

CAMP Whistler seeking youth feedback

by Claire Daniels

How about coming to CAMP Whistler this fall?

CAMP (Community Asset Mapping Project) Whistler is all about youth. We know youth have important insights and opinions about our community, and we want to hear them. What makes Whistler a great place to grow up in? What could make it even better? CAMP Whistler is a weekend workshop, Sept. 25-26, to honour all that is youth within our community.

Whistler preps aged 13-18 can help to shape our Official Community Plan (OCP) update through CAMP Whistler, where we will identify Whistler's issues and possibilities.

Youth mainstreaming is the engagement of youth in governance and policy decision-making. Youth-led development recognizes the ability and need of youth to be agents of change and activities are designed and implemented by youth to improve their lives or the sustainability of their communities. These two complementary approaches have a

place in our community, and the OCP update is a perfect opportunity.

June 18, 2010, marked the beginning of our efforts to engage youth in the OCP. Five students from the newly formed OCP Youth Advisory Group distributed a questionnaire to determine just what is important to Whistler's youth.

And boy did the students have a lot to say! Over 140 questionnaires were completed and of these, 130 proved to be extremely valuable — not bad considering it was the last day of classes before summer vacation.

So what do Whistler's youth really think? The following trends came out of the WSS Youth Questionnaire.

- Get Input! Youth care about this community and have lots to say!
- The community of Whistler is special and part of what makes this community so great is the "smallness" of it. Youth feel we need to stay a small community.
- The design of the village and the overall

design of Whistler are valued by youth. We need to re-enforce and improve upon these strengths/our successes.

- Access to nature is important to the youth of Whistler, whether it is the mountains, parks, lakes, trail systems, or pristine wilderness. These spaces must be protected and enhanced.

The youth of Whistler desire more safe places where they can meet and hang out, where they can feel supported yet independent.

So what's next for youth in our community? The RMCW in partnership with the B.C. Real Estate Association, is hosting CAMP Whistler.

But what is asset mapping? Asset mapping is the process of identifying resources, including services, people, economic opportunities, clubs and support networks, in a given locale. What makes it especially unique is that it starts from the premise that youth are assets.

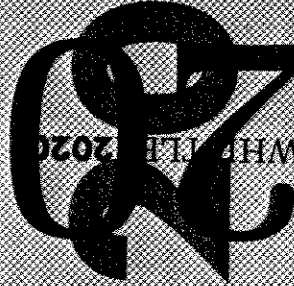
The International Centre for Sustainable

Communities — a Vancouver based NGO — will facilitate CAMP Whistler, a two-day workshop for 10-12 youth aged 13-18. The workshop will engage youth in collecting and mapping an inventory of community assets/resources that serve their needs related to the themes of the OCP.

These youth will then go out into the community and create asset mapping activities of their own with their friends, all of which will be fed into the OCP update.

Eric Brown, Youth-Led Development Officer for Sustainable Cities, the consultant doing Whistler's asset mapping, said: "Building on the experience we have in Vernon, Iqaluit and Dawson Creek, we are excited to be engaging youth directly in the OCP update process. The community assets and gaps in amenities that the youth of Whistler will identify through the asset mapping process will help to formulate a strategy that will result in a more youth friendly and equitable municipality."

For more information about how to get involved in the OCP update go to www.whistler2010.com or email ocp@whistler2010.com. ■



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