



REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

# Hamilton Youth Employment Summit



## Hamilton Youth Employment Summit Steering Committee

- Chair,** Christopher Cutler, YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
- Project Coordinator,** Jay Egbo, YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
- Dieter Klaus, Mohawk College
- Richard Allen, Industry-Education Council of Hamilton
- Kate Bennett, Industry-Education Council of Hamilton
- Mark Fraser, Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton
- Mara Fortino, Human Resources Development Canada
- Sandy McCallum, Public Health and Community Services
- Peter Edmonson, Community Representative
- Estella Jones, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- Luc Mikelsons, Community Centre for Media Arts

## Hamilton Youth Employment Network

- Chair,** Dieter Klaus, Mohawk College
- Past Chair,** Christopher Cutler, YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
- Richard Allen, Industry Education Council
- Sandy McCallum, Public Health and Community Services
- Patti Stirling, Stirling and Associates
- Aurelia Tokaci, Settlement & Integration Services Organization
- Milka Sobocan, Hamilton Public Library
- Lloyd Mackenzie, Community Centre for Media Arts
- Anne Harvey, Hamilton Public Library
- Gisela Oliveira, CPEC, McMaster University
- Denise Doyle, Internetworking
- Mark Fraser, Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton
- Sarah Goodhope, Career Cruiser - YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
- Joanne Snow, careerworx! YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington
- Jennifer Haanstra, Living Rock Ministries
- Deborah Neshkiwe-Fox, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
- Lisa Ouwehand, Community Employment Advocate Alliance

## Sources

- At a Crossroads, First Results for the 18-20 year old Cohort of the Youth-in-Transition Survey, *HRDC January 2002.*
- HR Matters, Hamilton Human Resource Strategy *Study May 2002.*
- Statistics Canada: Choices into Action, the Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools., *1999.*
- A Game Results, *Social and Enterprise Development Innovations, 2003.*
- The Hamilton Youth Employment Summit Survey Results and Analysis, *Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, 2003.*

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"I've never been very sure of what I wanted to do after high school. I think I'm a lot smarter than my marks show. I knew I'd never get into the program I wanted at college with the double cohort problems, so I'm taking the year off before I try to get back into school. I'm only working part-time, and my parents are making me pay rent."  
- Melissa, 19

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

### YOUTH IN THE HAMILTON LABOUR FORCE

- Nearly one out of every four participants in the Hamilton labour force are young people ages 15 through 29.
- The unemployment rate for young people in Hamilton is more than double that of the rest of the labour force.
- By 2013, the number of adults in the workforce (55-64) age group will exceed the number of youth (15-24).
- As of March 2003, there were 11,400 unemployed young people in Hamilton.
- Enough youth to fill 238 school buses.

### AT-RISK YOUTH

- In a survey of at-risk youth in Hamilton, completing school was identified as the biggest challenge to achieving their career goals.
- These same young people indicated that the need to care for their children, homelessness, and the need to find work affected their ability to stay in school.
- When asked if they had considered the skilled trades as a career option, 58% of at-risk youth said they had, compared to 32% of in-school youth.
- At-risk youth surveyed identified the educational requirements and associated costs of apprenticeships as significant barriers to participating in skilled trades.

### CONTINUING WITH SCHOOL

- 97% of in-school youth surveyed planned on continuing with their education after high school.
- In reality, only two-thirds of these students will continue on to post-secondary education and training.
- High school dropouts were less likely than other people to have been exposed to career & job skills courses while in high school.
- High school graduates were more likely than dropouts to have had a paid job during their last year of high school.

### HIGH-SCHOOL EMPLOYMENT

- Of all in-school youth surveyed, only one-third reported being employed.
- Yet, over half of in-school youth reported to be looking for work.

### DOUBLE COHORT

- Due to the 'double cohort' high school continuers reported not being able to get into the post-secondary program they wanted or complained that their marks were too low.
- The impact of the 'double cohort' is expected to continue through the next 6-8 years.

### OBSTACLES TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

- Just under half of 18-20 year olds reported facing barriers to going as far in school as they would like.
- 60% of these young people cited financial obstacles.
- In fact, 35% of the post-secondary students surveyed could not continue in school without employment income.

## The HR Matters, Hamilton Human Resource Strategy Study, May 2002, recommended developing:

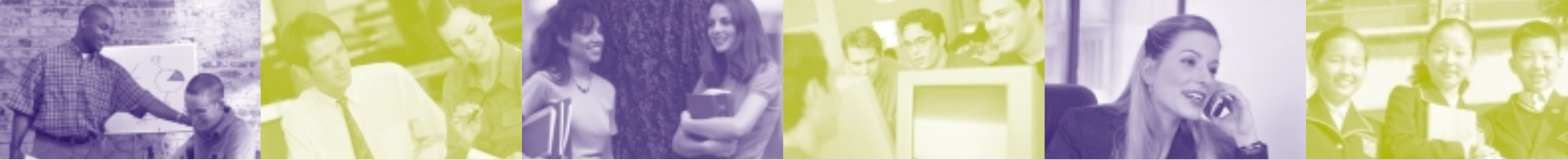
- A strategy to prevent local youth and young workers from migrating out of the community,
- To retain post-secondary students after they complete their studies',
- To improving skills and school-to-work transitions.'
- The School-Work Transition Coordinating Committee, a community initiative bringing together educators, industry, service providers, and labour was formed in February 2003.
- This committee is engaged in mapping the current state of the school-work transition in Hamilton, and also embracing a continuum of career activity from grade school through post-secondary.



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## THE PROCESS

- The Hamilton Youth Employment Network establishes the Hamilton Youth Employment Summit Steering Committee in June 2002.
- Human Resources Development Canada agrees to fund a significant community-wide consultation on youth employment in Hamilton.
- Project Coordinator is engaged as of December 2002.
- In January 2003, the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington, as lead agency, working with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, begins a four-phase process.

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## PHASE ONE

*A Pre-Summit Consultation begins in January, 2003*

Over 700 participants consisting of in-school, post-secondary, at-risk youth, employers and service providers are consulted.

*February 3-7, 2003: A-Game*

Working with Social and Enterprise Development Innovations (SEDI) the A-Game is held in Hamilton involving over 80 at-risk youth, employers, and service providers in an interactive forum.

## PHASE TWO

*Tuesday, April 29, 2003*

Youth Day: A series of small group discussions employing 'Open Space' technology and involving in-school youth, at-risk youth, and post-secondary students.

## PHASE THREE

*Thursday, June 15, 2003*

Stakeholders Day: Bringing together youth, service providers, educators, employers, parents and funders.

## PHASE FOUR

*Wednesday, June 25, 2003*

The Report to the Community

## 1000 Voices Later, 5 Themes Emerged...

### ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- Survey participants overwhelmingly identified the lack of access to reliable and accurate information on local employment services and programs as the single most significant barrier to youth employment in our community.
- The need to target parents in the promotion of employment programs and services was also highlighted.
- Young people expressed the need for more effective and innovative strategies to target and communicate with specific age groups.
- All stakeholders identified the need for more promotion of community employment programs and services within our schools.

#### PRINCIPLE 1

*Every young person needs access to better information on local employment services and programs available to them.*

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK EXPERIENCE

- Young people, service providers and employers, identified the lack of work experience as one of the main barriers to employment.
- Both high school and post-secondary students were asked about their participation in school-to-work transition programs.
- Only 6% of high school and 8% of post-secondary students reported participation.
- Out of over 28,000 secondary school students enrolled in the two Hamilton School Boards, only about 4,000 were able to participate in formal work experience programs last year.

#### PRINCIPLE 2

*Every young person needs access to opportunities for work experience*

### CONNECT SCHOOLS TO EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

- Both secondary and post-secondary students expressed the need for information on employment programs and opportunities to be provided in schools.
- Currently schools in Ontario are mandated to provide exit information to students not pursuing post-secondary education.
- However, the consensus from both summit days was that schools were not effectively promoting the full range of career options available to young people.
- Less than half of service providers surveyed indicated that they promoted their programs in schools.

#### PRINCIPLE 3

*Every school needs to connect and partner effectively with community employment programs and services.*

### ENGAGE EMPLOYERS

- Employers told us that youth need to understand employers' expectations.
- Young people expressed the need for "youth friendly employers".
- Employers that accept limited experience, offer flexible hours, and recognize the need for young people to complete their education.
- Service providers need to reach out to local employers to effectively promote the value of youth as potential employees.

#### PRINCIPLE 4

*The community must engage employers as full partners in overcoming the barriers to employment that young people face.*

### EMPLOYMENT READINESS

- When asked what they felt was their biggest challenge to achieving their career goals, many youth felt that they lacked direction and needed support in defining their career path.
- Service providers stressed the need to expose young people to career counseling and 'real world' training.
- Employers need young people who are employment ready.
- More than just job skills, they need to acquire life skills. (i.e. time management, communication and organizational skills)

#### PRINCIPLE 5

*There must be a collaboration between all stakeholders to provide employment readiness training to our young people.*



"I had to interrupt my university studies upon the arrival of my son several years ago. Raising him on my own has been difficult. I love him and I realize that education and training is the only way I'll be able to give him the life he deserves. I just can't seem to find a way to afford school, get the work experience I need, and support our home."

- Tania, 27

"I'm currently working on earning my GED. I wasn't able to earn my diploma while in school. Thanks to my participation in a couple of community based work experience programs I have found the motivation to finish my schooling. It hasn't been easy though. I'm only earning minimum wage and finding the time to study has sometimes been an uphill struggle."

- Greg, 23