Preliminary Research
Fusion North East Edmonton

Casselman, McLeod, Miller, York

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Findings

There was general consensus among the community interviewed and the young people that the community was safe and supported, although changing in recent years with an increase in the number of cultures and low income housing. “I love it because it has been home” but there is much more potential. The diversity in the community was considered both an asset and a challenge. The community was often seen as mature and established which was considered strength.

Among the young people in the community, the results of the survey indicated that some of the most significant concerns facing them were dealing with peer pressure and substance abuse. Changing family dynamics such as more broken homes, less access to family support programs and a larger mixture of cultures in the community reflect a need for the community and families to engage young people more directly who are often impacted by these circumstances.

Another major issue facing young people in the community was a perceived lack of accessibility to high quality programs. Some of these programs were viewed as too expensive for some families to get kids involved in and there was a need for more low cost and free community programs for kids. The churches and community leagues were seen as having an important role to play in this process of further engaging young people in the community.

In general, there was a strong sense regarding pride of community and home ownership although there was still a response from some people interviewed for the need of a stronger police presence in the community and the need for more community programs and events, especially for young people. Not having enough of these programs and events was viewed as being connected to increased substance abuse and vandalism which led to some residents feeling unsafe.

According to the most recent census data, the total population of the four communities has remained stable over the years with distribution by age and mobility in the area being similar to the city as a whole. Although there was a perception by some interviewed in the community of increased transiency and population as more building development has occurred with violence becoming more of an issue. The majority of homes in the community were detached single-family homes and mostly owner occupied.

There was a diverse range of experiences expressed regarding the overall sense of communication, trust and connectedness ranging from a high level of trust and feeling safe in the community to a feeling of disconnection with neighbours and distrust. In general, those interviewed felt areas could be improved.

Some homelessness was an issue in the community and other pockets of need. From those living within the community, the overall sense about the community was positive but there was a negative perception of North East Edmonton from those outside of the community which was viewed as being perpetuated by the media.

The school’s role in the community was recognized by those interviewed as being positive and overall very good. There was a response by some for the need for more after school programs and resources for the schools.
Fusion Youth and Community International

Fusion Youth and Community Society of Canada is an inter-denominational Christian community based organization that works to respond in practical and culturally relevant ways to the needs of young people, families and their communities. It is Fusion’s belief that where an individual experiences meaning and community that person is resilient and can best cope with the crises life can bring.

Fusion originated in Sydney, Australia in the early 1960s as a creative response to at-risk young people in the area. While it began working among youth, the importance of a healthy community to care for a new generation has led Fusion to include extensive community work. Today Fusion International has around 200 staff and thousands of volunteers in 25 countries around the world.

In 1995, Fusion Australia purchased a small town in Tasmania. “Poatina”, an Australia Aboriginal word meaning “shelter”, today provides supported care for socially at-risk young people and offers a wide range of training and job skills programs. In Poatina, Fusion is helping people transition from a difficult past to a hopeful future. Poatina is convinced that what is happening at Poatina can happen in any town or city where there is a will to do it.

Fusion became established in 2003 by Edmonton residents who visited Fusion projects in Australia. They saw outreach strategies that could be adapted to work to support communities in a uniquely Canadian context.

Fusion Canada has begun working with local churches to meet the needs of young people, their families and communities across Canada. There are Fusion teams now working in Vancouver, Edmonton, Olds and Regina. Some of the youth and community programs offered include:

- Open Crowd Community Festivals, which aim to help the local community reconnect.
- Breakouts, full day recreation programs that provide self esteem building activities, healthy role modeling and support.
- Schools work, including breakfast clubs in junior and senior high schools,
- Community work including Kids Clubs and community suppers
- Training for people wanting to grow in community awareness and skill in working with people.

Internationally, Fusion centres are established in response to research into local needs. Some examples of these responses are: drop in centres / youth cafes, accommodation programs, craft and social programs for isolated people, support programs for single parents, special programs for teenagers who are not fitting into the school system, employment programs and more. Care is taken to avoid duplication of other programs or services, and it is Fusion's aim to work in harmony with existing services.

The North East Edmonton research team saw the need to take the time to listen carefully to what people felt to be the strengths, weaknesses, needs and opportunities for this area. This preliminary research report is the result of a group of local people who want to reach out in appropriate ways to meet the needs of their neighbours.
1.3 How Research was Conducted
This preliminary research report was undertaken by Fusion Youth and Community Society of Canada, Steele Heights Baptist Church, Emmaus Lutheran Church and Trinity Christian Reform Church to determine the needs of the Northeast Edmonton Communities of McLeod, York, Miller, and Casselman and their young people. While there is no such thing as completely objective research, this preliminary research sought to cover a diverse range of people's opinions and data sources in order to give a report which is as accurate as possible. This type of research is known as qualitative research.

Qualitative research attempts to get beyond facts and figures and explore the meaning of the collected information. Qualitative research gives voice to a broad cross section of opinions and looks for themes rather than numbers.

Before Fusion commences any new programs it is clear that we need to know where our efforts will be most useful. This report will help shape Fusion’s strategy for future action in the Northeast Edmonton area.

The research method included:

**Interviews:**
The researchers conducted interviews with key community leaders, service providers, business leaders, community members and parents, asking them the same questions and recording their responses. (A list of the individuals interviewed is available in the appendix).

**Surveys:**
Fusion Youth and Community asked students who accessed services in the community to complete a simple questionnaire regarding their interests, issues they face in their lives, where they spend their time and what they’d like to see happen in their community. Their responses were tabulated and graphed which form part of this research document. A small section of the business owners were also given surveys to fill out as a part of the research document.

**Desk Research:**
Desk research consisted of compiling statistics from the most recent Government census. The researchers also utilized the local library and community league literature to build its summary of the history of the area.

1.4 How the Research was Presented
Each interview was transcribed and quotes were collated into different categories. At the end of this process there were several quotes, and it was clear we could not include them all. Thus the quotes that appear in this document are a selected sample deemed to be representative of the general themes that were identified in the interviews. The interview questions are noted above each corresponding heading within the document.

If you wish to see full transcripts feel free to contact Fusion Canada Youth and Community.
2.0 Community Profile

2.1 History and Description

These communities are located in Ward 4 of the new 12 ward system (the former Ward 3, under the previous 6 ward system) in Northeast Edmonton. Together, they compose the district of Steele Heights. They are bounded by the following roads: 137 Avenue to the south, 66 Street to the west, 153 Avenue to the north, and Manning Drive to the east. These neighbourhoods with the exception of Miller which was developed in the 1990’s are mature, established neighbourhoods developed in the 1960’s and 1970’s. They are primarily residential neighbourhoods with active Community Leagues in York (Steele Heights Community League) and McLeod; McLeod Community League serves the neighbourhoods of McLeod, Casselman and Miller as well as the adjoining neighbourhoods of Matt Berry and Hollick Kenyon to the North. There are elementary and junior high schools in McLeod (both Public and Catholic) with another public elementary school located in York. The area is also served by M.E. La Zerte, a nearby public high school. Londonderry Mall is located in close proximity to these neighbourhoods as is the Clareview Transit Centre.

Casselman
Named for Frederick C. Casselman, who practiced law in Edmonton in the early part of the 20th century, this northeast neighbourhood consists of a blend of single-family homes and multi-unit dwellings, as well as substantial recreation spaces and appealing pedestrian pathways throughout the neighbourhood. Although there are no schools in Casselman, two elementary and two junior high schools are conveniently located in nearby McLeod.

McLeod
Pioneer settler Murdoch McLeod (1844-1930) was born in Scotland and signed on with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1861. He spent six years in the Arctic before leaving the Hudson's Bay Company in 1868 and settling in Manitoba. In 1870, during the Riel Rebellion, Murdoch was held prisoner. He left Manitoba and came to Edmonton in 1879, where he farmed in the Belmont area. In 1907 Murdoch moved to British Columbia, but returned to Edmonton a short while later. The neighbourhood was officially named in 1962. McLeod (144 Avenue-153 Avenue, 58 Street to 66 Street) is unique in that almost all the residential properties are developed with single
detached dwellings. Most of these were built during the 1960’s. Streets are laid out in crescents and cul-de-sacs and its residential lots are large. McLeod has a very stable population and contains family units that are maturing.

York
The York neighbourhood was named for Annie A. York Secord. Annie York was born in Ontario and came west to Alberta in 1889 to teach school at Poplar Lake and Namao. In 1891, she resigned from teaching to marry Richard Secord, an Edmonton businessman and later a member of the North-West Assembly from 1902-1904. Annie York Secord died in 1950. The neighbourhood was officially named in 1962. York (137 Avenue to 144 Avenue, 50 Street to 66 Street) is somewhat of a pioneer neighbourhood. In 1967 row housing units in Edmonton’s first condominium complex were offered for sale in the neighbourhood. During the population boom of the 1960’s developers could not build single homes fast enough to meet the demand, and concerns about urban sprawl were paramount. The inclusion of condominiums may have been an experiment, but it was a cautious one – the single detached house still dominates. Average household incomes in York are close to, if slightly below, the average household income for the City of Edmonton.

Miller
Miller was named after Abe William Miller (1987-1964) who came to Edmonton in 1914 from Hungary. He graduated from the University of Alberta in 1925 and practiced law for nearly 40 years. Miller is a triangle shaped residential neighbourhood. It is bounded on the north by 153 Avenue, on the west by 50 St, and on the southeast by the Canadian National right of way and Manning Drive. According to the 2001 federal census, substantially all residential development in Miller occurred after 1996.
2.2 The Four Communities Today

The following statistics and graphs have been compiled from information from the 2001 Federal Census, and 2008 Municipal Census.

Table 1: Population Distribution by Age

The total population of the four communities is 12,693 (2008), which has remained quite stable over the years. The distribution of the population by age is very similar to that of Edmonton as a whole.

Table 2: Length of Residence

These communities are relatively stable with approximately half of the residents living in the area for five or more years. Overall, the mobility in the area is similar to that of the city in general.
Table 3: Housing

The majority of homes in these communities are detached single family homes especially in McLeod where nearly all the homes are of this type. Casselman and York also have several townhouse style homes with a few low rise apartment buildings in Casselman, Miller and York. The majority of homes in these communities are owner occupied particularly in McLeod and Miller. The ratio of owned to rented units in Casselman and York more nearly matches that of Edmonton as a whole.

Table 4: Income

The average income in these communities is similar to Edmonton, but the distribution of very low (less than $20,000) and very high (over $100,000) is different, especially in the communities of McLeod and Miller. Casselman has the largest number of people with low incomes and approximates Edmonton’s average; it also has the second highest number (after McLeod) of the highest incomes.
Table 5: Single Parent Families

According to the 2001 Federal Census, the communities of McLeod and Miller had significantly fewer than average single parent families; but both York and Casselman had more, with Casselman having almost twice the city average.

![Single Parent Families (2001)](image)

Table 6: Education

The number of adults with less than a Grade 9 education is similar to that of Edmonton in general but there are almost 50% fewer people with a university education with or without a degree than the Edmonton average.

![Education Attainment (2001)](image)
BACKGROUND OF INTERVIEWEES
Following is a cross section of the occupations of the persons interviewed for this research document.

What is your position or positions within this community?
- Principals
- Sales and working manager, lives in south Edmonton
- Hair Stylist
- Department Head of Student Services at local school
- Owner of this Subway Store
- Store managers
- Work and live within neighbourhood.
- Library Branch Manager
- Business owner
- Homeowner
- Marketing Assistant
- Employee
- Pastor
- Soccer Coach
- Resident
- North Division Police Officer
- Community Development Social Worker
- City Liaison to Community Leagues
- Facilities Director (McLeod Community League; Casino Director)
- Representative -17 Council.

How long have you lived and or worked in this community?
Those interviewed have lived or worked in one of the 4 communities researched anywhere from 2 months to 30 years.
Services Accessible in Community
The services that the people indicated as being accessible in their community are listed below. There are others that have not been listed. A few of their comments regarding the services follow.

What types of services do you access within this community?

- Banking
- Book Store
- Church
- Community League
- Convenience Stores
- Daycare
- Education Centers
- Employment
- Fitness Centre
- Grocery Shopping
- Hairdressers
- Health Services
- Library
- Medi-Centre

- Movie Theatres
- Police
- Public Swimming Pool
- Restaurants
- Senior Centre
- Shoe Repair
- Shopping Malls
- Skating Rink
- Sports
- Strip Malls
- Starbucks
- Transit
- Gym

- “Socially we are shy. We go to Rundle Park.”
- “For my personal needs- hardly nothing, but for school’s needs – collaborate with Community League, Steele Heights Junior High, Steele Heights Baptist Church, help some of our needy students with clothing, boots and after school daycare. I am a Christian and prayer is valuable.”

- “I don’t have chance to shop around.”
- “I use Safeway and other services”
- “Shopping such as at Safeway but not much at places like Londonderry Mall”
3.0 Our People, Our Community

3.1 The Community
Within the four communities researched we found a mixture of feelings. Some were happy and liked their area, like business owners, but most felt a strong sense of lack of community, connection and trust.

Changes Seen in Community
Many people who responded said that the area is becoming more multi cultural. Some interviewees commented that the population has increased as more building development has occurred in the area and as the population has increased violence has become more of an issue.

What have you seen change in the area over the time that you’ve been here for?

- More transiency and need (condos -66th Street – condo complex)
- Busing in kids from Hollick Kenyon area and draw from Steele Heights
- Last 31/2 years-seen increase in people from different cultures; more multicultural; apt. buildings-increase in transiency among students who come and leave; 415 student population but 442 on books; more aboriginal families
- Not much change in the community
- Cultural diversity of neighbourhood
- More traffic and population
- Housing increase (rent) affordability—a lot of buildings going up in the area. Not a whole lot of change. Increased fees. The accreditation process at the daycare and a lot of benefits for the staff. The daycare has been accredited for three years.
- More development, huge amount of power centers have gone up the area itself has become more attractive / affluent, less low income scary.
- Growth and more violence
- Amount of people, ethnic groups, violence
- Become much more diverse in many ethnic groups living in the North Edmonton area.
- Recreational centres upgraded and mall upgrading.
- Residential growth; development of the market place; a lot more ethnic diversity than when I first came here.
- “Kids are so protected that they can do no wrong which equals a complete loss of respect for elders”.
- You see it in the schools. Boundaries of children are different. There is no accountability for a lot of kids.
- Gone from farmland – beyond 153rd; population growth, aging population-younger when we move in; services-police, health. A lot of high density population. Aging community—mature neighbourhood.
- Population increase, growth, building development and growth. In 20 years there has been huge growth.
- Continues to be more and more need. Kids are growing up; more youth services. Churches did not collaborate to do events—desire to partner is greater. Steele Heights Jr. High was connected there.
In the Communities North of 153rd avenue there are little to no services (but are getting some commercial services); people beyond 153rd avenue have to come south and there is a little park space; no gathering places north of 153rd—need more. No after school care. Parent services lacking in this area (from 97th and Manning to North of 153rd).

Community has grown – Catholic church was here in Steele Heights; area has developed over the years; 137th avenue east was not paved back then.

**General Feel of the Communities**

Overall when asked about the general feel of the community, people expressed that they felt safe and supported. There was also a sense that the community has been changing over the last few years with an increase in the number of cultures represented and low income housing.

**Tell us about how you find this community what is the general feel of the area?**

- Not bad- suburbia; two weeks ago ATM was robbed; further south is a rougher area. It is generally quiet, late at night it is a little less safe, during the day I feel safe.
- School- very supportive, lots of volunteers
- I enjoy this community, middle class, lower class (subsidized); I live in the community, still growing, new families moving in and out. Two years ago more families moved away.
- Unusual community--McLeod--one of strongest community leagues in Edmonton--soccer league, etc.
- “Nice neighbourhood”
- “Depends on neighbourhood; higher upper class vs. Lower, poverty and crime ridden, usually poverty and crime go hand in hand.”
- Good, feels safe
- Relaxed, nice. It is very accessible to everything. We have a great variety of services. There is really everything you need here.
- Lacking in some community support organization
- Lacks local identity
- Comfortable in area
- Before – was very quiet, safe, clean
- Now-Need to watch your back a bit more, busier, dirtier
- Busy
- It is usually pretty low key, but inviting.
- I think it’s a good community to raise my family in, not totally commercialized; good schools and a great Baptist Church.
- I feel very comfortable (safe place)
- Where my shop is—129th and 50th can be a rough place.
• I love it. It has small attitude at times. It was a white neighbourhood years ago; some conflict when immigrants came in. There is a not a lot of ways to come together outside of church. “I love it because it has been home” but there is much more potential.

• I feel safe, short of isolated incidents in the community; it is pretty safe—from a policing perspective.

• More townhouses and appears to be low income housing which is drawing working class and are multi-cultural.

• I think it’s a good community. From perspective of community league—offers a lot of sports to residents but also maxed out. (Community leagues are volunteer organizations that depend on volunteers). Provides about 50 soccer teams.

• Good neighbours; I moved here from the west end where I managed apartment buildings

### Trust, Communication and Connectedness

There was an overall sense that communication, trust and connectedness could be improved. People expressed a range of different experiences from a sense of safety and community to a feeling of disconnection with neighbours and distrust.

**How would you describe the levels of trust, communication, and connectedness?**

- “Business wise we trust each other; customers are a little more closed, not as open.”
- High level trust – come to us often with needs
- Families are good set of people. Staff at facility are good at dealing with people. Have a lot of experience at dealing with diverse cultures. The issue is how to include culture, religion. I feel safe in the community.
- I’ve been happy here; parents are supportive. We communicate with parents. Schools have good reputation in area. People live in McLeod, Miller and Britnell want kids to come here but we are overextended right now--too crowded.
- “Feel safe at night, maybe naive, worked in inner city Winnipeg feels safe at night.”
- Good, no problems has regular customer that come in every second day or so
- Usually feels safe, couple of hold ups at 7eleven
- I don’t think it’s very high on any of those fronts.
- Not well developed due to lack of community infrastructure.
- Limited
- Within business good, in schools it could be better.
- Trust is fairly low unless I know the person well, communication is adequate and connectedness is a bit poor.
- I find that in terms of trust—may be moderate; connectedness—I’d like to see more block parties, community events and people taking more time to know their neighbours.
- A great job with sports program—we are disconnected from the community league. I live in a cul-de-sac and I know most of my neighbours. It is a tight knit group.
- Very individualistic; if are part of community you have more trust than new people who are isolated.
- Our cul-de-sac where I live –there is a huge level of communication-people know each other (close knit). The police department does not put out much information about what’s going on in the community but there are police community liaison constables (CLC’s).
• Communication seems o.k. with community events, willingness to communicate. People still have barriers and walls. “Everyone has way of expressing stuff”.
• Community life is different than 20 years ago, in general, not just this area. Generally—not just this community that people are not necessarily aware of geographic neighbours. Not as many opportunities to be interconnected. Both parents working full time; people travel to go to schools outside of the neighbourhoods—friends are scattered, parents don’t get to know each other. Community is defined differently today. The way we do things is not what community is. Time to reflect. We need to engage the community to help identify what they want it to look like.
• Could be better; some rift-raft come into the area sometime and cause problems; there were some drug houses near but we fought against them being here. There are homeless issues that impact the community.

Strengths of the Communities
The people in the area appreciate the diversity of the community. They generally have pride in their community and take good care of their homes. The community league is strong with lots of sports programs.

What do you appreciate about this community, what are the strengths to celebrate?
• Traffic is not as bad, not a ghetto, suburbia upper middle class to the north.
• Community relations liaison officer – Brandon Shapelt
• E.P.S. website – community liaison officer report – dialogue open with Sobeys (healthy schedule)
• The people (ex.—bar owner next door to my daycare center) are respectful and people in the community are diverse.
• People are hardworking who live here; nice facilities like Londonderry Mall, swimming pool, schools, playground is phenomenal; most of homes well kept; people take pride and so does school.
• “Diverse community, not cookie cutter like Sherwood Park, people is helping each other out.”
• Has good community support
• I love the older homes and how unique they are. The variety of schools is excellent.
• “Close school”
• The growth, the development, new services, cleaner overall impression. The ease to get around is due to transit service and LRT.
• Diversity of ethnic, moral, national groups
• People
• Accessible
• Strong North End Feeling
• Appreciate the freedoms we have
• Strengths- Canadian unity, patriotism is very important
• Community league is strong—they are organized with website, paper (The Piper) and huge soccer program, have good community center (Hockey rink) and nice huge park.
• I appreciate the level of up keep. People take pride in their homes. In general the sports (ex. Soccer programs) are going well.
• Support that we needed helped, recreation for our kids; little at low cost, was committee to recreation and families. Community continues in spite of all development.
• Not overwhelmed with retail—still have parks, etc.; still in the neighbourhood, not a lot of high density homes.
• There is a very nice part; inviting community, mature community with central hubs, schools and churches.
• They are resilient people, hardworking. McLeod is one of the first community leagues in Edmonton—has served area well. See trees on boulevard—the community is established.
• The area is reasonably quiet
Challenges of Life in the Communities

A strong theme from the people who responded is that there is a need for more support for families. As well the rate of drugs, alcoholism, and vandalism makes some residents feel unsafe.

What are some of the challenges you face living in this community?

- Nothing major
- Parenting issues (counselling needed)
- Exceptional families but some families need support. I drop off stuff to families. There is diversity in income and 80% families that have kids here are subsidized.
- Concerns are vandalism and we had to put grids over the doors because first 2 years had smashed windows. Parking lots used for drug deals--put chains on back doors. Have asked for more police presence and not received. We would love to see more visible police presence and have asked parents to request it also. Have had meetings with community league and churches about this issue but still need more police presence. We need to be aware of crime--safety is always a concern for us.
- Alcoholism and drug abuse, kids are independent with no sense of family.
- No big challenges, very respectful community
- Fights between schools Steele Heights and JJ Bowlen, some drugs in the community
- Biggest challenge traversing to NE for work.
- Some areas are still a little sketchy.
- Lack of small local commercial outlets
- Isolation from rest of Edmonton
- Drugs, fights
- Far away from other communities in Edmonton
- Understanding the backgrounds of many different ethnic groups.
- Getting to the Southside and West end. Feeling comfortable walking alone on the street side.
- I think there is sometimes a stigma of living in N.E. Edmonton (that it is down and out); maybe a little more crime. Getting out and doing things can be a challenge; long winters.
- “Kids are so protected that they can do no wrong which equals a complete loss of respect for elders”. You see it in the schools. Boundaries of children are different. There is no accountability for a lot of kids.
• Being involved. My husband and I are private and never able to volunteer much because we were very busy with work.
• Maintain status quo—family oriented community (quality of life).
• All communities challenging—aging population, multicultural groups, schools not meeting needs well—segments that want to be with their own groups; economy-unemployment
• Limited resources—services north of 153rd such as child care, after school care. Community League of 8 people trying to reach out to connect to all these neighbourhoods. Changing community and what that really means. How do we see community? North East is more multicultural—how do we reach out to different cultures. There is a way of doing things but people don’t know how.
• Parking across the street from Steele Heights Jr. High which is close to where I live has caused some problems. Parents of kids can be problematic. There was some problems with a adult group home.

What to Strengthen in the Community
Many people responded that they would like to see policing strengthened in the community. They would also like to see community events and programs increased with more things for the young people in the area to do.

What in the community can be strengthened?
• Tighter security, there are a few robberies, on the other hand police patrol quite regularly
• How do we address pockets of need? Parenting.
• Community Mapping Projects – targeting preschool kids to look at needs in community (Did project at Bannermen)
• See a little bit more other programs—like to see things (in the summer time—teens doing nothing—need referrals and do different things with their lives).
• Concerns are vandalism and we had to put grids over the doors because first 2 years had smashed windows. Parking lots used for drug deals—put chains on back doors. Have asked for more police presence and not received. We would love to see more visible police presence and have asked parents to request it also. Have had meetings with community league and churches about this issue but still need more police presence. We need to be aware of crime—safety is always a concern for us.
• “Things for kids to do after school so they’re not hanging out and getting in trouble.” More support for parents.
• More policing, some illegal activity occurs in his parking lot.
• Some homeless in our community
• Difficult to tell
• Community spirit, community events, and community loyalty.
• More community groups/organizations to address local issues.
• Family
• Protecting neighbourhoods from gangs, violence, etc—Keeping them out of residential areas at least.
• Canadian unity.
• “More people should go to church and churches can work together more; police department should increase their presence; healthcare facilities can be upgraded to adequately handle population growth. There is a perception that more gets spent on S.E. Edmonton infrastructure than N.E. Edmonton, etc.” Neighbourhood watch programs could be developed more—could help with less vandalism and need to strengthen families.
• McLeod Community—we are very driven. We are trying to make time for family and work. We are hanging on to older family values but struggling.
• Communication between residents. How do you keep people connected?
• More access to and availability of the police agency. The local beat cops program has change so police officers don’t know people in the community like they used to.
• Programming but can’t happen without meeting spaces. There is a need for free meeting spaces for programming in the communities.
• How can we reach out—the Community league boundaries in this area covers about 14,000 people.
• If people had more of an attitude of what can I do for my community and not what it can do for me?
3.2 Young People Today
There is a feeling within the four communities that the young people are dealing with much peer pressure and substance abuse.

Challenges the Young People Face
General challenges facing young people (K-12) are peer pressure and substance abuse. There was also a sense of the need to promote families and increase access to community programs.

What do you see as some of the challenges that the young people (K-12) of this community face? For example cultural issues, family dynamics etc.

- Majority of the young guys are not smart; hiring more women than men because they tend to be more qualified.
- Drugs
- Somalian Families
- Have DARE program
- talks to kids in neighbourhood
- Character is needed- do the right thing whether or not you’re being watched.
- Other programs. Get parents educated about access to programs and get involved.
- Need to offer parenting classes--family support esp. those marginalized; counselling activities for youth; afterschool weekend activities; “too many kids who don't know what to do and gather up and get into trouble”.
- “Drugs, Alcohol, peer pressure to be apart of illegal culture.” Kids are working all night and going to school during the day to provide for their family. “I would love to have fusion to come provide food and support for a breakfast program.”
- Kids in community need more family time, lots of single parent families
- Low income, drugs
- I think there are more single parent/blended families and a lot larger mix of cultures.
- Standard problems faced by recent immigrant children
- few entertainment and social options
- Parents need to be more involved with their children.
- Gangs, English as a second language
- Getting along with all ethnic groups, regardless of race or religion.
- There are a lot of evident drug and alcohol abuse issues. Many parents neglect their children nowadays, which results in the latter.
- Bullying-taking on different dynamics—internet, face book, etc. How to handle media (MTV); what is the media lifting up for young people especially young males such as violence. Young females are affected too. We need media awareness in schools about things such as drugs, etc. Schools have done a good job on preventing smoking—has gotten better. But what about heroes? What is virtuous now? Evil people are celebrated. Where are fathers, or everyday heroes (roles models). Native kids model rap stars.
- Broken homes – probably the biggest issue facing adults and kids. Physical fitness for kids and parents is a problem.
• Attitudes of older people against skateboarders. Don’t have McLeod meeting place drop in place. No place for young people to engage older people.
• See various people from different ethnic backgrounds, schools dealing well within it.
• Not sure but Many can’t take part in activities—many families are low income and some would if they could.
• On the recreational side-only sports offered and not other programs. What are other needs (engagements). No space for other programs. We need to get people engaged in their neighbourhoods. People identify with where they live. If you know your neighbours you will have sense of community ownership and feel more connected and safe (children). For me it’s all about people—less opportunity to be connected the less feel invested in community.
• Peer pressure with younger kids—not so much with racial and other issues.

Where Young People Today Spend Their Time

There was a wide range of responses of where young people spend their time; two of the most common being Londonderry Mall and at local parks or playgrounds.

How and where have you seen the young people from this area spending their spare time, both inside and outside of this community?

• Shopping, “A lot of kids come look at computers and come back with their parents.”
• Two kinds of groups
• Organized piano /sports
• Hanging out in condo complexes
• The Mall (Londonderry)
• Videogames, hanging out with friends, sexually active at younger ages; apart from electronic online, a lot of kids communicating by texting, face book. "Kids are relational". Kids are more sedentary and spend less time outside such as playing soccer and more time with electronics.
• Mall, hallways.
• The mall
• Too many video games, junior and senior high kids need something to do
• The mall, hanging out in parks.
• Bars, mall, and love to see a group of kids playing b-ball, soccer, etc.
• Malls, movies, restaurants
• Athletics clubs, schools, parks, mall.
• Mall, parks
• Skateboarding in front of our church; in our church youth groups; hanging out at the mall; community leagues at the hockey rink and young boys in indoor and outdoor soccer.
• Tennis courts by Londonderry pool; basketball courts by Londonderry is always packed; at hockey rinks in winter.
• They like the park areas, kids like walking through multi-family areas, mall (food court).
• My daughter involved; I don’t see a lot of congregating. I see guys at the basketball court. It is in the open so they can’t hide.
• Basketball, sports, soccer, mall, park.
• Sports. Steele Heights Hall has had a lot of vandalism. Sports can be limiting because of economic limitations for some kids. It depends on resources of the family (economic and other wise—strain families). We need to have more of an attitude of what we can give back to our community. Young people have a different view of authority now—not as much about respect and accountability.
• Playing basketball on the side of McLeod School—kids are involved in sports and such things as soccer leagues.

3.3 Programs, Organizations. Services and Resources
When asked about the programs, organizations, services and resources available we were provided with a number of options to the communities as listed in the comments that follow. Strengths and weaknesses of some of the program were also disclosed.

What is Available for Young People?
The services for young people in the area mentioned most frequently were sports teams, leisure centers and the green shack.

What programs, organizations, services or resources do you know of that are available for young people?
• Employment opportunities. LRT and transit system.
• DARE
• Family advancement social service
• Rotary members come in
• Green shack on site
• Social workers (Edmonton Public)
• Skate park (Clareview)
• NET teams (police officers and social workers; graffiti patrols; neighbourhood Empowerment team)
• Booklets don’t include teenagers. Not a lot of programs that I know about.
• Community league offers soccer, hockey, Londonderry Pool, libraries, churches—youth programs and activities. Organizations rent school such as brownies, rhythmic gymnastics; depends on interest of the family.
• Have started after school programs in response to kids in the hall needing a place.
• Sports teams but parents don't always have time or money for that
• “I am not aware of any, should be … I’m sure there is.”
• There are a lot of activity programs and a few drop in centers also.
• Leisure center, library, church/mosque groups
• YMCA
• Support Groups, boys and girls club
• Schools, government programs for low income families (i.e. kids
• Big brothers and sisters club
• Youth shelters
• Green Shack program through the city; number of youth groups at various churches; skateboard parks at Clareview, Castledowns; sports and fitness center at Londonderry; golf camps in Clareview.
• Church, community leagues, city, Londonderry, green shack.
• Community league—being a member—can sign up for sports.
• Through community league halls, community pool, unity center run programs throughout the year. In this community—soccer.
• Steele Heights Baptist Church is active with youth in the community.
• Karate, different sports; the social director at McLeod Community League engages people with activities such as Family Night, etc.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Programs
In general the strengths are that high quality programs are available. The weakness is the accessibility to these programs.

What do you think the strengths and weaknesses are of these programs?
• Getting people to be involved
• Knowing where to go to get help
• “Programs that I know of seem to be good. Weakness—Comes down to family—if family is involved and drive kids there it is good but if family is marginalized or dysfunctional-put kids in front of TV. This is a parent directed. Dysfunctional families need support—church can help in this area.”
• There are a lot offered, not everyone knows and don’t access or is unable to afford them. And don’t know how to access the funding available to them.
• Keeps kids out of trouble
• Volunteers
• Strengths-Become part of a group, social acceptance.
• Weakness-cost, if low income; time availability.
• Strengths—fairly economical, availability is good usually
• Weakness-not a lot of linkages between organizations; schools are huge (Steele Heights Jr. High is a strategic place) and McLeod Elementary build into kids while they are young. The Jr. High school reinforces with good role models. We need incredible leadership between principals and they need to talk more. “More than education can happen”
• They get kids involved; but demands on families
• Community league; the Piper (paper) is good, me and my family involved.
• Some programs are pretty pricey. The leisure assess program is there if you can’t afford for your kids to take part. Transportation is an issue. Strengths-programs run through city—skill based and fund based which helps whole person. Just for programming but what about moms, seniors? There are programs such as ELL-English Language learners.
• We need resources so people don’t have to travel as much outside the community and be creative and use our imagination more.
• There could be more of them; need people to organize events and be responsible. Parents often are working and some are single parents.
3.4 Your Role Working With Young People
Some of the people who responded said they saw their role with young people is to be a teacher or mentor to help the young people learn about respect and responsibility.

What do you see as your role, in working with young people?

- To make sure every child has the highest quality education
- Flexibility – ask questions
- “If children cannot learn the way we teach, we must teach the way they learn” – quoted from school motto on the wall.
- My role is to provide a safe environment—using facility to guide and referral to kids. Last year we employed a mom of one of the kids here to work here.
- My role is to help kids learn as much as possible at school and at home and become productive citizens and function well in society. Schools are often taking on role of church in teaching kids what is right, moral, respect etc. in a secular society.
- Emotional, social, and academic counsellor.
- Mostly has teens working in evening – teaches respect, punctuality, work ethics – staff of 6 from MEL
- Gives treats to kids sometimes when they come in, advertising
- Inform customers as to what is available to them.
- Bring involved in the events whenever I can. Sponsor/volunteer when its youth related within our community
- Providing options and a safe place to meet
- Low income family’s children at local school for free in Taekwondo.
- No comment
- In my business- two or three younger university staff – I train them and try to mentor some of them.
- Model—“I model respect. Kids are recognized and acknowledged. I am an advocate and resident in my condo complex.”
- Coaching daughter’s ball team; mentoring and coaching in the community.
- I don’t work specifically with young people.
- I am a youth representative at M.E. Lazerte which as leadership program. Young people do have something to bring to the table and it’s not all bad. We need to see what role they can play in their community. How can they help their fellow man, etc. As young people get older and more independent they need to see comes responsibility and accountability. Rights are not freedom from responsibility.
- Have been cub leader in the past; I encourage others to be active in the community.
3.5 Dreams and Visions for the Future

The common dream was to own their building so they could provide programs and activities to all age groups in some type of community centre that services all four communities. Also, to have agencies, organizations and services working together and communicating with each other so no one falls through the gaps.

Imagine you had unlimited resources and a team of youth and community workers at your disposal … what would be your plan, your dream for the future of:

Young People

Generally a need was seen for programs and services that bring a fresh approach to meeting the needs of young people.

- More extracurricular activities, more trees, parks, football fields; more things for young people to do and draw them out.
- A safe place that they could go that would be staffed with youth workers and resources they could access.
- Keeping them busy in activities in the communities; relaxed, comfortable, feeling safe, things to do—board games, food, few hours a day—teen drop in center.
- Establish something for afterschool and weekend activities. Centers that are close by—activities for young people.
- “Definitely provide free opportunity to do activity outside school time.”
- More teen employment, if more teens were employed there would be less hanging around.
- Rec. nights, breakfast programs in schools, movie nights
- Do lots to encourage reading.
- Provide safe/education/recreation places to meet, learn and socialize
- To stay in school, remove themselves from gangs, drugs, finding a job, living at home.
- Access to secondary education without going into debt for many years. The financial burden of university is ridiculous.
- They strive to become all that they can be and want to have a positive effect on the rest of the city.
- Make sure families have enough money go on family holidays and build positive memories together. Like to see more role models in Jr. And elementary schools—bring in sports and business people. More organized activities at night (grade 8-12) such as youth groups at churches, etc., constructive outlets such as youth center.
- Carnival type event (big family events (tournaments) everybody stop for a day. Key is breaking down barriers (defences) and combine it with charity where people give.
- I would want to go cultural, artistic; bring younger and older people together; we need an interactive meeting place; more sharing without electronics—like drumming etc.; call neighbours together.
- We are involved. I would like to see more kids involved. It would be good if more programs were not cost prohibitive.
- One of my colleagues came up with an interesting idea that they called: “Wal-Mart for Youth” where all the services (counselling, basketball, big game rooms, STD’s (sexual health) job issues, etc., could all be dealt with at one large facility. Children need hub—free center (deal with different ages)
- I would like to see youth engaged and taking on leadership.
- Getting young people involved which is a difficulty to the community.
Community

There are many different views regarding the dreams for the community. A main theme from the respondents was that they would like to see more community centers where people could come together and be involved.

- Clean it up - update appearances minor upgrades to homes.
- Learning group—reps from all areas of community talking together and action plans
- Same –keep busy and occupied.
- Keeping them busy in activities in the communities; relaxed, comfortable, feeling safe, things to do—board games, food, few hours a day –teen drop in center.
- Provide activities to "activate children in meaningful ways when they are not in school". Some activities that are free to children; some clubs that do interesting things that kids enjoy doing such as outdoor clubs.
- Community support for kids living on their own and single parents.
- It is good for people to come together, festivals are good
- Hard to say, not intimately involved in community
- Develop a sense of community
- Opportunities for local residents to come together to interact and meet each other.
- Where people watched out for their neighbours
- Canadian unity.
- Safe, comfortable, inviting.
- Community marriage seminars—people can proactively work on marriage; better hospitals; continue to develop parks; invest in wading pools; need to lead people.
- Carnival type event (big family events (tournaments) everybody stop for a day. Key is breaking down barriers (defences) and combine it with charity where people give.
- Entertaining the elderly.
- They need to get more involved also.
- Center for whole community (drop-in center like the one Millwoods community has for immigrants).
- More gathering spaces—more opportunities. We are all the same—this is our community and ethnic groups should be equally engaged. Things can look different than they have in the past 70 years if fear and ignorance are not there.
- The stage at the community Hall(McLeod) is a dream come true; we need to keep everything running smooth
Different Roles for Assisting Community

The Churches Role
In general a need was expressed for local churches to reach out to the community though social programming, spiritual guidance and community outreach.

What do you see as the local churches’ role for assisting this community?

- ...helping the elderly, doing service work. Would like to see more service work offered to the community.
- Volunteer in school – reading to kids
- Mentoring 30 minutes/week
- Educate people—I’m not religious person—but they should give to people-show someone cares, counselling—a safe place.
- Lobby the government, perhaps for more services for children and youth; come together in community outreach--collaborate with efforts to serve children and youth.
- Church is doing a lot already such as working together
- Very unfamiliar as to what churches are around.
- Ensure they have youth group programs as parenting programs.
- Churches are a place where people go to worship God. Some individuals go to find friends to help with their families. But essentially, people should go there to find God and get to know Him.
- They should be helping the less fortunate, but so should everyone else, too, spreading the good news of God.
- To offer spiritual direction for people (churches need to be health and unified) and living out what it shares with people. “Churches need to interface with the community and be bridges of trust and a safe place to come”.
- I’ve been going to church since I was a baby. Throughout the years I have not went steady. For kids and teens church keeps you on track. The world pulls you away. The message of the church helps families stay together & helps with values & principles
- Bringing people together; social dimension not necessarily through faith. “It should be a place of refuge.”
- Your church (Steele Heights Baptist Church) is proactive. That’s needed beyond Sunday.
- Willing to work with the community. Needs to be openness to partnership. If church has space should host a program.
- The role has changed. Now there are youth groups and things that did not exist for me when I was younger; Faith based organizations are reaching out to the community instead of waiting for people to come in which is good because churches have a great role to play in the community. Can offer a positive sense of hope and can bring good. There can be connection when people see caring people.
- Same as community league—reaching out is good.
The City’s Role
It was felt that the city’s role is to provide safe clean space and buildings for people to come together and to provide funding for programs and housing.

What do you see as the City’s role for assisting this community?

- Workers are around a lot.
- Child services
- Groups for parents
- Follow-up after accessing resources
- Need to inform people more about services available (Leisure Center). City fulfilling role but should advertise more.
- Provide space, buildings, funding, and more resources toward building in order to run programs free for kids.
- “Basic transportation without price tags, free access for kids at leisure centers, consistent community programs and events.”
- Properly channel programs to involve teens
- City does nothing
- Should be aware of changes that are needed even if they can’t act on it.
- Funding available so everyone is able to participate.
- We should feel safe
- Decreasing violence, providing safety, clean neighbourhoods
- Available housing for low income
- Good transit system.
- Keep it clean and safe.
- Support the community leagues, send out a consultant to help community boards and resource them so they can impact the community.
- I don’t have much to complain about.
- We are a support system to all groups of people. Finding ways to bring people together over common issues (facilitation) and finding money.
- Resources in the community
- We are into prevention”; partner with community, facilitate organization and plan programming; make sure programming runs and help other organizations run. Seeks to deal with issue of how to bring community together—Connections? How do bring to planners? Bring people together.
- This is a part of my role—information and referral, community development, recreational programs, park land development, public consultation, impacting the community and also acting as a social support network.
- City needs to give backing.
The School’s Role
The people who responded said that the main role of the school is to provide a safe place for the children to be educated.

What do you see as the City’s role for assisting this community?

- Be productive citizens, empathetic, leaders
- Do pretty good job—in every aspect.
- Schools already do enough—they are overworked now.
- Teach kids at school about moral duties punctuality, responsibility, work ethics.
- everyone should eat the same thing at the school cafeteria to bring unity instead of division
- Should be aware if they should need enough books, supplies, staff. Properly trained staff.
- More after school programs.
- More teachers, smaller classes
- We should feel safe
- Building that relationship with teachers/parents
- Improved communications with parents (ex: email homework so parents have copy of requirements for the day).
- Make students want to be good people and help others.
- Offer top notch education as primary mandate of the schools; facilities should be well monitored. The school’s secondary role is for teachers and principals to be involved in the community somehow.
- Education and sports are prominent. Schools are good.
- Educate (interactive learning—community); “schools must be in tune with their community”.
- Step up a little bit more with activities. Need to take more active role at younger ages (after school programs)
- They are a connector. They are advocate for many services such has enhanced health, increase family activity in local community; teach kids, keep kids safe during day; access resources to help families; inform families of what’s happening in schools such as safety.
- Main mandate is education but schools are hubs that can connect people in a big way.
- Depends on the principal. Steele Heights Jr. High has a terrific principal who gets out and meets the neighbours in the community.
The Community League’s Role

What do you see as the Community League’s role in assisting this community?

The community league is seen to have a major role in the life of these communities. The research shows that the interviewees see the community league’s role as organizing and hosting events and programs that bring families and community members together. To provide opportunities for community connection and for people to be able to work out community issues together.

- Steele Heights Community League – Need volunteers
- Don’t know very much about them but see kids in McLeod field.
- Don’t know much about all they are doing but they are active and seem to be doing good job.
- They do good work
- Not a lot of contact with community league any more.
- Helping start these programs. Get some people involved.
- We should feel safe
- Develop unity within their own communities.
- Be a place of gathering and sharing.
- Organize and maintain the community center and hockey rink and continue to offer sports programs such as hockey, soccer, softball, etc. Help people meet their neighbours—block parties, work with churches, festivals (alcohol-free) events.
- Build recreation center, swimming pool, sports complex.
- They need role of mentorship. Not good at handing off and sharing responsibility. Need to develop people—more leaders at community league.
- Have already talked about it.
- Focused on recreation such as sports; some open and let others rent space such as renting hall for weddings.
- The role is being redefined; their view of their role has been of sports and recreational opportunities but voice of residence in neighbourhood—can take role in dealing with community issues because community role is open.
- Working together in the community.
3.7 General Public Perception of Community and Media’s Effect

Generally the overall sense of the community is positive from within, but there is a negative perception of North East Edmonton from outside the community which is perpetuated by the media.

What’s the general public perception of this community and how do the media affect this perception?

- From the papers; crime and prostitution area; apparently now Stony Plain road is a prostitution area.
- People react quickly and can be judgmental
- From parents—pretty good, some complaints (pretty positive) N.E. —negative—not always fair perspective by media —make area look worse than really is. (I live and work in community).
- For those who know about it—it is good and strong in extracurricular activities such as soccer league—community well respected.
- Lots of immigrants, very rich or very poor
- “Nice area, never heard that this is a bad area” good perceptions
- Has heard it is a sketchy area (from family). Hasn’t seen anything to back that up.
- Helping start these programs. Get some people involved.
- Community perceived as lower middle class immigrant community with more media focus on crimes and problems than on accomplishments.
- An increased amount of immigrants, media shows the negative.
- North Edmonton is perceived as a good, quiet place to live. South Edmonton used to have a bad rap as a drug haven. North Edmonton areas aren’t as badly reputable for drugs, but some bad press over the years for different ethnic groups not getting along.
- It’s a bit scary, but it’s somewhere to live.
- Stigma of North East as “crime center of the world”. This area of McLeod is desirable.
- It would contradict what people think if they are here and live here. Media feeds this.
- Poor income, some people comfortable feeling. Media does nothing much new regarding McLeod. McLeod not known for anything.
- I don’t hear as much negative media that is negative; media has huge influence—can be for you or against you.
- Think of Edmonton, think of crime, transient people (people stay 1-4 years) more blue collar workers and lot of immigrants.
- No, not good perception—dollars are often allocated by the city to other areas than North East. This area can also be a dumping ground for things that no one else wants like a prison in our backyard. Crime in this area is on the news all the time.
3.8 What Life Is Like?

For Elderly

In general there is a perception that the elderly experience isolation and loneliness and for many there is a lack of access to services and social programs.

- “Shocking to hear what young kids say compared to what he and they said.”
- Seem happy
- Choir sings at Emmanuel Home
- We have Manning Center – my mom no very much for services except Medi-center and pharmacies. Not too much dealing with the elderly.
- Many struggle financially and are isolated. For many city life can be an isolated existence. Church can provide support for them. But churches can be religious and not always spiritual. Need to bring them into community first.
- Is hard for senior to get places. Need better accessibility.
- nothing really to do, maybe should have a bingo night
- A few come in evening – 2 regulars, quite busy – not much involvement – N/A programs
- Good support networks
- “You make what you want out of life”
- Left out
- Unsure as I have no relatives/friends in this age group. But…I’m sure it is challenging with health issues and finances.
- Hard to see how this generation’s morals and priorities are so skewed. Lonely.
- They can get lonely. They need other seniors. A lot of elderly residents in single dwelling homes. How long they can take care of their homes is a question.
- It must be ok.
- It depends on support; they can be active. Others- better if have access to places like N.E. Health Center; can be isolated.
- Have it pretty good in this mature area. But outside this geographical area it is harder; being victimized more and some are afraid
- Could be isolating, health challenged. Could be issues with access to recreation. There is an aqua fit class at Londonderry; changing population.
- On one hand some good resources such as North Gate Lion’s Center; on the other hand can be isolating because dependent on transportation—often a barrier—public transportation—mobility issues on top of that. As a community worker I want to know how I can I.D. seniors and get involved at community league with such things as quilting, etc.
- Depends on family background- can be very lonely for them; but have places like the Lion Center to help the elderly but some are taken advantage of by others.
For Younger kids, older kids:
Some people commented that they think life for young people is unsafe and that they are exposed to many negative influences.

- “Younger kids don’t see the light of day; older may not either due to how scary the area is.”
- Most children come loved and read
- Some struggle
- Except parks, Londonderry they don’t have much—that’s it.
- “Kids are being brought up by older siblings.” All programs in the community cost money.
- Bored and when looking for activity may find drugs
- “You make what you want out of life”
- Parents are not caring as much for their well being, violence
- Uncertain…the economy…what will it be like when they are looking for employment or careers in the future?
- Full of temptations, doubts, fears, attitude, and prospectiveness.
- “A good community league to grow up in. But kids from broken homes and blended families may have unique challenges. Also, media is a negative influence.”
- Above average (compared to globally)
- For some it is difficult (working class community); isolated if not involved; Have and have not’s.
- A huge need to finish grade 12 and go on. More of push for post secondary education now.
- Difficult because of all expectations and rules; “taught to be on guard” because you never know who’s in the parks, next door etc.
- Generally, pretty good but no services for after school care; always room for improvement (north of 153 –more multi-cultural population)
- Depends on the home and background
For single parents:
The life of single parents was felt to be hard in many ways. Challenges include financial issues and a lack of daycare options.

- Got to be hard
- Cost of raising children is high
- Frantic pace
- Not all kids are blessed – try to find their hope
- Very tough - financial, transportation until recently
- It is very tough -- marginalized -- Might be struggling themselves with mental illness, spousal abuse, poor; students may manipulate; very tough for single parents.
- “Not a lot of support for single parents, many working two jobs to make ends meat.”
- Immigrants can be lonely, obstacles to overcome
- Need more daycare options
- “You make what you want out of life”
- Difficult with recession
- Very challenging. Have 2 daughters in this group. Financially difficult.
- Hard because of the economy, stressful, and full of the need to give their kids just a good of life as a child with two parents.
- Busy, economic challenges, dating with children is not easy (guilt).
- As society we accept it—it’s normal; it’s not different but difficult financially.
- Ones in my complex – they are connecting with resources. Ones connected are getting support.
- More of them. A lot of women never been married, they are adaptive.
- Challenging—kids in school, daycare, all responsibility of parenting on them; time challenged to get involved in programming (financial challenges for some) but can be resourceful.
- Though I may be speculating, real challenge —cost of sports, hard to meet volunteer commitments. Leisure services program offered at community league but parents have to identify themselves to the community league to get subsidized help which can be a problem.
- It’s hard; my daughter has went through being a single parent and there are issues such as daycare issues.
For Immigrants

Overall the challenges faced by immigrants include isolation, language barriers, and building community between cultural groups

- “Pretty rough” Computer trends have French speaking employees as well as other languages.
- Whoa! A whole different world.
- Women connect with the women.
- at our center – getting a lot – went through Catholic services—had information to access—(Goodwill store helpful)
- Depends on support group they tap into. Very hard community especially if spouse knows English and (wife) does not because wife relies on husband and makes hard to know how kids are doing. (Example--Many Somalis come from violent backgrounds and are suspicious of authority and children may act out.
- English Language Learning not available, many have to go downtown to take course.
- Many have jobs are working and doing well
- More available to help transition them
- Need to develop focal [Londonderry] community groups as opposed to citywide organizations.
- “You make what you want out of life”
- The immigrants seem to have an advantage of knowing about free programs to help with their children. Whereas, people who have always lived here don’t know how to take advantage of these programs!
- Confusing, isolating.
- Language barriers are large; government does a pretty good job with support—provide channels and pathways to be successful if immigrants are committed to working hard. Diversity is something we celebrate. We are one of the best places in the world but there are challenges such as with Somalis who are used to violence and gangs.
- Difficult to come over with high hopes; people can be resentful and annoyed. When my parents came from Northern Italy—they worked hard.
- Some comments from Board (racist); individual issue. They are in high density places. Some use the unity center.
- More of them—and getting funding.
- Coming from reserves—all new when they come—adapting, trying to learn culture, schools system so different—such as putting in appropriate classes; how to get them in and engage them; some children in crime and gangs. Many work challenged because of languages; health system problem with understanding their needs and many come with large families which is not always as acceptable in this culture. Some have come from Montreal and Toronto.
- Again I may be speculating—but seems isolating; in this culture there is a certain way of doing things and for a lot of immigrants things like volunteerism are new for them. There needs to be lots of learning. There is willingness among people but they don’t know how to get involved and default back to what’s most comfortable. There are still financial costs also. We all need to sit at larger table of “community” but still have our own identity.
- For some life is good but others it is hard for them to come to our ways. Some of Somalian groups keep to themselves
For aboriginals:
The most common response was that there are lots of stereotypes and prejudices about the aboriginals in the area.

- More influx here vs. other areas in the city.
- 23 self-identified
- Getting them to be proud about who they are
- Cultural awareness for all staff—forming relationships with parents
- EPS—Aboriginal Website
- Life could be tough—family we had—things going on at home—teenagers doing things should not be doing. Others seem to be doing o.k.—Mom in our program did not send in childcare subsidies.
- Challenging—clash of culture—“feel misunderstood and put down; have bad memories of residential schools and attendance sometimes an issue”. Some aboriginal mothers drank heavily during pregnancy and kids suffer from effects of fetal alcohol syndrome.
- Liaison officer come into school once a week.
- There are a lot of programs so I think it is good.
- “You make what you want out of life”
- There are members who are stuck in living in drug-related hard times but the ones who choose to rise above that do very well for themselves. Everyone needs to be self motivated and want to succeed…this is for all peoples.
- Same as anyone else.
- Fathers are missing—reoccurring generational curse. Absentee father syndrome (higher teen pregnancy rate among girls). Stigma of racism; communal vs. Individualist society; unresolved grief at the societal and individual level; drugs and abuse; and tragic death rate which is probably higher than rest of population.
- Biggest stereotypes—many that I know are excellent customers. But they can reinforce these stereotypes.
- If they are here they are almost unseen. Lady in my complex was aboriginal and worked at low paying non-profit job—she was very private; very few here in McLeod.
- At some point they need to take control of their life, get on with life (this applies to many of them). There is abuse within the family and this can be generational).
- “Live with stereotypes”; two of my colleagues work hard to help the community understand their culture better. Some have difficulty finding housing and work and deal with prejudice
- There is still some real prejudice for aboriginal youth but some good city programs; still lots of learning needs to happen. We may have different perspective—which may or may not be true which is normal for all ethic backgrounds.
- For some it is very rough—but some are educated and are devoted to helping their community; a lot don’t work.
3.9 Young People - Survey

A random small sampling of young people from some of the neighbourhoods was taken using the survey found in appendix 8.2. The following graphs are a compilation of the data from those surveys.

Table 7: Question 1

Table 8: Question 2
Table 9: Question 3

![Bar chart showing how time spent after school and on weekends is distributed among various activities.](chart)

- **Computer/video games**: 7 times chosen
- **Swimming**: 13 times chosen
- **Watching videos**: 8 times chosen
- **Drug/alcohol use** and **Other** activities not shown or not relevant to the chart.

The chart indicates that spending time on computer/video games and swimming are highly preferred activities, with swimming being the most chosen activity.
Table 10: Question 4

![Chart showing Young Peoples Struggles Today]

- Peer Pressure: 9
- Feeling Down: 7
- Friends: 6
- Money: 5
- Transportation: 4
- School Marks: 7
- Finding Work: 4
- Boredom: 17
- Drugs & Alcohol: 14
- Bullying: 10
- Authority: 7
- Family: 7

Table 11: Question 4

![Chart showing Who the students live with]

- Mother & Father: 80%
- Foster Home: 5%
- Group Home: 5%
- Other: 0%
- Family Member: 0%
- Mother: 10%
- Father: 8%
Table 12: Question 6

Questions 7 through 9 on the students survey gave them the opportunity to express in their own words how they felt about life in their communities.

What needs to improve in the community?
(What do you think needs to improve in your community? Question #7)
“Better field maintenance”
“A lot”
“The trouble makers”
“Things to do”
“More fellowship”
“Getting to know one another better”
“Less drugs”
“Less bullying”
“Less violence”
“Need more activities”
“Crime rate”
“It’s your job, you tell me”
“I’m not aware of the goings on in my community. I’m not even sure if we have any”
“Everything”
“I don’t know, I don’t do anything in my community”
Physical improvements and Facilities
“A community Centre”
“A hockey rink”

Social Issues
“Less drugs”
“Less violence”

Recreation
“More activities”
“More sports teams”
“Things to do”
“More programs and recreational activities”

What young people need..
(What do you think the young people in our community need? Question #8)

Programs/Activities
“More sports teams”
“More authority figures”
“Better police force”
“Safety”
“Less drugs”
“Good influences”
“Rehab from drugs”
“Healthy food”
“More things to help people interact”

Facilities
“Community Centre”
“Better recreation”

Social Issues
“Help”
“Help with money”
“Safer area”
“Attention”
“Freedom”
“God”
What young people want to happen for young people…
(What would you like to see happen for the young people in your community? Question #9 Survey)

“Listening to authority”
“Meeting other people (new friends)”
“Mingling”
“Get to know each other better”
“More law enforcement”
“I would like to see us grow into respected members of our community”
“Just having a better safer community”
“A safer community”

Social Issues
“Not kill one another”
“Togetherness”
“Stop the alcohol and drugs”

Facilities/structural up grades
“A community centre”

Programs/Activities
“More sports teams”
“More activities”
“Have fun”
4.0 Recommendations and Fusions Response

Things can look different than they have in the past 70 years if fear and ignorance are not there.

Fusion acknowledges that this is preliminary research and there is much research remaining to be done to get a complete picture of the needs in these communities, however from this preliminary research themes have already emerged.

In response to the findings of the research, Fusion acknowledges the need to build Social capital. To do that we need to create opportunities for people to serve and trust being served, therefore Fusion makes the following recommendations to the city, local churches, community organizations, police, community leagues, schools and community member.

Recommendation 1
That a youth and community centre be developed in partnership with existing Community Leagues as a hub for connecting needs and resources. This hub will provide people of all ages with information and access to programs, education, and support services. This initiative aims to support particularly vulnerable people in the community such as; single parents, the homeless, the elderly, children and young people of all cultural backgrounds.

Recommendation 2
That there be greater networking, communication and cooperation between organizations and services that serve the north east communities.

Recommendation 3
That the City choose to fund relevant programs which support and impact community connection and families. This, in our view, will indirectly assist in addressing issues of substance abuse, violence and other concerns which come from a lack of critical support networks.

Recommendation 4
To provide venues and low cost programs for children and youth in the community. Some suggestions are:
1 Low cost or free recreation and sports activities
2 Positive adult role modeling/mentoring and connection
3 Assistance with homework and school work
4 Life skills and drug awareness programs
5 Programs addressing bullying

Recommendation 5
That school facilities be made available to serve the wider community through sports, recreation and community programs.
Recommendation 6
To provide leadership training for students who then become part of a community-wide Youth Team to give young people a voice in proactively and positively contributing to the community.

Recommendation 7
Address bullying related issues by running a program in schools which names values and enacts them across the school community.

Recommendation 8
To establish an Industry based mentoring program that will allow older people to support the young people by teaching them life skills and to be industrious.

Recommendation 9
That the community leagues work to facilitate Sports and recreation programs for all age groups (parents, youth, and children) available at a low or no cost.

Recommendation 10
That churches together bridge further into the community by actively supporting and providing school, community league and other community building programs.

Fusion’s Response:
To provide initiatives that invite members of the community to actively participate in restoring trust and hope in our neighbourhoods and families.

We will do this by-
1. Continuing community festivals in partnership with willing community members.
2. Networking with other organizations and services in order to connect needs to resources.
3. Providing education, recreation and support initiatives for entire families.
4. Further research the specific needs of aboriginals, recent immigrants, youth, seniors, and single parent families in the area and explore responses to these.
5. Building teams to work with children and youth through low cost, informal sports and recreational programs.
6. Seeking to restore the community centre model that links families, individuals, youth and Seniors through supportive programs.
5.0 People Interviewed

Thank you to all those below who gave their time to be interviewed. Your willingness to voice your opinions and ideas made this research project possible.

Darren Platt  Senior Pastor Steele Heights Baptist Church
Norma Lirincz  Community Recreation Coordinator
Elizabeth Norris-Kartz  Principal York Elementary School
Chrisa Arndis  Marketing Assistant, Londonderry Mall
Carol Saunders  Office Manager, Londonderry Mall
Paul Ungaro  Anthem Sportswear
Karen  Londonderry Mall
Del Golenoski  McLeod Community League
Robert Shortreed  Manager, Londonderry Branch, Edmonton Public Library
Tamara Fisher  Asst. Manager-Rickis/Bootlegger
Lavonne Hailes  Social Worker, Neighborhood & Community Development Community Services
Sergeant James Elkow  Edmonton Police Service
Lynne Heidebrecht  Social Worker, City of Edmonton, Community Services
Elisabeth Thomsen, Ph.D.  Principal, McLeod Elementary School
Tamara Greenwood  Regional Marketing Director, Londonderry Mall
Ryan  Manager- Computer Trends
Leah  Learning Through Play
Stanley McKergow  Happy Harbor Comics
Joan Mayhew  ME Lazerte High School, Department Head Student Services
Marcia’s  Marcia’s Hair Salon
 Jacob’s Connexion
Owner  Subway (137th Avenue & 66th Street)
6.0 References


City of Edmonton Maps website

7.0 Fusion Canada Contact Details

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Fax: (780) 421.7304
edmonton@fusioncanada.ca
www.fusioncanada.ca
8.0 Appendices

8.1 Interview Questions

1. a) What is your position or positions within this community?
   b) How long have you lived and or worked in this community?
   c) What types of services do you access within this community? For example, shopping, recreation, entertainment, food, etc.

2. a) What have you seen change in the area over the time that you’ve been here for?
   b) Tell us about how you find this community, what is the general feel of the area?
   c) How would you describe the levels of trust, communication, and connectedness?
   d) What do you appreciate about this community, what are the strengths to celebrate?
   e) What are some of the challenges you face living in this community?
   f) What in the community can be strengthened?

3. a) What do you see as some of the challenges that the young people (K-12) of this community face? For example cultural issues, family dynamics etc.
   b) How and where have you seen the young people from this area spending their spare time, both inside and outside of this community?

4. a) What programs, organizations, services or resources do you know of that are available for young people?
   b) What do you think the strengths and weaknesses are of these programs?

5. Networking question = What do you see as your role, in working with young people

6. Imagine you had unlimited resources and a team of youth and community workers at your disposal.... what would be your plan, your dream for the future of:
   - This community’s young people
   - The community as a whole

7. a.) What do you see as the local churches role for assisting this community?
   b.) The city’s role?
   c.) The schools’ role?
   d.) The community league’s role?

8. What’s the general public perception of this community and how does the media affect this perception?

9. Who else do you suggest we interview?

10. What do you think life is like for?
    - The elderly
    - Younger kids, older kids
    - Single parents
    - Aboriginals
    - Immigrants
8.2 Questionnaire to Young People

HAVE YOUR SAY!

If you are between 10 & 25 years of age this is your chance to say what you think young people in West Edmonton need!

1.) What community do you live in? circle one:
-Casselman
-York
-Miller
-McLeod
-Other Please list:_____________________________________

2.) What is the general feel of your community?
Circle the ones that best describes your community:
-Unsafe
-Safe during daylight but not at night
-Always safe
-Friendly
-Fun
-Comfortable
-Pleasant
-Scary
-Unfriendly
-Other Please List:_____________________________________

3.) How do you spend your time after school and on weekends? Circle that you do the most:
- Hanging Out
- Watching videos
- Swimming
- Computer/video games
- Events
- Skating
- Parks/playground
- Stores/shops
- Internet/MSN
- Friends/family
- Community Hall
- Playing Sports
- Other Please list:_____________________________________

4.) Circle the areas that you think young people in this community struggle with today (circle as many as necessary):
-Family
-Authority figures (ex: teachers, police)
-Bullying
-Drugs & Alcohol
-Finding Work
-School marks
-Money
-Friends
-Transportation
-Peer Pressure
-Feeling depressed/down
-Other Please list:_____________________________________

5.) Do you live with your:
-Mother & Father
-Mother
-Father
-Friends
-Foster Home
-Group Home
-Family member (Grandma/Grandpa, auntie/uncle)
-Other Please list:_____________________________________

6.) What kinds of events or activities would you most like to participate in? Circle 3 favourites
-Music/dance events
-Competitions
-Festivals (ex. Food, comedy)
-Sports/recreational activities
-Weekend Outings
-Website design/online projects
-cultural events
-Workshops (ex. Poetry, drama, writing, film, theatre or media projects)
-Other Please list:_____________________________________

7.) What do you think needs to improve in your community?
8.) What do you think young people in our community need?
9.) What would YOU like to see happen for the young people in your community?

Thank you for participating in this survey!
8.3 About the Researchers

Our team consists of the following group of dedicated and kingdom hearted people. They are either active members of Fusion Canada or members of three local churches, Trinity Christian Reform Church, Emmaus Lutheran Church and Steele Heights Baptist Church. At the time of the research project they all lived in the Edmonton area. They are acquainted with the communities our research covers through living in the community, working in the community and through the festivals and programs that have been provided from Fusion and these three local churches over the past few years.

Monica Manning - Community Outreach Pastor at Steele Heights Baptist in northeast Edmonton. She is involved in various ministry/outreach projects in the community including this survey. She got involved with Fusion through local “Open Crowd Festival” and took the Fusion Foundations course in May 2009.

Wendy Stewart- was born and raised in Edmonton, and have lived in McLeod for the last 23 years. She is a secretary at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. Steele Heights Baptist Church is her home church and it has been through here that she was introduced to Fusion and started working with them on this project

Mary Dewitz- a physical therapist who lives in McLeod and attends Steele Heights Baptist Church. She got involved with Fusion as an Outreach Ministry with the church. She has participated in this Community research project by researching and compiling the community profile

Ken Olson- lives in northeast Edmonton. He works as a youth pastor at Emmaus Lutheran Church. He is also a part time student at Concordia University College. Ken got connected with Fusion Edmonton through his Church Emmaus Lutheran and took Fusions Foundations course in May.

Jennie Lewin- Is a member of Emmaus Lutheran church who also lives in the research area. She got involved with Fusion Edmonton through the “Open Crowd Festivals” in northeast Edmonton.

Cody Lyzenga- Is the Youth Pastor from Trinity Christian Reform Church who was invited to join in this research project. He has a heart to see his community changed.

Darlene Robertson- is Fusion Canada’s National Office administrator who has been with Fusion since 2003. She also works as a registered nurse part time.

8.4 Special Thanks goes to:

- All the people who participated in the interviews and all the young people who filled out the questionnaire.
- The research team for their commitment to the project.
- Linda Deveau, Bonnie Coram and Darren Platt for assisting with some of the interviews.
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