

The Leduc Community Partnership Enhancement Committee

The Leduc Community Partnership Enhancement Committee formed in 2005 as a result of the Community Partnership Enhancement Fund initiative. A small but informal group of representatives from local FCSS and staff from the local Child & Family Services office from Leduc gathered to discuss ways to use the funding to enhance partnerships within our region. We took a very different approach in the way we chose to work together. Our committee believed that in order to meet the vision of Region 6 CFSA “Healthy and resilient communities for children, youth and families” that we needed to go back to basics to look at how we build relationships amongst ourselves, and colleagues in our own agencies. The rationale was that if we created or even enhanced our working relationships we would increase our understanding of each other roles, programs and mandates which would ultimately benefit children, youth and families resulting in a more comprehensive seamless approach to service delivery.

The method we selected to enhance and build relationships was through team building. We realized that not only could FCSS and Child & Family Services benefit from team building but that we needed to be more inclusive and bring other partners to the table. We invited staff from agencies such as AADAC, Mental Health, RCMP, Probation and the local Food Bank to join our planning committee. We had fairly good relationships with some of the staff, but felt that we lacked a thorough understanding of the roles and agency mandate. We had to come up with something fun and interesting to provide an opportunity for staff to engage and get to know each other in a friendly, comfortable environment while also providing an opportunity for learning.

Our first team building activity was held at Birch Bay Ranch located outside of Edmonton. Staff from numerous social agencies came together for a day of fun activities and learning. Staff were mixed together and asked to complete fun challenging trust based activities to build relationships and increase learning. With the overwhelming success of this team building day the committee applied for further funding and expanding on the team building concept to create the Amazing Partnership Race. The Amazing Partnership Race was based on the premise of the Television show and included various family scenarios depicting real live cases which had teams seeking out community resources, programs and services to meet the needs of the families. The game included detours, clues and various challenges. The Amazing Race was so successful that we continued it for 2 more years; in fact we had a wait list from agencies with staff wanting to play.

The local CPEF committee learned many important things through this process, but most significantly that partnerships take time, investment in resources and need to be nurtured. We had our challenges with lack of participation at the planning level resulting in the some team members often doing most of the work. Lack of time was another factor; staff with busy work loads found it hard to commit to the planning the events and also participation in the larger committee. The committee worked well together while it was engaged in a project, but struggled when projects were completed, resulting in a lack of momentum. However, looking back I believe we met our goals and enhanced our relationships resulting in more intentional, meaningful, seamless, appropriate referrals which have been of huge benefit to the families’ children and youth in our community.

Kim Williston, Beaumont FCSS, Chairperson Leduc County CPEF Committee