

Capacity Building as Crime Prevention Project: Process Evaluation on the Kids in the Hall program



Community-University Partnership
for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families

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Prepared by the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP)

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Funding for the Capacity Building as Crime Prevention Project was provided by the National Crime Prevention Strategy. The authors are grateful to Veronica Russell and Tammy Matchett of the National Crime Prevention Strategy for their very useful suggestions and support, and to Miranda Diakiw, and Kelly Shaw for their expert assistance in various phases of the project. This report and other, related documents are available at www.cup.ualberta.ca/resources_documents.html.

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August 2004

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Executive Summary

In July 2002, the Community-University Partnership (CUP) partnered with the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (ECCCC) to carry out a two-year investigation of the Kids in the Hall Bistro (KITH), an employment-training program for at-risk youth. Part of the project included a process evaluation of KITH, which involved two years of daily observations of the program, document reviews, and participant and staff interviews.

The Kids in the Hall Bistro project originated out of a perceived gap in services for street youth who wanted to integrate themselves into mainstream society. The KITH program includes two parts: (a) life skills training and career planning workshops for youth, and (b) on-the-job experience in the supportive atmosphere of the Bistro training environment. KITH has a staff of 10: two administrative positions and four positions in both the Workshop and Bistro. Youth are referred to the program from various sources including probation officers, social workers, group homes, other programs, and word of mouth from friends and family and through newspaper advertisement.

The Program

Workshop. The KITH Workshop is located in Alex Taylor School, four blocks from the Bistro. The Workshop currently involves five weeks of classroom instruction on life skills, job skills, and career planning. Youth are paid for attending the Workshop. The Workshop period is regarded as an important time for staff to develop a relationship with the youth and help them work on punctuality, attendance, and social skills needed for work at the Bistro.

Bistro. The Bistro is open for breakfast, lunch, and coffee, five days a week. When youth enter the Bistro, they are assigned to either the "Front End" Dining Room or the "Back End" Kitchen, depending on the current youth-staff ratio. Officially, youth should move through the set of stations at either the "Back End" Kitchen or "Front End" Dining Room in six weeks and then switch to the other section of the restaurant. The Bistro supervisors' relationship with the youth is similar to the boss-employee relationship in a regular restaurant, although more support, patience and room for error is provided. When youth are performing consistently and well at the Bistro, they are encouraged to move on to a Work Experience placement in the community.

Work Experience. KITH has developed relationships with a number of restaurants and businesses in Edmonton that have agreed to Work Experience placements with KITH youth. KITH pays the youths' salary for a three-week probationary period. The hope is that if the youth perform well they will be hired permanently.

School Component. KITH formed a partnership with Fresh Start, a local alternative school that is part of the Edmonton Catholic School System. Fresh Start is a module-based independent learning program for youth who are no longer in mainstream schools. As of September 2003, two teachers were hired by Fresh Start to each spend two half-days per week on-site at the KITH Workshop. Space adjacent to the Workshop was provided by ECCCC for an office for the teachers and a work area for the youth.

Process Evaluation

Youth in KITH. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 24 years, with a mean age of 17 years 10 months. The majority of participants were Aboriginal (42% Status, 20% Metis, and 5% Non-Status) and 59% were female. Only 4.5% of the youth had completed high school before entering KITH. More than half of the youth (60.3%) reported having a criminal charge, and 43% reported having been convicted of a crime.

Youth Impressions. When asked why they chose to attend KITH, 18.3% of the youth reported getting job experience, 12.7% listed being able to work on school credits, 22.2% clearly indicated it was the opportunity to both get job experience and work on school credits that made them choose KITH. Changes that occurred for youth while attending the Workshop included being on schedule and getting up earlier than they had been prior to admission to KITH as well as having a better attitude, communication skills and healthier lifestyle. When asked if they felt that Workshop staff were available to talk about personal problems during the Workshop, 84.2% answered yes. After working at the Bistro youth indicated they had healthier lifestyles (i.e., eating and sleeping better), shopped more for themselves, were more responsible in terms of paying bills and paying off debt, had learned new cooking skills they could use at home, were cooking for themselves at home more often, and were eating more nutritious foods. One problem that was observed by Research staff was that youth expressed frustration over a lack of communication between Bistro staff and the Fresh Start teachers about how students could work on school work when working at the Bistro. It seems that long periods of time were going by during which the youth were not adequately informed of how the school set up worked.

Staff Satisfaction. Most KITH staff members reported being very happy working at KITH. The opportunity to work with this population of youth, believing in the program, and the flexibility in working hours were commonly cited reasons for why staff enjoyed their jobs.

Pay. Almost all staff felt that they were underpaid, relative to what they would make in similar jobs in their field. All staff members acknowledged a tradeoff between the disadvantage in salary and the advantages of an eight-hour workday and job flexibility.

Program Planning. Once a year, the whole staff has a visioning meeting to discuss program planning for the next year. Most staff members feel that the Program Manager is very open to new ideas and feel very supported in whatever they endeavor to do. However, issues regarding program decision-making procedures were brought up in some staff interviews and were also observed by research staff. In practice, there is no formal or consistent system in place by which decisions affecting the program and staff are made.

Staff Dynamics. Historically, tension has always existed between certain Bistro staff and the Workshop staff. Most staff members feel the source of this tension results from the fact that the two components of the program have different goals and philosophies. Workshop staff teach life skills and job skills, and develop personal relationships with the youth in order to support the youth in dealing with personal issues. The Bistro staff's main focus is to provide job training and skill development. Tension often arises between the two staffs regarding decisions about courses of action with specific youth. Both the Workshop staff and the "Front End" Dining Room staff agreed that their relationship is very positive. The tension that does exist tends to be between the "Back End" Kitchen supervisors and the Workshop staff.

The official program procedure for dealing with conflict between staff members at KITH is for the people involved to try to resolve the issue on their own. If that does not work, Bistro staff members can approach their supervisors, and ultimately the Program Manager can be called in as a mediator. However, because there have been breakdowns in healthy communication between different staff members in the past, many instances of extended conflict between staff members were observed during the two-year evaluation that were not dealt with in a timely manner. Overall, based on issues observed between staff members and also the input received from staff members, a stronger stance from the administration on staff-related issues seems necessary and would be welcomed by most staff members.

Staff Training. The Bistro staff have restaurant experience but no training for working with at-risk youth. They are hired based on their skills in the restaurant industry, as well as their personal philosophies about and willingness to work in a training capacity with troubled youth. Training for working with the youth is received on the job; no formal workshops or courses are currently offered to new Bistro staff.

Issues for Discussion. Overall, the majority of youth and staff were very satisfied with the KITH program. A number of issues emerging from the youth and staff input as well as researcher observations for consideration and discussion are summarized in the following table:

Theme	Issue	Potential Solutions
Program Planning	Lack of consistent and formal decision-making and communication procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to a formal process. • Decisions made by consensus with all present. • Open debate and discussion around decisions. • Decisions communicated in writing with firm expectations for staff. • Repercussions in place for not cooperating with group decisions.
Staff Dynamics	Breakdown in healthy communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More team building activities as a staff. • Monitoring by Program Manager.
	Lack of knowledge about each others' jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have staff members trade and spend half a day in the other portion of the program.
	Workshop fielding youth complaints about Bistro supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up procedure more akin to regular workplace; youth make official complaints to Program Manager, not Workshop staff. If any disciplinary actions are needed, Program Manager takes them, not Workshop staff.
	Conflict not dealt with in a timely manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment from Program Manager to deal with major issues the same day they happen. • Program Manager spends more time on-site with both staffs, observe the dynamics, and make firm expectations and repercussions if they are not met.
	General suggestions for addressing current staff issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Manager spending more time at both the Workshop and Bistro, working with and observing staff dynamics. • Program Manager doing evaluations with each staff every three months and setting firm expectations for improvements that need to be made (especially for new staff members).
Staff Satisfaction	System for raises not consistent or tied to annual performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look into alternatives such as RRSPs or bonuses.
Staff Training	Bistro staff lacking formal training for working with at-risk youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look into local training sessions or workshops for working with at-risk youth. • Monitor new staff members closely for first few months and provide frequent, detailed feedback on specific situations. • Ensure that Bistro staff are clear on what they are expected to do, should issues arise with youth.
Fresh Start	Loss of communication and continuation once youth go to Bistro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up regular meetings between Fresh Start and KITH staff to ensure policies and procedures are agreed upon and communication is consistent.

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1.0 Introduction

In July 2002, the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) partnered with the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (ECCCC) to carry out a two-year investigation of the Kids in the Hall Bistro (KITH), an employment-training program for at-risk youth. The goal of the project, entitled “Capacity Building as Crime Prevention” was to develop a sustainable evaluation framework involving both quantitative and qualitative measures and then pilot the design on the KITH program.

Part of the project included a process evaluation of KITH, which involved two years of daily observations of the program, document reviews, and participant and staff interviews. The following is a description of the program, a summary of youth responses on surveys, and a review of the main themes that emerged through observations and staff interviews.

2.0 Program Origins¹

Kids in the Hall is a project of the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (ECCCC), a charitable organization dedicated to responding to the needs of people in Edmonton’s inner city. The Kids in the Hall (KITH) project originated out of a perceived gap in services for street youth² who wanted to integrate themselves into mainstream society. Crossroads, an ECCCC program that helps prostitutes leave street life, was successful in getting youth into stable housing and away from prostitution, but the youth often returned to the streets because of a lack of available support to help them establish a place for themselves in society. Many youth were not interested in returning to a regular school, and did not have the skills or confidence to gain or maintain employment. Although there were a few life skills training programs in the city, there were no programs to help youth make the next step after completing other short-term programs. A different type of program was needed to give at-risk youth the extra support and coping skills needed to prevent them from returning to the streets and help to them become stable, productive members of society.

The Director of ECCCC, along with a team of program planners, decided that an employment-training program would be best, based on the theory that earning an income would be key in helping youth stay off the streets. Furthermore, these youth need extra support to develop skills to enable them to find and keep jobs. A restaurant training program was chosen because other restaurant programs were running in Canada that could serve as models, and because there was space for a restaurant in the new City Hall, which was just opening up at the time. In the fall of 1995, ECCCC Director Martin Garber-Conrad held simultaneous discussions with then mayor, Jan Reimer, about leasing the space, as well as with Human Resources Development Canada, about funding the program. Funding for the first three years of operating the program was granted in December, 1995. A grant from the Muttart Foundation was approved in February, 1996, and in March, 1996, the City approved the lease of the City Hall space for the restaurant.

After almost a year of development, negotiations, and renovations, the Kids in the Hall Bistro opened in Edmonton’s City Hall in July, 1996. The project includes two parts: (a) life skills training and career planning workshops for youth, and (b) on-the-job experience in the supportive atmosphere of the Bistro training environment. These components are still the core of the KITH program, although various changes have taken place in the eight years since its inception.

¹ This information in this section was gathered from a personal interview with ECCCC Executive Director on October 2, 2003.

² “Youth” is defined in the project (and KITH) as being between ages 16 to 24.

3.0 Program Description

3.1 Program Funding³

As mentioned, the KITH program is a project of ECCCC, a registered charitable organization. The core operations of the program cost about \$700,000 per year. Funding is secured on a yearly basis, and has come from various sources over the past eight years. Human Resource Development Canada (federal), and Human Resources and Employment (provincial) previously provided core funding, however the changing demands of these funders made it difficult for the KITH program to meet the requirements of the grants without significantly changing the nature of the program. KITH has operated without any federal funding since September of 2003, and without provincial funding for three years (although they are currently applying for provincial funding again). Current funding comes from the Muttart Foundation, Levis Strauss & Co., Metis Nation of Alberta, and Oteenow Employment & Training Society.

The funding from governmental and non-governmental agencies goes into an ECCCC project account and is used to pay staff and youth wages. Rent for the workshop space, office supplies, equipment leases, and participant resources come from the fundraising project account at ECCCC.

The Bistro has a separate operating account that is used for all restaurant expenses, including rent. At the end of the year, any profit the Bistro makes (usually about \$15,000) is transferred to ECCCC, and is used for core project operations. The Bistro is classified as a training program, not a business. However, because the Bistro is a public restaurant and charges GST, it has a GST number and must pay GST. The Bistro operating account is used to help bolster the project funding account when possible. If supplies are needed to help run the project or help youth participants, money available in the Bistro operating account may be spent; a reduced amount goes back to ECCCC at the end of the year.

3.2 Referral Sources⁴

Youth are referred to the program from various sources including probation officers, social workers, group homes, other programs, and word of mouth from friends and family. Over the years KITH has used various means of recruiting youth, such as going to the Edmonton Young Offender's Centre (EYOC) to interview youth interested in attending after they are released. However, only a few youth who expressed interest in the program while in EYOC actually started KITH. KITH staff decided it was better for the youth to be released and then come to the program on their own initiative. One very effective recruitment strategy used by KITH has been local newspapers advertisements. These advertisements usually result in large numbers of youth applying for the program and, as a result, waiting lists are often started.

3.3 Intake Procedures

Youth who are interested in attending KITH usually contact the program by phone, at which time the staff informs them of key components and expectations of the program. If the youth is interested, he or she is asked to come to the Workshop at 9:00 a.m. the next morning and fill out an Application Form. This intake process is used to assess the youths' commitment to being in the program, and their ability to get to the office on time.

The Application Form is used to collect information on various aspects of the youths' lives, including living situation, drug and alcohol use, criminal history, health issues, and sleeping and eating habits. The youth are required to fill out the form themselves so that staff can assess their literacy skills. Once the form is completed, one member of the KITH staff goes over the form with the applicant in a one-to-one setting to assess whether the youth is a suitable candidate for the program.

³ The information in this section was gathered in a personal interview with KITH Program Manager on July 13, 2004.

⁴ The information in Sections 3.2-3.5 was gathered both through discussion with KITH Workshop Staff and the researchers' personal observations of program procedures.

The criteria for entrance into the program are not firmly set. Instead, each staff member uses their own judgment based on a combination of considerations. Generally, youth must:

- **Be between 16 and 24 years of age.**
- **Not be currently involved in street life.**

At the time of intake, staff inform the participant that they are expected not to be involved in street life during the program, including drug and alcohol abuse, criminal activity, gang involvement, and prostitution. This constraint is based on the assumption that if applicants are serious about making changes in their lives, they should be eliminating their involvement in these activities. As well, involvement in street life usually hinders participants' ability to be on time and participate fully in the program. Many of the youth who apply have criminal histories. Generally, recent charges for violent offenses are warning flags for staff. If violent charges have not been laid against the youth in the past year and the youth states that she or he is working on anger issues and has not been violent towards people recently, the youth is usually given a chance to participate.
- **Be dealing with addictions and/or dysfunctional issues appropriately.**

Again, these issues do not have to be solved completely as long as appropriate steps are being taken and the participant is making a reasonable effort. Moderate marijuana use is not considered a major problem. If the youth has had an issue with crystal meth (methamphetamine) in the past, they need to have been clean for at least a few months before they are considered ready to enter the program.
- **Have a stable living environment.**

This means that the participant has a home, food, and a safe living environment. If these are not in place, the applicant is referred elsewhere or supported in sorting these issues out before starting the program.
- **Not have serious mental health issues.**

When mental health issues are a concern KITH staff members contact the youth's social worker or other references to ascertain the extent of the problem. If a youth is taking antipsychotic drugs, or drugs to control anger issues, he or she would be considered unstable and likely would not be accepted into the program. KITH is not set up to provide support for people with mental health issues, and these students sometimes disrupt the workshop or are treated badly by other students. Therefore, if mental health issues are flagged on intake, the applicant is usually referred to Chrysalis or another appropriate agency. Sometimes a participant's mental health issue does not become apparent until after she or he has been in the program for some time. If this occurs, staff members work with the individual to find the best solution.
- **Have a reasonable level of maturity.**

Staff evaluate whether the applicant appears to have appropriate hygiene habits, social skills, and independence. There have been times when staff members have anticipated that an applicant would be harassed, taken advantage of, or bullied by the other participants, and that applicant has been referred elsewhere.
- **Have adequate reading and writing skills.**

Due to the low educational attainment of many of the youth who come to KITH, learning disabilities and literacy issues are common. Reading skills of about a Grade 5 level are deemed necessary for successful completion of Workshop and for reading orders at the Bistro. As a policy, if someone is unable to complete the intake form, they will not be admitted to the program. However, there have been exceptions; youth who are functionally illiterate have been admitted to the program. Staff members have worked intensely with these youth one-on-one and helped them enrol in literacy courses. In general, extra support is given to poor readers during Workshop.

- **Not have conflicting interests with other participants**

Staff also look at the applicants' connections with current participants. For example, couples are not allowed to begin the Workshop together. Friends and siblings are usually allowed to start the program together, unless staff have reason to believe this will be detrimental to their progress. If staff are aware that an applicant has a conflict or negative history with a current participant, the applicant's start will be delayed until the current participant has completed the Workshop and moved to the Bistro.

If the youth is judged to be appropriate for the program, the youth's references are checked and she or he is given a start date for the Workshop. This process has changed multiple times over the years. Originally, youth started in large groups a few times a year. This meant there were sometimes months between the youths' application and their start date. To address this problem, the program began starting smaller groups every six weeks. In 2002, the program went to weekly start dates, so that when youth applied, they usually started the Workshop the following Monday. During the busiest times of the year, a waitlist would be started and youth would sometimes start a week or two after applying. In 2004, the program began using the wait list system regularly, and start dates are often 2-4 weeks after youth initially apply. Currently, in any given week 4-7 youth are set to start the Workshop. About half actually show up on the Monday. The new participants are added to the current Workshop group, usually keeping the total number of youth in the Workshop between 10 and 15.

3.4 Workshop

The KITH Workshop is located in Alex Taylor School, four blocks from the Bistro. The Workshop has changed over the years, and currently involves five weeks of classroom instruction on life skills, job skills, and career planning. Workshops start at 9:00 a.m. and end between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Previously, the Workshop lasted only four weeks and youth were not paid during those weeks, but received a lump sum payment once they worked their first day at the Bistro (\$390 minus \$18 for any Workshop day missed). Currently, the youth are paid after their fourth week at the Workshop, then complete the fifth Workshop week and move on to the Bistro. The pay for the last Workshop week is added to their first Bistro cheque, two weeks after they begin work.

During the Workshop, participants must:

- Attend every day
- Be on time in the morning, after breaks, and after lunch
- Call in if they will be late or absent
- Provide doctors notes if they are sick
- Participate in class
- Have a decent attitude and be respectful
- Complete all assignments
- Abide by building rules (no smoking on school grounds, etc.)
- Not show signs of alcohol or drug use, or involvement in street life.

If a youth has trouble following any of these requirements, they may be asked to leave or restart the Workshop either the following week or after they have taken some time to stabilize. Many participants take more than five weeks to complete the workshop, and some never complete it. Some leave for significant periods of time and then return. Even when a participant is asked to leave, he or she is almost always encouraged to return if any support is needed or when she or he has dealt with the issues and are ready to begin again.

The Workshop schedule is divided into five sections, one per week. This allows for continuous intake of new participants. Participants can start at the beginning of any week.

Workshop Five-Week Description

- Week 1: Communication Skills
Anger Management
Personal Visioning
Current Events
- Week 2: Self-Esteem
Setting Boundaries
Stress and Time Management
Decision Making and Goal Setting
Public Speaking
Culture
Birth Control Clinic
Recreation
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)
- Week 3: Career Planning
Career Research at Library
Career Interviews
Presentations and Action Planning
Child Abuse
Healthy Relationships
Current Events
Recreation
- Week 4: Employment Standards
Job Maintenance
Interview Skills
Current Events
Culture
Critical Thinking
Bistro Policies and Procedures
Customer Service
Recreation
- Week 5: Resumes/Job Search
Mustard Seed (Soup Kitchen)
Money Management
Landlord and Tenant Rights
Current Events
Recreation

Almost every week there is also a guest speaker. Topics covered by regular speakers (and their affiliated organizations) include:

- Landlord and Tenant Act (Advisory Board)
- Alberta Food and Sanitation (Capital Health Authority)
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System Inservice (Diversify Lever)
- Money Management (Capital City Savings)
- Lifestyles and Healthy Relationship (Birth Control Centre)

The current Workshop Trainer has made an effort to add community service and cultural components to the Workshop. Every month all of the youth in the Workshop volunteer at an inner-city soup kitchen for half a day. The youth then debrief and write about their thoughts and experiences. This and other such events have elicited interesting conversations among the youth, and many youth report that it is a very important experience.

The Workshop period is regarded as an important time for staff to develop a relationship with the youth and help them work on punctuality, attendance, and social skills needed for work at the Bistro. The relationships formed with youth in the Workshop allow staff to support the youth in dealing with personal issues that become apparent after intake, such as abusive relationships, addictions, housing problems, and lifestyle changes, so that the youth are stable when they begin working at the Bistro.

Every second week, the Workshop Trainer has a one-on-one session with each participant to discuss her or his progress and give the youth an opportunity to talk about any current personal problems. Once the youth complete all five weeks of the Workshop they move on to the Bistro.

3.5 Bistro

The Bistro is open for breakfast, lunch, and coffee, five days a week. When youth enter the Bistro, they are assigned to either the “Front End” Dining Room or the “Back End” Kitchen, depending on the current youth-staff ratio. The “Front End” Dining Room Manager and “Front End” Dining Room Trainer supervise the youth and train them in hostessing, clearing tables, and serving as well as operating the till. The Chef and Sous-Chef supervise the youth in the “Back End” Kitchen and train them in dishwashing, food preparation, and cooking. Officially, youth should move through the set of stations at either the “Back End” Kitchen or “Front End” Dining Room in six weeks and then switch to the other section of the restaurant. The supervisors’ relationship with the youth is similar to the boss-employee relationship in a regular restaurant, although more support, patience and room for error is provided. Bistro staff is more lenient about late arrivals and absences when a youth first starts than a regular restaurant would be, but they become stricter over the youth’s time at the Bistro.

In the past, Workshop staff has kept Bistro staff on a “need to know” basis regarding a participant’s background, personal issues, and criminal history, to ensure the participant’s trust was not violated and to safeguard against pre-judgments and differential treatment. If issues arose with a particular youth, Workshop staff provided some background information to help Bistro staff understand what was happening.

In the past year, however, Bistro staff felt that they needed to be more aware of the youths’ backgrounds to work with them most effectively. In response, the Workshop staff now prepare information sheets on all of the youth that are set to start at the Bistro, and these are given to Bistro staff in advance. Information on the youths’ current living situation, family situation, addictions issues, and personal problems is provided.

Once per week there is a case conference meeting with the four Bistro supervisors and a Workshop staff member. At this meeting, each youth is reviewed, any issues she or he is having are raised, and the best plan of action is discussed. Issues mainly involve attitude, lateness, absents, wasting time, personal problems, and lack of comprehension of directions. The Bistro staff debrief the Workshop staff on how the situations were handled and sometimes suggests that a youth may need some one-on-one support from the Workshop staff. As much as possible, Workshop staff manage all of the personal issues that arise, and Bistro staff maintain a professional relationship with the youth.

Every three weeks the Bistro supervisors complete an evaluation of the youths’ job performance, and have the youth evaluate their own performance. Then the supervisor discusses with the youth, one-on-one, their perceptions of the youth’s strengths and weaknesses, skill and attitude improvement, and issues that need further improvement.

Youth can work at the Bistro for up to eight months. After that time, the Case Workers help the youth find the most suitable next step to follow-up their experience at KITH. Many youth are ready to leave the Bistro before they complete the program. Once they show consistently good performance on the job and adequate maturity and stability, they can either spend time at the workshop getting assistance searching for a job on their own, or they can do a Work Experience placement arranged by KITH staff.

3.6 Work Experience

When youth are performing consistently and well at the Bistro, they are encouraged to move on to a Work Experience placement in the community. KITH has developed relationships with a number of restaurants and businesses in Edmonton that have agreed to Work Experience placements with KITH youth. KITH pays the youths' salary for a three-week probationary period. The hope is that if the youth perform well they will be hired permanently. KITH staff help the youth apply for the Work Experience placement, prepare them for the interview process, and attend the interview with the youth to give support. The potential employer is given a full briefing on the youth's strengths and weaknesses so that the employer knows what to expect.

There have only been four Work Experience placements over the past two years. Research staff noticed a few times when youth were ready to leave the Bistro and were interested in doing a Work Experience placement, but the time it took to set up the placement and interview was lengthy and the youth left in the interim. Currently, youth waiting for placements are still paid their Bistro wage and allowed to pursue schooling options at the Workshop.

3.7 School⁵

The majority of the youth who come to KITH have not finished high school. KITH began a partnership with M.E. LaZerte, a local high school, to allow youth to earn credits in Career and Life Management (CALM) and Work Studies while participating at KITH. The youth could also arrange to do other courses through correspondence modules, and earn high school credits. The arrangement with M.E. LaZerte was not ideal, as the teacher assigned to work with KITH youth did not have adequate time to spend at the program, and much of the administrative work had to be taken on by KITH staff. The process was unorganized and youth were not receiving the guidance they needed to complete courses.

In the summer of 2003, KITH staff decided to improve the school component of the program. Staff had received feedback that many of the youth were leaving KITH to pursue high school credits. In an effort to increase retention and better meet the needs of the youth, KITH formed a partnership with Fresh Start, a local alternative school that is part of the Edmonton Catholic School System. Fresh Start is module-based independent learning program for youth who are no longer in mainstream schools. As of September 2003, two teachers were hired by Fresh Start to each spend two half-days per week on-site at the KITH Workshop. Space adjacent to the Workshop was provided by ECCCC for an office for the teachers and a work area for the youth. Every Monday new participants are told about the opportunity to work on high school credits and given the CALM modules to complete. The teachers obtain the youths' high school transcripts and help interested youth decide which courses they would like to work on.

To increase the incentive for youth to work on schooling, KITH uses some of its funds to pay the youth for completing courses. Currently, youth are given a bonus cheque of \$150 for each 5-credit course completed. During the Workshop, youth may be given time to work on school modules during the week, but the majority of the work must be done on the youth's own time. If the youth has shown commitment and worked hard on school at the Workshop, they can continue to do so once they move on to the Bistro. Interested youth are given half a day to a full day per week to go to the Workshop and work on school while the teachers are there. They are still paid their Bistro wage. However, if the Bistro is short-staffed, youth are not given the option to leave to do school work.

The demand for the school portion of the program has been high ever since the system with Fresh Start began. Aside from current participants in the program, youth who are on a wait list to start the program often spend the weeks before their start date working on school modules. Youth who drop out of either the Workshop or Bistro sometimes continue coming to the Workshop to work on modules. Also, when youth are waiting for a Work Experience placement to be set up, they may continue to receive their Bistro pay, but spend their days at the Workshop working on school.

⁵ The information in Section 3.6 was gathered through a personal interview with Fresh Start teacher on June 30, 2004 and the statistics collected by the Fresh Start program.

From September 2003 until July 2004, 235 courses were completed. Eighty-nine youth completed the Job Preparation option, which involves only one module plus Workshop activities. Seventy-seven youth completed an option course (another 43 youth started an option but never finished it). Forty-nine youth completed the CALM course (22 youth started it but didn't finish it). Twenty youth completed a core subject, and another 39 youth started a core subject but did not finish it. An additional 64 youth registered in the Workshop but did not do any school work.

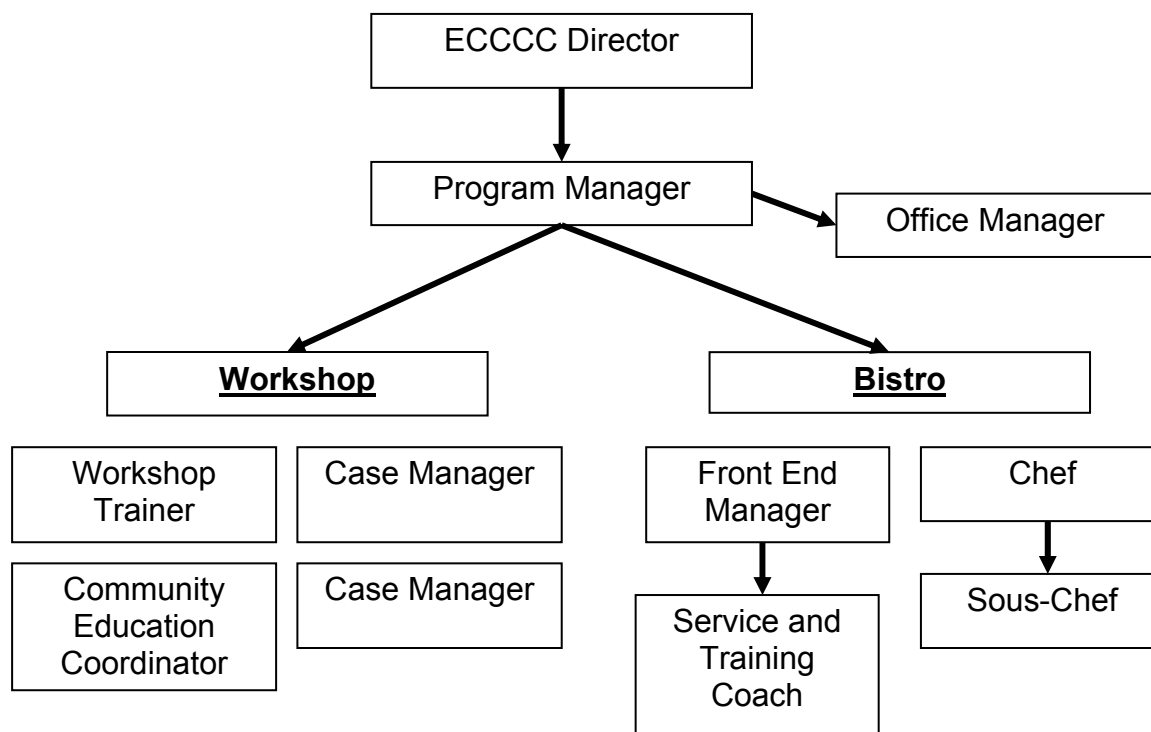
Fresh Start is funded by the Edmonton Catholic School system. Like all schools in Alberta, their funding is dependent on the number of credits students earn. Due to the high number of course completions at KITH this past year, Fresh Start's funding will be increased next year and the teachers will each spend 1.5 days per week at the Workshop.

The program staff, teachers, and youth all report very positive reviews of the schooling option of the program.

4.0 Administrative Structure and Staff

KITH has a staff of 10: two administrative positions and four positions in both the Workshop and Bistro (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Structure Diagram of Program



4.1 Administration

The Administrative staff includes the Program Manager and the Office Manager who share an office at the Bistro.

Program Manager (30 hours/week). The Program Manager has been with the program for 8 years, although in this position for only five years. Before that she was the General Manager of the Bistro. She works under the supervision of the Director of ECCCC. Her duties include overseeing the entire project, specifically, budgeting, proposal writing and securing funding, personnel, liaising with partners, setting the vision and tone of the program, and administering program policies and procedures.

Office Manager (40 hours/week, five days/week). The Office Manager has been with the program for five years and works under the supervision of the Program Manager. The Office Manager is responsible for all bookkeeping, including accounts receivable, accounts payable, banking, record keeping, and payroll.

4.2 Kitchen Staff

The kitchen staff includes the Chef, who reports to the Program Manager, and the Sous-Chef, who reports to the Chef. Both are responsible for kitchen management and training and supervising the youth.

Chef (40 hours/week, five days/week). The current Chef has been in this position at KITH for seven years. The Chef is responsible for setting the menu, food ordering, day-to-day operations of the kitchen, teaching culinary skills, training and coaching youth.

Sous Chef (40 hours/week, five days/week). The last Sous-Chef was with the program for one year, and a new Sous-Chef was hired in July, 2004. The Sous-Chef's duties are to aid the Chef, train the youth, and assist in all aspects of running the kitchen.

4.3 "Front End" Dining Room Staff

The "Front End" Dining Room staff includes the "Front End" Dining Room and Catering Manager, who reports to the Program Manager, and the Service and Training Coach, who reports to the "Front End" Dining Room Manager. Both are responsible for service aspects of Bistro operations, as well as for training and supervising the youth. The "Front End" Dining Room Manager also coordinates the Catering portion of Bistro business.

"Front End" Dining Room and Catering Manager (40 hours/week, five days/week). The "Front End" Dining Room Manager has been in this position for four years. The "Front End" Dining Room Manager is responsible for all "Front End" Dining Room operations, catering, youth training, and running the hot dog stand in the summer.

Service and Training Coach: (40 hours/week, five days/week). She has been with the program for one year. Her duties include teaching service techniques, training the youth, and looking after all "Front End" Dining Room operations.

4.4 Workshop Staff

The Workshop began with two full-time staff members. Currently there are four full-time positions. There is no hierarchy among the positions; all four staff members report to the Program Manager.

Workshop Trainer: (37.5hours/week, five days/week). The Workshop Trainer has been with the program for two years. She teaches the majority of workshop curriculum, carries out intakes, one-to-one counselling, organizes activities in the community, coordinates a lunch hour youth addictions group, and writes case notes on each youth.

Case Manager: (37.5hours/week, five days/week). The Case Manager has been with KITH for four years. Her duties include carrying out intakes, advocating for youth in the community, one-to-one counselling and

conflict resolution with youth, liaising with the Bistro staff, writing case notes, completing payroll for youth, and teaching two workshop topics.

Community Education Coordinator/Case Manager: (37.5hours/week, five days/week). The Community Education Coordinator has been with KITH for eight years, in various capacities. His current duties include presenting the program orientation each week to new youth, teaching some Workshops, coordinating the Work Experience placements, advocating for youth, promoting the program, co-writing funding proposals, newsletters and presentations, performing inservices for youth, and developing workshop curriculum.

Case Manager. (37.5hours/week, five days/week). The Case Manager has been with the program for seven years. She teaches the career planning workshops, carries out intakes, calculates monthly program statistics, aids in proposal writing, develops workshop curriculum, and conducts presentations on the program in the community.

5.0 Process Evaluation

Over the two-year period of the Capacity Building as Crime Prevention project, the Research Coordinator has been in contact with the KITH program daily. The research office is in the same building as the Workshop and research staff ate lunch at the Bistro two to four times a week. The on-site location of the research staff allowed them to gain an in-depth understanding of how the program and staff functioned.

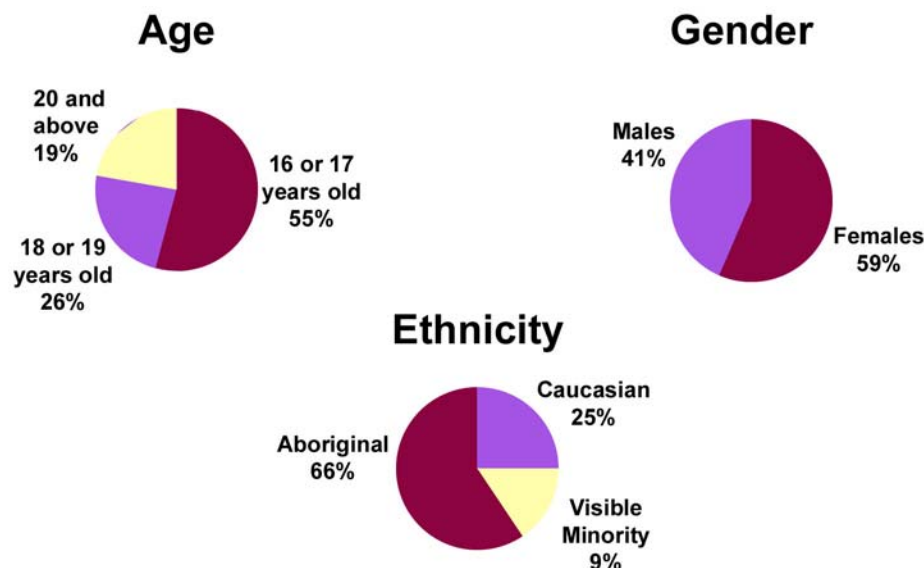
Process evaluation data were collected via youth surveys, one-on-one staff interviews, conducted in the fall of 2003, and the researchers' own observations.

Before discussing youth, staff, and researcher impressions of the program, it is valuable to describe the population of youth who come to KITH.

5.1 Youth Characteristics at KITH

During the 13-month data collection period, 174 youth entered the KITH program. Participants ranged in age from 15 to 24 years, with a mean age of 17 years 10 months. The majority of participants were Aboriginal (42% Status, 20% Metis, and 5% Non-Status), followed by Caucasian, and Visible Minority (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Age, Gender, and Ethnicity of KITH Youth.



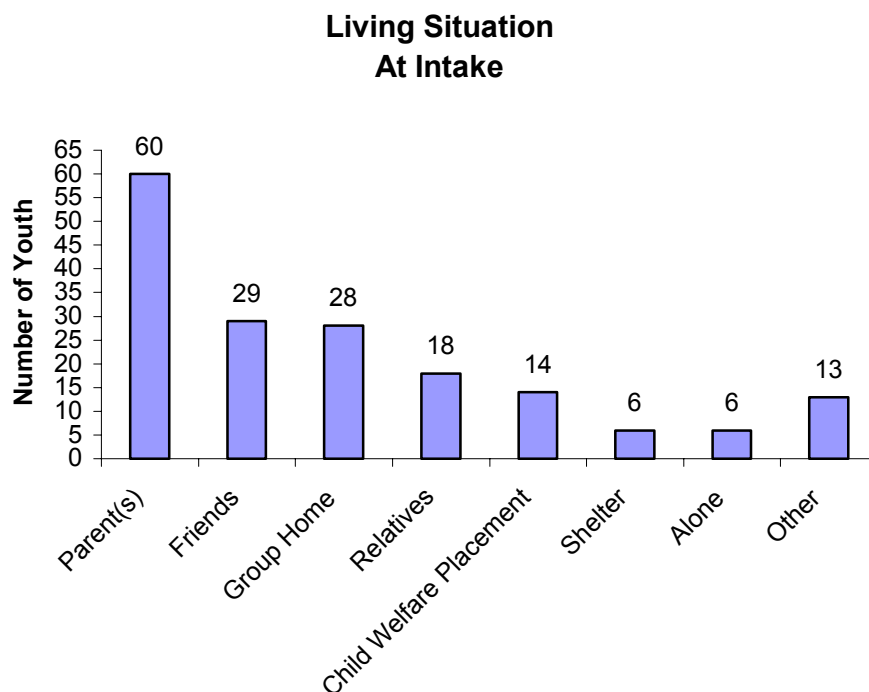
5.1.1 Living Situation at Intake

In the year prior to entering the program, 28.2% of the youth reported having moved three or more times. Another 51.4% moved once or twice in the previous year. See Figure 3 for a description of the youths' living situations upon entry into KITH.

Seventeen percent of the youth reported having children, but only 11.5% were living with their children at the time of intake into KITH.

Regarding involvement in the child welfare system, 35.8% of the youth reported having a social worker, and 17.4% of the youth had either Permanent or Temporary Guardianship Orders, meaning they were classified as wards of the province. An additional 10.5% of participants had either a Custody Agreement or a Support Agreement in place.

Figure 3. Living Situation of KITH Youth prior to Admission.



Only 4.5% of the youth had completed high school before entering KITH. The majority had completed Grade 9 or Grade 10 (see Figure 4). The average grade completed was 9.8. The average time youth had been out of school before entering KITH was 14.4 months (see Figure 5).

Figure 4

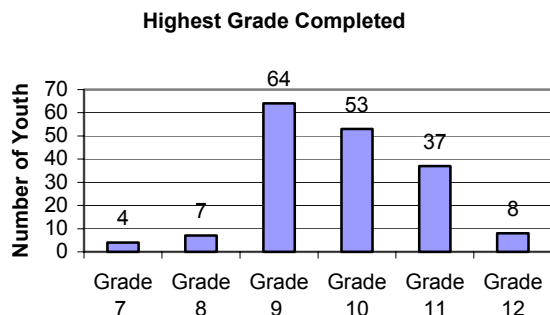
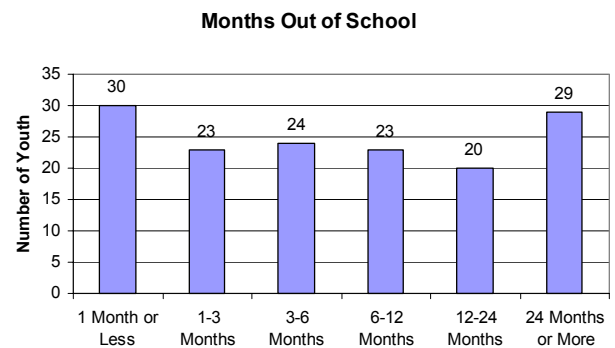


Figure 5.



5.1.3 Income

On entry into the program, only 52.9% of youth had a bank account. Before application to the program, participants had held an average of 2.6 jobs. The greatest number of jobs indicated was 25. The majority of youth depended on a parent as their main source of income upon entry into the program. Eighteen percent of youth were on Social Assistance.

5.1.4 Criminal History

More than half of the youth (60.3%) reported having a criminal charge, and 43% reported having been convicted of a crime. Forty-four percent of the youth were charged as young offenders, 4.7% were charged as adults, and 2.9% had been charged as both (two of the youth did not answer this question). Seventeen percent of the youth were on probation when they entered the program (three of the youth did not answer this question).

On the application form, 13.7 % of participants indicated they had been involved in a gang in the past and 1 youth (0.8%) indicated that he or she was currently involved in a gang while applying for KITH (53 youth did not answer this questions because it was added late in the data collection period).

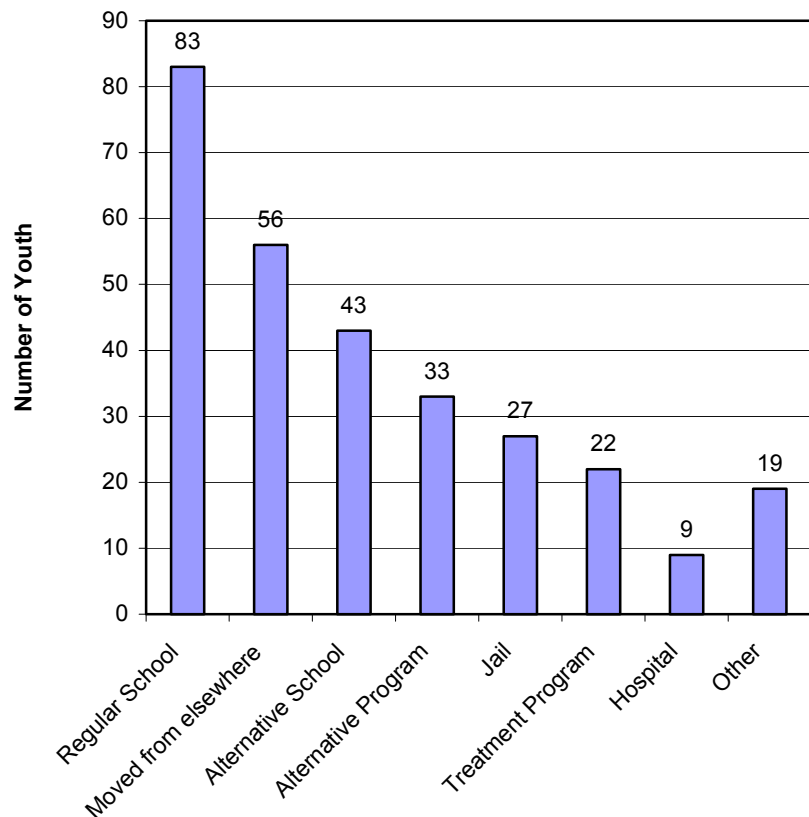
5.1.5 Activities During the Previous Year

During the year before their application to KITH, 48% of the youth had attended a regular school, and 28% had attended an alternative school. Almost half the youth had worked at some point in the year before they came to the program (see Figure 6).

5.1.6 Youth Goals

When youth were asked what they would like to work on while in the KITH program 75.3 % indicated schooling (high school credits), 62.6% indicated resume and interview skills, and 62.1% indicated an interest in career planning. Others indicated wanting to work on housing issues (48.3%), communication skills (45.4%), self-esteem (34.5 %), healthy relationships (33.9%), health (30.5%), anger management (23.6%), family problems (17.8%), cultural awareness (17.8%), drug and alcohol issues (16.1%), and parenting skills (15.5%). A small proportion of youth (3.4%) indicated that they wanted to work on something other than these issues (e.g., learn how to budget).

Figure 6. Activities in Year Prior to Admission



6.0 Progression Through the Program

During the 13-month data collection period, 174 youth started the KITH Workshop. Of these youth, 56 completed the Workshop. Fifty-three continued on to start work at the Bistro. The other three youth were not suitable for the Bistro placement (by Workshop staff) and were referred elsewhere or continued to work on schooling at the Workshop. Of the youth who started working at the Bistro, approximately 50% were still working at the Bistro after eight weeks.

7.0 Youth Impressions of the Program

The youths' impressions of the program were surveyed multiple times as the youth progressed through the program. Open-ended questions were also included on the Initial Survey, Workshop Survey, and Bistro Survey to give the youth an opportunity to provide feedback about specific aspects of the program and to reflect on how the program was affecting them.

7.1 Reasons for Coming to KITH

The Initial Survey is conducted during the youths' first few days at the Workshop. To assess the youths' reasons for coming to the program, we asked the question:

- *Why did you choose to come to KITH, over going back to school, other programs, or trying to get a job on your own?*

Of the 126 youth who responded, 18.3% reported getting job experience and 12.7% listed being able to work on school credits as their primary reason for coming to KITH. Another 22.2% clearly indicated it was the opportunity to both get job experience and work on school that made them choose KITH. Self-improvement was the main reason for 10.3% of the youth, and 9.5% indicated they chose KITH because they would get paid for their participation. About seven percent of the youth reported that they needed to participate in any day program (7.1%), and 7.9% indicated they chose KITH because they had heard good things about it. Two youth (1.6%) indicated they chose KITH because they were interested in the restaurant industry, and 3 youth (2.4%) indicated that they had already attended KITH and that was their main reason for coming back. Other reasons listed by 9.5% of the youth included making agreements with parents or workers, and generally thinking KITH would be a good experience.

7.2 Youth Impressions of Workshop

After the youth completed the Workshop component of the program, we administered the Workshop Survey that included the question:

- *Have you noticed any changes in yourself or your lifestyle since you started the Workshop?*

Of the 44 youth who responded, 22.7% indicated that the main change was that they were now on a schedule and getting up earlier than they had been prior to admission to KITH. Another 20.5% of the youth thought that they had a better attitude and were more positive now. Better communication skills and being less shy were the main changes for 18.2% of the youth, and 13.6% indicated that they had a healthier lifestyle now (i.e., they were sleeping and eating better). Nine percent of the youth thought that they were more responsible, and 6.8% thought they were more confident in general. Nine percent of youth indicated other changes, including (a) being more willing to learn new things, (b) becoming more independent (i.e., calling social worker less often, taking care of things for themselves), and (c) noticing better coping skills and improvements in attitudes and relationships.

At the end of the Workshop period, youth were asked to pick the top five Workshop topics that were the most interesting or helpful to them. A total of 57 youth responded, and the top five Workshops were:

- Communication Skills (47.4%)
- Career Planning (40.4%)
- Public Speaking (40.4%)
- Anger Management (38.6%)
- Self-Esteem (36.8%)

When asked what they found the most challenging about being in the Workshop, 24.6% chose “being on time”, 19.3% chose “paying attention”, another 19.3% chose “conflicts with other youth”, 15.8% chose “showing up everyday”, 14% chose “having a good attitude”, 10.5% chose “reading and writing”, and 8.8% chose “conflicts with staff”. About twenty-three percent (22.8%) chose “other” and listed things such as other youth being distracting, disliking the other youth, public speaking, and the stairs (the Workshop is on the third floor of the building and there are no elevators).

When asked if they felt that the Workshop staff were available to talk about personal problems during the Workshop, 48 youth (84.2%) answered yes, one youth answered no, and 8 youth indicated they never tried so could not comment.

When asked directly if they had talked to any of the Workshop staff about personal issues during the five weeks of the Workshop, approximately half of the youth (50.9%) indicated they had. In response to the question, “Are there any Workshop staff that you feel close to, that you feel you have developed a relationship with?” 60% of the youth answered yes.

As for changes in the youths’ personal lives, 12.3% of the participants had moved residences during the Workshop weeks, one youth had received a new criminal charge during the Workshop, and 66.7% of participants reported that they were now hanging out with youth they had met at KITH after program hours.

7.3 Youth Impressions of Bistro

After the youth had been working for eight weeks at the Bistro they completed the Bistro Survey. At this time the following question was asked:

- Has anything changed in your life since you’ve been working at the Bistro?

Out of the 25 youth who responded, 36% indicated they had a healthier lifestyle (i.e., eating and sleeping better), 26% indicated that they shopped more for themselves now, and 13% thought they were more responsible in terms of paying bills and paying off debt. One youth indicated that she was no longer living with an abusive boyfriend and had met a new best friend at KITH. Another 13% saw no real changes other than having to wake up earlier. About seventeen percent (17.4%) of the youth indicated negative changes, including partying, drinking, and smoking more because they had more money, feeling more stressed, being more “grouchy”, and feeling more easily irritated since working at the Bistro.

No one had received any new criminal charges since working at the Bistro. After two months at the Bistro, 48.1% of the youth indicated they no longer hung out with the friends they had before they started in KITH, and 85.2% of the youth reported they were now hanging out with friends they had met at KITH after program hours, indicating an interesting change in peer associations. For a few months KITH staff reported and research staff observed that a group of youth staff at the Bistro had become very close. This became problematic because this group was partying together on weeknights and missing work the next day or showing up late. This was especially troublesome since some of these youth had been actively trying to stop drinking. It seemed as though these youth were negatively influencing each other. The Workshop staff worked intensively with this group, and together with the Bistro staff, established firm consequences for negative behaviours .

Since working at the Bistro, 59.3% of youth thought they had learned new cooking skills they could use at home, while 44.4% indicated that they were cooking for themselves at home more often, and 55.6% thought they were eating more nutritious foods.

Youth were asked to indicate what they found most difficult about working at the Bistro. The response options and the percentage of you endorsing each option are presented below:

- doing the same thing everyday (40.7%)
- having a good attitude (33.3%)
- the stress (29.6%)
- conflicts with bosses (29.6%)
- conflicts with co-workers (29.6%)
- showing up everyday (18.5%)
- being on time (22.2%)
- dealing with the public (7.4%)
- other (14.8%)

Youth who chose “other” listed things such as: lazy co-workers, not being able to drink water while working, and remembering all the new information.

Almost 80% of youth working at the Bistro indicated that they thought working at KITH was different than working at a regular restaurant. When asked to describe how it was different, their responses included issues such as there being more support at the Bistro, there being a smaller menu at the Bistro, better hours, and more patient staff. Interestingly, some youth (7) indicated that they believed the Bistro staff to be more lenient and provide more chances whereas other youth (4) indicated that they believed regular restaurant staff would be less strict.

When asked if they felt that their experience at the Bistro had prepared them to work in a regular job, 88.9% of the youth answered yes. Some of the explanations given included having (a) learned the importance of waking up early and being on time everyday, (b) developed more self confidence, (c) learned the necessary skills to work and (d) job experience.

7.4 Bistro and Schooling

Generally, to be eligible to do school work while at the Bistro youth had to have worked diligently on school while at the Workshop. However, it seems that youth may not have been aware of that fact. Research staff observed numerous times when youth at the Bistro expressed frustration over having asked their Bistro supervisors several times about doing school work no action was taken to allow them this opportunity. There were also times when Bistro youth have asked the research staff if they could work on school, and how to set it up. It seems that long periods of time were going by during which the youth were not adequately informed of how the school set up worked. This information should be made available to participants at the beginning of the Workshop.

A related issue is that the Fresh Start teachers noted that they would often lose contact with youth who were working really well on courses once the youth went to the Bistro. No formal communication system between the Fresh Start teachers and the Bistro staff has been established, and the teachers are unclear about why some youth do not return to work on their courses after they leave the Workshop.

8.0 Staff Impressions of the Program

Interviews were conducted with each of the ten staff members of KITH. Eight of these interviews took place in the fall of 2003, and the final two took place in the February, 2004. The interviews were conducted in a private, one-to-one setting, after a confidentiality agreement was outlined and a consent form signed. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed and analyzed for themes. The main themes that emerged are discussed in the following sections, along with observations of the research personnel.

8.1 Staff Satisfaction

Most KITH staff members reported being very happy working at KITH. The opportunity to work with this population of youth, believing in the program, and the flexibility in working hours were commonly cited reasons for why staff enjoyed their jobs.

Almost all staff felt that they were underpaid, relative to what they would make in similar jobs in their field. All staff members acknowledged a tradeoff between the disadvantage in salary and the advantages of an eight-hour workday and job flexibility. For the Bistro staff especially, an important benefit to working at KITH, compared to regular restaurants, is being able to work days with no weekend or evening shifts.

Some staff expressed concern that there is no pay scale at KITH that includes pay equity across positions; annual raises tied to performance, and cost of living increments. A basic pay scale does exist at KITH, but the staff does not seem to be aware of it nor is it comprehensive enough to include the elements above. Regardless, a disparity exists between the salaries for similar positions and the staff members are unanimous in their concern

Because program funding is not stable, it may be difficult to implement a formal system of starting salaries and time worked, and performance increments. When the program started, funding was secured for three years and salaries for the original positions were set at that time. Salary increases were not part of the funding. Over the years, funding for new staff positions has been secured, but again, salary increases are hit and miss. Because the program is constantly struggling to secure enough funding for core operations, staff raises are based only on what is seen as reasonable to funders.

In lieu of raises based on time worked or merit, the Program Manager tries to be flexible in allowing staff to take time off or leave work early, and also gives holiday time as bonuses. After the first year, new staff members receive two full weeks of holiday and according to ECCCC policy three weeks are given after five years. Managers receive four weeks of holidays when they start.

All staff members indicated full awareness of the program funding issues. However, the discrepancies between salaries and feelings that there is no room for advancement are issues that may affect employee satisfaction and therefore retention of strong staff members in the program.

Some staff members indicated that if it were not possible for KITH to have a pay scale, they would be happy with other incentives. A benefits program was recently added for the staff, paid by funds in the Bistro operations account. Other ideas from staff included a Christmas bonus, a pension plan, or matching contributions to RRSPs. The latter in particular came up because there is no job security for the staff at KITH. Program funding is secured on a year-to-year basis, and most staff indicated that this is stressful for them. Five of the staff members have young families, and most indicated that the lack of job security is one of the most stressful parts of working at KITH.

Unfortunately, lack of funding is not an uncommon situation among nonprofit (or not-for-profit) organizations. Long-term funding sources are few and organizations must make tough decisions in order to sustain a program.

Other stressors reported by staff included worrying about the youth, conflict between staff members, and inconsistent management practices. The latter two of these issues will be discussed in the following sections.

8.2 Program Planning

KITH is constantly evolving and developing new ways to meet the needs of the youth it serves. The Workshop curriculum, intake procedures, number of Workshop weeks, payment schedule, and schooling options have all changed numerous times as the program tries to improve the experience for youth and increase retention rates. Members of the Workshop and Bistro staff frequently come up with innovative and interesting ideas for activities. Once a year, the whole staff has a visioning meeting to discuss program planning for the next year. Most staff members feel that the Program Manager is very open to new ideas and feel very supported in whatever they endeavor to do.

Issues regarding program decision-making procedures were brought up in some staff interviews and were also observed by research staff. In theory, decision-making policies are made with the staff and based on consensus. In practice, there is little formal or consistent system in place by which decisions affecting the program and staff are made. Sometimes a decision is made by the Program Manager and passed down to the staff either formally at a meeting or informally when talking to individuals or groups separately. Sometimes decisions are made in discussions with some but not all staff, and some decisions are made with the whole staff together as a group.

A variety of negative results have occurred due to the inconsistent procedure for making changes and poor communication that happens after decisions have been made. First, when decisions are not made as a group, by consensus, those not involved in the process may not fully understand the reasons for changes and therefore may not fully endorse them. Also, negative feelings may arise if job duties are affected by a decision that not everyone was consulted about. Second, it has been the case that when a change has been made, staff who disagree with the decision have chosen not to abide by it, thereby causing tension with other staff members who have accepted the decision. This situation could be avoided if all staff members are involved in the decision making process, or at least fully informed about new decisions. Third, there has been at least one time when the staff have come to a decision as a group, but later one or two staff members have individually voiced disapproval of the change and the Program Manager has reversed the group decision. When the rest of the staff responded against the reversal, citing the reasons for the original decision, the Program Manager reverted to the original decision. This type of inconsistency may make it difficult for staff to know what to expect when decisions are made, and how to implement the program as a team. The Program Manager believes that policy decisions and changes are discussed with the entire staff as a group and no decisions are made regarding an individual position without the staff member whose position is being affected being present.

One way to deal with these issues might be to put in place a formal procedure for making decisions regarding program planning. Preferably, this procedure would involve a discussion amongst the entire staff whereby decisions are reached by group consensus. All agreements that involve change in procedure or operations should be distributed in writing to each staff member, with a full justification for the change, firmly set staff expectations with regard to the change, and repercussions for not adhering to those expectations, as laid out by the Program Manager.

During staff meetings and discussions, it is important to afford an atmosphere of open discussion, where airing of concerns and disagreements, and healthy debate can occur. Staff frequently reported that, currently, problematic issues are not discussed openly and adequately. Although staff appear to agree with each other at meetings, issues are not fully resolved and behaviours do not change after the meeting. Again, a more formal procedure of decision making and clear expectations for staff including repercussions for not cooperating with decisions may help to avoid this problem.

8.3 Staff Dynamics

Historically, tension has always existed between certain Bistro staff and the Workshop staff. Most staff members feel the source of this tension results from the fact that the two components of the program have different goals and philosophies. Workshop staff teach life skills and job skills, and develop personal relationships with the youth in order to support the youth in dealing with personal issues. The Workshop staff endeavor to guide the youth toward improving their physical and psychological well being so that they will be able to succeed in whatever they choose to do after they leave the program. Because Workshop staff become quite familiar with the personal lives of the youth, Workshop staff see negative attitudes, tardiness and absences from the Bistro as symptoms of the youths'

larger problems. Therefore, Workshop staff are consistently advocating for patience and tolerance for youth at the Bistro, as they try to support the youth in dealing with their problems.

The Bistro staff's main focus is to provide job training and skill development. They are specifically hired to provide a supportive environment in which the youth can learn what is required of them in terms of work responsibilities. The Bistro staff emphasizes the importance of being on time and not being absent because these are keys to success in any job. They try to be flexible for the youths' first weeks or even months, but after that, they feel it is important to demand punctuality and attendance because if the youth do not learn the importance of these skills, they will never be able to hold any job in the "real" world.

Tension arises between the two staffs regarding decisions about courses of action with specific youth. One example is when a Bistro staff member feels that a youth should be suspended or let go due to consistent lateness and absences from work, but the Workshop staff feels that the youth should be given more chances because the youth is dealing with personal problems.

Both the Workshop staff and the "Front End" Dining Room staff agreed that their relationship is very positive. They are in agreement in terms of how to deal with the youth, and healthy debate and discussion takes place regarding the best course of action to take with youth. Both parties feel that mutual respect and a smooth working relationship exists between the "Front End" Dining Room Bistro staff and the Workshop staff.

The tension that does exist tends to be between the "Back End" Kitchen supervisors and the Workshop staff. The Workshop staff agreed that the healthy discussion and debate that happens with the "Front End" Dining Room staff is missing with the "Back End" Kitchen supervisors. It has been observed regularly throughout the year that disagreements about youth between Workshop staff and "Back End" Kitchen staff have often turned personal and have developed into drawn out conflicts between staff members. The tension between the "Back End" Kitchen staff and the Workshop staff seems to involve more than just differing philosophies about youth. Workshop staff indicated feeling that the "Back End" Kitchen supervisors do not respect the Workshop staff or the role of the Workshop in the program. The "Back End" Kitchen staff indicated that they do not fully understand what the Workshop staff do or what the division of labour is between the four Workshop staff. Conflict between the "Back End" Kitchen staff and Workshop staff was frequently observed by the research personnel over the course of the two years of observation, sometimes regarding youth decisions, and sometimes regarding issues such as what Workshop staff can and cannot order for lunch. The tension between staff members is sometimes very visible, and some staff worry that the youth may be aware of it.

The research staff observed a relatively frequent occurrence that seemed to further exacerbate tensions between Workshop and Bistro staff. It was often observed that youth approach Workshop staff with complaints regarding Bistro procedures or how their supervisors at the Bistro are treating them. In their capacity as advocates for the youth, the Workshop staff sometimes addresses these complaints with the Bistro staff member in question. This situation can become tense, and raises the question of whether the current procedure for dealing with youth complaints regarding Bistro supervisors is effective. The current procedure is for Workshop staff to ask the youth who is making the complaint whether she or he has talked to the Bistro staff member in question. If not, Workshop staff suggest that the youth discuss the issue directly with the Bistro staff and offer to attend the meeting with the youth.

The official program procedure for dealing with conflict between staff members at KITH is for the people involved to try to resolve the issue on their own. If that does not work, Bistro staff members can approach their supervisors, and ultimately the Program Manager can be called in as a mediator. However, because there have been breakdowns in healthy communication between different staff members in the past, many instances of extended conflict between staff members were observed during the two-year evaluation that were not dealt with in a timely manner. Staff members generally reported that there are issues and conflicts between staff members that have never been completely resolved and thus continue to cause problems. Some staff felt that issues between staff members that were not openly expressed and dealt with were sometimes evidenced in ways that affected the working relationship between the Workshop and Bistro staff, and may have affected decisions regarding youth on occasion. Overall, staff members agreed that conflicts between staff and office politics are not dealt with in a timely and effective manner. Staff members felt that if the problems were dealt with on the same day that they arise, there would be an improvement in staff relations.

9.0 Organizational Structure

9.1 Staff Training and Experience

The Bistro staff have restaurant experience but no training for working with at-risk youth. They are hired based on their skills in the restaurant industry, as well as their personal philosophies about and willingness to work in a training capacity with troubled youth. During the hiring process, either the Front or the “Back End” Kitchen supervisor conducts the first round of interviews. Three candidates are chosen based on their skills and experience in the industry, and their responses to different scenarios that may arise with the youth. The Program Manager then conducts a second interview with the three candidates, and describes in detail the population of youth that comes to KITH. It is made very clear to new employees at the Bistro that they are there to support and train the youth in job skills and not to do personal counseling. However, the Bistro staff are also expected to be understanding of the youths’ personal issues and how they affect the youths’ behaviour. Training for working with the youth is received on the job; no formal workshops or courses are currently offered to new Bistro staff. When scheduling has permitted, Bistro staff have been encouraged to attend some Workshop sessions, especially those on communication, but this has often not been possible. Other times, new bistro staff have one-on-one orientations with workshop staff.

9.2 Staff Evaluations and Discipline

Staff evaluations take place once per year on the anniversary date of their hire. At this time, the Program Manager sits down one-to-one with individual staff members to discuss her impressions of the staff member’s performance over the last year. Staff Members also are asked about their vision for their positions in the coming year.

Other than these yearly evaluations, the only other time for feedback from the Program Manager is if a staff issue arises. At that time, the procedure for staff discipline includes writing down exactly what the inappropriate behaviour was, what is expected to change and by when, and the consequences if the behaviour does not change. Depending on the severity of the issue, other measures taken have included a one-week suspension without pay.

Although a disciplinary procedure is in place and seems to have worked, it is used only in severe cases, usually to do with staff behaviour toward youth. As previously discussed, issues regarding staff members behaving unprofessionally toward each other have become an area of concern within the program. Because the Program Manager is rarely on-site at the Workshop, and is only on-site part-time at the Bistro, she is not always able to gauge the day-to-day dynamics between staff members. Although the Program Manager would ideally be able to leave the staff members to work together professionally and respectfully, observations and staff reflections indicate that currently this is not happening to a sufficient degree. Intervention from the administration seems necessary at this point to help staff members be more accountable for their behavior.

One way to address this issue might be for the Program Manager to spend more time both at the Bistro and the Workshop. Due to logistics, the Program Manager meets with bistro staff more frequently because her office is located in the Bistro. Her more regular presence would allow for more timely feedback to be provided as issues arise, and would help set the tone for expectations regarding staff behaviour. Repercussions for inappropriate behavior would need to follow in a timely manner as well.

Another change might be for the Program Manager to have more frequent, formal meetings with individual staff members. Instead of yearly evaluations, meetings to review progress and discuss any issues or concerns about the program and its’ functioning could be held with staff members every three months. This schedule would keep the Program Manager up-to-date on current issues with staff and whom they are with and allow her to institute a behaviour change plan with the appropriate people.

Overall, based on issues observed between staff members and also the input received from staff members, a stronger stance from the administration on staff related issues seems necessary and would be welcomed by most staff members. Efforts on the part of the Program Manager to be more visible and put in place firm expectations with

repercussions if those expectations are not met, may help to smooth out these staff issues and create a situation where less intervention from the Program Manager will be needed in the future.

10.0 Issues for Discussion

Overall, the majority of youth and staff were very satisfied with the KITH program. In this final section, a table is presented to summarize a number of issues emerging from the youth and staff input as well as researcher observations for consideration and discussion.

Theme	Issue	Potential Solutions
Program Planning	Lack of consistent and formal decision-making and communication procedures.	Commitment to a formal process. Decisions made by consensus with all present. Open debate and discussion around decisions. Decisions communicated in writing with firm expectations for staff. Repercussions in place for not cooperating with group decisions.
Staff Dynamics	Breakdown in healthy communication	More team building activities as a staff. Monitoring by Program Manager.
	Lack of knowledge about each others' jobs	Have staff members trade and spend half a day in the other portion of the program.
	Workshop fielding youth complaints about Bistro supervisors	Set up procedure more akin to regular workplace; youth make official complaints to Program Manager, not Workshop staff. If any disciplinary actions are needed, Program Manager takes them, not Workshop staff.
	Conflict not dealt with in a timely manner	Commitment from Program Manager to deal with major issues the same day they happen. Program Manager spends more time on-site with both staffs, observe the dynamics, and make firm expectations and repercussions if they are not met.
	General suggestions for addressing current staff issues	Program Manager spending more time at both the Workshop and Bistro, working with and observing staff dynamics. Program Manager doing evaluations with each staff every three months and setting firm expectations for improvements that need to be made (especially for new staff members).
Staff Satisfaction	System for raises not consistent or tied to annual performance	Look into alternatives such as RRSPs or bonuses.
Staff Training	Bistro staff lacking formal training for working with at-risk youth	Look into local training sessions or workshops for working with at-risk youth. Monitor new staff members closely for first few months and provide frequent, detailed feedback on specific situations. Ensure that Bistro staff are clear on what they are expected to do, should issues arise with youth.
Fresh Start	Loss of communication and continuation once	Set up regular meetings between Fresh Start and KITH staff to ensure policies and procedures are agreed upon and

	youth go to Bistro	communication is consistent.
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