



**VITAL COMMUNITIES:
GIVING VOICE TO YOUTH**
*Making the links between Youth and Leadership
for a Stronger Rural Ontario*

The Ontario Rural Council – June 2005 Public Issue Forum
Tuesday, June 21, 2005
Ignatius Jesuit Centre of Guelph, 5420 Hwy 6 North, GUELPH, Ontario

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INDEX

1. TORC Welcome and Opening Remarks	3
Pat Smith, Chair, The Ontario Rural Council	
2. Greetings and Message	3
Carol Mitchell MPP, Huron-Bruce	
3. PLAY WORKS – Bringing the Power of Play Back to the Young People of Ontario	4
Rob Black, Executive Director, 4-H Ontario	
4. YNOT? – Lend me your Ears: Engaging the Voice of Young People.....	6
Wendy Blair, Youth Coordinator, Nottawasaga Futures	
5. ‘Giving it up’ for their Community: Youth And Philanthropy	9
Emma Guild, Chair, Youth Advisory Council, Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation (Waterloo, Ontario)	
6. Speaker Questions	10
7. Small Group Discussion: An Ideas Exchange and Reporting Back.....	12
Facilitator: Mary Feldskov, University of Guelph, Junior Farmers’ Association of Ontario – former President	
8. Forum Wrap-up: <i>Where does the afternoon leave us?</i>	15
Elinor Humphries, TORC Individual/Regional Member	

1. TORC Welcome and Opening Remarks

Pat Smith, Chair, The Ontario Rural Council

TORC embodies the interests of 40 organizations, private corporations and government groups whose representatives share a commitment to building strong rural communities. The Council provides a unique and vital opportunity for multi-sector cooperation within the rural environment. Members identify issues and then work together to develop innovative solutions and strengthen rural voices.

As a catalyst for rural dialogue, collaboration and action, TORC and its members engage in challenging thinking with the intent to offer substantial and influential input to policy and decision makers at the organizational and political levels.

TORC provides the opportunity for people who are interested in rural Ontario to attend three forums a year, as well as a conference. There are several working groups and if you are interested in joining any of them, please share your interest with us.

TORC is all about participation - you will not just sit here and passively take things away. We look forward to hearing more about what everyone has to contribute today – this is what adds depth and relevance to our discussions.

2. Greetings and Message from Carol Mitchell MPP, Huron-Bruce

It is an honour and a privilege to be considered a champion for rural Ontario. My experience includes involvement as a Municipal politician for a number of years in Clinton and Huron County, and Central Huron. Currently, I am the MPP for Huron-Bruce Counties. From my short time at Queen's Park, I have learned that while there is a great deal of focus on agriculture, we have lost site of our rural communities. Agriculture is the machine that makes us go, but what about the rest of the communities?

What are our strengths and weaknesses? There are wonderful opportunities but we need to recognize these opportunities and move them forward. Our ridings are getting larger and larger, and this becomes increasingly difficult for rural areas due to geography. We need to determine what is important, and move this forward. Our rural communities were based on majestic buildings, and we need to continually keep in mind our hereditary factors – the mindset that built the buildings, and the significance of those buildings.

Today, June 21st, is the longest day of the year and it's the rebirth-day – we need to rethink where we are going and how to get there. We need to give youth a stronger voice, and a place where they feel that they have a voice, and a place in our rural communities. What can we do to bring them back to us? The youth are our future and our government recognizes this (education, infrastructure, universities). Our rural communities need to be the tools for improving the lives of young people. There are wonderful opportunities for our youth – let's not miss them!

3. PLAY WORKS – Bringing the Power of Play Back to the Young People of Ontario – Rob Black, Executive Director, 4-H Ontario (Guelph, Ontario)

Rob Black is Executive Director of 4-H Ontario and serves as a major proponent of the innovative new Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program by Play Works. A collaborative of province-wide organizations representing the areas of sport, physical activity, civic engagement, arts and culture, rural youth and recreation, Play Works counts 4-H Ontario as a founding partner and a major supporter of Play Works' vision to bring back the power of play to Ontario's young people. This group is dedicated to advancing the concept of youth play on local and provincial public and political agendas.

What is Play?

- Play is any non-school activity that has elements of choice, leads to satisfaction, and encourages progressive learning and enjoyment
- Activities can include – but are not limited to – recreation, sport, leisure, arts, drama, dance, civic engagement, youth activism, volunteerism, social clubs and youth leadership
- Play can be structured, freewheeling, or supervised
- It is important socially, physically, intellectually, emotionally, and even 'civically' – adding a vital component to youth and therefore, society
- Becoming engaged in the community, developing personal and social responsibility – play is a vital part of the development of youth
- Play is a major social issue, one with a huge impact on so many other issues

What is Play Works?

- A group of organizations concerned about the future of our youth, joining forces to bring back the power of play to Ontario's young people
- First came together in 2003 to do something about an issue that has been relegated to the sidelines of society: youth play and activity in Ontario
- Consists of various organizations in the areas of sport, physical activity, civic engagement, arts and culture, rural youth and recreation
- Exists to champion the social, environmental and economic benefits of investing in, and maintaining, youth and recreation opportunities, spaces and programs at the community level
- Envisions an Ontario society that values and demands more youth recreational activities in every community, with more youth involvement at the core
- Funding from Laidlaw, Boys and Girls Clubs, Ontario Young People's Alliance, Sport Alliance of Ontario and more
- Group meets every couple of months to develop ideas for getting in front of policymakers in order to maintain physical and recreational opportunities in Ontario

Why is Play important?

- Where youth are active, there is likely to be less crime, more post secondary graduates, healthy, competitive youth, and interaction
- Being active is a necessity for positive growth

Three fundamental commitments:

- Creating a more youth-friendly province
- Increased dialogue
- Renewed investment in youth play across the province

Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program:

- Communities that support youth
- Have a variety of activities (recreation, dance, arts, drama, sports)
- Play opportunities that include volunteerism, activism, and leadership development
- Opportunities for young people to participate in meaningful play

Criteria for Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program:

- Actively supports growth and opportunity for youth (13-19)
- Offers youth options for play in their community (structured, peer lead, adult led)
- Youth are formally connected to the community (a chance to have their voice heard, youth advisory councils, designated seats on decision-making bodies)
- Facilities are dedicated to youth play (specifically for youth)
- Information about play activities in the communities is easily accessible (bulletin boards, guides, pamphlets, websites)
- The community supports public youth events (tournaments, dances, outreach)
- The community celebrates and recognizes its youth (annual awards, scholarships)
- The community commits funding for youth play (community grants for youth groups, free activities for youth)
- The community exhibits and supports positive youth development (staff involved with youth in order to interact and learn from youth)
- Youth volunteerism and leadership development is encouraged and supported (summer programs)
- The community has developed models of effective community partnerships
- Youth activism and advocacy for play is nurtured (youth involved in the planning stages)
- Youth feel comfortable in their own community (business, recreation centres, malls, theatres)
- Effective transportation is offered for youth to attend Play programs (transit, taxis, after school programs)
- Schools support the youth-friendly approach (partnership between schools and communities)
- Adults champion the cause for youth play (dialogue back and forth)

Current Status of the Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program:

- 19 applications were received for the year
- Applications are being reviewed and announcements will be made in the next six weeks
- Plans underway to designate it an annual program
- Application process designed to build capacity within the communities in an attempt to be more youth friendly
- Everybody wins in the long run

“Winners” of the Youth Friendly Community Recognition Program:

- Receive a framed Certificate acknowledging work in supporting youth play
- Recognized as a ‘youth friendly’ community in *Municipal World* magazine and in a news release to media in Ontario
- Recognized as a ‘youth friendly’ community on the Play Works website

4. YNOT? – Lend Me Your Ears: Engaging the Voice of Young People

Wendy Blair, Youth Coordinator, Nottawasaga Futures (Alliston, Ontario)

Wendy Blair serves as youth Coordinator for Nottawasaga Futures and current director of a program called YNOTtawasaga (YNOT), which is dedicated to engaging young people and facilitating their voice within the community. Combined with public, private and voluntary sector administrative and project management experience, Wendy brings to the table more than three decades of community service in a variety of areas across southern and central Ontario. Recognized as a leader in her community, Wendy is dedicated to working with youth in a mentoring capacity to achieve their dreams. As Coordinator for the YNOT program and as founder of Innisfil's Promise (now a youth-driven, mentored organization), Wendy's mandate is the creation of a working model from this existing non-profit youth program. The model will be implemented across South Simcoe in hopes of ensuring community connectivity and reducing the incidence of youth out-migration. The continuing facilitation of youth participation in Innisfil and the development of community partnerships for young people across South Simcoe are just a couple of the goals of this exciting program.

Background

- YNOTtawasaga is a division of Nottawasaga Futures, a non-profit community economic development corporation
- Serves the needs of young people throughout the five areas of South Simcoe including Adjala-Tosorontio, Essa, New Tecumseth, Innisfil, and Bradford/West Gwillimbury
- Involved in many different rural issues including, but not limited to:
 - offering three business resource and development centres
 - acting in the capacity of consultant for such things as business retention and expansion; tourism and strategic planning for the towns of the South Simcoe area; and, of course, youth engagement
- YNOT began as a rural youth organization called *Innisfil's Promise* and grew through a partnership with Industry Canada's Knowledge-Based Economy Program. Five key philosophical elements formed the basis of the group:
 - A healthy start
 - A learning relationship with a knowledgeable adult
 - A safe place for young people outside the home
 - Access to marketable skills
 - An opportunity to give back through community service
- Early shift from adult-driven to youth-driven:
 - Adults involved in the organization soon realized they did not have the right to make decisions based strictly on their own notions – but recognized the need to support a more youth-inclusive, decision-making process in order to be truly effective
 - Organized "The Hearing" where youth were invited to share concerns. Three main priorities were identified:
 - Lack of transportation
 - Lack of education and employment resources for post-secondary resources
 - Lack of connection with their communities
 - Brought youth in on a permanent basis and this is where YNOT was born
 - A mentoring system was implemented so that adults could communicate what was needed in order to get the job done
 - By the end of the first year, the adults stepped back to observe
 - This year, the board is entirely run by youth (!)

- This model is being used to create new organizations – new councils will be introduced in the surrounding areas – and the councils will work together to serve the needs of each community. Plans include the formation of an umbrella organization.
- There is really nothing new in the issues that confront young people in rural communities, but the problems remain. We all know what they are – lack of resources, shortages of employment and higher learning opportunities, substance abuse and boredom, among others. We need to act with all that we have to affect positive change.

Rural Youth Out-migration

- Dr. Fellegi, Canada’s Chief Statistician, suggests: “Rural youth out-migration is a continuing problem for rural development initiatives. Moving in search of a job has traditionally depleted the human capital complement in rural areas. The decline in job growth in urbanized regions has re-emphasized attention to rural youth retention as a rural development strategy. Mobility from rural to urban for individuals 20 to 24 years of age is high.”
- Rural Ontario has let our youth down.
 - Many would suggest young people simply don’t care or they are too self-absorbed to recognize they owe the village that raised them a debt. Adults as a population of the village have not fostered any sense of connection with our youth that would make them want to stay.
 - Repeatedly rejecting youth and their ideas sends a very clear message that they are worthless to us. How is it possible we are so shortsighted we have yet to recognize the intrinsic worth of their uncensored and untarnished creativity?
- We must impart what we have to our youth so that they can continue to build on the potential of rural communities. Only by doing so can we ensure the needs of those communities will continue to be met - and exceeded - over time.

Pattern of diminishing creativity exists

- Many wonderful ideas are lost because they are met with negative reactions. But, we know the impossible merely takes a little longer! We must we provide young people with the tools to build their dreams within the community and the single greatest tool is knowledge.
- YNOT is working to change this pattern through a tiered mentoring system that seeks to provide creative young minds with the means to develop ideas and communicate them effectively in order to be realized.

The recipe for success is simple

- Bring together a group of adults
- Encourage these people to share their knowledge and credibility with a group of creative and motivated young people
- Let the ideas flow and work in partnership with them to make dreams come true

YNOT’s Mission is to Encourage, Enable, and EMPOWER The Voice of Youth

- **Step 1:** Form a steering committee of interested adults and elect an Executive Board
- **Step 2:** Recruit community young people and elect a Youth Executive Board

- **Step 3:** Youth shadow adult executive members for one year, learning the finer points of how to effectively run a volunteer organization
 - **Step 4:** Adults shadow youth executive members for one year to ensure adequacy of knowledge, consistency and success
 - **Step 5:** Year Three – youth shadow youth. At the end of Year Two, a new youth board will be elected to shadow the seated youth board for a one year period
 - **Step 6:** This process will be repeated youth-to-youth each year
- Having been mentored at the local Youth Council level and now knowing how it is done, the YNOT Senate will consist of one Steering Committee (adult member from each geographic area) and three members from each of the local level Youth Councils. The Senate will be responsible for setting policy and adhering to local level Youth Councils re policies and procedures as prescribed; addressing issues; and taking action to promote local level Councils as necessary. The Senate will also be responsible for ensuring the ongoing success of all Councils, including tackling problems and issues that may arise as a “guiding” body, and offering connectivity between local level Councils and external organizations.

Affording youth a sense of belonging and connectedness

- Share skills and knowledge
- Share networks and partnerships
- Create youth-friendly environments within our communities
- Where young people feel disconnected, they also feel discontented. When they are discontent, the positive creativity often gets lost in negative behaviour as young people are bored and idle

Current Actions

- **Providing a much-needed transportation system for young people in Innisfil.** This was possible, briefly, in December, 2004, however, challenges occurred when the owner of the bus filed bankruptcy and the bus became unavailable. New possibilities are currently being explored.
- **Development of a business plan to open a youth drop-in centre in Alcona.** Goal is to open a facility within 12-18 months.
- **Virtual Volunteer Centre.** MyVolunteerPage.com/SouthSimcoe was among the first three such online community service connections available in Canada. It serves organizations and volunteers across South Simcoe and Barrie, matching and monitoring activities throughout the volunteer sector.
- **Construction of a Strategic Plan for Youth.**

Points to ponder

- “Youth are resources to be developed not problems to be fixed.” - *Professor Robert Blum*
- Young people are looking to see where they fit in this world. Let’s help them find their place beside us building the rural Ontario that reaches its greatest potential.
- Together with our youth, we can build an environment in which miracles happen right here in rural Ontario.
- “A society that cuts itself off from youth severs its lifeline.” *Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations in his address to the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Aug.1998)* Can we afford to take this chance?
- Engagement of youth cannot happen overnight. Rather, it will happen one person at a time...one town at a time.

5. ‘GIVING IT UP’ FOR THEIR COMMUNITY: Youth and Philanthropy **Emma Guild, Chair, Youth Advisory Council, Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation (Waterloo, Ontario)**

Emma Guild is a third-year student at the University of Waterloo studying behavioural neuroscience. She is the chair of the Youth Advisory Council for the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation and has been a member of the KW YAC since its inception six years ago. Emma is also a committee member for the Ontario Endowment for Youth in Recreation Fund and a board member for the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation. Emma views grant-making and endowment building as an exciting and unique vehicle for young people to make a difference in their community, and is a strong advocate for engaging youth in philanthropy.

What is a community foundation?

- A group of people who seek to improve the quality of life for others in their community
- A collection of funds from the generous donations of individuals, organizations and companies, which is then invested and, in turn, the income generated is granted back to the community

What is the Youth Advisory Council?

- A group of young people who are passionate about making a difference in their community, and who use granting and endowment building as the vehicles for making a difference
- Functions similar to a community foundation – grants are offered to organizations that are youth-focused
- Provides youth with the opportunity to learn how to set agendas, review grants and run a foundation. Also offers exposure to organizations that exist in the community

Why engage youth in philanthropy?

- Teaching the benefits of philanthropy shapes the community members of tomorrow
- Youth will carry this on to a time where they will have financial resources to share

Why should organizations engage youth?

- Young people desire to get involved and are genuinely eager to make a difference
- They have contagious energy and bring both talent and insight to boards and committees
- Youth are strong assets, and have fresh insights to contribute to boards
- Involvement now is also cultivating boards of directors for tomorrow

Training and Organization

- Provide an opportunity for youth to learn, have fun, and make a positive difference
- Mentorship is an effective method for training and fostering new members
- Strike a balance between expectations and accountability – do not make it so overwhelming that people are not attracted to it as youth today are balancing many things
- Need to ensure meetings don't interfere with school
- Need to address transportation concerns
- Orientations are important, but it is the energy and enthusiasm that will bring people back – it will take time to learn

- True mentorship – not just orientation - is key when new members are brought on board.
- Take minutes and set agendas – these are skills that vital and transferable
- Identify roles – gets people to step up to the plate; provides structure
- Incrementally build responsibility – start slow
- Establish recruitment and succession plans
- Appreciate the unique challenges each organization faces
- Strong personal relationships are the best way to attract and keep young members, as well as foster accountability
- Encourage diversity in age amongst group members
- Involve local schools as a way to tap into a rich resource for potential volunteers and committee members. Establish timelines to reduce turnover and encourage commitment – ex. a two-year term
- Be direct in requesting youth to fill specific roles and positions

How to recruit?

- Word of mouth – passion and enthusiasm (Talk to people behind you in line – they might be a potential new member; fosters relationship-building)
- Who are the powerful community leaders? (Talk to the people who run programs, are involved in volunteering – they might be too busy, but they can recommend others)
- Access schools - student activity directors – ask them to nominate someone; offers a liaison to schools, geography and age range
- Remember passion and enthusiasm!
- Keep in mind personal relationships

Engaging Youth

- 'Engaging' is holding their interest
- You have to make it fun – be spontaneous and improvise
- Make it a learning experience –something new that they have not learned before
- Strike a balance between governance activities and physical volunteering activities (traveling into the community and meeting with people, Relay for Life, House of Friendship delivering food hampers, etc.)
- People need to see the impacts of their activities – especially for youth! Follow up on site visits, identify small successes - this builds morale and encourages people to come back

6. SPEAKER QUESTIONS

i) Re: Recruiting unusual suspects

Try targeting:

- Cultural groups
- Research lesser-known groups
- Hold large events where people can bring their friends, invite schools
- Remain open-minded
- Send invitations to groups that work with youth and asked them to send you 10 people based on certain criteria – to cover a cross section of individuals

ii) Re: Re-energizing people who are involved in many things

- ◆ Find new and exciting projects – no matter how small
- ◆ Be sensitive to various commitments of your volunteers

iii) Re: Current members of YNOT

- ◆ YNOT is made up of youth between the ages of 13-25 years, with one student entering Grade 9 and a number finishing Grade 12, which means a need to return to the mentoring process. Over time, it is anticipated that youth will mentor each other at a peer level. There are some 14 to 25 people, and this will expand and retract over time.
- ◆ The majority of the youth are from Innisfil. There is an objective to expand to two more Youth Councils. Members have parents drive them to meetings, **but this is a major concern of the youth – the lack of transportation**, and the negative prospects of potential for public transportation. Young people are dependent on school buses to get them to and from school, which makes it difficult to get into extra-curricular activities.

iv) Re: Connections with school boards in terms of recruiting

- ◆ K-W Advisor is a trustee with the school board and this is a very valuable resource
- ◆ Schools are a rich resource with built-in diversity.
- ◆ YNOT is school-friendly, originated as a project in an elementary school; has the support of all principals of both school boards; YNOT has enjoyed a great deal of access to student bodies
- ◆ It might be important to contact the director of communications for the school board right from the start, instead of going through trustees and student councils

- v) **Re: Dissemination of Play Works outcomes**
 - ◆ Best practices will be made available through various media and on the website

- vi) **YNOT Transfer of responsibility from adults to youth**
 - ◆ It was very difficult but important to do this
 - ◆ It is important to let them know that you are available when they might need you
 - ◆ Requires a lot of courage!

7. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION: An Ideas Exchange and Reporting Back

Facilitator: Mary Feldskov, University of Guelph, former president - Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario

Mary Feldskov, a native of Huron County, is a former President of the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario (JFAO), having served her term in 2003. She has lived in Guelph since 1994, obtaining a BA from the University of Guelph in 2000. Mary has worked in the not-for-profit sector for the last five years, focusing in the areas of volunteer management, fundraising and communications. Currently, Mary is working for the Alumni Affairs and Development Department at the University of Guelph, where she is developing a new alumni outreach program in communities across the country. Mary is a volunteer for a number of local and rural organizations, including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Guelph, the Foundation for Rural Living, the Howick Agricultural Society, as well as continuing work with JFAO, where she is currently chair of the strategic planning committee. Despite a busy schedule, Mary has found the time this past year to become a foster parent for Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County.

1. How can we capture the exuberance of youth and channel it effectively to revitalize our communities and organizations?

- ✓ Respect the 'youth' voice: Youth should know that the leaders of the communities respect the voice of the youth, that they will act on what they are hearing, that they will allow the youth voice to blossom in their own way, and that they are *mentors* rather than *administrators*
- ✓ Provide positive feedback: People should not be afraid to criticize youth, but it must be done in a constructive way. Youth should not be 'babied', but should be treated as equals
- ✓ Early Involvement: Pre-teens need to have a base for involvement by being educated on community issues
- ✓ Ownership and celebrations: Give youth a project to have ownership with and celebrate small accomplishments
- ✓ Youth mentoring youth: Opportunities must be made available for youth mentoring youth as well as leadership development – but youth need to be taught how to do this effectively
- ✓ Educate youth volunteers: Really involving youth during their community service hours is a way to recruit future volunteers in organizations. Student volunteers should not be taken advantage of, but should be given the opportunity to understand all aspects of the organizations – not just the garbage room or a specific event. A recent study has shown that the mandatory 40 hours of community service for high school students will not affect their likelihood of

volunteering in the future. However, if youth are given meaningful volunteer placements, this could influence their future volunteer efforts.

- ✓ Welcome youth: Make youth members and volunteers feel part of the group (list serves, agendas, suggestion box at the end of meetings)
- ✓ Be specific and organized: Need to have clear expectations for youth to meet, as well as the necessary training
- ✓ Create entrepreneurship opportunities for youth
- ✓ Help youth to find their passion: Adults are involved in organizations because they are passionate about them. If youth can truly understand and believe in what an organization does, they may be more likely to become dedicated volunteers in the future.

2. How can we be 'intentional' about involving young people in our succession strategies?

- ✓ Involve the unusual suspects: This may require more effort, but will be beneficial as they may not be involved in as many activities and will therefore have more time. This may also result in an increased sense of belonging for the individuals.
- ✓ Invite and support youth: It is not enough just to offer an invitation – there must be an effort made to show that the organization is really interested in the identified youth and is making an effort to accommodate them (go into the schools, skateboard parks, and support them). Encourage youth to give their opinion at meetings, and ensure that there is a comfortable way to do this (verbal, written, etc.)
- ✓ Tap into the school system: Utilize schools but understand the uniqueness of each individual school and create opportunities to speak at the schools. Create grade-specific volunteer positions with specific organizations.
- ✓ Community buy-in: It is important to bring the whole community on board, but they must be consulted first – the community needs to buy into the process
- ✓ Allow for mistakes
- ✓ 'True mentorship': True mentors work in the 'youth' trenches – we need to be there for them. Allow for a 1:1 ratio when matching mentor to potential youth board members.
- ✓ Avoid token youth positions: They do not work. Youth members really need to be involved, the same as all other members. Need to understand how and why youth are there – what their roles are, and what they want out of their involvement. At the same time, be intentional by stating in organizational bylaws that a youth member(s) must be present during decision-making processes.
- ✓ Create advisory groups: Advisory groups are excellent sources of information – creating a useful venue for information dissemination and gathering from the youth perspective. Often youth are unaware that they are tremendous information resources and this encourages them to share; increases self-confidence.
- ✓ Youth-designed projects: Create projects that attract more youth, which are designed by youth themselves – give them a sense of power.

- ✓ 'Start them young': Involve youth from a young age and this might make the community more attractive to them once they have gone away to school. Ensuring a variety of ages will also encourage succession in the organizations.
- ✓ Meet youth where they are: Bring in people by teleconference, email, and web forums – whatever method works for the youth members. Provide timely activities for university students, who may be returning home on weekends and during the summer.
- ✓ Offer formal training: Offer the training that is required to be part of the Board in order to make youth feel comfortable with the organization and the available positions.

3. We know that youth is integral to a vital community or organization. Why are we not hearing their 'voice'?

- ✓ **Youth lack a sense of community**: Youth tend to have more of a global perception due to links fostered through the Internet. Youth must be convinced of "what's in it for them."
- ✓ **Lack of exposure**: Youth need to be informed of issues and organizations at a young age so that they are familiar and have the confidence to become involved.
- ✓ **Are youth being asked for their voice?** It is possible that youth do not feel that they are being asked for their opinions, or that their opinions do not count due to a pattern of past inaction. Be truthful and honest with youth in what you want from them, and what they can give to you.
- ✓ **Lack of available time**: Our world is highly organized and kids' time is so structured (volunteer activities, lessons, organized sports, homework) that they do not have time to develop their own leadership abilities.
- ✓ **Socioeconomic differentials**: Socioeconomic differentials affect the opportunities for volunteering - the modeling is not there for all youth. It is the youth who are *not* engaged who are staying in the rural communities; those who develop the leadership skills are the ones who are leaving.
- ✓ **Lack of adults with team-building experience**: Training adults in team building would result in breaking down barriers between youth and adult members. Adult members need to have the knowledge of how to involve the youth, and the youth need to know how to interact.

Where CAN youth go to have their 'voice' heard?

- ✓ Traveling speaker's corner
- ✓ Message board (on-line)
- ✓ Youth Friendly Events: Ensure that events suit ages of people you are looking to target (time of year, make people feel welcomed)
- ✓ TORC Youth Working Group

8. Forum Wrap-up: *Where does the afternoon leave us?* Elinor Humphries, TORC Individual/Regional Member

1. Create a TORC Youth Working Group:

- ACTION: Three volunteers came forward at the forum. Contact TORC for more details

2. Develop Mentoring Skills: The mentoring aspect is really important - mentorship is a skill and people need to be taught how to mentor. Just because you are skilled, does not mean that you know how to teach it to someone else.

- ACTION: Mentorship toolkit (perhaps facilitated through TORC)

3. Develop Coaching Skills: There is a need for coaching leaders – not necessarily a mentor (model), but just someone to give tips to youth, and for youth, to be linked to someone.

4. Partner With Youth: Effort must be made to partner with youth in all aspects of our efforts.

5. Be Attractive To Youth: If you want youth volunteers, then you have to be attractive to youth. If we are all going to go back to our daily lives and not market our organizations to youth, we will never get any youth volunteers

- ACTION: Cross-cultural forum, or youth forum in terms of marketing (TORC)

Points to Ponder

- If you make one thing more youth-friendly about your organization then today has been a success
- Youth are the future but they are also resources that can be used TODAY
- Look to the youth within you –do you enjoy your meetings? Are they fun?