



**Bright Ideas IV – Shine On!**  
**Youth Conference, October 2011**  
**Final Report**

**Proudly supported by the CRD Family Court Youth Justice Committee**



**Made possible by funding from the United Way of Greater Victoria**



## **Introduction**

This report is primarily prepared for the CRD Family Court Youth Justice Committee, as the main supporters of the Bright Ideas series of youth conferences. It is available to all stakeholders across CRD including youth, youth serving agencies, sponsors and supporters of the youth conferences. Any questions or comments can be sent to the chair of the Youth Matters committee (Mitzi Dean : mdean@pcfesa.org).

## **Background**

Established under the Provincial Court Act, Section 57 24-2, the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee includes representation from thirteen municipalities, three School Districts, as well as several youth-serving organisations across Greater Victoria.

The mandate of the committee is to protect youth in the justice system by:

- educating the public
- reviewing family and youth legislation
- making recommendations to appropriate legislative bodies
- monitoring court hearings and custody facilities

Section 69 of Bill C-61, Young Offender's Act, establishes youth justice committees with the remit to target problems and services. The FCYJ Committee is structured on the basis of a number of sub-committees, including the Youth Matters committee. The Youth Matters sub-committee is concerned with matters involving youth in the court system or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system.

The Bright Ideas IV – Shine On! Youth Conference was the fourth in a series of conferences hosted by the CRD Family Court Youth Justice committee over the past 5 years.

The aims were to:

- Have an understanding of youth serving community agencies
- Identify beliefs about other communities
- Identify how strengths can alleviate gaps
- Create tangible maps for communities
- Work on individual action steps to close gaps
- Contribute to regional & community planning for youth

As a result of the three previous conferences it was acknowledged that there had been similar themes emergent and that the focus should have been on local policy and planning around those:

- More engagement and activities in their community.
- Improved access in particular transport to reach activities and services.
- Improved housing options that are safe and within their community.
- Facilities, such a drop-in, that offer activities and services in their community.

It was recommended to the CRD FCYJ committee that all municipal representatives discuss with their respective councils how to consider the findings from the series of conferences and consider how they are capable and willing to engage with youth and to plan for the needs of youth in their community. As a result, it was assumed that the series of conferences was therefore retired and no longer needed.

However, thought the course of 2009-11 there continued to be many changes across the sector in CRD, and there were requests for another conference to be held. Building on the learning from previous events we planned the event in consultation with stakeholders and youth, we also firmly committed to creating action plans.

## **Planning**

The planning was informed by the principle of engaging youth at all stages of the development of the event. We also decided to ‘skill up’ the adult participants to be able to actively and meaningfully engage with youth as a result of the conference. So we offered a half-day workshop prior to the Bright Ideas: Shine On full day conference.

We worked in partnership with Youthcore through the process; they assisted with the youth engagement and preparation for the conference and they facilitated the half-day workshop for adults.

We were again supported by a fantastic, effective and cooperative steering committee comprising: Dianna Seaton, Chantal Van Weezel, Georgia Peters, Azra Heder, Sarah Amyot, Jen Harrison, Tara Munro, Bobbi Neal and Sal Hunt.

## **Funding**

This Bright Ideas conference would not have been possible without the financial support of the United Way of Greater Victoria and the Victoria Family Youth Justice Committee. We were also supported by Capital Action Regional Team against sexual exploitation of youth. Our expenses were in the majority staff time for engagement of youth and coordination of the planning, honoraria for youth, the venue and refreshments. We received donations from Wild Plan and West Shore Parks and Recreation. The time and energy of our planning committee was also invaluable.

## **Youth Engagement Workshop**

The half-day workshop was aimed at adults working with youth and those responsible for decisions affecting youth. There were 30 participants, many of whom also attended the full day youth conference.

The learning event was designed to build individuals’ capacity to

- Incorporate a youth lens in day to day work
- Respectfully work with youth
- Ensure decision-making is informed by a youth perspective

- Continually develop skills to adapt work to changing youth needs.

By the end of the session participants were able to:

- Understand the key aspects of meaningful youth engagement
- Share resources, emerging practices regarding youth engagement and civic action for municipalities and community organisations
- Increase awareness of emerging youth engagement strategies and frameworks for service providers, local government and community organisations
- Work with colleagues to identify how we are currently developing youth engagement opportunities in the community and the opportunities for action
- Prepare for meaningful participation in the Bright Ideas IV conference

### **Bright Ideas IV – Shine On! Summary**

The Bright Ideas IV Shine On Conference was planned to:

- address the need for increased cooperation, increased cohesion, increased understanding among agencies of the changing needs of youth
- address the need to share up to date information, including new initiatives, e.g. mental health pilot, and relevant research, such as measures of wellbeing among youth and evidence of youth activities and patterns of engaging with supportive and preventative agencies
- address the need to coordinate youth engagement projects across CRD
- create tangible actions and outcomes for youth in their community.

In total there were 180 participants, of which 121 (67%) were youth (not including the youth speakers).

### **Format of the day**

<b>Intro and Icebreaker activities</b>
<b>Identifying Key Issues in our Community:</b> Youth Panel presentation
<b>BREAK</b>
<b>Identifying Key Issues in our Community:</b> small group discussions
<b>Speaker: Lorena Pilgrim and Colby Gates, Federation of Youth in Care Network</b>
<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>Energizers and reconvene</b>
<b>World café Inspiration:</b> What is already happening in our communities that is positive?
<b>Action planning</b>
<b>Report back</b>
<b>Next steps</b> for working together and event evaluation

The initial exercise with all participants encouraged everyone to think outside the box and to recall the awesome things in our daily lives.

The youth and service providers were asked to take a moment and think of something awesome that happens to them. To take a moment and slow down to savour the moment and write down what comes to them. This set the tone for the awesome contributions we experienced for the rest of the day.

### **Youth Presentation- Video/Photo Project**

A group of youth had been recruited to assist with preparation for the day's conference and they created a presentation using pictures of their community and ideas. The slide show exhibited what the youth felt pride in and also some of the areas of change they would like to see. For example, their pride in and the unfair reputation of Belmont school, the desire to erase stigmas and to have the Langford skate park improved, they identified the lack of female role models in sports which they believed could change and presented their proposal to increase the number of garbage cans and for everyone to take our part in preserving our environment and natural surroundings.

There was opportunity for questions and answers and discussion with the panel. This led to more conversation about activities and entertainment that youth would like to see in the community, such as youth drop in facilities with pool tables, instruments, rockband and other video games and ping pong. There were suggestions about a free teen swim, space at the youth clinic for services and a youth shelter in West Shore. It was highlighted that activities must be central and easy to access.

The youth panel identified that from this experience they learned that other youth share the same concerns and ideas about their communities and that they feel that there is opportunity for change.

### **Identifying Key Issues in our Community**

Through the process of group discussion, youth and adults were asked to identify three main issues and one priority for action. The feedback generated some highlights that included:

#### **Actions**

- gain community support through fundraising/donations
- create volunteer group for school/community clean-up
- raise money for more garbage cans
- teen nightclub → volunteer base, space donated
- open youth center in the mall
-

## **Presentation: Lorena Pilgrim & Colby Gates, Federation of Youth in Care Network**

Lorena and Colby presented a video about the Federation of Youth in Care Network. They highlighted that it is youth driven and has different programs reflecting the needs and rights of youth who have been impacted by the Ministry. Their services include advocacy, rights education for youth, action when rights are violated, collaboration with partners to address issues for youth in care, empower youth with positive opportunities and produce information and publicity to support youth.

### **Youth leadership – world café**

Youth leadership tables were established throughout the main room, where young people presented on their experiences of creating change, having an impact and making a difference. With great thanks to our presenters we offered the following discussion groups:

Lilia Zahara- Think Inside Out: From Isolation to Integration

Andrea AKA Bipolar Babe- Setting up the BC Schizophrenia Society

Ravi Parmar, Belmont student- Youth leadership for education

Colin Benesh, Yekakey Wason, Students, Westshore Learning Centre- The need for alternative education opportunities

Mariah Derksen, Pathway Project participant- Standing up for programs that work: the Pathway experience

Vienna Ngyen, Student, former student, John Stubbs School- Creating identity in middle school

Youth attended two presentations and were able to ask questions and discuss the issues further in their group. The main group fed back some key learning points from the world café experience.

### **Youth Leadership Discussion**

- don't be afraid to share your ideas and goals
- it takes determination but many youth-led goals are achievable
- now more aware of how many youth in the community are taking leadership roles to create positive change

### **Action planning**

The final key session of discussion was theme-based focused on action planning. The participants were offered a range of discussion tables to share ideas with colleagues and create individual or group action plans. The themes included

- *What are the needs, rights and ideas of youth in care*, facilitated by the Federation of Youth in care
- *Involving youth in recreation planning*, facilitated by Bobbi Neal, Community Development Coordinator for West Shore Parks & Recreation
- *Regional Parks Youth Opportunities*, facilitated by Nancie Dohan, Coordinator of Environmental Interpretation for CRD Regional Parks

- *Youth engagement in transportation planning*, facilitated by Sue Hallett, CRD transportation planner
- *Creating positive change in education systems*, facilitated by Samantha Quesnel, Ravi Parmar, and Dianna Seaton
- *Starting your own youth-led social change project (ideas and resources)*, facilitated by Sarah Amyot, Youthcore
- *Creating a youth advisory group or council in your organization or community*, facilitated by Mitzi Dean of Pacific Centre Family Services Association
- *Ideas into action*, facilitated by Bill McElroy of Capital Regional Action Team for Sexually Exploited Youth
- *Literacy and Life Long Learning for Youth*, facilitated by Shantael Sleight and Chantal Van Weezel, of West Shore Literacy Project
- *Youth and housing*, facilitated by Tyler Roach of the “Y”

There were a range of themes recurring in these discussions, and comments arising through the day, summarising actions that can create successful youth engagement in our communities NOW.

### **Engagement activities:**

Avoid ‘popularity’ contests

Positive links between engagement in school and having a voice

Listening to youth (genuinely) is how they will be more engaged

Youth creating the agenda and working together in groups is more effective

Ensure that the conversations are transparent and realistic – e.g. about roles, responsibilities and costs

Need to balance with other commitments of youth e.g. jobs

Hold meetings at coffee shops, provide transport and honoraria

Hold more of these types of events

More youth leaders make positive changes, youth having more opportunities to be involved

Youth knowing their rights and having stability and security at home

Connection, mentorship and communication

Make what we already have more engaging and inviting

**Community needs:**

More youth space

More long term/sustainable programs

Drop in centres (safe, arts, crafts, activities, counsellors)

More activities for youth (dirt biking, dj-ing, lacross, karate, hockey swim, theatre, art studio, roller rink, pool tables, teen nights at rec centres, youth music options at teen swim – FREE OR AFFORDABLE)

Improve school facilities

More garbage cans in community

More green space

Improved transport

More youth apartments and youth shelter accommodation

Health Clinics

Youth employment support

Increased respect from Police and improved relationships

More support from the Ministry for young parents

More girls' sports opportunities

More coffee shops and healthy restaurants

Horse friendly trails

Improved lighting and public phones

The afternoon table activities creative and lively discussions resulted in some tangible actions.

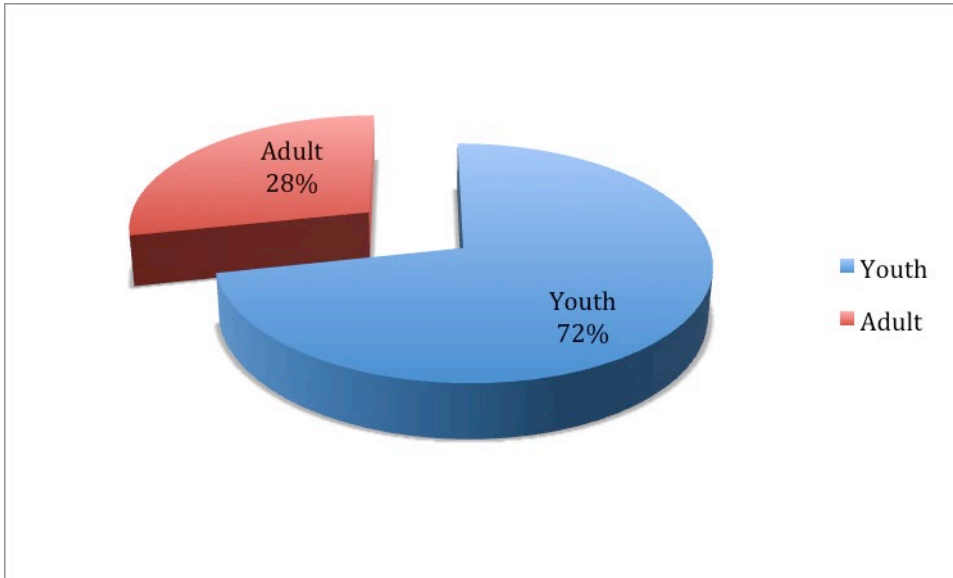


<b>Action</b>	<b>Success criteria</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Other support</b>	<b>Lead facilitator</b>	<b>Update December 2011</b>
Create a group. Approach a teacher to sponsor the group. Approach Leanna Hill at VV for help.	Start a group at school that educates people about horses and equine related issues like the horse trolleys	Students	October 2011	Volunteer Victoria assistance.	Marika/Leanna	
Meet together to identify a plan to address youth needs in West Shore for emergency shelter.	Develop a concrete plan to meet shelter needs for youth across West Shore.	Youth serving agency leaders.	November 8 <sup>th</sup> 2011 first meeting	Identify input from youth, West Shore Youth Collective, resource partners, stakeholders	Bill McElroy	Task group created and plans being made for an emergency shelter in West Shore.
Publicise what is available in parks to youth.	Youth are more aware and more engaged in local parks and activities	CRD Parks; Nancie Dohan		Youth participants, volunteers	Nancie Dohan	
Feedback to BC Transit the issues youth face with how transit is currently planned.	Youth are able to travel safely and conveniently .	Sue Hallett			Sue Hallett	
Resurrect skateboard committee.	Engage boarders in future planning of the skateboard park and improve skatepark.	Bobbi Neal		Youth participants, boarders	Bobbi Neal	

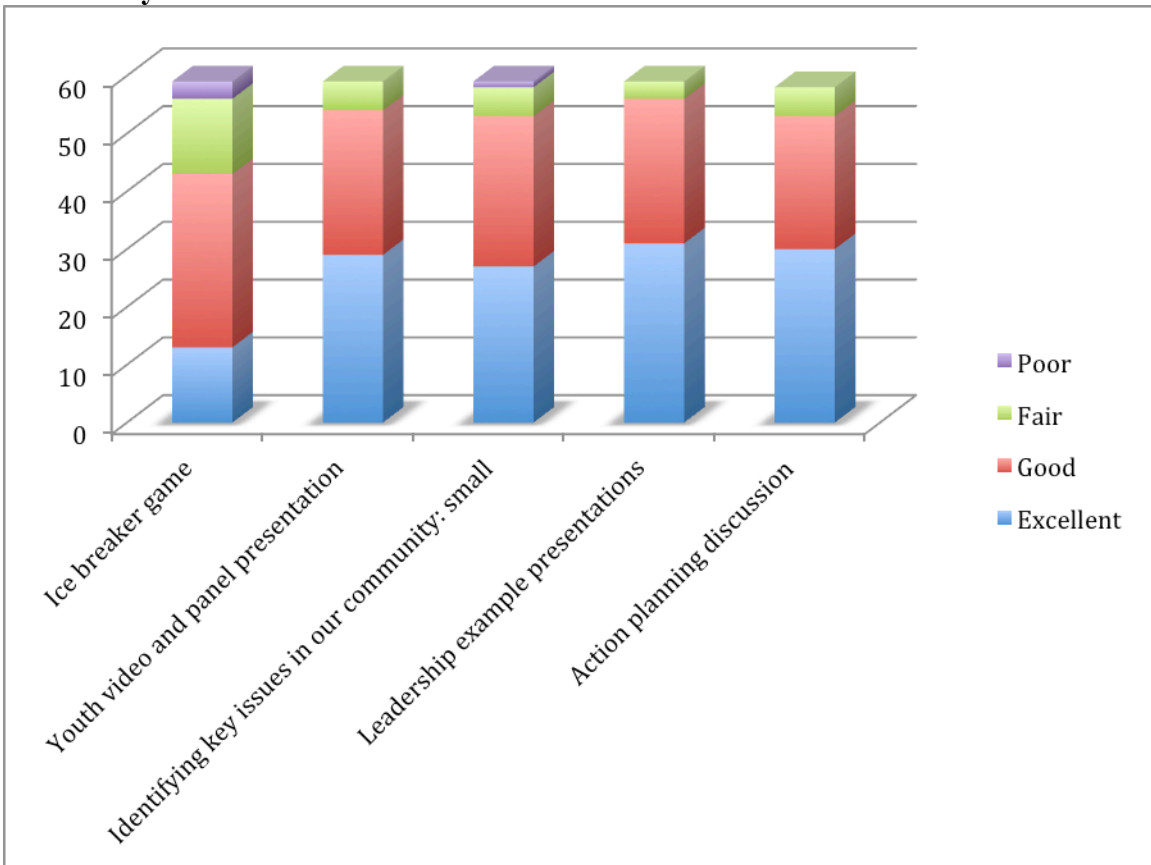
Publicise recreational opportunities for youth.	Youth are aware of and access recreational opportunities.	Bobbi Neal		Youth participants	Bobbi Neal	
Literacy Coordinator to review the Life Material and put into plain language for the users.	Youth are more aware of and access recreational opportunities.	Shantael Sleight		Bobbi Neal	Shantael Sleight	
Hear from Beecher Bay Community about recreation needs.	Enhance recreational opportunities for Beecher Bay community.	Bobbi Neal		Beecher Bay community	Bobbi Neal	
Establish a guy's recreation group.	Enhance access to recreational facilities by local young men.	Graham Kelly		Local young men	Graham Kelly	
Review Bright Ideas Conferences for key messages to inform PCFSA service planning.	Youth are more engaged in PCFSA service planning.	Mitzi Dean		PCFSA Board and Staff	Mitzi Dean	During 2012 – strategic objective set by PCFSA Board November 2011
Monitor actions and outcomes and report to CRD Family Court Youth Justice Committee	Support, maintain and evaluate action plans arising from Bright Ideas conference.	Mitzi Dean		Lead facilitators and youth	Mitzi Dean	Report to CRD February 2012
Publicise youth achievements presented through this event.	Youth presentation from this conference is publicised.	Mitzi Dean	January 2012		Mitzi Dean	Photo slide show will be posted on PCFSA website.

## Evaluation

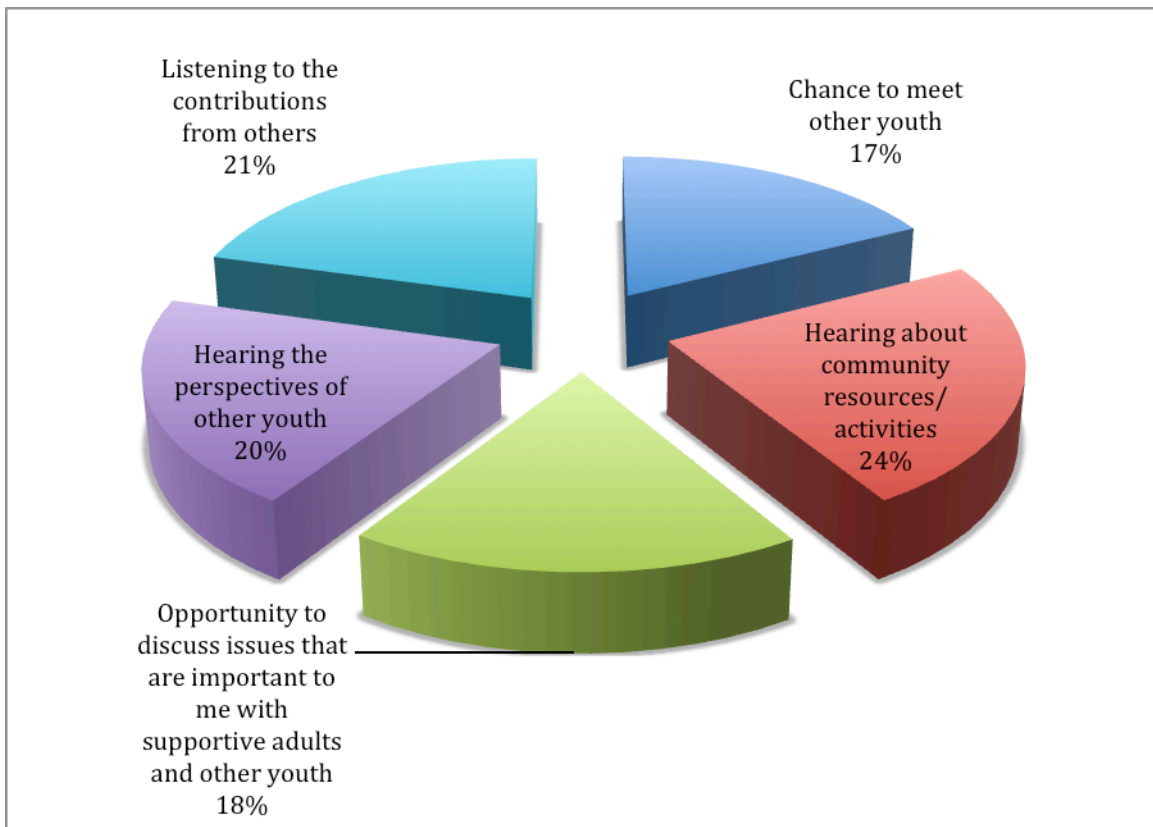
Total number of evaluation forms completed and submitted: 60 (50% of participants), of which 72% were completed by youth.



## What did you think about these activities:



**What did you find helpful or useful about the day? (Check all that apply)**



In response to the question of what was the favourite part of the day, action planning was a common and frequent response. Additionally, there were favourable comments about talking and having open discussions, the presentations, expressing ideas, meeting new people, listening and learning new things. The lunch and games were also appreciated.

In response to identifying what was learnt from the day there were many comments acknowledging learning about resources that are available to youth and information about the community. Importantly there were comments about learning to make a difference, that change is possible and recognizing that the ideas of youth do matter. The amazing youth driven projects that already exist were noted. There were comments that people learnt that others shared the same point of view as them, and that everyone had different lives. Some specific points of learning were also identified, such as hearing more about the skate park, about bi-polar disorders, the federation for youth in care, housing and transportation issues.

The solutions that were identified included: appreciation of the feedback from youth and how to more actively engage youth in responsibilities and follow up with them, 'getting

the ball rolling' e.g. starting a group or just starting to take some action, more youth activities, improved transportation, using technology to improve existing services and some concerns that there were many issues and they could not all be solved.

When asked what participants would have changed about the day the majority of responses were 'nothing'. The main concern was that so many students had to leave early in the afternoon, especially as this was the time for action planning. The structure of the day would have been improved for a few of the participants if there were more snacks and the day was shorter. Some other suggestions were for more time for discussion, though others wanted less talking. Among the other comments and also as a result of follow up we were concerned that some participants may have become ill as a result of the food.

The immediate actions as a result of the day included: refer more youth to more resources, follow up on valuable youth contacts, engage more youth in programming, organize a horse group for Langford, try to start a youth group, learn the bus schedule, let others know what we have discussed, tell people my ideas, use more garbage cans, start my own project, be more green, take care of community more and there were about 10% of respondents that replied '(probably) nothing'.

The other comments included reflections that this day was 'a great opportunity', 'inspirational', appreciation of the hard work and support for more events like this. There were many comments of thanks for the day, that it was 'awesome', it was smart and fun and was a great idea. Finally, there was a profound comment that: "This made my life ☺ Thank You"

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

Many similar themes emerged through this process of engaging with youth. The issues of local youth space, transportation problems and recreation were recurring. There were also lessons to assist us in moving forwards to address these.

There were some clear lessons from the full-day conference, in summary:

- Plan well ahead with the School District and maintain close communication,
- Continue with opportunities to listen to youth and engage them,
- Bring key decision makers to the process (e.g. representatives from transit, school district, parks and recreation),
- Share information about successful youth activities,
- Share and update information about local community resources for youth,
- Create action plans and monitor progress.

As a result of this conference a regional action plan has been created. This plan will be monitored through the Youth Matters sub-committee and where possible we will continue to support and innovate youth engagement activities.

Respectfully submitted,

**Mitzi Dean**

Executive Director, Pacific Centre Family Services Association  
Chair of Youth Matters sub-committee

**December 2011**

**Thank you to our supporters and sponsors:**

Youthcore

United Way of Greater Victoria

CRD Family Court Youth Justice Committee

Capital Regional Action Team on Sexually Exploited Youth

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

West Shore Literacy Project

West Shore Parks and Recreation

Sheraton Four Points Hotel

Wild Play