



Rexdale (Jamestown)

Host agency: Rexdale Community Health Centre
8 Taber Road, Etobicoke ON M9W 2N4
Tel.: 416-744-0066

Program director: Adam Hunt

Boundaries: South: John Garland Road; East: Kipling Avenue; North: Albion Road and Finch Avenue West; West: Martingrove Road.

Area dropout rate: 55% (Toronto District School Board data).

First cohort size: Eligible are approximately 83 students currently in grade 9 (Toronto District School Board & Toronto Catholic District School Board schools).

Participation rate: 87% are currently registered and outreach continues.

Brief description

Rexdale is located in North Etobicoke, in the northwest end of Toronto. The community is culturally diverse and has a history of strong community spirit. However, it is also wrestling with many socio-economic issues related to poverty, unemployment, immigration, affordable housing, education, and family breakdown.

In October 2005, Toronto City Council designated Rexdale (Jamestown) as one of 13 priority neighbourhoods, requiring infrastructure investment and improvement of community services.

The Rexdale (Jamestown) Pathways to Education Program is offered through an alliance between United Way of Greater Toronto and Pathways Canada. Further, in addition to corporations, foundations and private donors, the Youth Challenge Fund has been a key funder for both the start up and implementation of the program, contributing significant funding over the next three years.

Why Rexdale has a Pathways program

The need for academic support for school students, both in elementary and secondary school, has been a consistent and high priority for the Rexdale community. Parents, youth and agency staff see the Pathways program as “a needed resource to begin to break the cycle of poverty, and improve the life chances of youth.” During the engagement phase, over 200 parents and youth as well as many agency personnel participated in focus groups and information sessions.

Community members have a lack of trust and familiarity with a system that is very different from their experience in their home countries; feel left out of the communications loop with respect to school, school programs, and course selections; and have challenges with the school curriculum that leave youth behind, never catching up. Other life challenges described by community members include limited understanding of what opportunities exist outside of Rexdale; lack of motivation and hope; and poor relations with the police. Further issues are the dispersed nature of the area where attendance in activities is determined by proximity rather than need; short term funding for programs; and a lack of local role models.

The Rexdale (Jamestown) Pathways to Education Program has many partners which include parents, youth, the Horn of Africa, West Indian Volunteer Community Support Services, the Albion Library, Elmbank Community Centre, Humber College, Family Services Association, Youth Unlimited, Sky's the Limit Youth Organization and local youth workers. In addition, partnerships have been established with the local high schools and elementary/middle schools in both the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

For more information about the community and the Rexdale (Jamestown) Pathways to Education Program, please contact:

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