

## The Journey to REACH Edmonton



### **Report to the Membership: Lindsay Kelly and Fred Rayner Co-Chairs, REACH Edmonton Transitional Board June 22, 2010**

Last fall the REACH Report presented a bold generational plan aimed at increasing community safety in our city. It focused on preventing crime before it happens, enhancing coordination, evaluating the work we do and using innovative approaches. On September 16, 2009, Edmonton City Council unanimously endorsed this vision and the platform of nine recommendations that form the heart of the REACH Report. The name REACH captures the essence of the vision for change- it reflects the need to **reach out** to help build a culture of community safety and to **strive for** goals we know are going to take a generation or more to accomplish.

The concept of the organization we are launching tonight emerged in feedback the Taskforce heard from citizens and ultimately took shape in Recommendation # 7 of the REACH report. That recommendation called for New Leadership to bring about the kind of change envisioned. It also described the need for an overarching body to own the R for responsibility, to connect the dots, and to provide the leadership needed to galvanize a culture shift to prevention. The REACH report outlined the vision for a new Coordinating Council, a centre of responsibility to implement the REACH Report and to be the go-to centre of excellence on safety in our city.

Since September 2009, a Transitional Board has begun implementation of the REACH recommendations. This Board has been co chaired by Lindsay Kelly and Fred Rayner, and includes the following people who we salute tonight for their dedication, expertise and commitment to creating the new organization we are here to launch:

Barb Dart  
Janice Boiko  
Karen Cox  
Kurt Sandstrom  
Jana Grekul  
Mike Percy  
Lloyd Lewis  
Jon Hall  
Kate Quinn  
Dave Ward  
Darren Caul  
Mike Boyd  
Amarjeet Sohi  
Catherine Keill  
Linda Cochrane  
Kathy Barnhart  
Gerald Lamoureux

The mandate of this Transitional Board was daunting and challenging, with three key areas of focus: Governance, Resources and Action.

1. A Governance Subcommittee worked with the full Board to develop the new leadership vehicle to engage citizens and community organizations. It moved quickly and boldly to create this new council, first confirming the name, REACH Edmonton: Council for Safe Communities. Bylaws of incorporation for the new not-for-profit council were developed and registered with the Province in the spring of 2010, along with a vision, mission and mandate statements. REACH Edmonton is an arms length, community driven entity that is nimble and action oriented and modeled after the sustainable and successful Edmonton Arts Council.

The vision of REACH Edmonton is *A City in which every Edmontonian contributes to a community where everyone **is** safe and **feels** safe.*

As a centre of excellence that inspires citizen engagement and coordinated agency action on community safety, REACH Edmonton's mandate will be to:

- ensure the creation and sustainment of a long term preventative community safety strategy,
- enhance the leadership capacity of individuals and agencies by engaging citizens and facilitating partnerships,
- develop and share community safety information, resource tools and learning opportunities,
- research and monitor and evaluate and share promising community safety practices,
- inform and steward policy changes to encourage sound and sustainable investment in community safety and
- advise and inform Edmonton City Council, Senior Administration and civic agencies on matters related to community safety.

The Governance Committee also led the creation of a compelling visual identity for the new organization and a Facebook presence, with a new web site hub in the works for this summer. Finally, a Nomination Sub-Committee, led by Co-Chair, Lindsay Kelly, developed a strong slate of Board nominees for the foundational meeting of the new organization on June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

2. Secondly, our Board has successfully sought out and leveraged significant resources from different sources to support initial implementation of the REACH recommendations.

- The redirection of City community safety staff, resources and infrastructure support from Community Services of the City of Edmonton has been perhaps the most critical factor in our early success. The vision, trust and generous support of Community Services General Manager, Linda Cochrane, of Kathy Barnhart and of our great champion, Councilor Amarjeet Sohi, have been instrumental in helping us begin to translate the ambitious vision of REACH into reality.
- In December 2009, Edmonton City Council also set aside one time funding to kick start initial implementation of our work.
- Successful application to Alberta Justice Safe Communities Initiative Funds in the fall of 2009 has yielded funding for two three year projects, just announced in June. These funds will make possible the implementation of two of the most innovative REACH proposals: Recommendation #1 Schools as Community Hubs and Recommendation #5 Cultural Community Groups. Both projects are strong multi-

partner initiatives, engaging in total over 15 diverse organizations to work alongside REACH Edmonton, the facilitator, and our great partner, the City of Edmonton, the fiscal agent. Since the beginning of the Taskforce in 2008 we realized the powerful opportunity to align our work with the strong leadership shown by the Province and its Safe Communities Initiative and we thank the Safe Communities Secretariat for their strong vote of confidence in providing these resources to our partnership projects.

3. Thirdly, our focus on action saw the Transitional Board seed six on- the-ground projects in 2010, thanks again to the support of Community Services. These projects speak to need to coordinate, engage and foster new approaches and community driven leadership to advance the REACH vision. A few examples include supporting outreach to immigrant and refugee youth, helping community organizations learn more about the innovative Social Return on Investment evaluation model, and creating a new Out of School Time training and toolkit for ethno-cultural children youth and families.

In keeping with our focus to build on existing strengths, it's important to note that REACH Edmonton has also continued support to a number of legacy projects in community safety including the Stop Marijuana Grow Ops Coalition, led by Clr Karen Leibovici, the Good Neighbour Awards, the Sexual Exploitation Working Group and a 3 year Health Canada funded Youth and Addictions initiative.

In closing, it's always important to keep the end in mind. We have to continually ask ourselves, "How will we know we are achieving the mandate of REACH Edmonton?" It's our belief that when we see...

- Enhanced engagement of Edmontonians in community safety;
- Improved agency coordination and communication;
- Increased community knowledge, skills and resources in community safety, particularly in how to measure our work;
- Innovative policy change to support sustained investment in prevention;
- And more effective and coordinated investment of time AND money in preventing crime;

...we will know our efforts have been successful. Tonight, REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities is about to become fully active as a membership driven organization. It is a landmark evening for all of us, particularly you who have taken the bold step and joined as founding members of this new Council. Thank for taking up the challenge of REACH Edmonton and becoming a part of this journey.