

**THE BUZZ**  
**REGENT PARK FOCUS**  
**YOUTH MEDIA ARTS CENTRE'S**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
**AUTUMN 2011**

*The Buzz is a quarterly newsletter devoted to informing the broader community about the activities of the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre. This issue covers the period of September 1, 2011 to November 30, 2011. Previous issues of the Buzz are available for downloading at [www.regentparkfocus.com](http://www.regentparkfocus.com).*

**Celebrating Over 20 Years!**

In October, Regent Park Focus (Focus) celebrated over 20 years of successfully making media with Regent Park community youth. **CBC News** was even on hand to cover the weekend events; you can view the news clip here:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUHtfniB-ZI&feature=channel\\_video\\_title](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUHtfniB-ZI&feature=channel_video_title)

While the organization is now in a new space, the mandate has stayed the same: Focus continues to focus on empowering youth participants through media arts production to lead engaged, creative and healthy lives.

Focus hosted a weekend of activities to celebrate this milestone. First up to bat was Margarita Antonio, journalist and founder of youth-run community TV "BilwiVision", engaged a group around the topic of community media. This event was co-sponsored by CAP @ York U, CERLAC and Digital Storytelling Toronto.

The next evening, **Last Fridays'** kicked off as a combined Anniversary Awards ceremony at 246 Sackville Ave (Space provided by Daniels Corporation). Festivities included refreshments, speeches, music, spoken word and dance performances as well as a crowd-pleasing set by the **Regent Park Focus House Band**.

Also on the agenda was a successful "**Open House**" event that included guided tours of our new digs, screening of youth-produced videos (including several Super8 films), and radio/music recording workshops to demonstrate the studio capabilities.

Saturday's panel discussion brought together local media and community representatives to discuss, "The importance of alternative media in empowering marginalized communities and their young people." A key theme that emerged was how alternative media enables youth to break down stereotypes created by the mainstream media. The four panelists included: Tracy Chen, a Ryerson journalism student; Ian Esquivel, Regent Park Focus board member and former coordinator of the Association for Media Literacy; Dr. Kwame McKenzie, a government Senior Scientist; and DJ Damian, a studio producer who teaches youth how to DJ and conduct radio shows. Focus extends a heartfelt thank you for their contributions to an exciting dialogue.

### **Annual General Meeting**

Focus hosted its Annual General Meeting for members on October 29; this marked the launch of the **Regent Park Focus Fundraising Campaign**. As always, there was a vibrant youth presence. It was inspiring to see so many youth participating in the voting process and taking ownership for Regent Park Focus' future direction.

### **Welcome!**

At the AGM, two new board candidates were elected: **Cyrus Sundar Singh** and **Marlon Hylton**.

Cyrus is a Genie Award-winning film-maker and composer as well as a singer and poet who immigrated to Canada from India. His unique and original style as well as his passion for media, story-telling and community has much to offer Regent Park Focus.

Marlon is a lawyer who has a strong commitment to social justice and community development. Hailing from Jamaica, he received his J.D. from Osgoode Hall Law School and a finance degree from York University. He has previous nonprofit board experience and is active in the community.

### **A Resounding "Aye"! - Youth Leadership Opportunity**

At the Annual General Meeting, a motion was passed for the Board to elect one or more youth interns. These Intern Directorship positions are available to youth participants under the age of 18.

### **Changing of the Guard**

Regent Park Focus enthusiastically welcomes **Deany Peters** as the new President of the Board of Directors. Deany is a resident of Regent Park and one of Focus' original Board members when the organization incorporated in 1992 (later dissolved in 1999). Deany is a graduate of George Brown College and works as a community health development worker. Her encyclopedic memory of the organization is valued and deeply respected.

Focus also extends a very appreciative 'thank you' to the Board's former President, **Wallo Plummer**, who will now be serving in the capacity of Vice-Chair. His perspective as a resident and music/radio expert continues to be invaluable to the organization's growth and development.

### **Travel Notes: Making Friends Far and Wide**

On August 23, Executive Director Adonis Huggins and New Media Coordinator, Tyrone, ventured to Vancouver to visit various multi-media arts sites. The intention was to establish links on the west coast with like-minded organizations.

Tyrone reports that, "Most of the people we met spoke about their concerns regarding lack of funding for community driven not-for-profit organizations. It seems that ever since the Vancouver Olympics, the focus of funding has shifted."

As a result, organizations are forced to get creative to generate more revenue. W3, one of the nonprofits Adonis and Tyrone visited, does this by renting out studio space to artists and musicians in addition to operating a basement coffee shop.

Tyrone added, "Visiting these multi-media arts centres in British Columbia taught me that organizations suffer from the same funding issues across the provinces; yet, these non-profits, as a resource, needs to remain available to young artists."

Regent Park Focus extends a shout-out to all those who helped facilitate this trip and site tours.

Following up Vancouver, Emmanuel Kedini, Focus' Video Coordinator, and Adonis Huggins traveled to Japan in September. They went to learn about Japan's not-for-profit radio stations and, in turn, share Regent Park Focus' best practices. The trip included tours of FM YY, an organization that also teaches young people media arts to tell stories and discuss issues of importance, and Radio Blue Sky, which is an emergency all-volunteer public radio station. Radio Blue Sky was one of the first to begin broadcasting after the earthquake and tsunami devastated Japan in March 2011. Emmanuel and Adonis also visited some of these areas en route to Radio Blue Sky. Additionally, the trip itinerary

included an excursion to one community TV station, Our Planet TV, which will be closing due to lack of funding.

Reflecting upon his travels, Emmanuel says, "One of the most moving experiences I had in Japan was when we visited the Hiroshima Peace Museum. A Museum dedicated to remembering the atomic massacre that occurred on August 6, 1945." He also admits he was deeply impressed by the people of Japan, the relaxed atmosphere and the respect towards visitors he encountered on his trip.

Regent Park Focus certainly hopes the memories last a lifetime!

### **Guest of Honour**

Bob Marley's charismatic granddaughter, Donisha Prendergast, visited the Diva's radio club. Focus participants were delighted to meet her. The Divas' program continues to provide a safe space for young women to socialize and engage in healthy lifestyle activities. It also aims to nurture their interests and talents in technology and media arts.

### **New Fall Line-Up**

Fall program workshops began Sept. 26, 2011. These include:

- Underground Music Studio (Mondays & Friday)
- Video (Mondays & Thursdays)
- "Learn to Make Beats" (Mondays & Thursdays 5-8 pm)
- Photography (Tuesdays)
- Magazine (Wednesdays)
- Radio (Tuesdays & Wednesdays)
- Girls Radio Club (Saturdays)
- DJ'ing (Fridays)
- Divas' Girls Program (Fridays)
- Drop-In Clinic (Daily)

Offered free to youth, activities take place in our newly renovated space at 38 Regent Street. For more information and to register, please contact us via email at [regentparkfocus@gmail.com](mailto:regentparkfocus@gmail.com) or call Pat at #416-863-1074

### **New Project**

In November, a partnership was established with Crescent Town. Twenty youth there are working on a video project focused on drug prevention. This initiative is part of the **O'Connor Media Lab Project**, a collaboration between Regent Park Focus and the O'Connor YMCA. The aim of the project is to establish a satellite media lab in the O'Connor-Parkview area that can provide young people with opportunities to learn about media production and support them to carry out their own multi-media projects.

### **The Arts Network for Children and Youth (ANCY)**

Exec. Director Adonis Huggins presented a workshop at the Creative Communities symposium (Oct. 14-16) at Toronto's Harbourfront Centre, an event hosted by ANCY. The cause célèbre was sustaining youth engagement in the arts.

### **Last Fridays' – Last but not Least!**

Last Fridays' is off to a triumphant start again this fall. As you may know, Last Fridays' is Regent Park Focus' initiative to enable culturally diverse families to gather, socialize, share cultural foods and experiences, and be inspired by diverse musicians, poets and storytellers. The program takes place from October to June on the last Friday of each month (except December) and is held at various venues around the community.

Following up October's successful event, November proved to keep the momentum going - kudos to the all the talented performers who participated!

Be sure to mark your calendars for the first Last Fridays' of the new year: January 27, 2012 at the Daniels Presentation Centre located at 500 Dundas St. West. See you there!

### **Updates**

Don't forget to check out our event and activities blog online at:  
<http://regentparkfocus.blogspot.com/>

And be sure to stay tuned for updates about our new initiatives **Radio Regent** (launching January 2012) and **Regent Park TV** (programming starts Fall, 2012). If you would like to host a radio program, please contact us for an application form – we would love to hear your ideas!

### **Did You Know**

Did you know that **x** people took part in program activities offered by Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre during the Autumn 2011 season?

Or that Regent Park Focus conducted presentations to **x** people and received **x** website visitors during this same period?

We're still busy!

## **About Regent Park Focus**

Established in 1991, [Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre \(Regent Park Focus\)](#) is a not-for-profit organization located in Regent Park, Toronto. Regent Park Focus is motivated by the belief that community arts and participatory media practices play a vital role in building and sustaining healthy communities. Regent Park Focus seeks to increase civic engagement and inspire positive change by giving youth the tools and support to create artistic works and media productions.

Youth are encouraged to work collectively to develop resources that explore issues of relevance to them and their communities. These resources, along with the process of creating them, increase personal well-being, contribute to community health and address systemic barriers to equitable social participation.

[Regent Park Focus](#) is funded by [The Toronto Arts Council](#) and [Ontario Arts Council](#) and receives in-kind support from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.