

Parker's Project



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Parker's Project was inspired by Parker, a newborn boy whose body was in a park in Brantford in July of 2005. In an anonymous letter sent to police the young mother indicated she didn't know where to turn for assistance and was too afraid to approach anyone she knew about her situation. While there have been some changes in services over the last 12 years there is still a need to identify and address service issues.

A collaborative group consisting of local parenting youth, and community agencies was formed to oversee a needs assessment to investigate what pregnant and parenting youth identify as their needs in terms of support.

Teen pregnancies in Brant are 66% more common than teen pregnancies in Ontario (Public Health Ontario, 2013). Our communities have higher poverty rates, education and employment barriers, and intergenerational trauma. However, there are no comprehensive services for young, vulnerable parents.

Parker's Project was designed to empower vulnerable youth to become change makers in their community. With mentorship, training and support, youth led and participated in a formative evaluation to investigate how community agencies can better support pregnant and parenting teens

Funding for Parker's Project was provided through a grant from the Ontario 150 program and donations in-kind from the collaborative partners.

"I need the community to understand that just because you are young and pregnant doesn't mean you can't succeed in parenting."

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What We Did

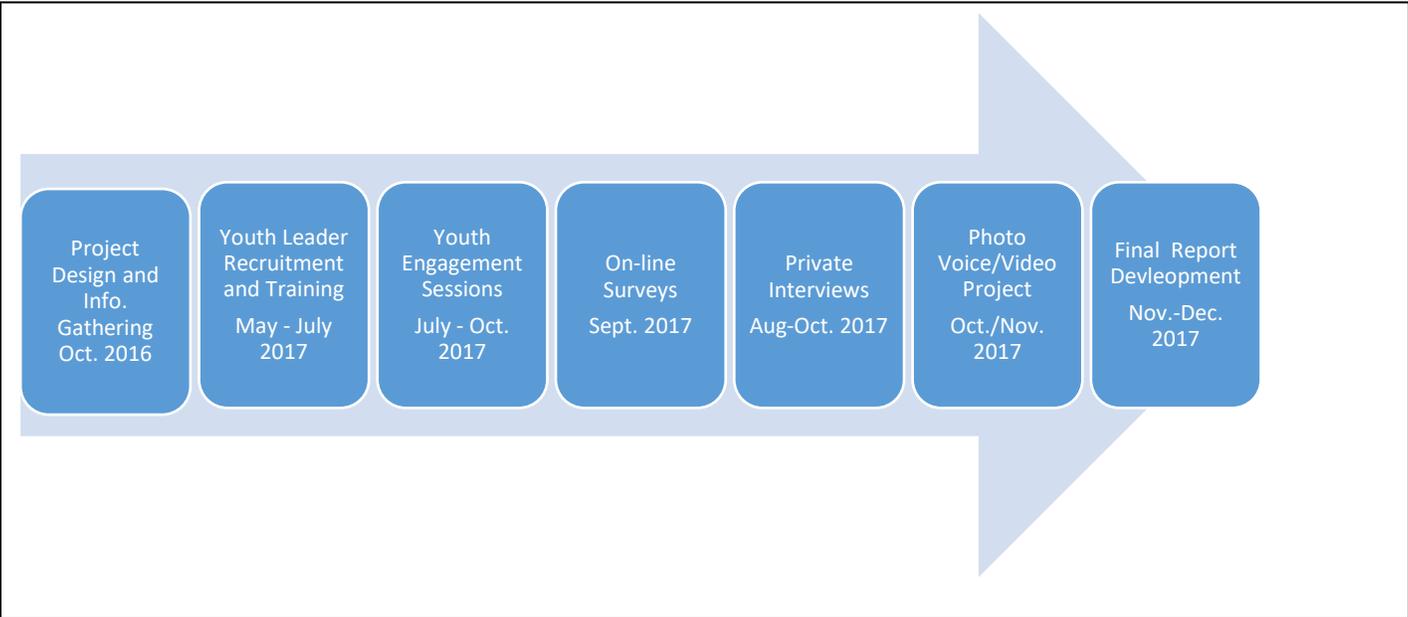
In 2016 a Youth led collaborative was established involving youth, community agencies and both the County of Brant and City of Brantford. Together this collaborative developed an outline for a needs assessment to investigate the needs of pregnant and parenting youth in our communities.

Early in 2017 a process began to recruit and train 10 Youth Leaders. Training was provided in leadership and group facilitation skills. At the same time efforts began to recruit youth to participate in Youth Engagement sessions. In total, over 150 youth, ages 15 to 29 who had experienced pregnancy or parenting in the last five years took part in the sessions. In addition, private interviews were held and an on-line survey was provided to gather additional information.

In October and November of 2017 a Photo Voice and video project were completed. These projects provided an opportunity for youth to visually show what they experience in their day-to-day lives.

Finally, in November and December of 2017 a final report was created that highlighted the information gathered and the recommendations that were developed.

“This project has been so amazing. I’m at a loss for words for what this project has done for me, my life and this community. I am overwhelmed with the joy at the change I’ve noticed within myself; to be more confident and speak up to be heard because everyone’s voice and opinion helps to make a change.”



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What We Found Out

The following chart identifies the most significant challenges in the day-to-day life of pregnant and parenting youth and the resulting needs. Finally, the youth involved in Parker's project developed recommendations for actions in the community that could assist with these challenges and needs.

	Challenge	Primary Need	Primary Recommendation
1	Day to Day Life	Financial and emotional support at home	Develop peer-to-peer volunteer support program where moms offer support and socialization Provide community funding available assist with baby supplies
2	Mental Health	Postpartum depression information and supports	Develop program to support parents with pre and postpartum mental health issues
3	Barriers to Accessing Services	Service information, parent-friendly transportation	Provide Information package of all prenatal & parenting services available locally Improve city transit operations Develop Public transit for Brant County
4	Breastfeeding	Unbiased feeding support (formula vs. breast), breastfeeding information and support	Develop PR campaign about Bottle & Breastfeeding Provide 24/7 breastfeeding support Improve marketing of current breastfeeding services
5	Community Connectedness	Social opportunities, acceptance from community	Develop "Goal Specialist" Peer-to-Peer Model Increase use of social media to address the judgment biases towards young parents
6	Childcare	Increased childcare spots, affordable childcare, on-site childcare at schools, shorter subsidy wait list	Increase number of daycare facilities Decrease subsidy waitlists Provide on-site childcare at schools with high parenting populations
7	Medical/Sexual Health	Improved nurse support, pregnancy prevention education	Continue sexual health awareness programs Provide training for professionals specific to supporting young parents
8	Employment	General employment challenges	Develop workshops geared to young parents returning into the work force
9	Cultural	Awareness of Aboriginal upbringing	Improve marketing of Indigenous services Provide knowledgeable people available in community to share information
10	Housing	Increased affordable housing units, increased family-friendly housing complexes	Develop more affordable housing units available Improve safety at family housing complexes
11	Educational	Increased post-secondary opportunities, support from educators	Increase college level courses relevant to job market in Brantford & Brant County Ensure information is available about educational goals available in community

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Who We Are

Parker's Project is a youth led collaborate that involved:

Over 150 youth, ages 15 -29, who were youth leaders, co-chairs and project participants

Community partners including:

Contact Brant,	Brant County Health Unit,
Brant Family and Children's Services,	Brantford Native Housing,
City of Brantford,	County of Brant
Brantford Public Library,	Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services,
Pregnancy & Resource Centre Brant,	St. Leonard's Community Services,
Wilfrid Laurier University,	Woodview Mental Health & Autism Services,

For more information or a copy of the full Parker's Project report please contact:

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