

**Social Planning Network of Ontario
Kids & Community Parent Readiness Project**

**All-Community *REFLECTIONS* Session
January 25-26, 2007
Community Development Halton,
860 Harrington Court, Burlington, Ontario**

In January 2007, the *Kids & Community* Project brought together more than 30 parents from the five project sites along with project staff in order to reflect on project implementation and to plan further project development.



Parents attending the *REFLECTIONS* session in January 2007 from five local sites of *Kids & Community* Project (several who had to leave early not in the group photo)

Parents and project staff from each local site made a presentation on their work to date.



North Bay parents included video excerpts of local media coverage of their project



Quinte parents used a PowerPoint presentation to summarize demeaning public perceptions about families on low income that they wanted to address in their community



Parents and staff from the Ottawa project report on major issues confronting families from diverse backgrounds in their community



Parents in the Hamilton project present on the issues emerging from their Visioning Day



Parents and staff from the Toronto communities of York, Etobicoke and Scarborough report on their early work in the Project.

Following presentations and discussion of each local project's work, attention was given to drawing out the common dimensions across all sites. Dave Hasbury, co-facilitator, offered the following summary of learning from all five

sites on their work to date, which participants felt accurately reflected the process that they were following.



Kids & Community: REFLECTIONS, Burlington, January 25-26, 2007

Summary of Themes on Inclusion and Mobilization from Parent Stories

- At the centre of each community’s development is the formation of a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) to lead the local project. In discussion, parents referred to their groups as similar to a wolf pack, since they are really strongly bonded and often provide mutual support. This notion led to reformulating the PAC for Parent Advisory Committee into the short form “PACK”.
- The PACK’s *bonding* is strengthened as parents talk about their experiences and discover similarities and concerns that they collectively share. In some communities this has happened through *telling and recording personal stories*.
- *Listening* and learning helps the parents make the *connection to barriers and challenges* of external systems to their inclusion.
- Parents are developing a variety of imaginative and creative ways to start to share their experiences with the wider community – to *broadcast* the injustice of exclusion.

- Talking about their experiences gives the parents the confidence to *act together for change – to do something*, again together as a bonded group of parent leaders.
- The PACks are intentionally reaching out to *make links and connections* with other groups with their story-telling and shared actions (*bridging*).
- Their purpose is to *act with others in the community for change* that will reduce or eliminate exclusion and promote inclusion for parents and children of families who are unjustly being left out of fully and equally participating in community life.