

Manitoulin will not be guaranteed 40 Jobs for Youth positions

By Alicia McCutcheon on May 7, 2014 Local News - The Manitoulin Expositor

MANITOULIN—The subject of the Jobs for Youth program, which pairs youth in at-risk communities with summer employment, was again brought forward at the April meeting of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) with Manitoulin not being granted special favour.

Donna Moroso, director of integrated social services with the DSB, explained to the board by way of background that the Jobs for Youth program had its beginnings in Ontario's Youth Strategy, launched in 2006. The strategy was in response to "government concern regarding the escalating rate of youth violence in urban communities," Ms. Moroso explained. "The research pointed to diminished economic opportunity, early school leaving rates, youth unemployment rates and a variety of neighbourhood-level factors, including low community participation and socially disorganized neighbourhoods all as risk factors for youth violence."

Ms. Moroso told the board that two years later, in 2008, the government introduced the Summer Jobs for Youth program as part of the provincial government's Poverty Reduction Strategy, which she defined as "helping youth to overcome economic disadvantages and reach their potential by supporting them as they gain confidence, new skills and work constructively within their communities." The funding is delivered the Ministry of Child and Youth Services.

The strategy, she added, recognizes four populations of disadvantaged youth: youth living in underserved/at-risk communities (the category Manitoulin falls under); youth at risk of conflict with the law; youth at risk of re-offending; and youth who face identified barriers to employment.

The Jobs for Youth program was launched on Manitoulin, identified as an underserved/at-risk community, in 2009. The program was also delivered in Sudbury North, Sudbury East and LaCloche, but was administered by the Sudbury YMCA, she explained.

After hearing from some of the DSB's member municipalities where the program was administered through the YMCA, where a change was requested that the DSB act as administrator of the 40 allotted positions in these areas, the ministry agreed.

"The YMCA, the ministry and DSB have agreed that 40 student placements with an allocation funding totaling \$165,985 would be adequate for the Sudbury East, Sudbury North and LaCloche areas based on the current limited ministry funding allocations," she said. "The Manitoulin Island numbers and funding allocation will not change as a result of this decision." This brings the total number of Jobs for Youth positions in the DSB to 80.

"As part of this transition, the YMCA and the DSB staff have worked cooperatively together to ensure that there is a work plan put in place for the smooth transition of the program from one service delivery agent to another," DSB CAO Fern Dominelli said. "The YMCA has been more than helpful with the DSB staff to ensure the shift is as seamless as possible."

While there was discussion of keeping Manitoulin Island's allotment of positions at 40, as it was in the past, DSB CAO explained that the 80 placements would now be distributed among the entire DSB area.

"We always placed children on the Island based on the child's priority," Mr. Dominelli said. "All applications will be based on the needs of that child, not where they live."