



The Restorative Action Program (RAP) began as a request from a Saskatoon high school, Mount Royal Collegiate, to one Rotary Club in 2002 to support and work with youth who needed help in addressing issues such as conflict, bullying and crime. Through the leadership exhibited by Rotary, the community gained a new perspective on how to support youth facing these issues. Rotary became the glue that cemented partnerships from the community. These partners helped to create and develop a program that builds social capacity so that all youth experience a better quality of life.

Today, RAP is a registered charity which operates a community-based initiative using an approach that focuses primarily on prevention, intervention and reconnection. The program is hosted in nine high schools and is sustained through a partnership between all five Saskatoon Rotary Clubs, two school divisions, provincial and municipal governments, other supportive organizations and private citizens. By providing a RAP worker in the school there is a service for all youth, to develop and practice conflict management, relationship management, and leadership skills.

“RAP has helped me through so many relationship issues between me and my peers. I always know I can turn to RAP for anything.”

RAP Student

Each year RAP is independently evaluated by the University of Saskatchewan’s Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science & Justice Studies (The Centre). Last year, The Centre identified that RAP provided direct support for 1220 students, conducted 236 Conflict mediations and provided 2173 ‘one on one’ support for students in Saskatoon alone. Each year the need for RAP by students increases. Compared to last year, there was a 14% increase in the reported number of students supported by RAP workers. In addition, the number of 'one-on-one' cases and mediations increased over last year (25% and 6% respectively). The majority of referrals to RAP continues to be initiated by young people (33% self-referrals, 9% peer referrals). RAP workers assist students with a variety of different issues and conflicts. Data analysis indicates that bullying and mental health were the most frequently reported key indicators for one-on-one cases, while bullying and physical violence was more common in mediations.

“RAP provides essential life skills for our young people – survival skills, really. It allows them to be in control of their own identity and to recognize their own personal strengths. I’ve no doubt that the RAP program has saved lives.”

Karen Peterson, Vice Principal, Walter Murray Collegiate

RAP has become a recognized leader in contributing to the support of young people dealing with the issues affecting them in the school and the community. In the Government of Saskatchewan's Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying, the government stated, "Programs such as the Restorative Action Program (RAP) in Saskatoon can be used as a model for other areas of the Province."

In 2016 W.H. Croxford high school in Airdrie, Alberta adopted RAP through the delivery of Calgary not for profit Peer Mediation and Skills Training (PMAST). Internal evaluation by the Rocky View school district identified that the majority of students who were involved with the program, and previously plagued by chronic absenteeism, had returned to school full-time. Further, it was identified that a majority of these students showed improvement in grade level achievement. Anecdotal information has credited RAP in supporting students with a multitude of issues that prevented their social, emotional and academic success.

"As a result of the preventative work of RAP, administrators are better able to focus on instructional leadership as opposed to a high number of student conflicts. This benefits our entire school community and aids in the development of a thriving city."

Erhayat Ozcan, Assistant Principal, W.H. Croxford High School

RAP has been credited with contributing to keeping young people in school. The completion of high school has long-term financial impact, not to mention the social impact. Statistics Canada states that the difference in annual salary for a young person with a high school diploma versus one without a high school diploma is over \$4,300.00 per year. In addition, the difference in annual salary for a young person without a high school diploma and a university graduate is \$13,200.00 per year. RAP provides opportunities for young people to deal with their issues so they can remain in school. This ultimately contributes to the quality of life for young people and has an overall benefit for Saskatoon.

RAP is accessible to 8,000 young people in nine high schools in Saskatoon at a cost of \$78.00 per student per year. As Canadians, we pay \$78.76 per Canadian per year, to fund the Federal Prison System. This amounts to \$2.9 Billion, not including provincial systems, court costs, etc. We have been advised that the cost to the Justice system of processing one youth in the Province of Saskatchewan is over \$80,000. The cost of RAP is far cheaper and more beneficial compared to incarceration and/or rehabilitation. A study by the *US Justice Policy Institute* says it best, "We cannot afford the financial or the societal costs of unnecessary juvenile incarceration. By shifting our focus - and our investments - to the front end of the system, we will save not only money, but also lives."

"RAP works to prevent youth from engaging in high risk and/or criminal behavior. On many occasions our Saskatoon Police Service members have worked with RAP to help young people to deal with their issues. Ultimately, this collaborative work between policing and the community has helped young people to make positive decisions and changes their behavior. We have found our relationship with RAP to be a valuable contribution to our work with youth in schools and the community."

Clive Weighill, Chief of Police, Saskatoon Police Service

The work of RAP creates a ripple effect that has immediate and long term impacts to society. Some of the key outcomes of the RAP include:

- Contributing to increased time spent on teaching and learning by school staff, thereby creating stronger, healthier learning environment for all students;
- Reduced strain on the education and justice system because of the programs multi-sector collaborative strategies;
- Students having the necessary supports to stay in school;
- More effective, efficient use of public resources through innovation and collaboration;
- Supporting youth to transition into empowered, engaged contributing citizens;
- through its myriad of contacts and community partnerships RAP has increased the community's awareness and understanding for the need to support and engage youth as contributing citizens.
- Safe, respectful communities are developed and strengthened.

Through the hard work, dedication, commitment and stewardship of Rotarians, school partners, government, supportive organizations and citizens, RAP contributes directly to academic success, school attendance, graduation, safety, self-accountability, leadership and citizenship in young people.
