

## 'BREAKING BREAD' PROGRAM



## FINAL EVALUATION REPORT



**BLACK DADDIES CLUB - 'BREAKING BREAD' PROGRAM:  
FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

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## INTRODUCTION

Black Daddies Club (BDC) and Promoting Education and Community Health (PEACH) partnered with a wide range of community-based organizations to deliver *Breaking Bread*—a program designed to address an important gap in social service programming for young and potential fathers in the Jane-Finch area. Our joint aim was to capitalize on the cultural significance of sharing a meal (aka “breaking bread”) to create a non-judgmental, autonomy supportive space where young men (especially young fathers) could convene regularly and converse on issues of fatherhood, masculinity, pro-social family life, gender equity, and pro-social behavior, including community-development and anti-violence. Within these conversations we also wanted to be able to address broader topics related to the young men’s experiences of social marginalization including racism, the racialization of poverty, and stigma associated with being a young Black father in Toronto.

The *Breaking Bread* program was conducted in the Jane-Finch area of Toronto from April through September 2011. The main project idea focused on fostering a desire in men on the cusp of adulthood to take up the positive values of manhood through a sense of self-control and commitment to values of parent involvement, healthy relationships, and positive roles for Black men in the community. It offered a nurturing environment to openly discuss and share the unique experiences and challenges related to their daily-lived experiences of being young Black men who are also fathers, and the complexities that sometimes emerge at the intersection of these three identities. Within the environment created by *Breaking Bread* young men began to identify and equip themselves with strategies to overcome challenges related to fatherhood, the criminal justice system, and education that they believed would benefit them, their families, and their communities.

The *Breaking Bread* model was not limited to the conversations that occurred in the group sessions, but extended into the community through a series of coordinated neighbourhood organizational partnerships. In coordinating these partnerships we operated from the premise that ‘It takes a healthy village to raise a healthy child/man’ and with this in mind we sought to form sustainable community partnerships that would narrow the gaps in young Black men’s access to community resources that were available to support their goals for positive manhood and fatherhood. The *Breaking Bread* program also aimed to create a support network (across neighbourhoods) of young fathers so that they can continue to offer and receive social support to/from other young Black fathers who have experienced *Breaking Bread*. These networks will be generated through the *Breaking Bread* retreat (anticipated for first quarter 2012), which is a reunion of participants from all four neighbourhoods who will convene to celebrate their contributions and commitments to their families and communities. This report outlines the history, successes, and challenges of *Breaking Bread*.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### Breaking Bread Concept Development

In conceptualizing the *Breaking Bread* program, BDC wanted to ensure the program was theoretically sound, culturally relevant for Black communities within the Canadian context, and developmentally appropriate for the youth that would be participating. We enlisted the assistance of a researcher from the University of Toronto (Dr. LaRon E. Nelson) with expertise in the design of theory-driven health promotion programs for urban youth and young adult fathers of African descent. Dr. Nelson and Mr. Hay worked together on the design of the program over the course of 4-6 weeks from Jan 2011-March 2011.

There are four major concepts promoted in *Breaking Bread*:

1. Positive self-identities as Black fathers
2. Healthy Relationships
  - Gender equitable relationships with mothers of their children and other women
  - Maintenance of co-parental relationships with their children
  - Pro-social relationships with other young men in their communities
3. Anti-violence attitudes and behaviours
4. Pride in local community and collective self-efficacy for community development

### Guiding Framework- Self Determination Theory

*Breaking Bread* is based on self-determination theory<sup>1</sup>. This is a social-psychological theory of motivation that outlines the conditions necessary to facilitate behavior and attitude shifts. *Breaking Bread* uses self-determination theory as the framework upon which group discussions are built. This theory states that in order for persons to make positive shifts in their attitudes and behaviours:

1. the target attitude/behaviour should be discussed in a supportive social context/environment (relatedness)
2. the facilitator and group must acknowledge and respect the person's right to feel and act in whatever manner he believes is in his best interest (autonomy support)
3. the person needs to develop the necessary understanding and skills to activate the attitudes and enact the behaviours (competence)

Listed below are the theoretical components as they are operationalized within *Breaking Bread*:

- **Autonomy Support-** *Breaking Bread* helps fathers identify and recognize that choices that they have in their lives. We respect their right to conduct their lives as they choose (autonomy) and do not pass judgment on any of the choices they make.
- **Relatedness-** *Breaking Bread* is a space of social support in which we acknowledge the various ties that bind us together as fathers and empathize with each other's experiences of trying to develop and accomplish goals for ourselves and our families.
- **Competence-** *Breaking Bread* promotes fathers' self-efficacy that "yes they can" accomplish the goals that they set for themselves. We promote collective self-efficacy that fathers can accomplish great things when we work together towards the improvement of our communities.

<sup>1</sup>Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78.

## **Breaking Bread Approach to Group Facilitation**

*Breaking Bread* facilitators utilize motivational interviewing<sup>2</sup> to facilitate goal-oriented motivations among the group participants.

- Motivational interviewing is a goal directed conversation that allows the group to determine what goals they want to accomplish for themselves and how they want to accomplish them.
  
- The primary role of the facilitator is to support participants' development of their own goals and their movements towards their goals. The facilitator:
  - DOES NOT offer unsolicited advice without asking permission
  - IS NOT the expert
  - IS NOT the teacher

This unique, evidence-based, approach to group facilitation is an important distinction between *Breaking Bread* and many other community programs that take more parochial approaches where the facilitator is the “educator” and the participants are positioned as the “learner.” In *Breaking Bread*, both the facilitator and the participants are learners who value and respect the knowledge and experiences that each brings to the guided conversations.

<sup>2</sup>Rollnick S., & Miller, W.R. (1995). What is motivational interviewing? *Behavioral and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 23, 325-334.

## **Innovative Multi-Modality Format**

*Breaking Bread* is implemented using video, guest speakers, and guided conversation. These strategies are consistent with the theory guiding *Breaking Bread* in that it was not an “education” session. These strategies are designed to engage participants and stimulate conversation that would allow them to draw on their individual and collective assets to bring about positive changes in their attitudes.

## **PROGRAM DELIVERY (PROCESS EVALUATION)**

*Breaking Bread* consists of three facilitated group conversation sessions (one session per week). We implemented four full cycles of *Breaking Bread* (one full cycle in each of the four neighborhoods targeted by this grant; 12 conversation sessions in total). Each *Breaking Bread* cycle was implemented in partnership with an agency located within the communities targeted. Table 1 lists the neighbourhoods where *Breaking Bread* was delivered and the supporting agencies.

*Breaking Bread* was delivered through a substantial amount of in-kind support. This includes volunteers who directly assisted with elements of the program, community referrals of young men to the group, distribution of recruitment flyers, and attendance at information sessions that were convened in the lead-up to *Breaking Bread* at each of the four neighbourhoods. *Breaking Bread* team members also participated in a series of debriefing sessions after each session (reflexive practice) and prior to launching a cycle in a new neighbourhood (preparatory practice). Table 2. displays additional process measures related to *Breaking Bread* from April 2011 through September 2011.

Table 1. Summary of Breaking Bread deliveries across four target neighbourhoods.

Breaking Bread	Dates	Jane-Finch Neighborhood	Supporting Agency	# of Attendees	Hours Devoted	
					Program Only	Total Operational
Phase 1	18/04/2011-04/05/2011	Jane-Eddystone	Promoting Education and Community Health (PEACH)	13	9	35
Phase 2	15/06/2011-29/06/2011	San Romanoway	San Romanoway Revitalization Association	23	9	28
Phase 3	27/07/2011-10/08/2011	Falstaff	City of Toronto/Falstaff Community Centre	13	9	15
Phase 4	14/09/2011-28/09/2011	Driftwood	Jane and Finch Action for Neighborhood Change	15	9	15

Table 2. Summary of Breaking Bread activities outside of the group sessions

Activity	No. of Contacts Times	Total No. of Hours Dedicated	No. of Breaking Bread Personnel Involved
Recruitment flyer distribution	7500 (distributed)	80	4
General information sessions	4	12	5
Post-session debriefing	12	20	8
Pre-cycle preparation meetings	4	12	6
Community partnership development	6	---	---
Referral of participants to community agency for services	15	6	2
Follow-up with participants between sessions	54	8	3

## SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, AND OUTCOMES

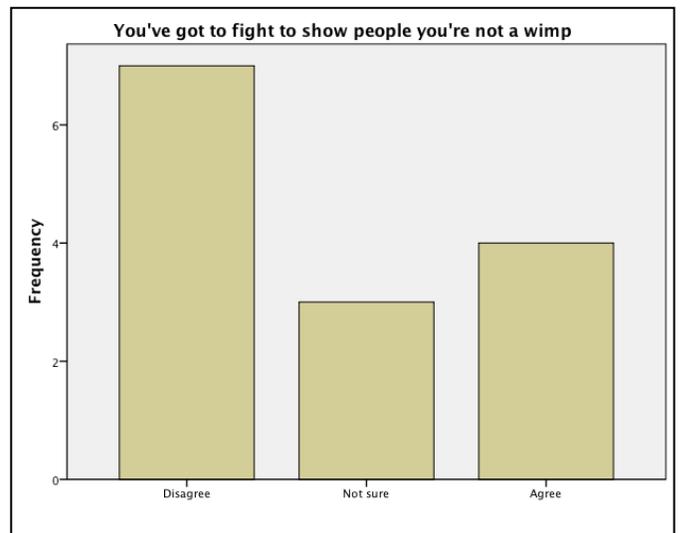
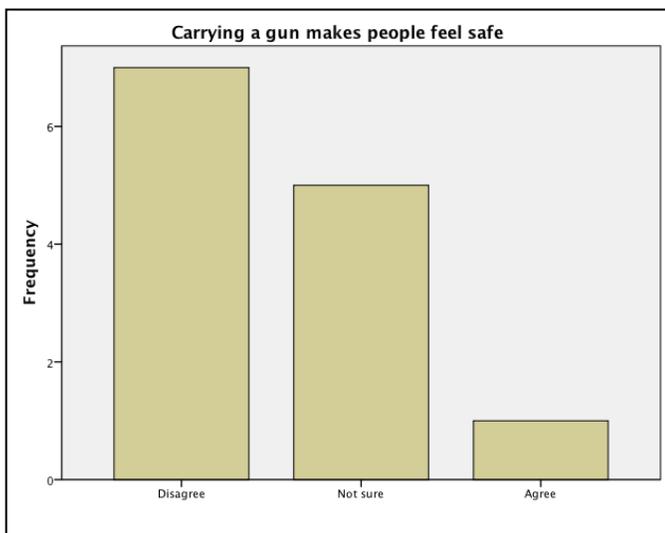
### Baseline Attitudes and Beliefs Measures

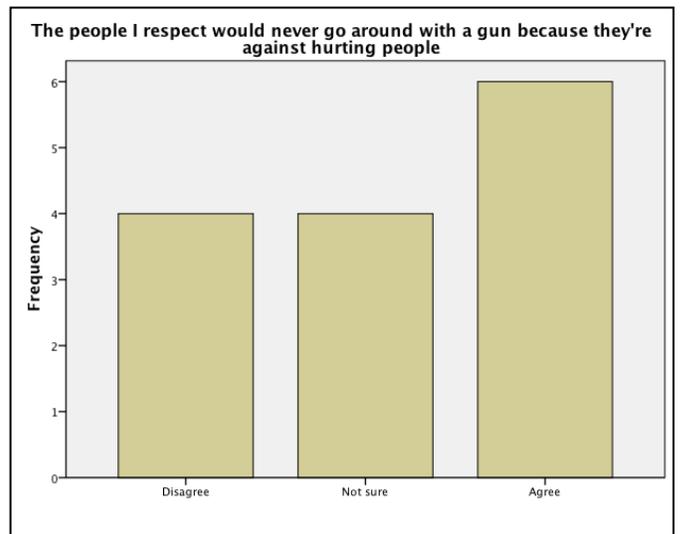
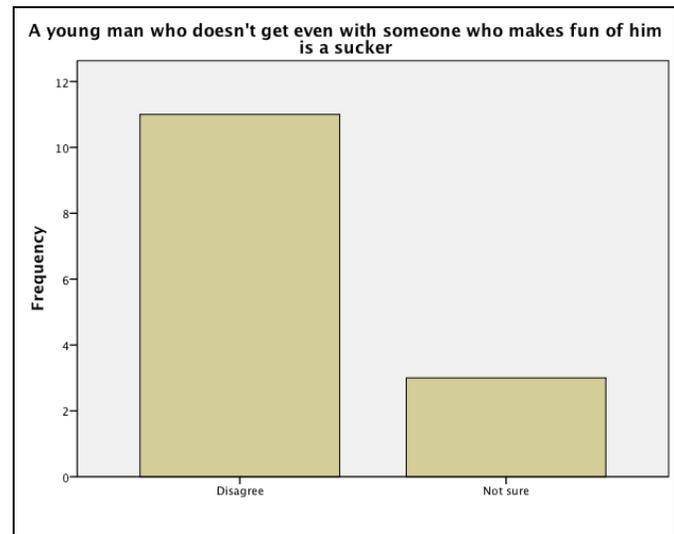
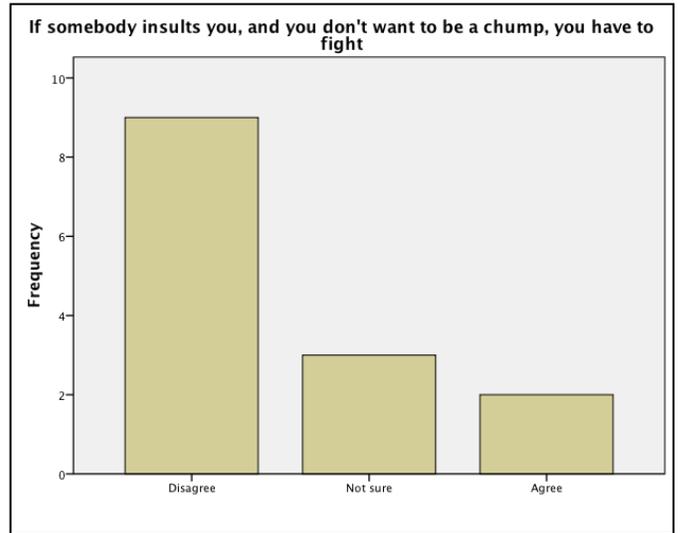
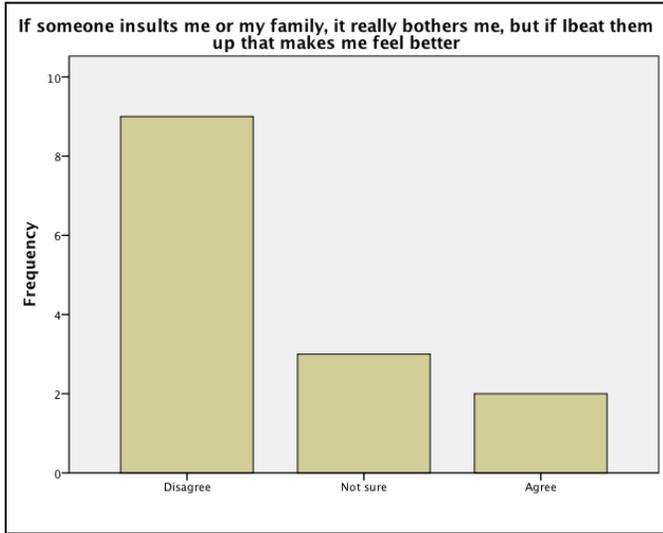
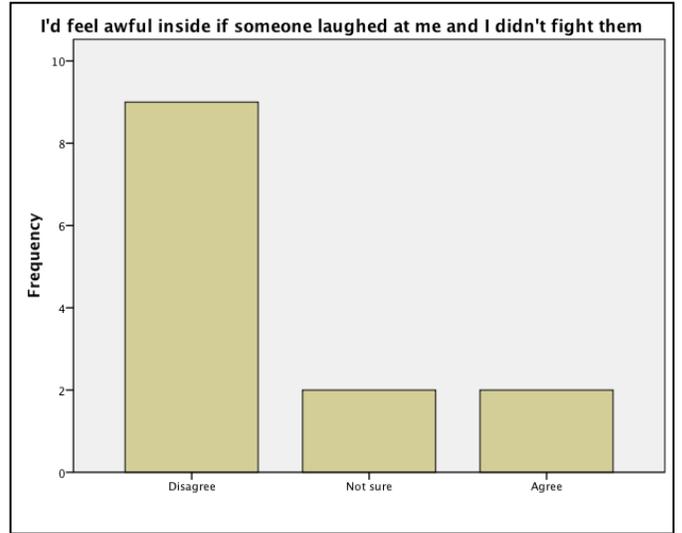
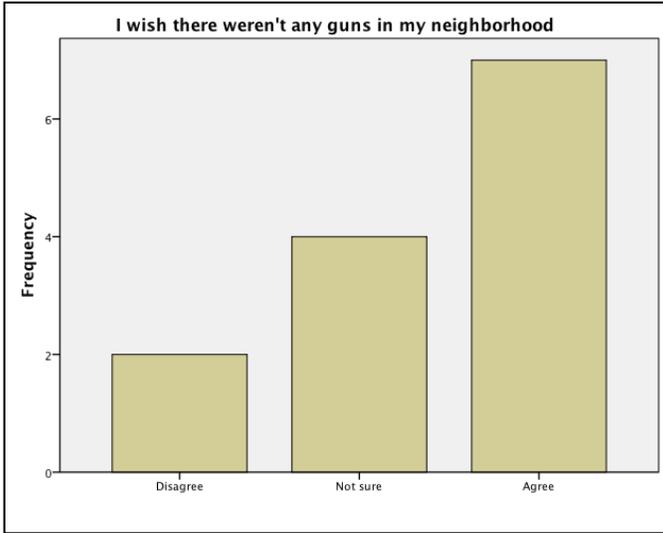
As this is the first offering a newly developed program, we de-emphasized trying to demonstrate changes in attitude, beliefs, and behaviour outcomes in order to focus on establishing feasibility of *Breaking Bread*. It is essential that a new program first establish content (e.g., is curriculum relevant and well-received) and logistical (e.g., can the target population be recruited/retained for 3-sessions) feasibility before making attempts to demonstrate the efficacy of a program. We invited young men to complete a survey when they entered in the program. These baseline data aimed to demonstrate that we had recruited men who would benefit from participating in the *Breaking Bread* program based on their scores in four domains: (1) attitude towards violence, (2) self-confidence, (3) perceived self-determination, and (4) gender equity. The selected measures were carefully scrutinized to determine whether they would measure the specific types of attitudes and belief constructs that are included in the *Breaking Bread* curriculum. All the surveys were previously validated in research studies.

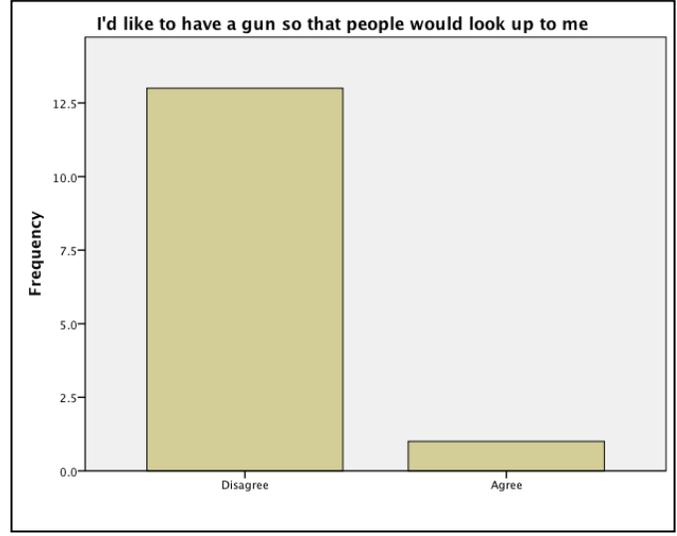
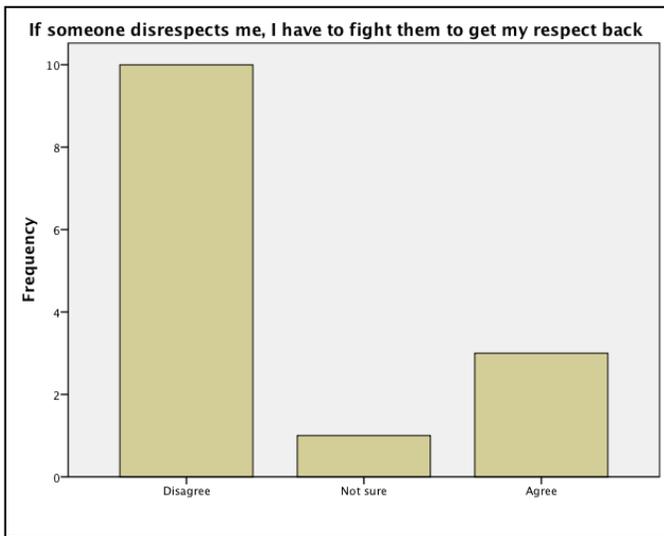
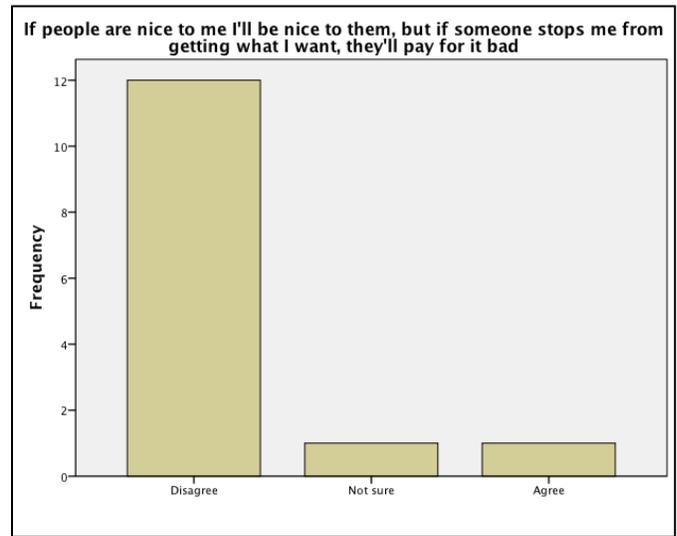
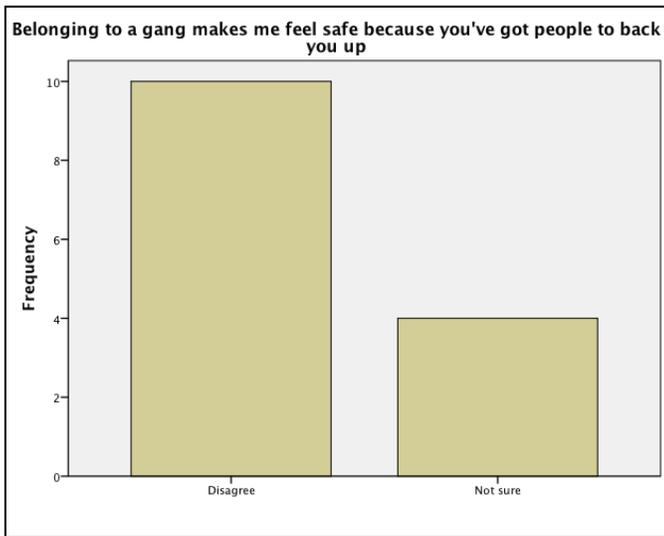
**Attitudes Towards Guns and Violence.** In accord with the safer and vital communities grant, we assessed the degree to which participants had positive or negative attitudes towards violence at the time that they entered into the program. We used the “Attitudes Towards Guns and Violence Scale” (Applewood Centers, 1996)—a scale consisting of 12 statements regarding attitude and beliefs about guns and violence. The participants were asked to indicate whether they “agreed” or “disagreed” with each statement, or if they were not sure how they felt about the statement. Scores can be between 0 and 24. Lower scores indicate anti-violence attitudes. Higher scores indicate attitudes supportive of violence as means to resolve conflict or feel safe. The average score was 6.5 and the most frequent score (mode) was 6. The results, summarized in Table 3, indicate that overall, the men did not have attitudes that were supportive of guns and violence. The following graphs display the results from the 12 items on this measure (n=14).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics Summary for Attitudes Towards Guns and Violence

Attitudes Towards Guns and Violence Summary				
Statistic	<b>Average</b>	<b>Min. Score</b>	<b>Max. Score</b>	<b>Mode</b>
Score	6.5	0	14	6







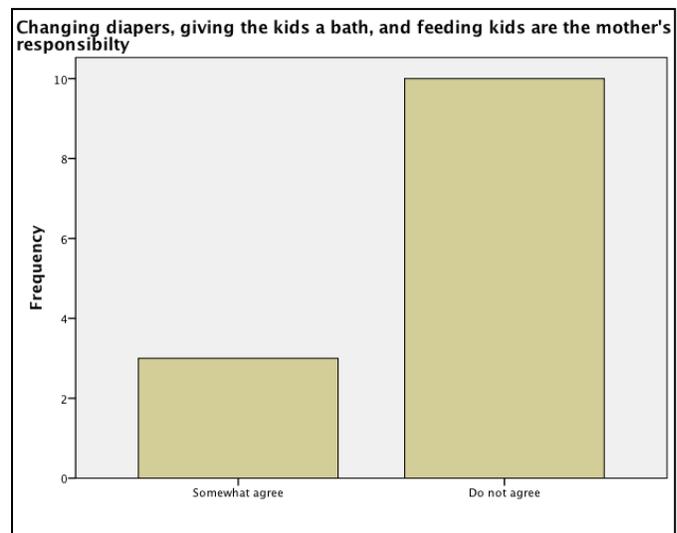
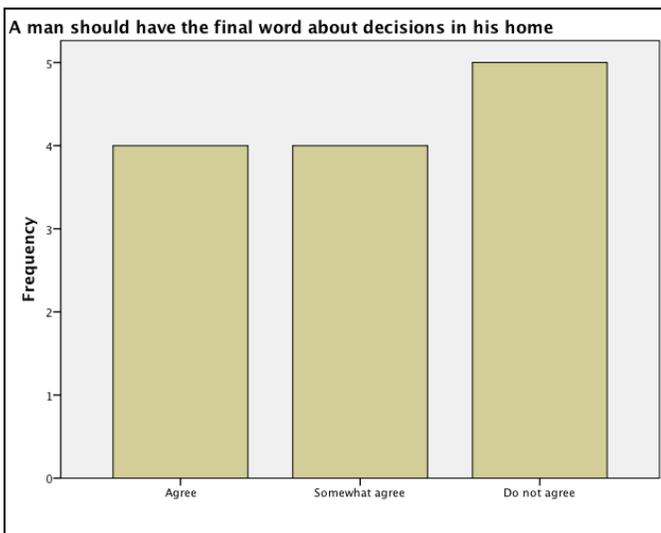
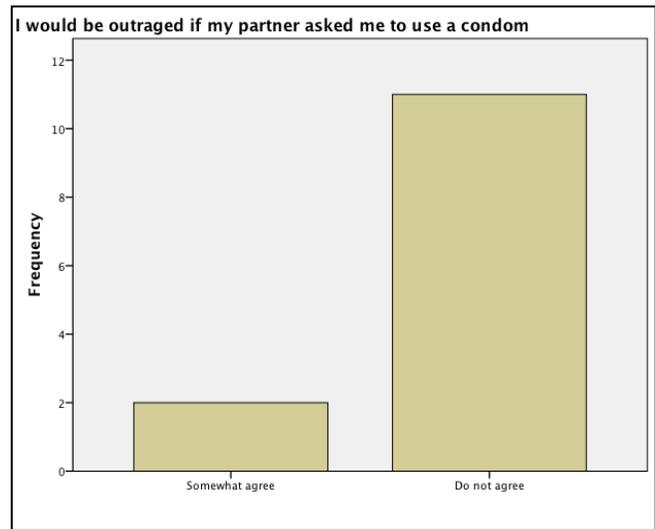
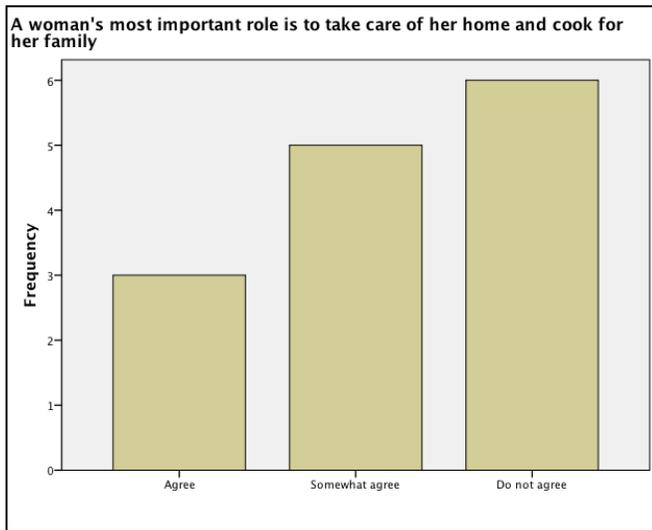
**Gender Equitable Norms.** The *Breaking Bread* program curriculum also includes discussion about men's relationships with women, including the women who are the mothers of the participants' children. It is important to address norms regarding gender equity because ensuring a safer and vital community is not limited to reducing violence between men, but must also address violence against women. We did not assess participants' actual behaviours, rather we used the *Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale*<sup>3</sup> to assess the degree to which participants agreed or disagreed with 10 statements that reflected both equitable and inequitable norms. Participants could score between 10 and 30. Lower scores indicate inclinations towards the endorsement of inequitable norms that render women vulnerable to men's power, while higher scores indicate an endorsement of equity between men and women. The average score on the GEM scale indicates that the men in the program were slightly more inclined towards equitable gender attitudes, although not firmly within the realm that would indicate solid norms that promote gender equity. The most frequent score (mode) was 23, which is an indicator of even

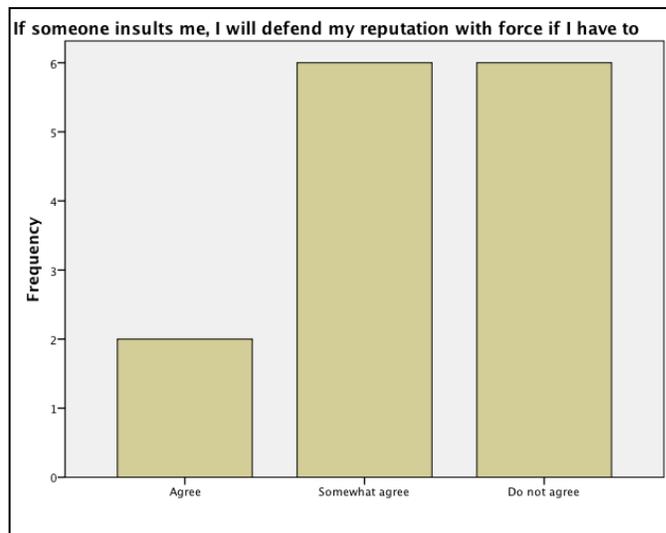
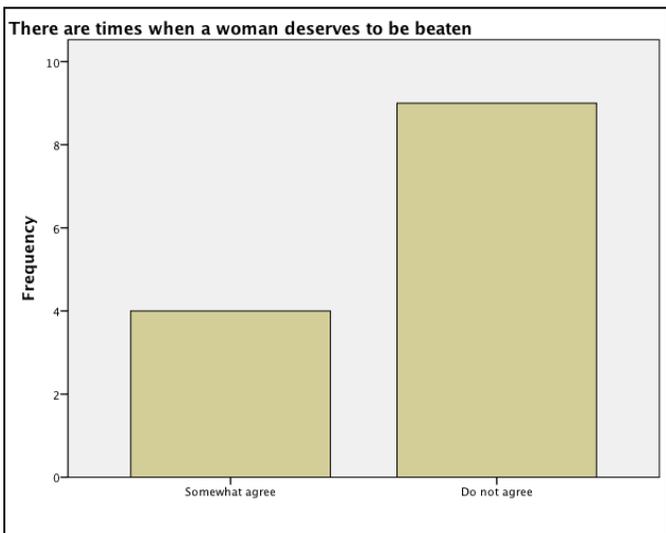
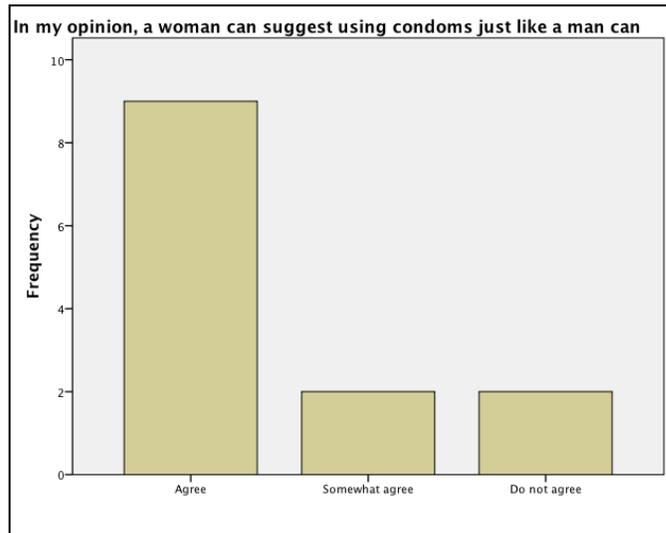
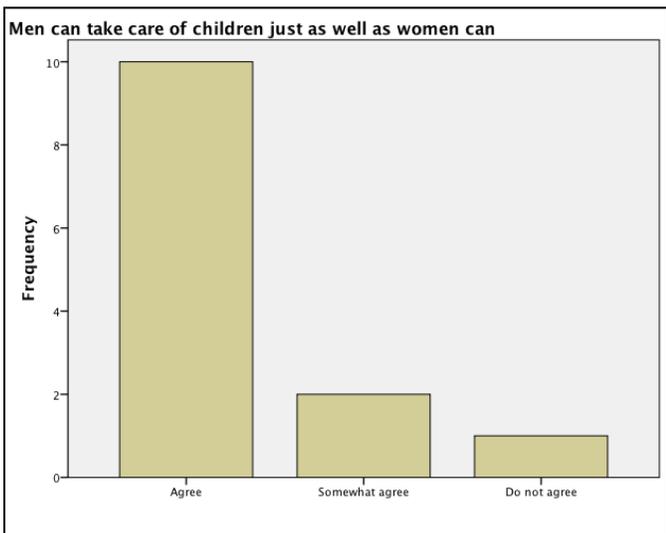
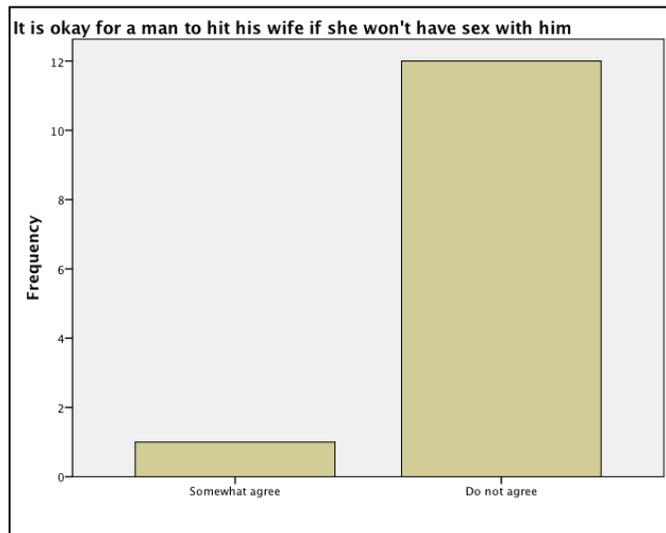
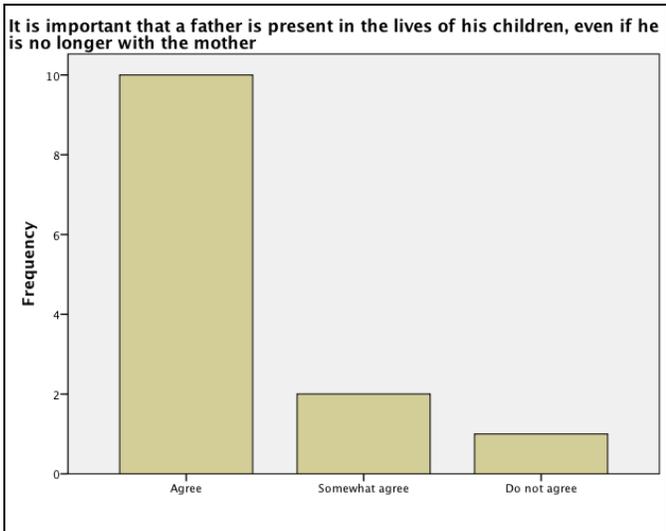
more gender equity. These results, summarized in Table 4, highlight that while there is room for improvement; the men in *Breaking Bread* came to the program with some important assets already in place. The following graphs display the results from the items on this measure.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics Summary for GEM Scale

Gender Equitable Men Score Summary				
Statistic	Average	Min. Score	Max. Score	Mode
Score	21	18	30	23

<sup>3</sup>Pulerwitz, J. & Barker, G. (2007). Measuring attitudes toward gender norms among young men in Brazil: Development and psychometric evaluation of the GEM scale. *Men and Masculinities*, 10, 322-338.





**Perceived Self-Determined Behaviour<sup>4</sup>.** This 4-item scale assessed whether the young men experienced their behaviours as fully volitional or whether they felt impelled to behave. High scores on the SDS scale indicate that one feels more self-determined—suggesting a strong internal locus of control and a propensity to make decisions that are pro-social and in their best interest. Low scores indicate that one feels a lesser degree of self-determination—suggesting a propensity to act in response to environmental stimuli that could result in the exhibition of anti-social behaviour. Table 5 summarizes the SDS scale results. Overall, the men scored low on perceived self-determined behaviour. The highest score for this measure was 4, which is only at the mid-point between self-determined versus controlled. None of the men who completed this scored solidly within the range of self-determined behaviour. This is an important finding which highlights the importance of Breaking Bread’s creation of an “autonomy supportive” environment and the use of motivational interviewing to facilitate the group discussions, since these techniques are designed to share control of the group with participants versus the traditional “educator” models where participants are treated as passive subjects who acted upon.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics Summary for Perceived Self-Determined Behaviour Scale

Self-Determined Behaviour Score Summary				
Statistic	Average	Min. Score	Max. Score	Mode
Score	3.13	2	4	3

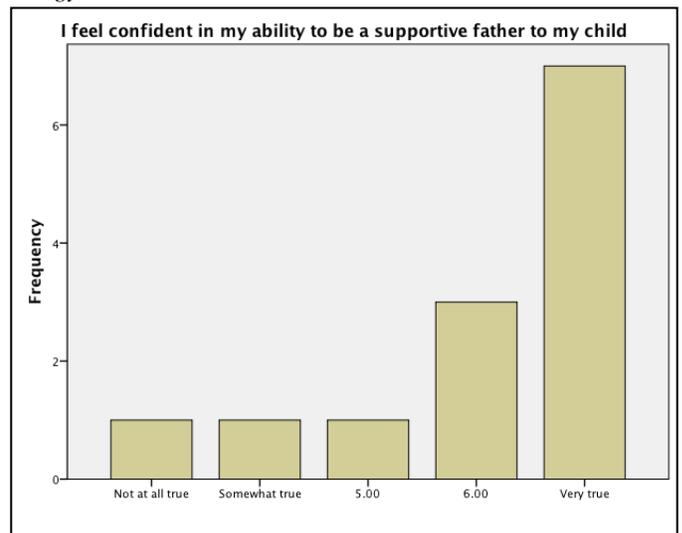
<sup>4</sup>Sheldon, K. M., Ryan, R. M., & Reis, H. (1996). What makes for a good day? Competence and autonomy in the day and in the person. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22, 1270-1279.

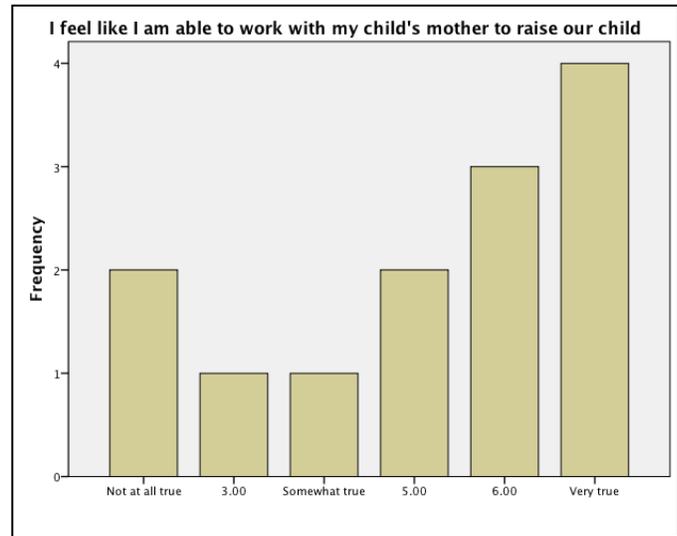
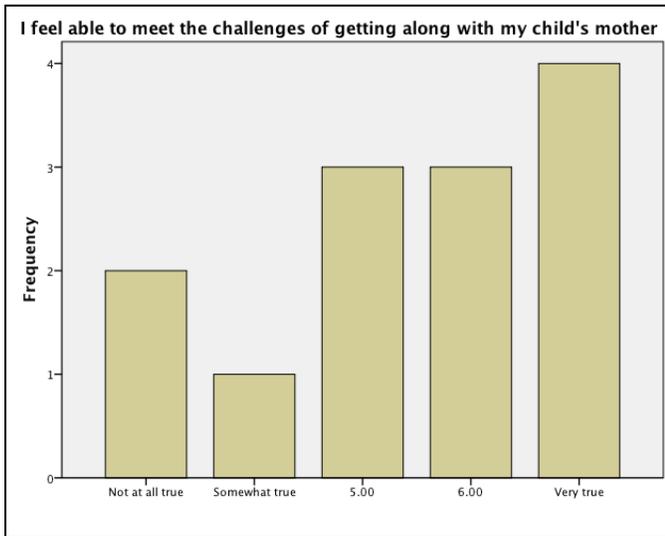
**Self-Confidence.** We assessed the degree to which the participants felt confident that they could accomplish four specific items related to fatherhood. We adapted the perceived competence scale<sup>5</sup> for use with young Black Canadian fathers. Scores could range from 1 to 7. Lower scores indicate low confidence in one’s ability to accomplish the items stated and higher scores indicate a greater confidence in doing so. Overall, the men exhibited a moderately high degree of confidence on this measure. The results are summarized in Table 6. The two equally most frequent scores on the measure were 5.75 (high score) and 7.00 (highest possible score). The young men did exhibit lower confidence on items related to getting along and working together with the mothers of their children.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics Summary for Perceived Competence Scale

Perceived Competence Score Summary					
Statistic	Average	Min. Score	Max. Score	Mode 1	Mode 2
Score	5.5	1	7	5.75	7

<sup>5</sup>Williams, G. C., & Deci, E. L. (1996). Internalization of biopsychosocial values by medical students: A test of self-determination theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 767-779.





**Future Plans for Attitude, Beliefs, and Behaviour Outcome Assessments**

Now that we have successfully established program feasibility, we plan to integrate surveys to measure attitudes and beliefs immediately following the conclusion of *Breaking Bread* and a 2-week follow up survey to measure possible changes in behaviour. Behaviour change must be measured more distally to the actual intervention since the participants need to have had sufficient time and opportunity to enact pro-social attitudes and behaviours.

**Challenges in Evaluation**

**Survey Format and Completion**

One of the challenges included use of paper-pencil format. Some research has indicated the youth are averse to taking pencil-paper based surveys since they evoke experiences of in-school examinations/tests. Due to limits in the budget, we utilized the paper/pencil format to deliver the survey. This method yielded a low uptake rate among participants (26% completion). Many programs have employed computer assisted or handheld assisted devices to deliver surveys, as these are more congruent with how youth access information. These are important considerations for future deliveries of *Breaking Bread*.

**Literacy and Accessibility**

One concern with the low completion rate for the survey relates to possible challenges in literacy. The survey had to be self-administered by the participant reading and responding to the questions. While some participants completed the survey, it is possible that the paper format rendered the survey inaccessible to other participants. In the future we will consider using more innovative methods for administering surveys such as iPad based survey measures and the use of software with audio components that allow the questions to be read to the participant through headphones. These innovations have been widely used in the evaluation of community programs and have greatly increased uptake of survey participation and reduced the likelihood that low-literacy posed a barrier to survey completion.

### **Assessing Sensitivity of Survey Questions.**

Some of the group facilitators expressed concern for whether the questions on the survey were too sensitive or whether they would be perceived as offensive to participants. Although we used survey items that have been used widely in hundreds of research studies, it is possible that the questions may be experienced differently by the young men in the *Breaking Bread* program who may have had involvement in the criminal justice system or who may have strained relations with the mothers of their children. While we did not receive formal feedback that participants found the questions to be too intrusive (at least) or offensive/traumatic (at most), we are nonetheless considering strategies that can be used to ensure that the questions are as respectful as possible of the men and their lived experiences. One way we expect to address this is to pilot test the survey measure with a small group of young Black fathers and to conduct cognitive interviewing. In cognitive interviewing, the survey respondents are asked the question and then queried about what they understood that question to mean. Respondents are then explained what the question was attempting to ask. After the question has been explained, the respondent is then asked to recommend how best to ask the question so that others will be more likely to understand the language and intent of the question. This will help us refine the survey so that it reads in such a way that allows the men to be forthcoming when answering the questions.

### **Outcome: Successful Demonstrated Recruitment Feasibility**

Over the six months that *Breaking Bread* was implemented, we reached a total of 54 participants. A total of 10 participants travelled to at least two or more neighborhood sites to attend the program. Although concerns regarding crossing into other communities' 'turf' to attend the *Breaking Bread* session were raised as a concern in the planning stages of the program design, we did not find that this was a major impediment to program participation.

One of the major challenges in recruiting this particular youth demographic was that many potentially eligible young men were under supervision of the criminal justice system, with conditions such as curfew or house arrest. This posed conflicts between the safer and vital communities grant goals and the probation/parole conditions that prevented eligible young fathers from participating in *Breaking Bread*. For example, one of the participants was arrested as he returned home from one of the sessions. He was cited for breach of his conditions of release. This unfortunate incident highlights the need for a stronger relationship and coordination between PEACH/BDC and Toronto-area probation offices. Although we successfully recruited 54 young men, we hope that stronger relationships with probation/parole offices can facilitate the temporary relaxation of some conditions that impede youth from participating in the program.

BDC/PEACH seized on several opportunities to build positive relationships between *Breaking Bread* and police services (and related agencies). We outreached to two courts that were in close proximity to Jane and Finch in hopes that staff and officials would be willing to refer young fathers to the program. We also conducted a *Breaking Bread* presentation for the probation office that services the Jane and Finch community. As a result of the presentation the officers expressed their interest in linking their clients to *Breaking Bread* the next time that it is offered. We also wrote letters of attendance for the participants of *Breaking Bread*, some of which were used in court as proof that they have been engaged in positive community activities.

### **Outcome: Successfully Demonstrated Feasibility in Accommodating Needs of Fathers**

We introduced child-minding services for any participant who would need to bring his child(ren) in order to attend the *Breaking Bread* sessions. Child-minding services were organized and supported by PEACH. We found that, even with this accommodation, some men preferred to find other arrangements for their children's supervision since this would allow them to focus more on the program, rather than having to be interrupted during the session to tend to their children at various points during the evening. It is clear from our experience with *Breaking Bread* that child minding is an important consideration that helps increase the likelihood that men can participate in the program. We will still make child-minding services available for fathers that may need it during future deliveries of *Breaking Bread*.

### **Outcome: Successfully Demonstrated Feasibility Leveraging Community Support**

BDC and PEACH believed that engaging local agencies within the four neighbourhoods targeted for the *Breaking Bread* program was essential to ensuring community uptake and support. Direct involvement from trusted community service institutions such as Jane and Finch ANC (Driftwood), San Romanoway Revitalization Association (San Romanoway), PEACH and JVS Toronto (Jane-Eddystone), Doorstep Neighbourhood Services and City of Toronto Parks and Recreation (Falstaff), helped the men to feel comfortable attending sessions that were held within their communities. This was particularly evident at San Romanoway and Driftwood where sessions were walking distance for most of those that attended those sites. Below are brief summaries of the experiences of engaging agencies in the four neighbourhoods.

#### **Jane-Eddystone (Phase 1)**

The local community partner for this neighborhood was PEACH. We worked very closely with Phyllis John at PEACH to ensure that the *Breaking Bread* group was advertised widely in the community and that all resources and equipment needed to run the group were available at the start of the group. One innovation that emerged from working with PEACH was the idea of involving young fathers in recruiting participants for the group. One of the young fathers (16 years old) who attended the *Breaking Bread* session at PEACH found the information relevant and helpful to him and his life as a young man and father. He was very enthusiastic about spreading the word to other men from his community who were also fathers and that he felt could benefit from a program like *Breaking Bread*. Harnessing this young man's enthusiasm was an important component of the program that helped to build the young father's self-confidence and to have a stake in the program and in involving his community. One lesson learned from his outreach effort was that many young fathers' affiliation with gangs prevented them from crossing rival territories to reach the PEACH site. This helped us realize that future deliveries need to incorporate even more sites than the four funded by this grant.

#### **San Romanoway (Phase 2)**

In this neighbourhood we partnered with San Romanoway Revitalization Association. We worked closely with Joseph Clayton who, like our previous experience at Jane-Eddystone, supported the space and logistical needs of conducting *Breaking Bread*. Due to strategic adjustments made based on lessons learned from Phase 1, we had our highest turnout at this site (23 participants). PEACH also continued to provide logistical support for such things as food delivery. PEACH also supported us by identifying a charismatic young woman from the San

Romanoway neighbourhood to help disseminate information about the *Breaking Bread* sessions happening in San Romanoway. We observed that many young men were more receptive to her outreach than they were to the male members of our outreach team. We also found that the young male San Romanoway residents who attended the sessions all said that they were motivated to “check out” *Breaking Bread* because of the introduction they receive from the outreach team. The dual support provided by PEACH and San Romanoway generated a synergy that helped the Phase 2 of *Breaking Bread* work with amazing efficiency and professionalism.

### **Falstaff (Phase 3)**

In this neighborhood we worked closely with Falstaff Community Centre. Consistent we lessons learned from Phase 1 and 2, we identified a peer recruiter for the Falstaff neighborhood. The peer recruiter for Phase 3 came to our attention during the Falstaff general information session. We found that the attendance numbers increased from week to week as more fathers from the Falstaff community learned about the *Breaking Bread* program from the peer recruiter and other Phase 3 attendees. One unexpected development was that young men from Phase 2 also attended some of the Phase 3 sessions. We queried the young men about their repeat attendance and learned that they believed the program was significant because it was the only space where they felt comfortable speaking about their experiences. Nonetheless, we found that some of the participants who were Falstaff residents were concerned when they noticed that some participants were not from the immediate area due to the colours that they were wearing (Red and Blue). This prompted two of the participants to leave one of the sessions early. We also had some men that had to travel long distances to attend the sessions; however we benefited from the in-kind support provided by Wendell Adjetey, case manager/employment counselor, with the JVS-Prevention Intervention Toronto (PIT) program in Jane and Finch. Wendell also made himself and JVS-PIT services available to participants who were not clients of the agency. This resulted in non-JVS youth developing rapport and relationships with Wendell, and ultimately the uptake of JVS-PIT services such as employment and resume building.

### **Driftwood (Phase 4)**

In the final phase of *Breaking Bread* we partnered with the Jane and Finch Action for Neighborhood Change (ANC). We also relied on PEACH and JVS-PIT for logistical support and peer recruiters. Mr. Wendell Adjetey, identified and secured the peer recruiter for Phase 4. This recruiter was an excellent choice because he was a resident of the apartment complex adjacent to the Phase 4 venue. The assistance of the community partners, the peer recruiter, and the close proximity of the recruitment catchment to the *Breaking Bread* all contributed to high session-to-session retention in this phase. The general information session for Phase 4 even turned into an impromptu *Breaking Bread* session with 14 young men carrying a for 3.5 hour conversation on a range of topics from the importance of grandparents in our community to challenges fathers face negotiating the court system. This is a prime example of the reputation and excitement that was generated by *Breaking Bread* over the course of the four phases. It was also helpful to have a “neutral” program such as JVS-PIT who could interface with *Breaking Bread* across all 4 phases. Mr. Adjetey attended most sessions and served as an important source for attendees in all phases.

**Conclusion.** Through leveraging community support, the BDC/PEACH partnership was able to create spaces in local communities where men could conveniently and comfortably access the program and get linked to important social services in the community.

### **Guest Speakers**

Another way that we leveraged community support was by utilizing guest speakers. The speakers volunteered to share their own stories of successes and challenges with fatherhood. The speakers enhanced the discussion by engaging youth and encouraging them to commit to community level engagement and to being the best possible father to their children. The speakers also encouraged participants to vision, plan, and set goals and priorities for themselves so that, despite the reality of their current situation, they will always strive to act in ways that serve the interests and well-being of their children, families and communities. Summaries of the two guest speakers are listed below.

**Dalton Higgins** is a music programmer, pop culture critic, author, broadcaster and journalist. He is also Canada's foremost expert on hip hop culture. Dalton Higgins is an arts programmer at the Harbourfront Centre and a facilitator in the *More than a Haircut* Barbershop Project program that promotes positive fathering in the African-Canadian community. Mr. Higgins' latest book is *Fatherhood 4.0* and features stories, memories, insights, and revelations about fatherhood from thirty of Canada's most acclaimed multicultural personalities, intellectuals, entertainers, athletes, and public figures.

**Anthony Davis** also known as PECULIAR-I was born in Kingston Jamaica and went on to would eventually complete his education as a Civil Engineer at Centennial College in Toronto Canada. He is a prolific and peculiar poet who offers solutions to many of the global issues that the world is currently facing. Mr. Davis has released a critically acclaimed album "They Called Me Madness" which is already hailed as a timeless classic!

### **Outcome: Successfully Demonstrated Feasibility in Facilitating the Curriculum**

The BDC team aimed to create and open, safe, respectful environment for youth to converse honestly about their experiences. Each session was led by 2 facilitators and documented by 1-2 persons. Facilitators found that the outline and goals for each session were too vast to have a fruitful discussion within which participants could leave with a digestible amount of information. Facilitators found that it was necessary to let the conversation be more organic, so as to allow each participant the space to voice themselves. As well facilitators found that it was necessary to shorten the amount of time that participants would view the video components to allow for a more comprehensive discussion. By the final session we showed excerpts of the movies and documentaries, supplemented with print media such as books, which were well received.

Each session featured a visual component (e.g., book, movie or documentary), guest speakers, and a guided conversation. We found that participants really gravitated to the videos that were viewed. Some participants said that they were moved by it because they could directly relate to the topics that were raised which ranged from fatherhood, violence and racism and systemic barriers to civic and economic participation. These strategies are consistent with the theory guiding *Breaking Bread* in that it was not an "education" session. It was designed to engage stimulate conversation that would allow the fathers to draw on their individual and collective assets to bring about self-directed changes in their attitudes.

In addressing how young men reflect about their position in their communities, one component of the program exposed young men to the ideas of famous Black writers or artists who had struggled with their identities as fathers and their own fatherhood, with the goal of providing a way for the young men to relate their struggles with others and reduce potential feelings of hopelessness and isolation. Facilitators and guest speakers also used themselves as examples for how one can overcome adversities and serve a meaningful role as a father. These particular discussions also provided avenues for the Black youth to discuss and challenge the conditions and negative stereotypes that are socially imposed on their lives as Black men. Facilitators repeatedly drew references between the discrimination faced by Black males in Toronto and the creative (and effective) measures adopted during the 60s and 70s to challenge institutionalized white supremacy, as a template for how they might wish to frame meaningful local action to challenge oppression and other forces of corruption that impede community development.

Participants of the *Breaking Bread* program were asked what motivated them to come back to the Breaking Bread sessions. Below are some of their responses:

“We need venues like this (Breaking Bread) where Black men can work through their frustrations.

“These programs provide stability, a place to be appreciated.”

“I love the people...good environment...something I like...I’m happy to come talk to some man and see everything bless...when I’m talking, I’m learning, and when I’m listening I’m learning”

“To see a space like this to see fathers in the communities, husbands, this is opposite to what people think...speaking about deep real issues that affect the community”

“As old I’m am...first time I have been in a group like this to speak about relationships...everybody listens, everybody speaks...this is what is good about it...the community is unique...if you can do this 3 times a month...you never know it may stop something out there...this is creating a way for youth to find themselves...their inner self...I really want to be part of the group...I’m not too old to learn...”

“I have never been to a group where the main focus was black fathers...it resonated with me”

### **Breaking Bread Retreat**

Based on our experiences and conversations with *Breaking Bread* participants and other community service providers, we assessed that there is a need for a follow-up component to this 3-session program. Specifically, there is a need for a space that would bring men who participated in the *Breaking Bread* Program together to expand on the relationships and lessons of the program. The *Breaking Bread Retreat* through collective action, continued learning and inter-generational influence seeks to bring men together, free from distraction, to focus on building both individual and communal responses to address the challenges that young Black men face as individuals and fathers. The retreat will be a cross-site (cross-neighbourhood) reunion that will help the men to develop a clearer understanding of personal, communal and systemic barriers that work against young Black fathers and the civic tools and personal skills that they can use to navigate and overcome these barriers. The retreat is estimated to take place in January 2012.

### **Breaking Bread Team**

**Brandon Hay**, Director and Facilitator. Mr. Hay is the Founder and Executive Director of Black Daddies Club, which was started in November 2007 to address the need for spaces for Black fathers who feel isolated for various reasons. Brandon has a background in marketing, event planning and music business administration. He has also facilitated for the Region of Peel, More than a Haircut –barbershop project, TDSB, TCDSB, June Callwood Centre, Urban Alliance on Race Relations, and Ryerson University.

**LaRon E. Nelson, PhD, RN, NP**, Technical Advisor and Volunteer. Dr. Nelson is an assistant professor of nursing and paediatrics at the University of Toronto and Director of Research for the Young Families Program at The Hospital for Sick Children. His clinical specialty is in the primary health care of adolescent parents and their children. Dr. Nelson's research focuses on the development of culturally appropriate co-parenting promotion programs for African Canadian and African American youth and young adult parents.

**Phyllis John**, Wraparound and Logistics Coordinator. Ms. John managed wraparound services and the school-away-from-school program at PEACH. She also facilitated a weekly young mothers group at the organization in addition to managing the program grant under which *Breaking Bread* was funded. Phyllis served as the primary liaison between Black Daddies Club and PEACH and work closely with Mr. Hay and Dr. Nelson to develop the plan for the rollout of *Breaking Bread*. Ms. John has years of experience working with marginalized youth and previously successfully managed youth-centered programs in the Regent Park area of Toronto.

**Paul Bailey**, Facilitator. Paul Bailey is an undergraduate student at York University pursuing a B.A., Hons. double major in history and social science. His work focuses on community level engagement with Black youth. He has worked as a student organizer with the York United Black Students' Alliance, and currently works in an organizational capacity with CHRY Radio Inc., as a member of its Board of Directors.

**Junior Burchall**, Facilitator. Junior Burchall is a former middle school teacher, Reading Specialist, freelance writer, Afrikan History instructor and author of three children's books, *Look for Me in the Whirlwind: A Story of Marcus Garvey*, *Freedom's Flames: Slavery in Bermuda* and *The True Story of Sally Basset and Dame Lois: The People's Advocate*. He holds a Master's degree in Literacy Education from Mount Saint Vincent University. His fourth children's book, entitled *By Any Means Necessary: A Story of Malcolm X*, is tentatively scheduled for publication in the fall of 2012.

**Knowledge**, Facilitator. Knowledge is the proud father of two young children. He is a dynamic and dedicated community organizer currently involved with the Nia Centre for the Arts, *Breaking the Cycle*, and facilitating after school programs in Toronto's East End. Knowledge has been involved in community level engagement for a number of years, being published in *Sway Magazine's Black Daddies Club* column in 2010, also being featured in the Macaulay Child Development Centre's *More Than A Haircut* documentary in 2009, and co-hosted a Radio program on CHRY 105.5 *Zion Train* in the same year. Knowledge is, currently building an organization, *Our Time Enterprises*, designed to train youth, youth trainers alike.

**Chevy X**, Project Evaluator. Chevy X is an undergraduate student at York University pursuing a B.A., double major in international development studies and Latin and Caribbean studies. He has worked as the evaluator for *More Than A Haircut* Project and is currently working on his first full length documentary entitled "From Slaveships to Relationships: Narratives of Healing."

**Jermaine Bagnall**, Video Data Collection. Jermaine Bagnall currently works as a Director, B-Camera Operator/Camera-Assistant, and Editor for *Emerge* and *See Media*. He holds a Hons. Bachelor of Arts Degree in English rhetoric and media studies and a Masters of Fine Art, in documentary media. Jermaine has produced and directed two award winning films, *Rambivalence* and *Walking the Same Earth*. He followed these pieces with his first documentary project that focused on homelessness within Sudbury.