

*Town of Sylvan Lake  
Family & Community Support Services*

*2006*

*Community Asset & Needs Survey*



2006 COMMUNITY ASSET & NEEDS SURVEY

OBJECTIVES ..... 3

PART I A. NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOPICS ..... 4

PART II A. PRIORITIES -CHALLENGES..... 5

*CHILD CARE*..... 6

*ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE* ..... 7

*HOUSING FOR LOW INCOME* ..... 8

*COMMUNICATION- CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH RESOURCES*..... 9

*SERVICES FOR SENIORS* ..... 10

*PARENTING* ..... 11

*FAMILY VIOLENCE* ..... 12

*EMPLOYMENT* ..... 16

PART II B GROUPS IN NEED ..... 17

PART II C PRIORITIES – BARRIERS..... 18

TELL US....HOW DO YOU FIND OUT ABOUT SERVICES OR EVENTS? ..... 19

PART III LOCAL SERVICES & SUPPORTS - AWARENESS OF LOCAL SERVICES ..... 20

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED..... 22

COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 23



## OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the 2006 Community Asset & Needs Survey is to provide a framework for program and services planning and decision-making. The asset and needs assessment is the first step in developing an ongoing community process for social planning in Sylvan Lake.

This first step has involved gathering information to determine community awareness of existing program and services, common community issues, views and opinions about the types of services that are important to the community and what the greatest challenges families living in Sylvan Lake are facing.

Our hope is that the Community Asset and Needs Survey will provide the basis of information needed to generate discussion within our community that will help to align and orient organizations in their services planning and offer direction to address the identified issues, challenges and needs of children, youth, families and seniors.

*3500 surveys were distributed to Town of Sylvan Lake & Summer Villages households.*

*640 or an 18% response rate means that results of the survey are valid and representative of the general population and effective measure for use in community programs & services planning.*

*Who provided the survey data?*

*Respondents described their household as:*

1. One or more seniors	24 %
2a. Two adults under 60	26 %
2b. One adult under 60	10 %
2c. Two adults with children under the age of 17	38 %
2d. One adult with children under the age of 17	2 %
2e. One or more people under 18	

*Respondents have lived in Sylvan Lake*

3a. less than one year	11 %
3b. 2 to 5 years	27 %
3c. 6- 10 years	20 %
3d. more than 10 years	19 %
3e. more than 20 years	18 %

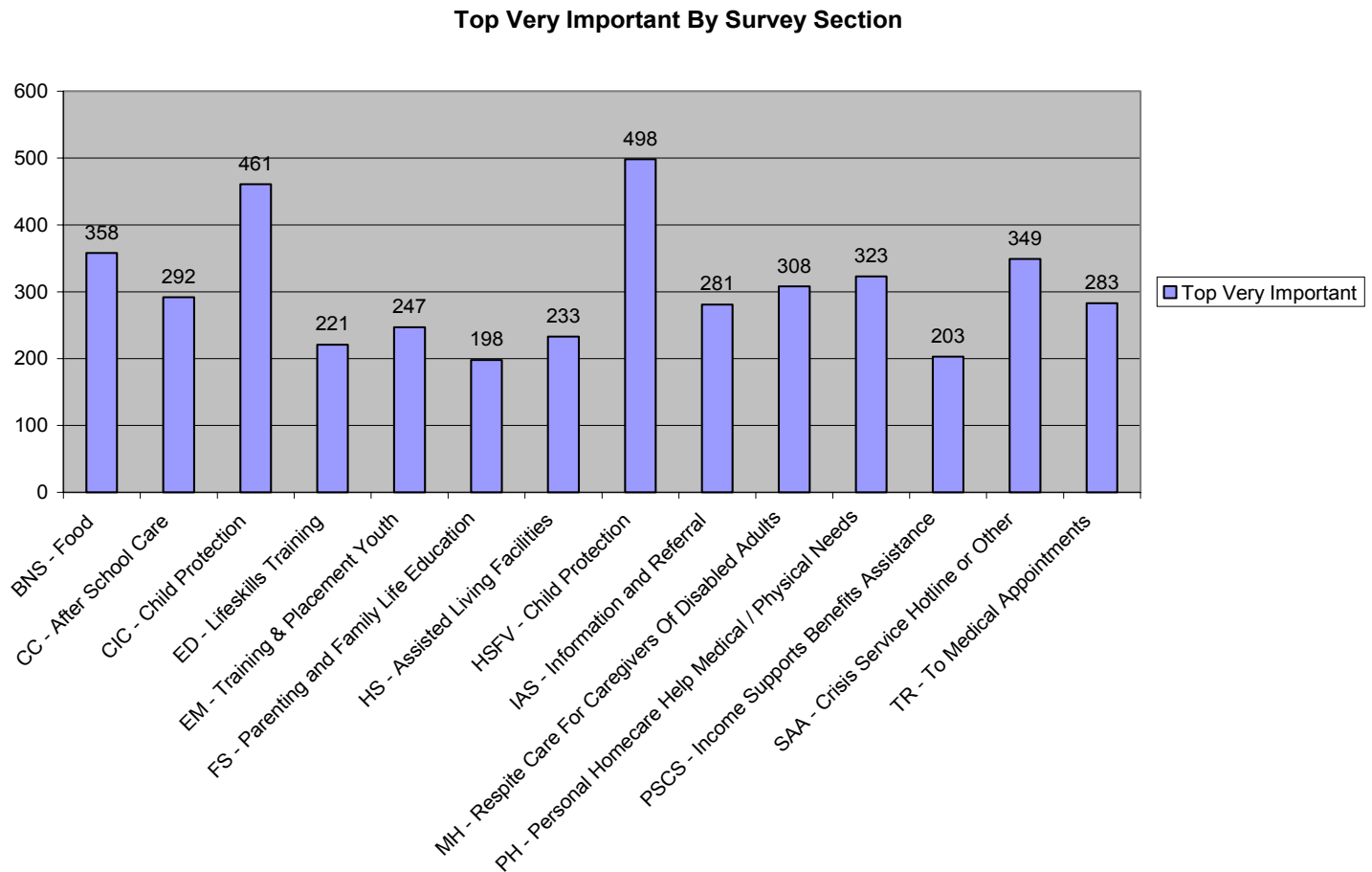
5 % did not response to this question

## PART I A. NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOPICS

14 topics were provided with a number of related services. Residents were asked to give their opinion how important each service is to the community of Sylvan Lake.

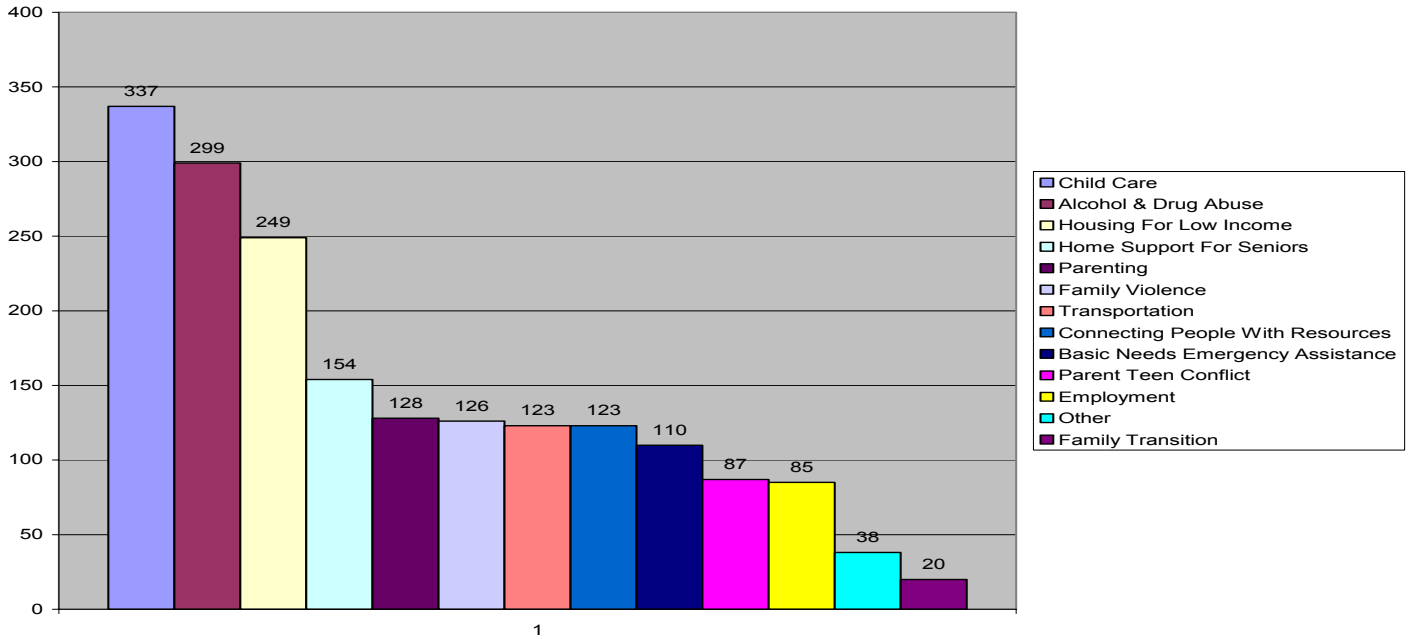
1. Basic Needs - BNS
2. Childcare – CC
3. Crisis Intervention/Counselling – CIC
4. Education - ED
5. Employment –EM
6. Family Services – FS
7. Housing - HS
8. Household/Family Violence & Related Issues – HSFV
9. Information about Available Services - IAS
10. Mental Health –MH
11. Physical Health - PH
12. Public Safety & Community Services – PSCS
13. Substance/Alcohol Abuse – SAA
14. Transportation - TR

The table below shows the top *Very Important* service in each of 14 topics provided.



**PART II A. PRIORITIES -CHALLENGES**

**Residents were asked in which of the following areas families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



The community’s response to this question gives us an opportunity to look at our existing services and program priorities and mandates; as well as our capacity to enhance these services, and/or to develop and deliver new services where service gaps exist.

On September 20<sup>th</sup> 2006 community organizations, agencies, volunteer programs and service providers were invited to participate in community joint planning session to review information provided from the survey data.

At the end of the joint planning session smaller groups were tasked to continue discussion, identify existing and new opportunities to address 3 priority challenge areas including Childcare, Alcohol & Drug Abuse, and Housing for Low Income. The fourth choice area: Connecting People with Resources was selected by the planning session group participants. Each of the tasked groups met three times between September and November 2006. Recommendations presented by the groups are included on pages 23-26.

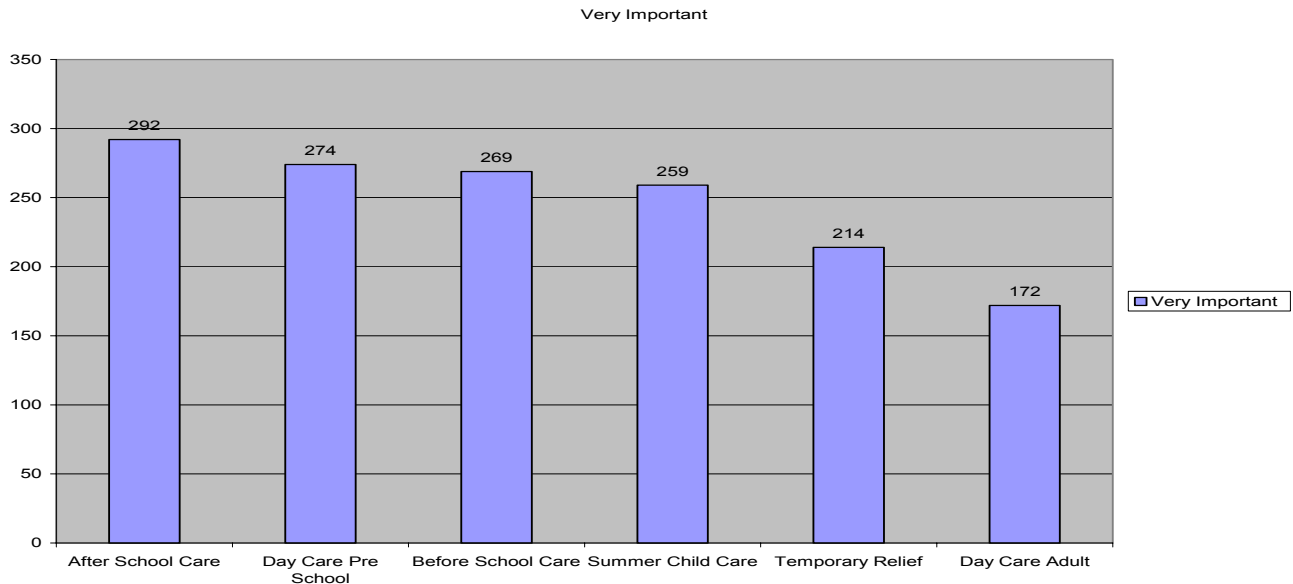
**Community services workers, agency representatives and volunteer organizations attending the community joint planning session rated Connecting People with Resources as a priority challenge area.**

Tables on the following pages are community responses to the challenge areas and services they rated as very important.

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### CHILD CARE

**53% said Childcare is an area that families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



#### Part I Topic - Childcare – Services rated as *Very Important*

88% - before & after school care combined (only 14% rated the service as not important)

43% - daycare for preschool

40% - summer care and

33% - temporary/occasional parent relief services

Childcare options are different from community to community though most are experiencing decreases in the number of full-time licensed daycare centers and out of school care. Sylvan Lake has seen the closure of 2 full time day care centers since 2000.

Razzle Dazzle Family Day Home Agency operates licensed full time/part time family day home childcare and has the capacity for 30 day homes. (Approximate spaces: 180 children).

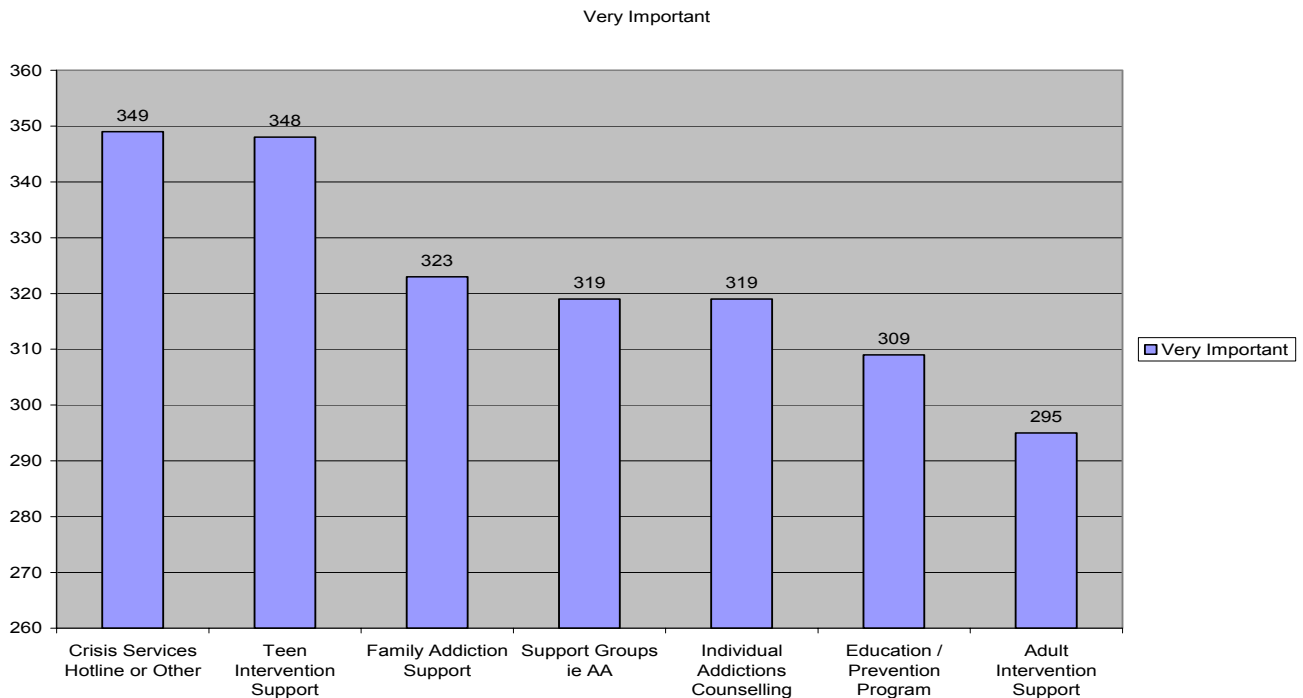
Sylvan Lake School Age Care Society operates two licensed before and after school care programs. The programs are offered at Steffie Woima & CP Blakely schools and have a capacity of 50 full time spaces. The program also offers full time out of school care during the summer and school breaks.

There are an undermined number of unlicensed private childcare givers in the community that can be found through community social networks, preschool programs, classified and community board advertising.

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

**48% said Alcohol & Drug abuse is an area that families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



#### Part I Topic – Substance/Alcohol Abuse – Services rated as Very Important

55% - Crisis Services

54% - Teen Intervention support

50% - Family Addiction support

50% - Support Groups (such as AA)

50% - Individual Addictions counselling

48% - Education/Prevention programs

46% - Adult intervention support

Crisis and help lines, addictions counselling and AA groups support individuals and families with drug and alcohol addictions.

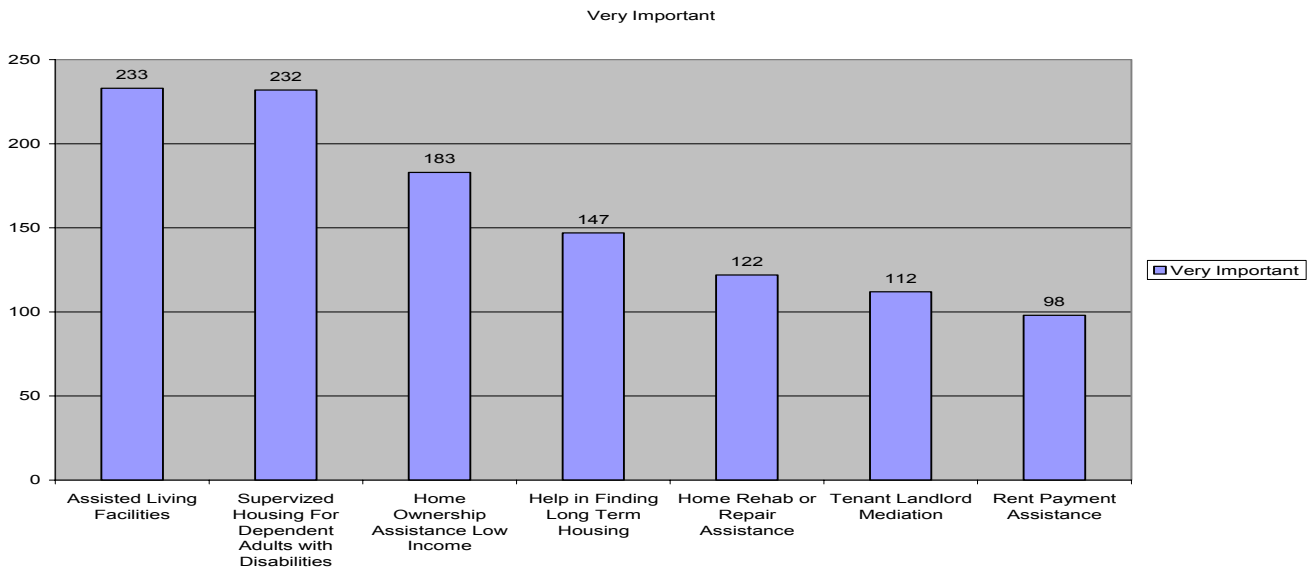
Drug and alcohol addictions counselling is available through mental health and AADAC offices and school programs.

Few intervention support services are available for adults and teens; although schools, RCMP and community support workers offer various preventative, education and awareness programs for students and parents throughout the year.

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### *HOUSING FOR LOW INCOME*

**39% said Housing for low income is an area that families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



Part I Topic - Housing – Services rated as Very Important

#### **Services rated as Very Important**

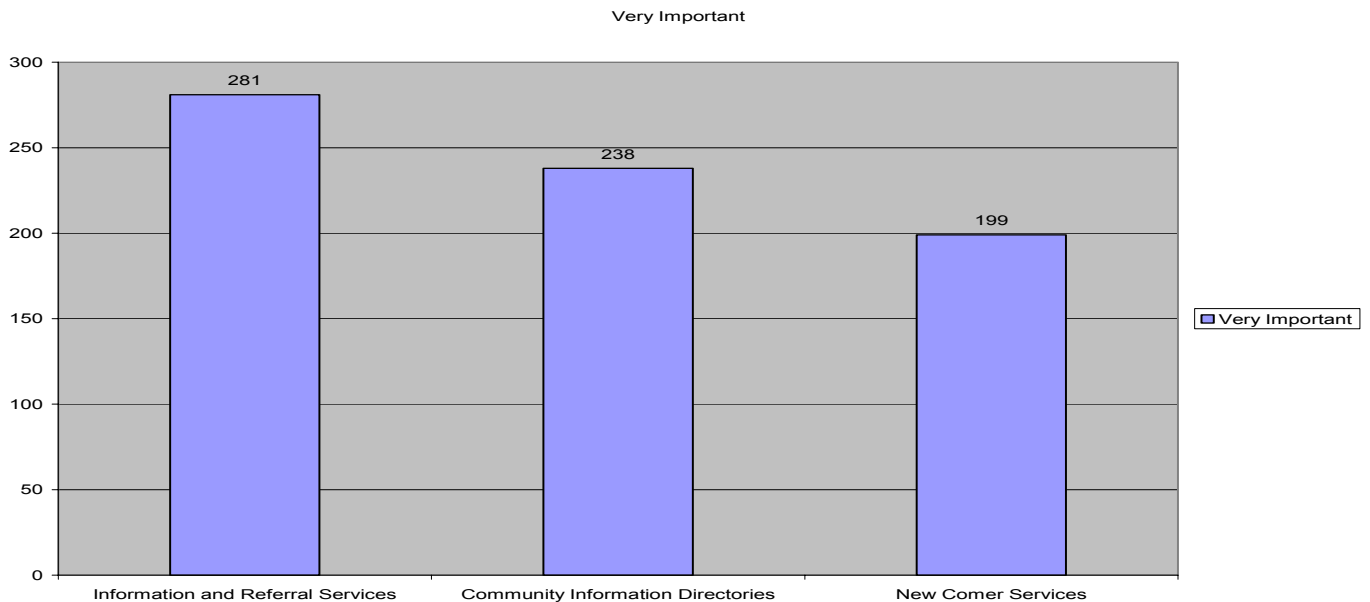
- 36% - Assisted living facilities
- 36% - Supervised housing for dependant adults with disabilities
- 29% - Home ownership assistance for low income
- 23% - Help in finding long term housing
- 19% - Home repair assistance
- 18% - Tenant & Landlord mediation
- 15% - Rent payment assistance

There is concern that a lack of housing options exist in Sylvan Lake for low income and average wage earners, seniors and people with disabilities.

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### COMMUNICATION- CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH RESOURCES

**19% said connecting people with resources as one of area families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



For many programs and services that *are* available presently there are challenges in making potential users as well as other service providers aware of the services. The programs are operated by so many different (local, regional and provincial) agencies that information can become fragmented, confusing and overwhelming.

Participants of the September 20<sup>th</sup> community joint planning session stated that it is often unclear just what agency is offering what program and service.

Initiatives such as Neighbourhood Place, Community Services directories and the Community Program Guide have made some inroads to amalgamating information on services into one reference.

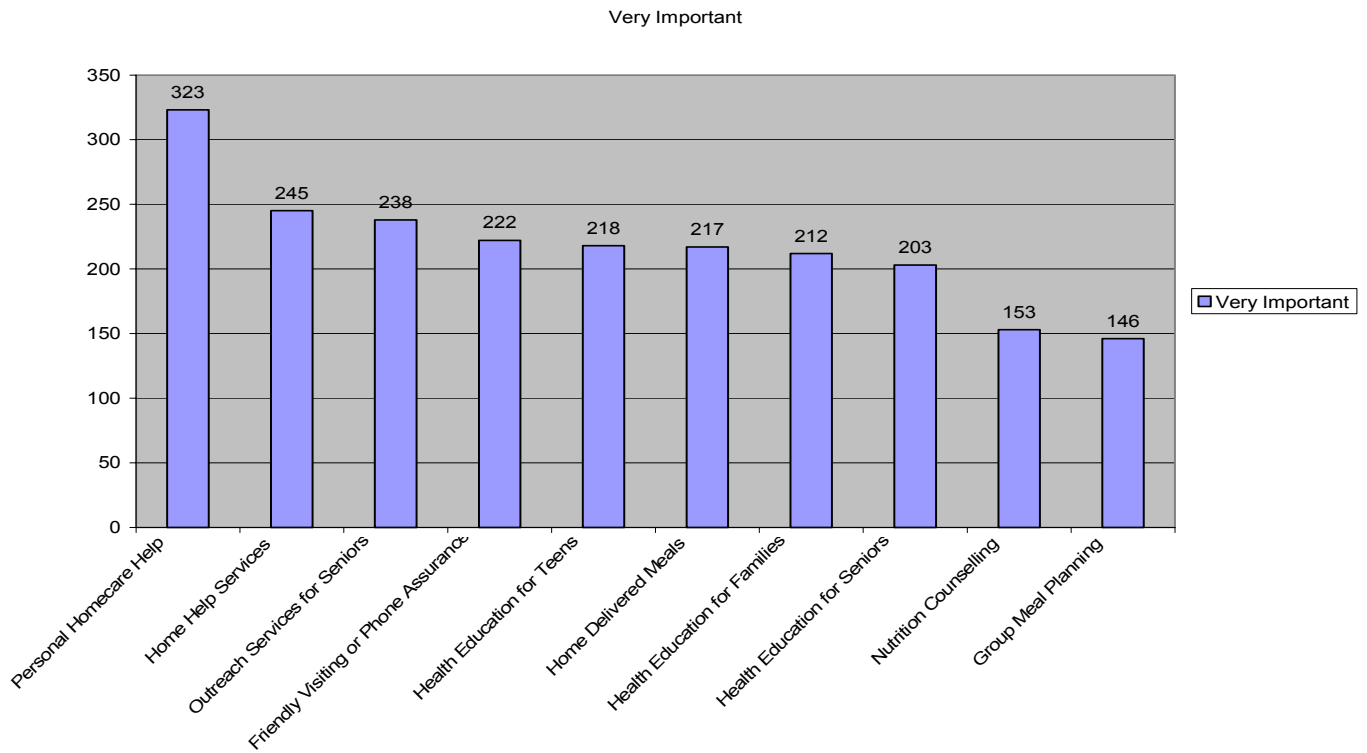
#### Part I Topic – Information about Available Services– Services rated as Very Important

- 44% - Information & Referral Services
- 37% - Community Information Directories
- 31% - Newcomer Services

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### *SERVICES FOR SENIORS*

**24% said Home Support for seniors is an area that families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



#### Part I Topic – Physical Health – Services (for seniors) rated as Very Important

50% - Personal Homecare

(10% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

38% - Home help services

(8% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

37% - Out reach and coordination of services

(3% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

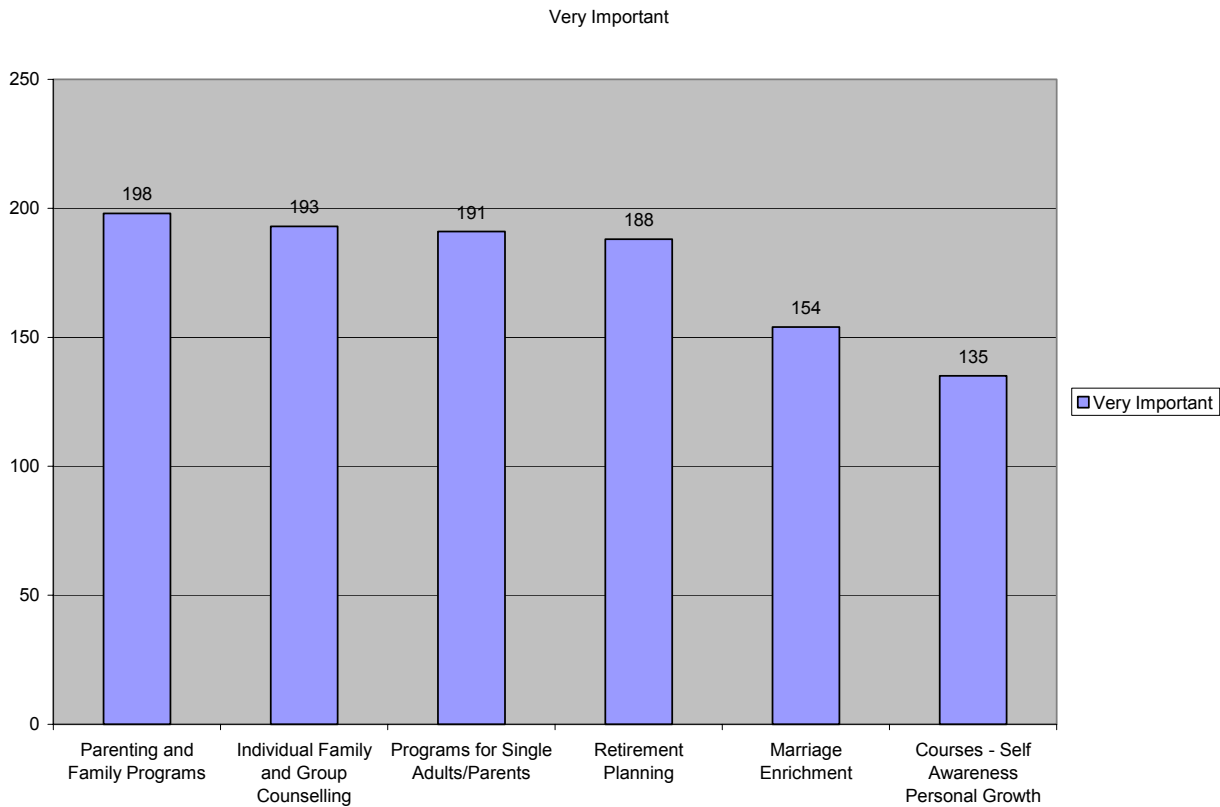
35% - Friendly Visiting or phone assurance programs

(4% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### PARENTING

**Combining the responses of Parenting, Parent/teen conflict and family transition 37% said this is an area families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



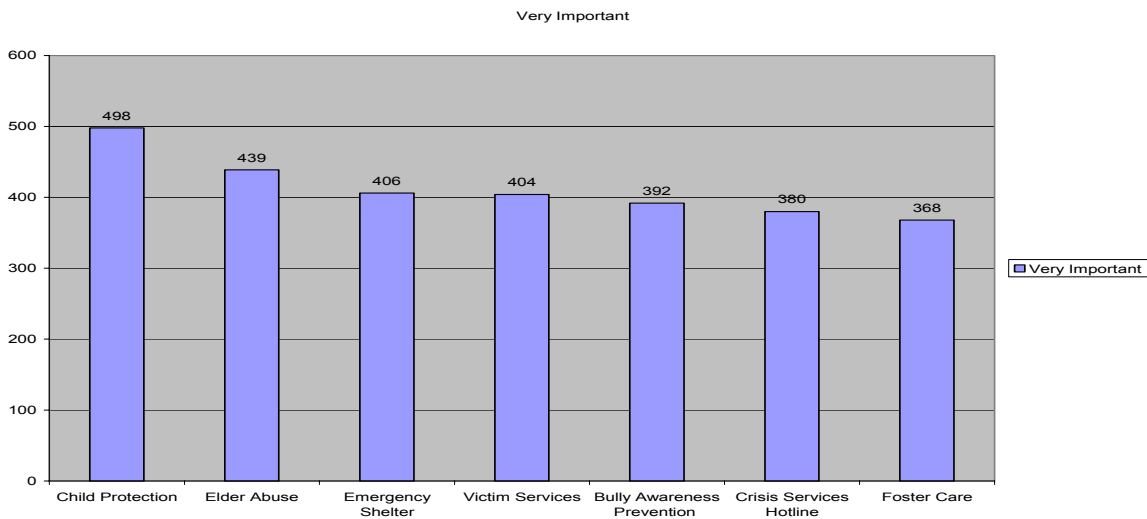
#### Part I Topic – Family Services – Services rated as Very Important

- 31% - Parenting & Family life education/development programs
- 30% - Individual, family & group counselling services that are educational
- 30% - Programs for single adults/parents
- 29% - Retirement Planning
- 24% - Marriage enrichment
- 21% - Self awareness/personal growth courses

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### *FAMILY VIOLENCE*

**20% said Family Violence is an area that families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



#### Part I Topic – Household/Family Violence Related Issues – Services rated as Very Important

78% - *Child Protection Services*

(4% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

69% - *Elder abuse*

(2% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

63% - *Emergency shelter*

(4% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

63% - *Victim services*

(4% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

61% - *Bullying awareness/prevention service*

(5% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

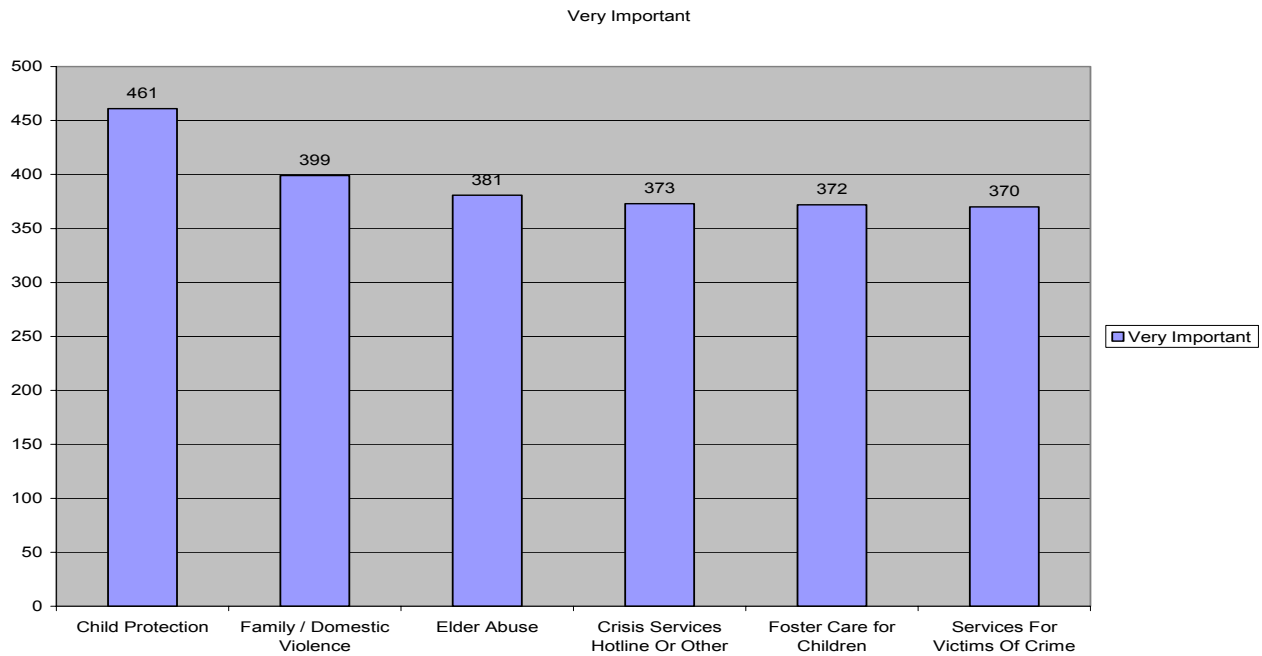
59% - *Crisis service*

(4% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

58% - *Foster care for children & adolescents*

(4% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

Family Violence continued...



Part I Topic – Crisis Intervention/Counselling – Services rated as Very Important

75% - *Child Protection Services*

(5% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

62% - *Family violence*

(8% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

60% - *Elder abuse*

(4% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

58% - *Crisis services*

(7 % said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

58% - *Foster care for children*

(5% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

58% - *Services for victims of crime*

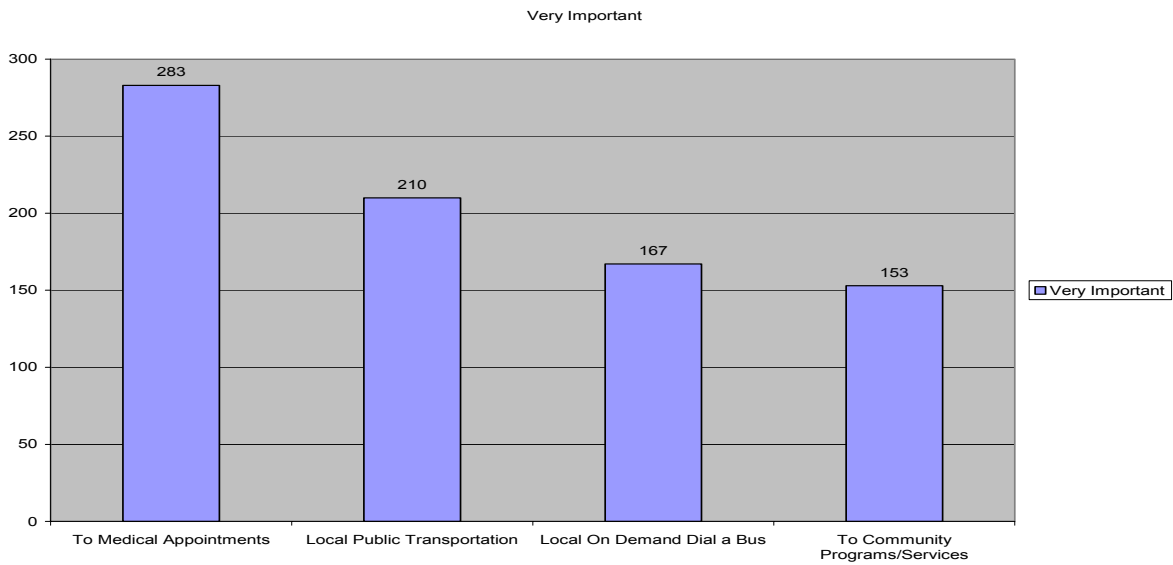
(6% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

***Note: Services Under these two topic areas “Crisis Intervention/Counselling” & “Household/Family Violence Related Issues” rated the highest number of Very Important responses.***

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### TRANSPORTATION

**19% said Transportation is an area that families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



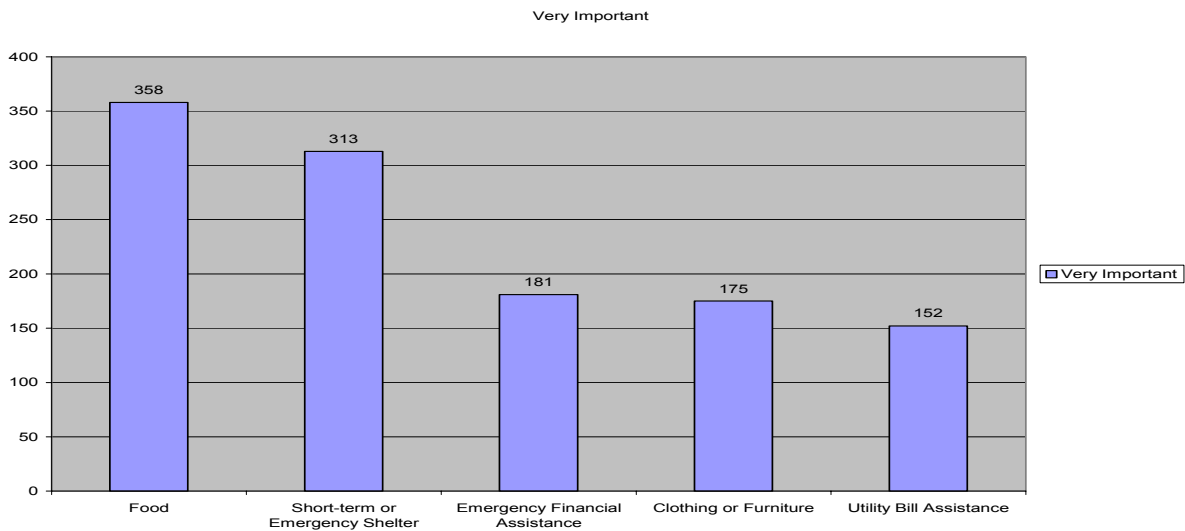
Part I Topic - Transportation– Services rated as *Very Important*

- 44% - To medical appointments
- 33% - Local Public transportation
- 26% - Local on Demand/dial a bus
- 24% - To community programs/services

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### *BASIC NEEDS*

**17% said Basic needs/emergency services are areas families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**



### Part I Topic – Basic Needs – Services rated as *Very Important*

56% - Food

(16% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

49% - Short-term or Emergency shelter

(7% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

28% - Emergency financial assistance

(11% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

27% - Clothing/furniture

(11% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

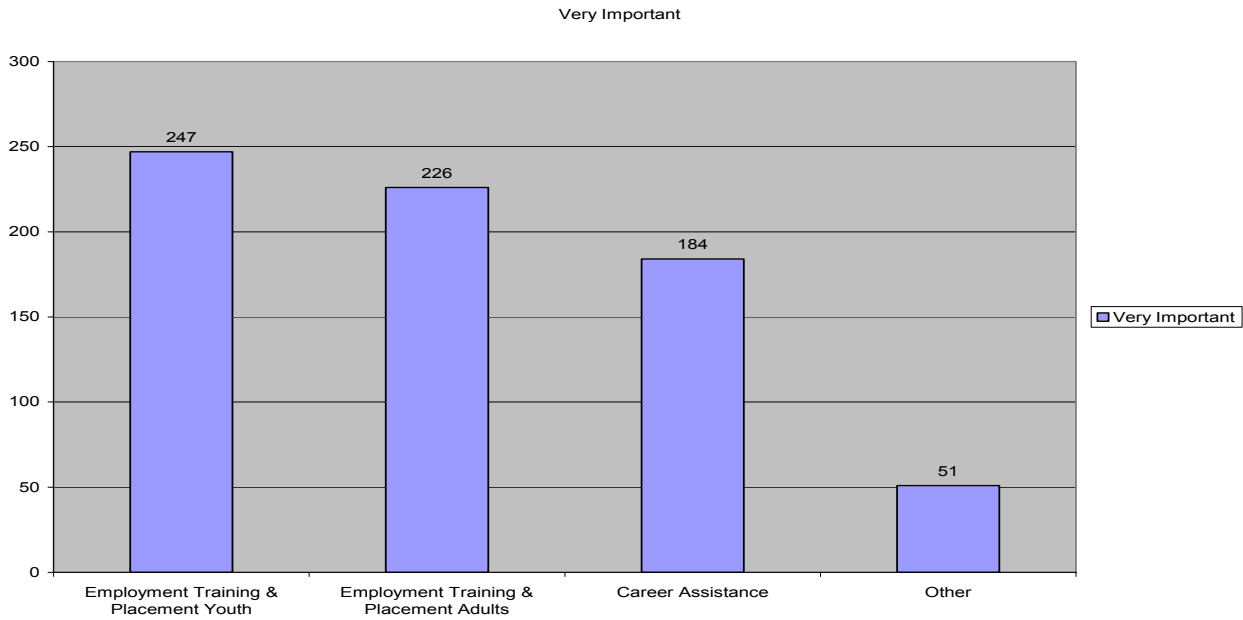
24% - Utility bill assistance

(8% said they or someone they know has used and needed this services)

## Part II Priorities – Challenges

### EMPLOYMENT

**13% said Employment is an area that families living in Sylvan Lake face the greatest challenge.**

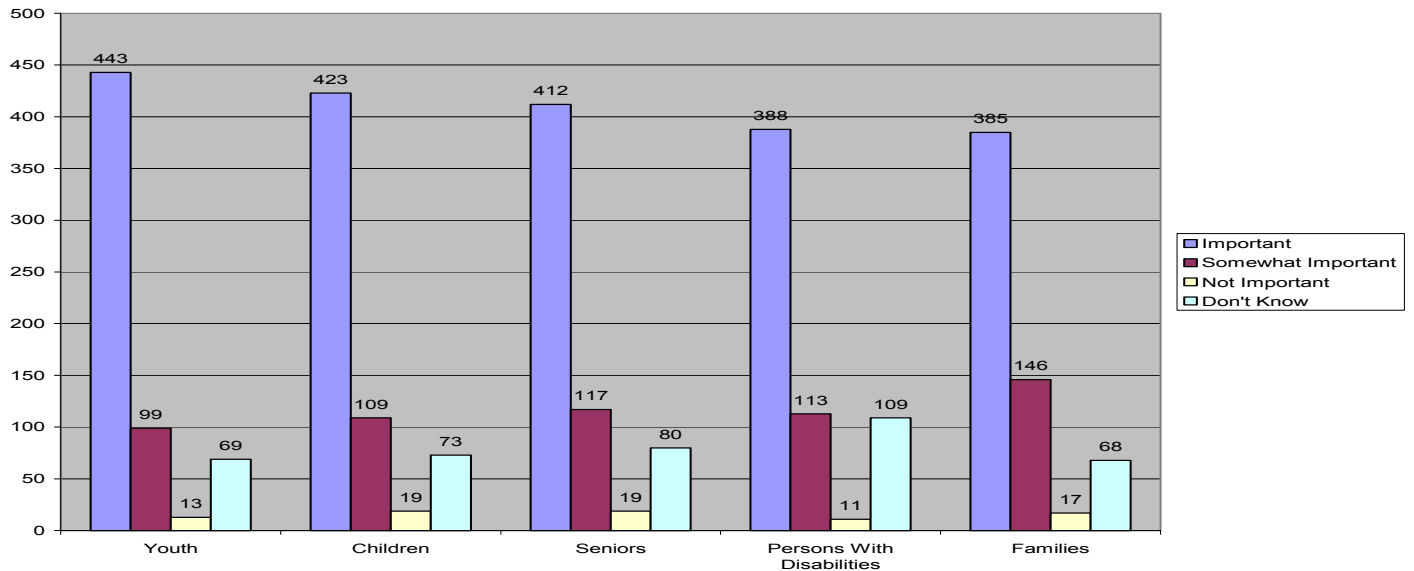


Part I Topic - Employment – Services rated as *Very Important*

- 39% - Employment training & Placement for Youth
- 35% - Employment training & Placement for Adults
- 29% - Career Assistance

## PART II B GROUPS IN NEED

How important is the need to increase or enhance services for the following population groups?



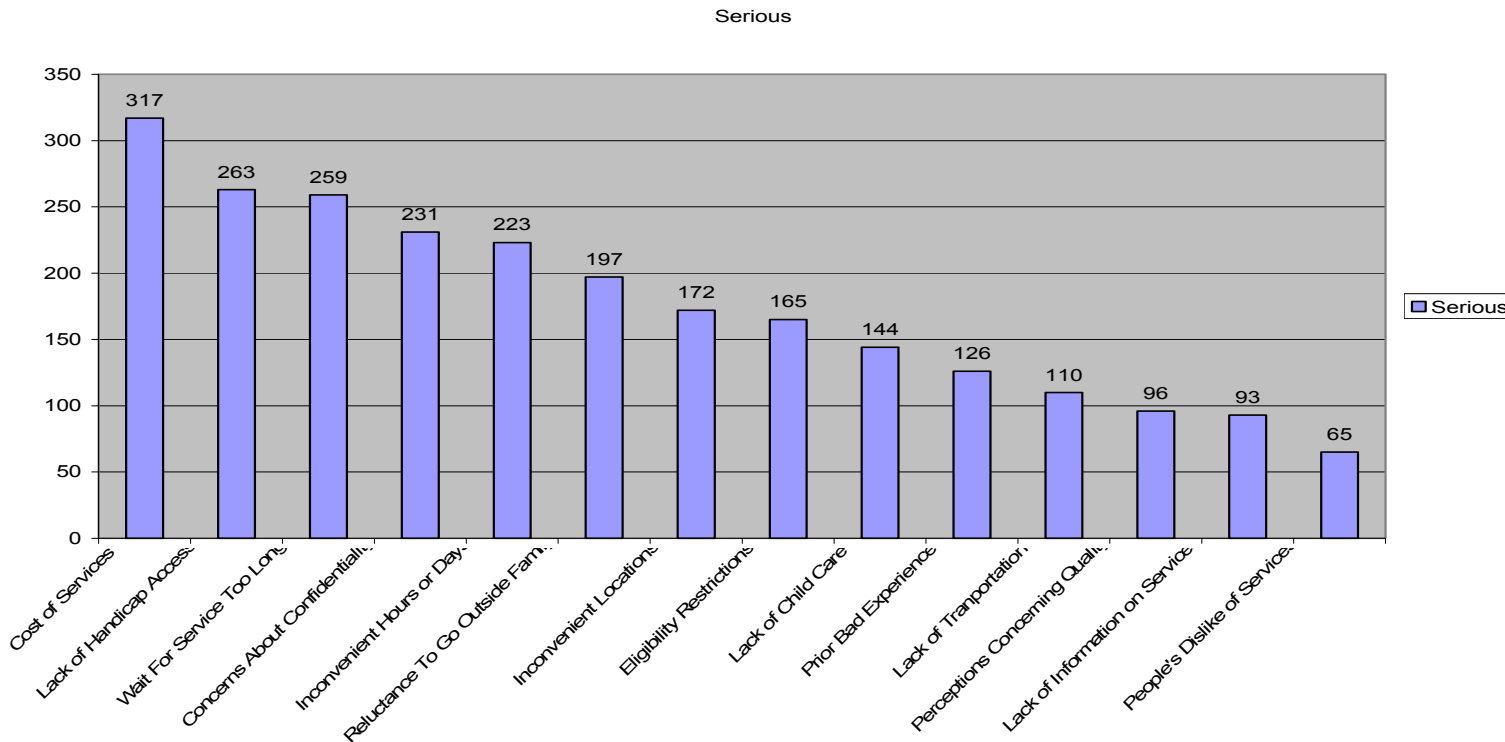
There is a growing need to develop strategies to enhance programs and services for individuals and families in Sylvan Lake. Many of these strategies will begin as informal, community development activities and focus on the empowerment of individuals in addressing their own needs, often in collaboration with other affected individuals. (i.e. support groups, pilot programs, workshops)

Service agencies can use the results of this report to determine which resources could be used to design effective, collaborative strategies that could empower families and community members by giving them a role in designing and implementing the strategies.

The information collected by the community survey can be used by service agencies to gain a better understanding of the conditions in which families live and the issues families want to address.

## PART II C PRIORITIES – BARRIERS

For each of the common barriers that might prevent people from using existing, services how serious you think this barrier is for people?



The cost of a service or program, physical accessibility, long waiting times, concerns about confidentiality, inconvenient hours and reluctance to go outside of family were rated as the top five serious barriers that may prevent people from accessing services.

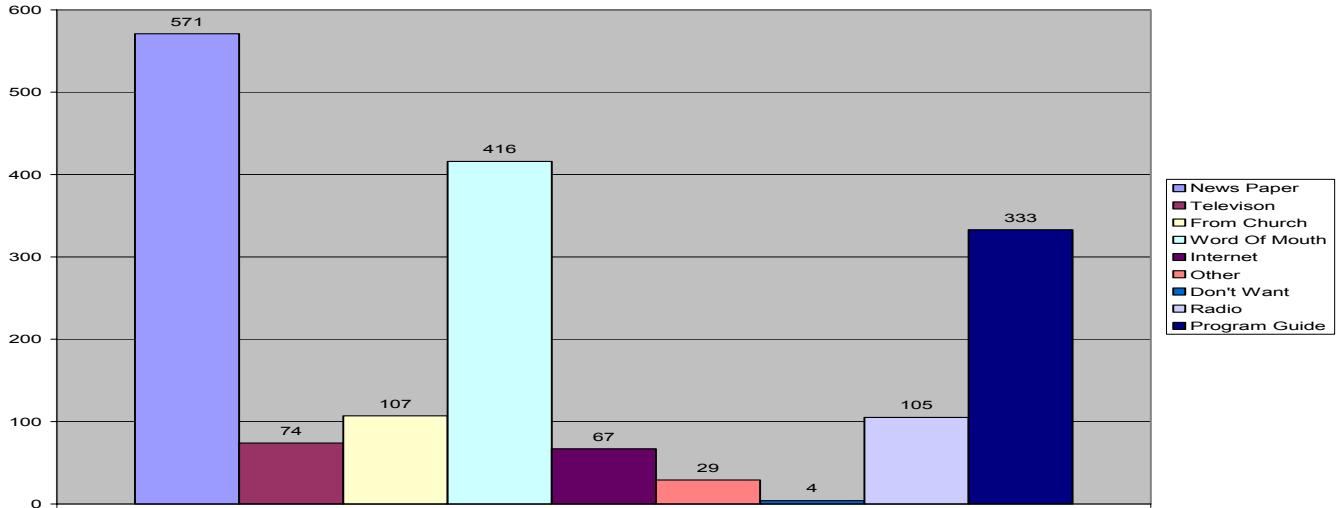
Most community based programs and support services for families are accessible at low or no cost. People may want or need services, however lack the connection or confidence to ask for or to initiate help.

Service providers that are able to go into the community to make initial connections where people gather (schools, community center, youth & seniors centers, and playschools) rather than waiting for people to come to them, can offer support and lead to people seeking services themselves through channels they feel comfortable with.

**TELL US....HOW DO YOU FIND OUT ABOUT SERVICES OR EVENTS?**

You said...

89% - Newspaper,  
 65% - Word of mouth  
 52% - Community Program Guide.



The local newspaper is a major resource for the general public to find out about program and services. Direct communication and word of mouth is an effective method of making people aware of programs and services. The Community Program Guide is published and distributed three times a year to households in Sylvan Lake and is a positive resource for connecting people with programs and services.

Community programs, agencies, volunteer organization and community support workers can support families to connect with the programs and services they need by keeping the information current, clear and focused on what they are offering for the community to receive the maximum benefit.

**Access to information and support for community services has become more important than ever before.**

**Access to the right information at the right time, is essential to the individual's and community's ability to cope, to achieve, to excel.**

**PART III LOCAL SERVICES & SUPPORTS - AWARENESS OF LOCAL SERVICES**

*Residents were asked indicate which of the 47 community services and programs listed in the survey they are aware of. This is what they said.*

***Program/Service Name*** ***Under 10%***

Compassion Fund	7%
Healthy Families Home Visitor	9%

***10 to 15%***

Healthy Communities Breakfast	11%
Rainbows	13%
Adult Literacy Program	13%
Building Incredible Babies	13%
55 + Club	13%
Mom's and Babes	14%
Family Education and Support	14%
Volunteer Tax Program	15%
Community Information Fair	15%
Mental Health	15%

***16 to 20%***

Lifeline	16%
Mom's Time Out	16%
Seniors Resources & Info Center	16%
Youth Employment Initiative	17%
Family School Wellness	18%
Kidz Club School Age Care	18%
Employment Placement Center	18%
Ladies of The Patch	19%
Family & Community Resource Center	19%
Citizens On Patrol	19%
Home Care	20%
Community Kitchen	20%
Kindercare Achievement Center	20%
Sun Busters Summer Day Camps	20%

**PART III LOCAL SERVICES & SUPPORTS CONT'D**

<i>Program/Service Name</i>	<i>21 to 30%</i>
Al-Anon/Alateen	21%
Victim Services	21%
Volunteer Center	21%
Family & Community Support Services	21%
Chips & Playgroup	22%
Community Garden	22%
Seniors Bus Association	23%
Block Parents	24%
Christmas Bureau	24%
Alcoholics Anonymous	24%
Meals on Wheels	24%
Community Health Center	25%
Youth Center	25%
AADAC	26%
Care and Share	26%
Summer Student Employment	27%
Seniors Center	28%
Razzle Dazzle Day Care	28%

*Over 30%*

Food Bank	31%
-----------	-----

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

Many families in Sylvan Lake and surrounding areas are prosperous, yet the list of community needs and the challenges families face is long. There is increasing awareness among service providers, agencies and volunteer groups of the complex web of community needs. A person/family that is in need in one area of life is also likely in need in another. The mechanisms or strategies used to address specific community needs must also address the interconnectedness of issues.

- Given there are finite resources available in the community, it is necessary to refine and prioritize the list of issues agencies plan to address.
- The need to build strong communities in order to address interconnected community needs must become an overarching principle.

### CONCLUSION

Given today's environment community social programs have two primary challenges:

- To maintain a clear understanding of emerging *community* social trends and issues to ensure services and funded programs remain relevant and that community receives the maximum benefits.
- To maintain the joint planning efforts of agencies to close the growing gap between needs and funding resources.

2007 PRIORITIES for building a strong, vibrant and healthy community:

- Implement Childcare recommendations and community programming to support families child care needs.
- Implement Connecting People to Resources recommendations; information/referral services
- Implement Alcohol & Substance Abuse recommendations, community programming for youth 15-17, education & awareness sessions through existing services and programs
- Support Social Housing Advisory committee to define and analyze affordable housing needs and options.
- Community development focus on community capacity/capability building
- Prevention regarding alleviating family stress and subsequent impact on children and youth

### Evaluation/Outcome measures:

**Prepare annual interagency report** showing the progress that has been made in implementing the objectives and actions set out by the community joint planning groups.

## COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

### CHILDCARE

**Recommendation I:** The Town and Community of Sylvan Lake adopt the vision statement “Every child has the right to quality care.”

- Continue the community childcare committee ( invite others to participate) to promote initiatives and;
- Establish, recognize and support a community standard for quality childcare. ( minimums include first aide, child welfare and criminal record check for all types of childcare providers)
- Celebrate National Child Day annually – November 20<sup>th</sup>
- Look at creative ways to increase the “spaces” for childcare in the community.

**Recommendation II:** Education

- Promote existing childcare options, choices and resources including subsidies and respite available.
- Promote indicators of quality care, provide families with a check list and distribute printed materials such as “Choosing Quality Child Care”
- Promote and highlight to employers the benefits associated with ensuring quality childcare for their employees.
- Facilitate and promote presentations such as “Keys to Parenting” to parent support groups
- Facilitate connections with surrounding communities to offer parenting speakers and presentations.

**Recommendation III:** Training and Resources

- Offer incentives for first aide training to private and non profit childcare providers
- FCSS/Volunteer Center to assist providers with obtaining criminal and child welfare checks
- Toy Lending Library for providers and parents to support/promote healthy early childhood development

### **Recommendation I:** Increase Alcohol and Substance Free Activities for Youth 15-17 years

- Pilot opening the” Youth Centre” to midnight one or two nights a month
- Late nights at the youth center “De-compression Day” (Thursdays) preceding the School “Compressed Fridays”
- Encourage a variety of youth cultures to plan and organize drop in and special interest activities.
- Coordinate with others (business) municipality and town departments to support free drop in swimming and skating nights

### **Recommendation II:** Establish a Sylvan Lake Alcohol/Substance Abuse Awareness Committee (Coalition)

### **Recommendation III:** Education and Awareness Activities

- Increase awareness of existing support & services contact information
- Support addictions (drug & alcohol) awareness information and sessions for families, parents, teens and community services workers/agencies.
- “Getting the Facts” – What I/You need to know
- “Natural High” activities for parents/youth/family with support /facts information available
- Cause and Effect - Crime Prevention, Family Violence Prevention
- Learn and know the names of youth and others (hand out)

**Recommendation I:** To establish a Sylvan Lake Committee for Housing Options

- To look at the issue of affordable housing and housing options;
- To increase awareness of housing issues/needs
- To reduce barriers and opposition to affordable housing initiatives
  
- To stimulate the development of diverse housing options for low income to average wage earners in this community (i.e. individuals with special needs, seniors, young adults, single adults, young families, lone parent families, etc).

**Recommendation II:** To increase awareness of existing housing and assistance programs

- emergency shelters
- transitional housing
- subsidized or social housing, rental housing
- home ownership

**Recommendation III:** To conduct an objective analysis of the Town's current demographic and housing situation and develop a set of recommendations of what needs to be accomplished in order for the Town of Sylvan Lake to meet the housing needs of all its residents.

## CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH RESOURCES

### Level 1-Information

- Printed materials (such as those listed under opportunities)
- Basic referral (i.e. CIRS - providing a contact, number, address etc.)

### Level 2- Assistance

- To navigate the systems to access services

### **Recommendation I** – Enhance *Cooperative Community Building (CCB) Luncheons*

- Structure CCB to allow one or two programs (group) to present their mandate, objective and detail of the program and services they are offering availability and how to access the service.

### **Recommendation II** – Host *In Service Meetings*

- To involve community workers and agencies in opportunities to discuss needs and issues; to evaluate and address the challenges and successes.
- To provide professional opportunities for community workers to meet with Central Alberta agencies as a group to increase connection with the agencies mandates, services and protocols.

### **Recommendation III** - *Frequently Called Number – Tear off Pad*

- Print and distribute to community workers and service providers to pass along and/or to leave with clients
- Expand the Frequently Called Number to include reference page # with a brief and clear description of the program, service, availability and contact.
- Half fold subject pamphlets (Childcare, Housing, Alcohol/Substance, Seniors Center etc.) with inserts that will update easily)