

Running Head: THROUGH THE EYES OF CHILDREN

Through the eyes of children: Sport and its role in a public housing community

by

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Abstract

Children living in public housing often experience sport differently than mainstream peers because of low socioeconomic status and subsequent reliance on government housing. The purpose of this case study was to delineate the benefits and constraints reported by children living in public housing in Winnipeg in relation to gaining access to, and maintaining involvement in sport. Ten children, ages ten to twelve, from the Gilbert Park Housing Complex, and four staff from community organizations, were selected to participate using purposeful sampling. Participant observation and an interview guide approach to unstructured interviews were employed to gather data documenting the benefits of and constraints to sport participation for children. The findings, five core benefits and twelve core constraints, enabled the development of suggestions for how community leaders can improve sport delivery within Gilbert Park and, potentially, public housing throughout Winnipeg.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The use of sport as a tool to attain specific development and peace objectives, which fall under the Millennium Development Goals developed by the United Nations, has been increasing in recent years. The eight goals are: an end to poverty and hunger, universal education, gender equality, child health, maternal health, the combat of HIV/AIDS, environmental sustainability, and global partnership (United Nations, 2010). The success of programs such as Right to Play and the Mathare Youth Sports Association have highlighted the role sport can play in the lives of individuals, especially children. While primarily considered to be issues affecting developing countries, and therefore the location of many current sport for development interventions, these also represent goals that have yet to be fully achieved in more developed countries including Canada, which “ranks 19th of 24 developed countries on measures of low income” (Milner, 2002, p. 176). The potential application, and therefore success, of sport for development programs at home should be examined to determine how best sport can serve as an aid in the reduction of poverty and hunger, and in the improvement of child health.

The prevalence of low income after tax, an indicator of poverty levels in Canada, was 11.4% of the country’s population in 2005 (Statistics Canada, 2008). This statistic illustrates that additional effort needs to be taken to reduce poverty in Canada in order to improve the quality of life for all Canadians. Research shows that people living in poverty experience more encounters with the justice system, a higher prevalence of undernourishment, hunger, illiteracy, lower levels of education, physical and mental ailments, emotional and social instability, unhappiness, sorrow and hopelessness (Blanco, 2002, p. 28; Milner, 2002, p. 172). Manitoba, along with British Columbia, has yet again

been named the Child Poverty Capital of Canada (Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, 2009, p. 2). This inequality amongst residents of Manitoba reduces access to vital services such as healthcare, education, and recreation (Blanco, 2002, p. 28), which impacts an individual's physical, cultural and social development. Sport has been utilized by many governmental and non-governmental organizations and groups to: resolve conflict and build intercultural understanding; build physical, social, sport and community infrastructure; raise awareness of social issues, particularly through education; empower individuals; have a direct impact on the physical and psychological health, as well as general welfare of individuals; and generate economic development/poverty alleviation (Levermore, 2008, p. 185-186). Drawing on the experiences of previous sport for development initiatives, it has been illustrated "how sport and youth mentoring can play an important role in tackling social exclusion and building social capital" (Deuchar, 2009, p. 140-141), while contributing to overall positive development.

In 2009, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg reported that 68% of urban Aboriginal children under the age of six, and one in three children of recent immigrants living in Winnipeg, live in poverty (p. 6). Aboriginal Canadians, recent immigrants, persons with disabilities, and lone parent families represent those in Canadian society who have a high incidence of low income as well as a high incidence of persistent low income (Milner, 2002, p. 173). In an effort to reduce poverty rates, all levels of government need to work together with the aforementioned cultural and marginalized groups so as to limit the isolation faced by individuals living with low income in order to improve their quality of life. The relegation of individuals to exclusion as social beings is

another characteristic of poverty and is often the result of living in public housing in Manitoba (Blanco, 2002, p. 28). One way to counter the “educational failure, perceived oppression, stigmatism and/or social exclusion in local urban neighbourhoods” (Deuchar, 2009, p. xiii) is through generating social capital. This is often achieved through involvement in academics and school activities, and through interactions with peers in a variety of settings (Deuchar, 2009).

Public housing in Winnipeg, operated by the provincial government under the auspices of the Manitoba Housing Authority (MHA), provides affordable housing for Manitobans with low incomes who are unable to obtain housing within the market. The monthly rent for a family, regardless of its size, is calculated as 27% of their total gross income and allows for rent to vary on an individual basis (Manitoba Housing Authority, 2010, p. 4). One such complex is Gilbert Park, located in the Inkster neighbourhood in Winnipeg’s northwest area. As the largest public housing complex in Manitoba, Gilbert Park is comprised of 254 townhouse units and has almost 1,000 tenants (Government of Manitoba, 2008). The residents of the housing complex are primarily of Aboriginal ancestry or are recent immigrants from African nations. Data from the 2006 Census for the Burrows-Keewatin neighbourhood, which includes Gilbert Park, can be found in Table 1. The ghettoization of neighbourhoods (as evidenced by the geographically separate MHA complexes) serves to add to the daily constraints faced by residents (Robidoux, 2004, p. 300). With the current built environment isolating historically disadvantaged groups an emphasis should be placed on creating opportunities to facilitate positive development in public housing communities. The marginalization experienced by Aboriginal people and recent immigrants, along with other racialized minorities, has

been well documented in the literature and pervades the context inherent in participation in social and cultural activities (Canadian Heritage, 2005; Juteau, 2000; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009).

Table 1
Burrows-Keewatin Neighbourhood Statistics (2006)

Category	Community		
	Burrows-Keewatin Number	% of Pop.	City of Winnipeg % of Pop.
Ages 0-14	805	29.0%	17.7%
Aboriginal identity	805	29.2%	10.2%
Visible minority	610	22.1%	16.3%
No high school diploma (over age 15)	845	43.0%	23.1%
Incidence of low income after taxes	916	33.2%	15.7%
Rented dwelling	680	65.7%	34.9%

Note. The community of Burrows-Keewatin represents the larger census tract to which Gilbert Park belongs. Adapted from “2006 Census Data – Burrows-Keewatin” [Data file], by City of Winnipeg and Statistics Canada, 2008.

One avenue that exists to generate these opportunities is through the introduction of sport programs into a community. Low socioeconomic status, however, is also a major barrier to participation in sport. As Statistics Canada reports “the amount that can be spent on sport activities is dependent on the amount of discretionary income that is left after other household essentials are covered” (Ifedi, 2008, p. 21). In an effort to promote positive participation and experiences, the need for accessible sport programs that will meet the needs of children living in public housing without furthering isolation is evident.

My interest in this topic has developed from personal experience as a Community Development worker with a local cooperative community health centre in Winnipeg’s Inkster neighbourhood. During my time there I saw firsthand the impact of living in public housing on the lives of children. The negative stigma associated with calling government housing home, racial and ethnic tensions, poverty, and crime and gang-

related activity played significant roles in the lives of residents. The residents, however, often exhibited resilience, creativity, and strong familial bonds as they negotiated constraints of daily life. Part of my job entailed running a free day camp involving participation in outdoor recreation activities for children who lived in two of the Manitoba Housing complexes in the neighbourhood: Blake Gardens and Gilbert Park. Through participation in this program I saw children from diverse backgrounds forming new bonds and friendships, experiencing enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, and improvement in athletic skill performance. While these represent just a few of the benefits from participation in this program, involvement in sport generates opportunities for positive youth development, which encompasses benefits for sport, their current life and their future (Gould & Carson, 2008, p. 59).

The purpose, therefore, of this case study was to explore the benefits of, and constraints to, sport engagement by children living in Gilbert Park, a Manitoba Housing Authority complex in Winnipeg. The perspectives of children who live in the community were of primary interest because sport participation can promote positive development and serve as an alternative to the lures of negative activities, such as gang membership, prostitution, drug, and alcohol abuse. Staff were initially consulted to provide the context of children's perspectives and background on programming. However, given the emergent nature of qualitative research, the role of staff within the research process changed. Instead, staff provided insight based on their experiences working with children in Gilbert Park as to what the perceived benefits of and constraints to participating in sport are for children in the community. Within Gilbert Park there are two main community service agencies currently delivering programming to children and youth,

with a focus on unstructured leisure and recreation activities rather than competitive sport: the Health Centre and the Club.

Documenting children's perceptions of the benefits of sport participation and the factors that make this difficult in a public housing complex in Winnipeg makes a unique contribution to understanding sport in Gilbert Park and will inject this important perspective into future program planning initiatives. In doing so, the completed research addressed an issue identified in previous literature—the general public's lack of accessibility to the information and research that has been generated (Jarvie, 2007). Traditionally, the responsibility for the development and implementation of programs is often left in the hands of community leaders and members. Through publishing information in journals, access to which may be restricted to academics, the likelihood for the application of results to community-level programming is diminished. By embracing the role of the public intellectual, extra effort will be taken to have the publications that result from this research accessible to those who will benefit the most, community members (Jarvie, 2007). This knowledge translation will be accomplished through meetings with community leaders and members following the completion of the research process where the results will be shared. Through acting as a public intellectual and facilitating an exchange of information between community members and policy makers, the results and findings will be put into action so as to serve as a catalyst for change in public housing in Winnipeg, and more specifically for the lives of those currently living in Gilbert Park.

Key Terms

Sport. Sport, in the context of sport for development, includes play, recreation, leisure, and physical activity rather than a sole focus on the competitive activities that require complex physical skills (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009, p. 4).

Sport for development. Sport for development, as differentiated from development of sport, is “activity designed to use sport [, play, recreation, and physical activity] as a vehicle to achieve a range of other social, economic and political objectives” (Beacom, 2007, p. 84). It is important to note that the aforementioned objectives are those with the intent of enhancing the quality of life of an individual rather than those with a malicious aim.

Children. Children will be defined as individuals ten to twelve years of age.

Public Housing. Public housing is rental housing that is owned and managed by the government and provides lower rental rates for those with low and moderate incomes (Manitoba Housing Authority, 2009, p. 20).

Involvement in sport. Involvement in sport will be generally defined as actual participation in sport activities whether in an organized format or not.

Constraints. For the purposes of this research, constraints are defined as the barriers that must be negotiated in order to achieve the desired level of involvement in sport.

Aboriginal. The term Aboriginal will be used in this research to refer to any individual of First Nations, Métis, or Inuit descent regardless of status.

New immigrant. When reference is made to new immigrants in this research the term is used to refer to individuals who have moved to Canada within the last five years.

Positive youth development. Positive youth development involves the development of “diverse competencies that can help a young person in sport, in their current life and/or in their future” (Gould & Carson, 2008, p. 59).

Life skills. Life skills, a core outcome of programs focused on positive youth development, are defined as:

those skills that enable individuals to succeed in the different environments in which they live, such as school, home and in their neighbourhoods. Life skills can be behavioural (communicating effectively with peers and adults) or cognitive (making effective decisions); interpersonal (being assertive) or intrapersonal (setting goals). (Danish, Forneris, Hodge & Heke, 2004, p. 40; Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1993)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

From a review of the literature, a gap in the knowledge base has been identified surrounding sport participation for children who live in public housing. Leisure constraints theory, which seeks to explain the factors that mediate the relationships between an individual's choices and engagement in an activity, in a positive or negative manner, provides the theoretical foundation for this research. Drawing on the foundational concepts of leisure constraints theory, this research was needed to identify constraints to participation, but more importantly, to determine avenues for negotiation of the identified constraints to enable children to access the opportunities they desire. To provide the context of sport participation in a community, however, it was necessary to also ascertain what are the perceived benefits of participation in sport in the eyes of residents and stakeholders. The needs of children living in public housing in Manitoba, while similar to those of children living in poverty, contain unique attributes because of their living arrangements which, when compared to those living in other regions of the country or world, present unique constraints. It is also integral to note that living in public housing does not only constrain sport participation but also offers opportunities based on the high concentration of children living in the community. Since research had not yet been done with regard to the sport experiences of children living in public housing communities in Winnipeg it was important to examine the needs specific to this community.

There are three main categories under which the current literature base can be divided for this research: leisure constraints theory, sport for development including an examination of the benefits of sport participation and positive youth development, and

public housing. Each of the areas, while often linked together, helps to illustrate why additional research was needed into the potential uses of sport within public housing.

Leisure Constraints Theory

While there are benefits that can be acquired through participation in sport, for many individuals something is standing in the way of their involvement. These intangible, although sometimes tangible, barriers can constrain entrance to, continuation in, or desired level of involvement in an activity. Leisure constraints theory, the theoretical grounding of the research conducted, seeks to explore the factors that limit, inhibit or prohibit participation in leisure activities (Jackson, 2000; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000). The main assumptions of leisure constraints theory are:

1. Barriers or obstacles exist to achieving a meaningful quality of life on both an individual and a societal basis.
2. Access to, and enjoyment of, leisure are central to a high quality of life for individuals, and indirectly to the quality of the society as a whole; therefore, leisure can play an important part in removing or alleviating these barriers.
3. There is also a wide range of barriers that may preclude people from achieving their leisure goals and realizing the full benefits of a high quality of leisure.
4. Understanding the distribution of constraints in society, how they effect people's lives and leisure, and how people adapt to these constraints, is a crucial task for leisure researchers. (Jackson, 2000, p. 63-64)

Leisure constraints theory is represented as a hierarchical model by some of the literature. Godbey, Crawford and Shen (2010) suggest that "leisure constraints exist at three levels:

intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural which must be navigated sequentially for participation to take place or continue/progress” (p. 113). Within each of these levels numerous dimensions of constraints have been identified and include “constraints related to the costs of participating, time commitments, the availability and quality of facilities, isolation (sometimes sub-divided into social isolation and geographical isolation), and personal skills and abilities” (Jackson, 2000, p. 64). Nadirova and Jackson (2000) reclassified the five dimensions of constraints as isolation, knowledge, skills, costs, and time and commitments (p. 400). As previously identified, isolation of both social and geographic natures play significant roles in the lives of individuals who live in public housing. Isolation also proved to be a constraint to the participation in sport for children living in Gilbert Park. It is important to note that individuals experience their own set of constraints to participation and, as a result, must develop ways to work around or resolve them, taking into account personal characteristics in addition to the dimension of the constraints. Jackson (2000) acknowledges that the “physical structure and infrastructure of North American cities and towns” (p. 65) has an effect on the context of leisure, which establishes a link between leisure constraints theory and the focus of the completed research on public housing as a constraining living environment. Drawing on leisure constraints theory, the research conducted was needed because individuals and groups come to experience constraints differently throughout life (Jackson, 2000, p. 64). The role that each dimension plays was incorporated during the data analysis phase through linking the resultant codes and themes to constraint dimensions. An emerging field that assists individuals and communities with negotiating constraints, both in terms of sport and life in general on a daily basis, is sport for development.

Sport for Development

A major gap exists in the literature and I am unaware of any published research, with the exception of Nicholls and Giles' (2007) work, that explores the use of a sport for development framework in Canadian communities. The field of sport for development is currently populated with research positing the negative implications of the northern or western influence on developing countries. This hegemonic relationship has been termed whiteness which "as a subject position of benevolence, rationality and expertise, [is] confirmed in opposition to marginalized, unsophisticated and appreciative bodies of colour" (Darnell, 2007, p. 560). While most often utilized to refer to individuals from developed countries as a whole, the term whiteness can also apply to the context of this case study. The residents of the broader City of Winnipeg represent whiteness, while those who live in public housing are often portrayed as unsophisticated, marginalized, and from diverse ethnic backgrounds, regardless of whether that is actually the case or not. The result of Right to Play's framework for delivery is a focus on whites as experts and bodies of colour as subjects (Darnell, 2007, p. 569). With the awareness of the dichotomy that has been established in the past, efforts can be taken to equalize the relationships among those involved in sport for development programs. Racial and cultural gaps can be narrowed, and language barriers can be overcome (Darnell, 2007, p. 570). Darnell (2010), in an exploration of the experiences of volunteers for the Commonwealth Games Canada's International Development through Sport program, suggests that while issues exist surrounding the imparting of northern influences through sport for development, they should not be abandoned solely because fears exist that they may secure hegemonic relations which further marginalize. Instead, organizations and

countries should learn from their past mistakes, and develop new opportunities for the world's marginalized, instead of running from the dominance that has been asserted in recent programming (Darnell, 2010; Matthews, 2008).

One of the most well documented sport for development organizations is the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA). Based in the Nairobi, Kenya neighbourhood of Mathare, the MYSA has “evolved naturally out of community-defined needs and the active engagement of youth” (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. iii) resulting in greater acceptance of their programs. The overall aim of the MYSA is to “link youth development, sports, and environmental activism” (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 2). The specific program Brady and Khan (2002) examined in their case study is the girls' football program. This program was developed to provide girls, who are often restricted to the domestic sphere and by “cultural norms and conditions [that] determine where it is safe and/or acceptable for them to go” (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 1), with opportunities for physical activity. This restriction on where it is safe and acceptable for girls to go is prevalent around the world, including Canada, where there is often a functional curfew for women urging them to avoid certain areas (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 1). In Winnipeg, the community of Gilbert Park represents one of the areas where a functional curfew is imposed on many of the residents both within and outside the community. The curfew, while not compulsory, is generally accepted because of an increased concern for personal safety, especially amongst female residents. This concern may be rooted in the 148% increase in the incidence of sexual assault in the community over the past year (Winnipeg Police Service, 2010). The MYSA documents that sport, in addition to the benefits previously mentioned in the present literature review, contributes to the transformation of gender

and social norms which result in enhanced opportunities for women and girls to play an active role in society (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 2). While the demographic makeup of Mathare differs in terms of the severity of key indicators when compared to the representation found in public housing in Winnipeg, a few notable similarities exist. The first is that in Mathare the majority of the land is owned by the Nairobi City Council, acting in a role similar to that of the Manitoba Housing Authority, who rent the dwellings to residents. The second is that poverty, while more structural and abject in Mathare, is prevalent amongst the residents. The third similarity is that “women’s sexual vulnerability is exacerbated by their economic vulnerability” (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 7) leading to high participation rates in the sex trade in both Mathare and Winnipeg. The MYSA establishes a link between sport for development and positive youth development that has previously been absent from the literature, cultivating life skills within its membership. Through programs such as a HIV/AIDS education program, the aforementioned football program, educational scholarships, a photography project, and other community service and environmental education activities the MYSA seeks to respond to the “expressed needs and interests of the community it serves” (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 8-9). Following the decision to implement a football program for girls, one of the major barriers that stood in the way was parental concern. To alleviate some of these concerns “staff visited parents at home, where they would describe the program as an opportunity for girls to learn and develop new skills and do what boys were able to do” (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 12). Additional barriers to girls’ participation included:

- cultural teachings that forbid the participation of girls in sport following the onset of menses, a teaching reinforced by the menstrual traditions and

notions of purity and power amongst the Dene people in Canada (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 13; Giles, 2004);

- household responsibilities held by the girls (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 14);
and
- fears surrounding their daughter's mobility within the community and the grave consequences being in an unsafe environment could have (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 15).

These barriers were addressed by the MYSA through changes to the locations and times of practices and games, by providing a transportation allowance for travel to and from the fields, having female chaperones, and by allowing members to leave early in order to get home before nightfall (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 24). The inclusive perspective that MYSA has taken in the delivery of a sport for development program focuses on the unique personalities and talents of all individuals, regardless of gender, and works to foster skill and leadership development in the various life environments.

In the United Kingdom, efforts have been undertaken to utilize sport to achieve development objectives on a domestic basis. In Braunstone, a suburb of Leicester, England known for its large concentration of public housing, the Score4Sport program was developed utilizing soccer as its focus (Collins, 2010). The program created training opportunities for youth, who had previously been or were at risk for becoming involved in crime, as junior football organizers. With this training, the youth were responsible for organizing tournaments and events, and were given opportunities to attain coaching certification. Following their training, participants took on the role of coach with local amateur clubs in the area. Stemming from the high rates of arson in the community, a

side project, Fireball, was established in conjunction with the local fire department to have firefighters volunteer as coaches and/or team managers. Participants would then take part in visits to the fire station to learn the personal and social consequences of arson (Collins, 2010, p. 202). As a result of Score4Sport and Fireball, “the housing office and the police saw falls of 23% in local antisocial behaviour and vandalism” (Collins, 2010, p. 202) in the community. The experiences of Score4Sport, and several other projects Collins (2010) elaborates on, illustrate that conventional sport development programs will not work effectively for the majority of deprived communities because there are additional constraints to participation. Common constraints for those living in Braunstone included: family obligations, health problems, age, gender, size, location, financial, transportation, lack of infrastructure, disabilities, a lack of information, and shift work (Collins, 2010, p. 196-197). These barriers represent some of those facing children in Gilbert Park, however, this research by Collins did not focus on children nor was it specific to one public housing complex. Drawing on Collins’ work, the completed research examines how the identified constraints can be negotiated so as to enable individuals to access desired activities.

Research has been done into the use of sport as a tool in HIV/AIDS education in Aboriginal communities in Canada, which illustrates the applicability of using sport for development with the Aboriginal population in Canada (Nicholls & Giles, 2007). Nicholls and Giles (2007) report that “although Canada is a leader in the international use of sport for development, and particularly in the use of sport as a tool for HIV/AIDS education, this learning has not been applied domestically” (p. 53). Through their recommendation of working from the starting point of programs that have been applied

internationally, “Aboriginally defined and implemented sport for development in Canada serves as an opportunity to reclaim culture and harness the power of sport to effect positive change” (Nicholls & Giles, 2007, p. 65). As many governments and governmental organizations become involved in sport for development in international communities, it is important that they clearly examine the implications of their foreign policy choices to ensure that the needs of their local communities are also met, rather than solely focusing their efforts on international projects. Many Western countries have failed to make use of their knowledge within their own country, and could be able to achieve many of the same goals that international projects aim to accomplish while addressing the needs of their constituents. By doing so, a government could be able to reduce costs in areas such as crime and healthcare, and as a result be able to support even more international projects in the long run if they chose to do so. The aforementioned benefits represent just a few of those available to communities as a whole, however, many additional benefits can be achieved through participating in sport and implementing programs based on best practices from the field of sport for development.

Benefits of sport participation. In their discourse on sport and post-colonialism, Bale and Cronin (2003) identified that “sport has provided a rare avenue of participation, opportunity and success in mainstream culture” (p. 9) for individuals who have been marginalized. It is important to note the reference to mainstream culture as in the past sport has been utilized as an oppressive tool towards some cultures, such as Aboriginal people in Canada and Australia through the eradication of traditional sport. The opportunities generated through sport do provide a common ground for individuals from diverse backgrounds to build relationships and a sense of unity (Bale & Cronin, 2003).

Jarvie (2007) identified the “power of sport to act as a resource of hope for both individuals and communities” (p. 411). The emphasis on communities illustrates the larger role that sport can play beyond the individual through benefits including the generation of pride and having positive role models locally. The evidence, through examples including Australian Olympian Cathy Freeman, suggests that sport can transform people’s lives. This in turn facilitates social change (Jarvie, 2007, p. 415). This change results in a positive correlation between participation in sport and social and institutional trust (Jarvie, 2007, p. 420). The benefits of “membership and participation [in] sports clubs is associated with being more satisfied with life, more trusting, more sociable, healthier and more positive towards state institutions” (Jarvie, 2007, p. 420). Positive identification with state institutions is an important benefit for those who live in public housing because the Manitoba Housing Authority is owned and operated by the Government of Manitoba. Additionally, the benefits of improved health and quality of life help to address the aforementioned concerns raised regarding those who grow up living in poverty.

Perhaps it is Collins (2010) who has been able to identify most keenly the benefits of sport to those who have been marginalized, as engaging in sport “will help to support life-long learning, improve health, help make communities safer through greater cohesion across cultures and classes, aid urban and rural development, and reduce social exclusion, especially in the most concentrated areas of deprivation” (p. 26). Social exclusion can be enhanced through sport offerings that are not inclusive of the broader community, such as the SPIN (Sport Programs in Inner City Neighbourhoods) project run by the City of Winnipeg in Gilbert Park that only involves inner-city children from similar

circumstances. The importance is not just to create opportunities for engagement in sport but also to reduce social exclusion by having greater interaction with other community members.

Sport can also be utilized to create safe and supportive environments through which unique opportunities for girls can be generated. Through participation in sport, girls can:

develop new and valued skills; form friendships, receive and give peer support, and enhance their social networks; enjoy freedom of expression and movement; receive mentoring support from trusted adults, who can serve as girls' advocates; and take advantage of new learning and educational opportunities. (Brady & Khan, 2002, p. 1)

These findings, based on the work of the Mathare Youth Sports Association, which offers sport programs to youth in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, showed that girls and women were able to utilize sport as an empowerment tool to better their lives and their communities. Given the diversity of Gilbert Park, it was important for the conducted research to explore the presence of any gender and/or cultural norms that constrain participation in sport. The research findings, which will be discussed in detail in a later chapter, suggest that gender dynamics appear to play a significant role in the lives of girls in Gilbert Park. Therefore, determining ways to negotiate the participation of girls in the community while retaining adherence to these gender and cultural norms is needed.

Another of the key findings from the literature is that there is too great an emphasis on the provision of sport in a community rather than facilitation of opportunities to develop life skills and achieve benefits, a term Redeker (2008) coined the

“spiritual poverty of sport” (p. 496). The act of simply giving a community sports equipment or developing infrastructure does not solve local problems. It is through creating a sustainable, purposeful program that results may be achieved. The importance of developing an appropriate framework, which addresses the needs of the population and takes into account the fundamentals of positive youth development, is reinforced through this finding.

Darnell (2010), referring to a statement made by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, found that “when young people participate in sports or have access to physical education, they can experience real exhilaration even as they learn the ideals of teamwork and tolerance” (p. 55). How they learn these ideals, whether it is through the act of participation in sport itself or something else, falls under the classification of positive youth development, the next topic to be explored in the current literature review.

Positive youth development. Sport for development, which seeks to enhance the lives of children throughout the world, draws on many of the central tenets of positive youth development when facilitating programs. This is because positive youth development involves the development of “diverse competencies that can help a young person in sport, in their current life and/or in their future” (Gould & Carson, 2008, p. 59). The skills developed through this framework are “those skills that enable individuals to succeed in the different environments in which they live, such as school, home and in their neighbourhoods” (Danish, Forneris, Hodge & Heke, 2004, p. 40). These skills must be taught and fostered in order to develop and need to be transferable from one setting to another to be classified as a life skill (Danish et al., 2004, p. 46; Gould & Carson, 2008,

p. 60). When sport is focused on success and extrinsic outcomes as the reason for participation, the likelihood of developing life skills is diminished (Gould & Carson, 2008, p. 62). Therefore, whether the emphasis should be on participation as opposed to competition for sport in public housing was one issue explored with the research participants.

The literature also identified the eight key features of positive development settings that apply to the after-school programs that are currently the focus of sport programming in Gilbert Park. The eight setting features are as follows:

1. Physical and psychological safety
2. Appropriate structure
3. Supportive relationships
4. Opportunities to belong
5. Positive social norms
6. Support for efficacy and mattering
7. Opportunities for skill building
8. Integration of family, school, and community efforts (Eccles, Gootman, National Research Council (U.S.) Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth, Institute of Medicine (U.S.), & National Research Council (U.S.) Board on Children, Youth, and Families, 2002, p. 90-91).

The setting features draw on previous knowledge about how youth develop, however, “there is very little research that directly specifies what programs can do to facilitate development, let alone how to tailor them to the needs of individual adolescents and diverse cultural groups” (Larson, Eccles & Appleton Gootman, 2004, p. 8). Therefore, it

suggestions for how to improve sport delivery were developed for the case. Through working with community members, organizations and policy makers the results and findings can be put into action to serve as a catalyst for change in the sport delivery framework utilized in public housing throughout Winnipeg.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

Prior to presenting the findings of the research it is important to keep in mind that the purpose of this research was to explore the benefits of, and constraints to, sport engagement by children living in Gilbert Park, a Manitoba Housing Authority complex in Winnipeg. To accomplish this, multiple methods were employed including participant observation, interviews with child participants and staff participants as well as document analysis. From these sources of data several key themes began to emerge. These themes were classified as the core benefits and constraints experienced by children in Gilbert Park drawing on the insight provided by the children themselves and the staff who work in the community on a daily basis. Engaging in participant observation enabled me to gain a better understanding of daily life in the community as I participated in GP² programming. The ensuing presentation of findings first describes the case, looking at both the places and people that impact the sport engagement of children in Gilbert Park. After the stage is set with regards to the community, the key themes (denoted by italics) that developed from the data are explored, focusing first on the benefits of participating in sport and then the constraints that affect their participation. Given the substantial overlap between staff and child participants' views, each speaker is identified with the relevant staff or child designation following their pseudonym. Doing so ensures clarity of who is speaking so that there is no confusion as to whether staff or child participants reported that particular benefit or constraint. The findings were reported in this way to enable effective interpretation of the data. The result is that potential methods of

negotiating the constraints and ways to enhance the benefits experienced could be developed for the case.

Life in Gilbert Park: The Places and The People

Gilbert Park, a community located in Winnipeg's northwest corner, is comprised of townhouse units operated by the Manitoba Housing Authority. These units are called home by approximately 900 individuals, over half of whom are under the age of 18 (C. Mohr, personal communication, February 11, 2011). At the centre of the community lies the Gilbert Park Gym, which borders the skate park and basketball courts and is across from the townhouse units that are home to the Club, GP² and the Gilbert Park Resource Centre (see Figure 1 for a diagram of the relationships between the aforementioned organizations and staff participants). GP² is a drop-in program open to children from the community to attend after-school and on Saturdays throughout the whole year. Activities offered include crafts, computers, floor hockey, skateboarding, Cooking Club, MENtorship, and hip hop among many others. The Club operates seven days a week with after-school activities and programs as well as drop-in on the weekend. Programs offered by the Club include Girls Night Out, flag football, soccer, an Aboriginal cultural program, guitar and volleyball amongst a variety of other opportunities. The Gilbert Park Resource Centre mainly serves adult members of the Gilbert Park community with drop-in services provided by Manitoba Housing Authority's Tenant Services Coordinator and Co-op Relations Officer, the Health Centre's Community Development and Aboriginal Health Outreach staff, and Employment and Income Assistance staff. The unit from which GP² operates is essentially a three bedroom townhouse that has been repurposed with two of the bedrooms upstairs serving as offices for staff and counselling while the

third is a computer room with roughly ten computers for the children to use. On the main floor the living room is used for the majority of programs, which, given its size, can accommodate a limited number of people. The kitchen is used for cooking club as well as another space where staff often play games with the kids while other programs are going on. Recently GP² moved into a renovated unit next door to their original site where they have the same layout. Once renovations are completed, they will combine the two units through a doorway opening in the living rooms for enhanced space. The enhanced availability of space will still not allow for any programs of a more physically active nature to take place within the confines of their unit, however, they will be able to accommodate more participants. While GP² does not utilize its basement(s) for programming, utilizing them instead as storage space, the Club, whose units have a similar layout, use theirs as a weight room for the older participants. The greatest assets found in Gilbert Park, however, are not of a geographic nature but rather the people who work and live in the community.

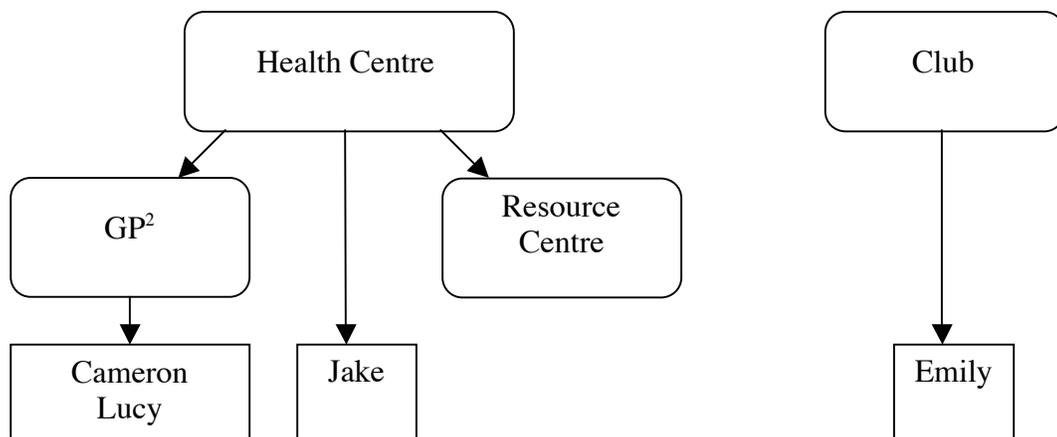


Figure 1. Relationship between community service providers in Gilbert Park and staff participants.

Four different staff members took part in the interview process, with two others playing significant roles in the recruitment of participants and the observation phase. Staff were interviewed to provide the context of child participants' experiences and background on programming in the community. The focus of staff interviews changed through the pilot process, resulting in staff participants instead providing their own insight into the benefits and constraints experienced by children in Gilbert Park in relation to sport based on their substantial experience working with kids in the community. Staff participants provided insight into the inner workings of organizations in the community as well as their experiences with children in their programming in the past that would not have come across solely by interviewing child participants. Staff participants included Jake, a Community Facilitator; Lucy, a Community Development Social Worker; and Cameron, a Skill Development Worker, all from the Health Centre; and Emily, who had assumed the role as Manager, from the Club. Other staff observed while they worked during GP² programming were Cara, another Community Development Social Worker, and David, a Skill Development Worker. Staff are denoted throughout the findings by their first pseudonym followed by the designation Staff to enhance clarity of whose thoughts are presented. Jake, who has a Bachelor of Recreation Management and Community Development degree, has worked at the Health Centre for four years and in his role as Community Facilitator serves as the lead for Gilbert Park. Jake explained his role as "most things pertaining to Gilbert Park would go through me and um in that community there is a Resource Centre and that's something that I manage day to day happenings out of". In addition, Jake is the chair of the Gilbert Park Resident Advisory Committee where he does most of the footwork for what it is the residents want

to see happening in their community. Lucy, a social worker, has been working in her current capacity with the Health Centre and GP² since the summer of 2008, however, she commenced work with the organization prior to that while still a student. As the lead of the GP² program Lucy

manage[s] the programs, making sure that people are meeting their program goals, organiz[ing] any sort of meetings that have to do with planning the calendar or planning programs or planning presentations that type of thing. And just like overseeing stuff like um maybe applying for grants for programs that type of thing. As for the counselling part, I provide counselling to youth and parents.

Counselling provided to residents of Gilbert Park and the kids who participate in GP² most often revolves around the issues of abuse, violence, family matters, anger management and self-esteem. Cameron has been with GP² for the past two years, both through his applied counselling practicum and in a professional capacity, and works to support the Community Development Social Workers. As a Skill Development Worker, Cameron “will handle um sort of the more recreational programs um stuff in the gym, board games, computers stuff like that. Um with of, like, a role model and mentorship piece as well”. Emily, who had just begun her role as Manager after being a Program Facilitator for the past year and a half, represented the Club in Gilbert Park in the interview process. In her role as Program Facilitator, Emily

was responsible for all the programming that went on at Club so planning all our all our drop-in activities and then collaborating with the Manager and other staff to plan our enhanced programs which are where we do more sort of skill building, um the more specific programs.

All of the staff of the Health Centre and GP² went to great lengths to assist in the research process, specifically with respect to participant observation and recruitment. An overview of all staff participants can be found in Table 4.

Table 4
Overview of Staff Participant Attributes

Pseudonym	Title	Organization
Jake	Community Facilitator	Health Centre
Lucy	Community Development Social Worker	GP ²
Cameron	Skill Development Worker	GP ²
Emily	Manager	Club

Note. Organization refers to the service provider with whom the majority of their time is spent rather than who they are employed by. Staff of GP² are all employed by the Health Centre.

The openness with which most of the children who participated in the interviews expressed their thoughts and views on life in Gilbert Park resulted in a rich dataset. The child participants included Violet, Max, Brittany, Luke, Amber, Joseph, Alyssa, Marvin, Stacey, and Marcus. Other children who were observed at GP² but not interviewed included Jeremy and Joy, who is Violet's best friend. Child participants are denoted throughout the findings by their first pseudonym followed by the designation Child to enhance clarity of whose thoughts are presented. Permission to observe those who were not participants in the interviews was granted by the Health Centre. Violet is an outgoing grade 6 student at Public School No. 10 who is 11 and a half years old. She has lived in Gilbert Park for nine or ten years with her mom, dad, two sisters, brother, and her nephew. Violet is always eager to talk about animals and plans on being a veterinarian when she grows up, making Pet Pals at GP² one of her favourite programs to attend. Max who is 11 years old also goes to Public School No. 10 and has lived in the community for six years with his mom, dad, sister, and two brothers. Brittany loves sports and painting and is a very thoughtful 11 year old who is in grade 6 at Public School No. 10. She has

lived in Gilbert Park her whole life and has five brothers, one of whom is in jail while another does not live with her. Brittany also lives with her mom, grandparents and uncle and is very proud of her heritage representing the Hollow Water, Sagkeeng and Sandy Bay First Nations. Luke is 10 years old and is in grade 4 at Public School No. 10. He has grown up in Gilbert Park and lives with his mom, dad, three brothers who are 6, 5, and 2, and his two sisters who are 13 and 1. Luke was one of the only participants who spoke about playing sports for teams out of the Northwood Community Centre, having played hockey, basketball and soccer there in the past. Luke has strong ties to his family's reserve, Hollow Water First Nation, and spends most of his summer out at Black Island, which is by Hollow Water. The vivacious Stacey is 10 years old and is in grade 5 at Public School No. 11. She has lived in Gilbert Park for a short time, however, she had lived in the community in the past before leaving because there were too many "mean people" there. She lives at home with her mom, dad, two brothers who are 7 and 12, a 3-year-old sister, with another sister not living at home who is 15. Stacey relishes the visits her grandpa makes to come see her on Saturdays. Marcus, who is 11 years old and is in grade 6 at Public School No. 10, loves everything about movies, and also enjoys singing and dancing. He has lived in Gilbert Park for the past five years since moving to the city from Fairford First Nation, where he continues to visit his grandmother in the summer. During the year he lives in Gilbert Park with his mom, three sisters who are 14, 18, and 24, two brothers (one of whom is 16), his 11-month-old nephew, and his brother's girlfriend who is 17. Throughout the participant observation process I was fortunate to get to know Marcus and his youngest sister and witnessed the close familial bond the two

of them share, always looking out for each other and speaking with pride about the other's accomplishments. Amber is 11 years old and is in grade 5 at Public School No. 10. Having lived in Gilbert Park for eight years, Amber spoke about living at home with her mom, dad, sister and two brothers who are 8 and 6. When asked about her favourite things to do, Amber mentioned that she enjoys fishing when she goes back to her reserve, although she was not sure which one she was from. Other activities Amber enjoys are hockey, football, basketball and soccer. Joseph is a quiet 11 year old who attends grade 6 at Public School No. 10. Joseph, who could not recall how long he has lived in Gilbert Park but mentioned that they lived downtown after coming to Canada from Sierra Leone, shares his home with his mom and dad and his seven brothers. Through Public School No. 10 Joseph is involved in the CANU program, which takes students to the University of Manitoba where they learn about nutrition, healthy living, and participate in a training program for track and field every Tuesday night. While Joseph did not always attend programming at GP², throughout the research process his 15-year-old brother, Jamal, was usually the first one to get to program. It became clear throughout my observation that Joseph's family has a close connection to GP² as the staff knew Joseph's father, one of the only times I heard staff speak about knowing parents during my time there. Marvin, an 11 year old who is in grade 6 at Public School No. 10, lives with his mom, dad, five sisters and brother. Prior to living in Gilbert Park, Marvin spent the first three years of his life living in Hollow Water First Nation and he spends some time out there in the summer where he likes to swim. Throughout my time at GP², Marvin came to programming on two occasions, likely because he plays on his school's basketball team as well as on Northwood Community Centre's hockey team. Alyssa, who

loves everything about Gilbert Park, has lived here her whole life, is 12 years old, and is also in grade 6 at Public School No. 10 and lives with her mom, dad, and two brothers who are 2 months old and 6. Alyssa was also the only participant who admitted that she does not like sports or anything of that sort, although she mentioned that she does play basketball. Instead she prefers to spend her time drawing and cooking. While each of the child participants expressed unique interests and perspectives on the world, it is significant to note that seven of the ten children interviewed, Violet, Max, Brittany, Marcus, Amber, Joseph and Marvin, are currently involved in the Little Moose hockey program run out of Public School No. 10. More detail on this program is forthcoming, however, it is necessary to first establish the baseline involvement of the children in several community programs, such as Little Moose, GP² and the Club. An overview of all child participants can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Overview of Child Participant Attributes

Pseudonym	Age	Grade	Years Living in Gilbert Park	Home Environment
Luke	10	4	10 years	Mom, Dad, 2 sisters, 3 brothers
Stacey	10	5	A few months ^a	Mom, Dad, sister, 2 brothers
Amber	11	5	8 years	Mom, Dad, sister, 2 brothers
Violet	11	6	9-10 years	Mom, Dad, 2 sisters, brother, nephew
Max	11	6	6 years	Mom, Dad, sister, 2 brothers
Brittany	11	6	11 years	Mom, grandparents, uncle, 5 brothers (1 presently incarcerated)
Joseph	11	6	Unknown	Mom, Dad, 7 brothers
Marvin	11	6	8 years	Mom, Dad, 5 sisters, brother
Marcus	11	6	5 years	Mom, 3 sisters, 2 brothers and one's girlfriend, nephew
Alyssa	12	6	12 years	Mom, Dad, 2 brothers

Note. Home environment refers to the other individuals with whom the child participant resides in Gilbert Park. ^aStacey had previously lived in Gilbert Park, however, had left due to safety concerns.

The Benefits of Sport Within The Community

Being engaged in sport can have different results and implications depending on the individuals involved and their perspective on life. For the children and staff interviewed several key themes arose detailing the benefits surrounding the importance of sport in their community. Sport enables people to *expand opportunities available to them, provides role models and helps to develop life skills, strengthen the community, provide social opportunities and encourage friendships*, as well as a number of *other specific benefits*. A summary of the key benefit themes outlining who reported them are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Key Benefit Themes

Theme	Staff Reported	Child Reported	Observed
Expanding opportunities	Jake, Emily	Violet	✓
Role models and life skills	Jake, Emily, Cameron, Lucy	Brittany, Luke, Joseph, Amber, Stacey	
Community Social/friends	Jake	Brittany Amber, Joseph, Violet, Max, Marcus, Stacey	✓
Specific benefits i.e. health, fun	Cameron	Amber, Joseph, Alyssa, Marvin, Max, Stacey, Luke, Brittany, Violet, Marcus	

Note. The names listed under each category represent those individuals who identified that specific benefit throughout the course of the research process.

Expanding opportunities. For children who live in Gilbert Park one of the constraints, which will be discussed later on, has to do with geographic and social isolation from the greater community. Expressed through the eyes of both child and staff participants, sport provides opportunities to leave the community, helping to reduce isolation. One successful program, offered through Public School

No. 10 where the majority of children in Gilbert Park go for their elementary and junior high education, that gets kids out into the community is the Little Moose program. Funded by Winnipeg School Division No. 1, Little Moose provides children with the opportunity to play ice hockey during the school hours. The Manitoba Moose (the American Hockey League team that plays out of the MTS Centre in Winnipeg) helps to sponsor their namesake program through their Manitoba Moose Yearling Foundation. Through the various sponsorships the program has attained, Little Moose is able to give each child who participates all of the necessary equipment that they need in order to play; equipment that they are able to keep rather than something that they must return at the end of the season or after each game. Little Moose also provides all of the necessary transportation to and from games greatly reducing any constraints children may have otherwise experienced in their quest to play hockey. Violet Child explains how Little Moose is “for people who know how to skate and we go versus different schools and we go to Moose games for free”. Amber Child also thought that one of the benefits of participating in sport is “probably to go to a [professional hockey] game”. However, Little Moose is solely focused on providing an inter-scholastic hockey program to schools with lower sport participation levels often related to the low socioeconomic status of the neighbourhoods they serve. The result is that Little Moose does not necessarily reduce social isolation experienced by children from Gilbert Park because the program continues to segregate the different social classes. Emily Staff discussed the impact playing in an actual league can have:

I think one great thing about being on a city or a community centre team um is that it gets you out of the community, gets you around the city and interacting

with really different people and seeing different parts of the city and it opens your eyes to that beyond Gilbert Park which I think um many kids don't get out of this little niche very often so that's a really cool benefit.

Through participation in athletic teams, children are exposed to more of their surrounding community and city, an idea also incorporated into the regular programming GP² provides.

Through planning different opportunities to expand the horizons of children who attend their programming both GP² and the Club include options to go on field trips to different organizations and locations throughout the city. Skateboarding is a hugely popular sport in Gilbert Park in the summer and is supported by the presence of a relatively new skate park that has been built in the heart of the community; however, as Jake Staff and Lucy Staff mentioned there is significant appeal to be able to go to other skate parks within the city. With the programming offered by GP², Jake Staff talks about how

it's more of a reward to go skateboarding outside of the community um so if it's, you know, based on attendance and behaviour and whole bunch of different items, then that's kind of what can get you a seat in the van to get out.

Through rewarding the exhibition of desired behaviours, such as following rules outlined by GP² and the Club, staff at GP² are able to expand the boundaries of children, which can help reduce the constraint of isolation that will be discussed in detail later on. One of GP²'s programs that takes kids out into the community is Pet Pals. Violet Child explains Pet Pals as:

we go to animal shelters and play with them. We're going on a field trip there in four days to D'Arcy's ARC. That it's an animal centre for animals that don't have homes that they don't put them down but they keep them there until they get adopted.

The excitement that Violet Child and Joy Child expressed towards going on their Pet Pals outing with David Staff was palpable and lasted for days afterwards in the stories Violet Child told. Jake Staff, Emily Staff, and Violet Child reiterated the importance of getting children out into the community in their interviews as well, with Jake Staff talking about the Careers for Kids program, which had recently taken children from GP² on a field trip to an investment group in Winnipeg's downtown to learn about stocks and how to invest your money. Through programs such as these, children in the community are exposed to a wider variety of possibilities for their futures than those they would have been exposed to solely within Gilbert Park.

Role models and life skills development. Residents of Gilbert Park benefit from the introduction of role models and the development of life skills facilitated through participation in sport. A theme throughout the interviews with staff was the resilient and persistent nature of Gilbert Park residents, especially the children. Emily Staff has "seen lots of resilient kids yeah have great struggles but still are doing okay and yeah just that general inventiveness and kind of make the best of the situation and have a good time". In the following stories of how staff participants describe the children of Gilbert Park it is clear that while the children look up to staff members as role models, the staff also hold a similar level of respect for the children with whom they work on a daily basis. Cameron

Staff discussed how the children in the community “are tough. Like they’re really tough”, a characteristic that can

equate to resiliency and uh I think that they’re also a pretty tight knit group. They may not understand it yet but I think they have ideas of you know commitment and loyalty to friends um where that comes from I’m not sure but we notice it especially within families so I think that there’s tons of respect that are there and we’re trying to build on them so I think um... that I don’t know if they’re just generally good kids with barriers that present different challenges um you know if I was growing up I don’t know how I would be dealing with certain stories.

Lucy Staff reiterated the resilient nature of children in Gilbert Park as

they’re always open to new things like um I found that with skateboarding there was some kids who were really good at cuz they already were skateboarding, there’s like kids who were willing to try new things you know embarrass, not embarrass themselves but say they did fall and get laughed at, they kept on trying and there was like a few kids who really excelled so it’s really great to see kids who are participants.

From Lucy Staff’s perspective as a social worker in the community whose help is enlisted to deal with many of the challenges of violence (domestic or otherwise), substance abuse, and poverty on a daily basis, she doesn’t “know if it’s a matter of having been exposed to it a lot of times but they seem really strong to be able to you know not let it stop them from being kids”. The importance of life skills was not only mentioned by staff participants however as many children also spoke of related ideas.

The resilient nature of children in the community also translates into their persistence when participating in sport as Joseph Child explained that you have to participate in sports in order “to get better at them”. Stacey Child reiterated this belief as “we practice how to do like anything we practice and then get better at it all”. This belief in the need to work hard in order to become better at something helps the children to see the value in doing their homework and practicing skills to reap the benefits in the future. The essence of sport, and the life skills that can be imparted through participation, were explained in the following dialogue between Brittany Child and Luke Child:

Brittany: “It teaches you that you can’t always win, that it’s fine to lose to.”

Luke: “At least you tried”.

Brittany: “And it’s not about winning it’s just about having fun”.

Through adopting an approach such as Brittany Child and Luke Child expressed illustrates one of the many benefits that children can experience from participating in sport. Without such activities they may not have been given the opportunity to learn these life skills in their school or home environments.

In the programming offered by GP², Cameron Staff, who works in a hands-on capacity with the children who attend, says they “do things like board games, computers, and other recreational stuff cuz thinking is a really important thing to development as well socializing so that’s what we do”. Life skills focused on through GP² programs, according to Cameron Staff, include

basic ideas of sportsmanship and team play and fair play um [which] have a huge impact I would guess on on how kids develop into their day to day stuff and would help them for sure. Again, I can’t read minds to see where kids are going to

be in a few years but some of the stuff that I learned playing sports as a kid um definitely worked their way into the rest of my life.

The expression of the value that sport had in the lives of staff, whether from a competitive or recreational perspective, athletic or otherwise, clearly illustrates that sport can continue to have an impact on an individual's life beyond their childhood. All of the staff who were interviewed mentioned their past participation and its impact on them on their own terms, without any probing. From Jake Staff's perspective sport can also facilitate the development of other life skills as

I think the one that lots of people would say is it's kind of a buzz right, it's like sports, teams or like your gang. It's a positive gang outlet so I still think, I mean, I'm biased because I kind of grew up in the team sport um team sport upbringing but seeing it in the kids when they're involved like when they won the soccer um and just seeing the um self-esteem, is it self-efficacy? Yeah everything just comes together and then they have that I did something, I accomplished something... team mentality.

In addition to the more general life skills developed through involvement in different sport activities, the opportunity to enhance physical skills was also addressed by child participants. Referencing the development of physical skills, Marvin Child and Marcus Child mentioned building strength, while Amber Child spoke of how sport can help you to "be fast" and that participation in sport "teaches you how to like jump, maybe like volleyball". For Marcus Child, participating in activities such as Little Moose are important because "they want to get exercise" and he likes "skating around. I don't like standing there", which as will be discussed later on can constrain the participation of

children when overcrowding occurs. With the Club in Gilbert Park Emily Staff told of how they are

trying to shift towards um kind of uh a long term athlete development focus starting with basic fundamental movement skills at a younger age in our drop-in programming and recreational programming and then building that up into skill building for a specific sport and then eventually getting them onto a team.

While none of the staff participants felt that they were in a position to comment on the skill development of the children with whom they worked in comparison to those of their peers throughout the city (most often because of a lack of awareness of children in other communities) the possibility that skill levels could be hindered because of a lack of more structured programs was expressed. One of the ways that the development of life and physical skills can be fostered amongst children is through developing relationships with those who serve as role models.

Amongst those who can serve as role models for community members, children, youth or adults, are the staff of different community programs. The relationships between children and their role models can be fostered through involvement in sport as Lucy Staff mused

the first year we ran it [, the SPIN soccer team,] we had one of our facilitators he was um almost a professional soccer player um I think he might have played almost for Belgium. So like he was amazing, he was like fit and all that stuff and he like had a real passion for it so I don't know if that really um really helped guide that, but yeah he was super passionate about it. And Cameron Staff who you met, he is super passionate about hockey which kids are super passionate

about now, so I don't know if that rubs off on the kids but like I think maybe it does yeah.

In reference to the same staff member who influenced children's participation in soccer, Jake Staff explained how the following year, when that staff member was no longer present, soccer was unpopular:

I think it was the first year Gilbert Park had a soccer team, I think they won the whole thing and they didn't lose a game and it was like super popular with um a couple things. We had a former staff who was who played semi pro in where he was from... Sierra Leone, so the kids were anyways a lot of the African newcomers to Gilbert Park were drawn to him and were drawn to ultimately also play soccer so it was awesome that they won the whole tournament and then they offered it I think the following summer and then for various reasons it wasn't popular. So they actually didn't field a team.

The various reasons that were reported seemed to stem from the Refresh project undertaken by the Manitoba Housing Authority in the community to renovate units, resulting in families leaving the community for the summer. Jake Staff also related the impact that staff from similar backgrounds can have on children in the community as

I know in the past there's been social workers in Gilbert Park, one was from Zimbabwe and I don't know she did relate really well with the kids from Africa and they related well with her so um I don't know going deep into that I don't know if its like just a personality or like if they were profiling and going hey, so and so's black and I'm black too. We have something in common.

Role models do not have to be of the same race, gender, or background as those who look up to them, though based on discussions with staff it has been shown to influence those who attend programming. One program where the sole focus of GP² is to foster a relationship between boys and a positive male influence is through the MENtorship program. Through the use of sport in the program they have been able to make strong connections between children and programs that are offered. As Lucy Staff explains

it's a great way to reach kids who might not be coming to programs very often cuz we have a couple of kids who come for the MENtorship program that does focus a lot on sport who haven't been coming for a really long time as a result of coming to that they've created bonds with the facilitators for that program and they come on a regular basis I'd say pretty much everyday so um I think it's really good that way because it creates connections with program facilitators.

Through programs that focus on the development of role models Lucy Staff identified the importance of

the relationships that like some of the kids are gaining with Cameron Staff and David through the MENtorship program. I'd say that's like a big key to steering them away from that type of lifestyle because they have somebody to an older person who's not a friend who's not necessarily a family member that they could confide in and talk about some stuff that they might not feel comfortable talking about with someone their own age.

While emphasis is placed on creating relationships between staff as role models for participants, the community has also focused energy on youth serving as role models.

Through the sport of skateboarding GP² has tapped into the resources available to them within the local skate park; the youth who are going there on their own time to practice. When asked why skateboarding is so popular in the community Lucy Staff explains,

I think a lot of it has to do with we have some older kids who are like in their 18s/19 who um do the skateboarding and they've been doing it and they're like pretty much pros and I think they really look up to them and it's really nice because last summer some of them were like helping us like teach kids some skills with skateboarding so I think um there's that plus um just because mainstream culture like skateboarding has also been pretty popular.

Popular, both because of the role models they look up to and its strong connections to urban culture, skateboarding is one of GP²'s most popular programs in the summer months. Interestingly, the majority of children interviewed did not talk about skateboarding, which may be due to more of the out of sight, out of mind idiom with the interviews occurring during February and March rather than a lack of interest. With respect to older kids serving as role models through skateboarding, Jake Staff tells how

within that program alone there is probably three or four what we have been really trying to mold them because they have, they are kind of natural cool kids; they are leaders, they are very positive kids. They take their skateboarding very serious so there is a driver's seat to kind of role model that kind of behaviour and um just positive outlet for their after-school, weekend kind of free-time, I guess leisure time, right? So um we've had I guess three or four mentors now working with younger skateboarders and getting their equipment kind of ready to go, teaching

them tricks and and ultimately hanging out with them and just being that kind of positive role model and that's with skateboarding and I mean we could say that for other programs and kids are um are kind of being self-identified as leaders and then mentors so we have specific programs [for] peers mentors so now working with kids that are going to be peer leaders in their community and so if they can support other kids that are going through troubled times and they're the ones that are ultimately going to get the kids coming to them and you know they may go to a service provider, you know, a recreation worker, but you know if we can have these kind of key strategic people in the community that just support kids during their free play, um, all the better.

Siblings can also serve as role models to their other, often younger, family members as Brittany Child talked about how her "sister plays basketball, volleyball and soccer" serving as a role model for her to become involved in similar sporting pursuits. Several other child participants relayed the involvement that their siblings had in different activities such as carpentry, guitar, saxophone, and hockey. Overall, through enhancing relationships between community members through the identification of positive role models, programs such as GP² are better positioned to aid in community capacity building.

Community. Participation in sport provides benefits on a community-level basis in addition to the individual benefits that can be accrued. One of the characteristics that makes Gilbert Park unique according to Jake Staff is that it is "a really young, kind of youthful community... so when it is at capacity and you're talking about 900 people, 550

are under 23”. This youthfulness of the community, expressed by Jake Staff, is evident through

the energy. It’s a pretty diverse community. I think culturally, I think there is lots of great things happening, a lot of community pride, that people are from Jigtown or really proud to say that. And um, um like I mentioned culturally, it is pretty vibrant and people are pretty proud to be First Nations, Métis. For the most part those are the larger pockets.

In the interviews with children, many mentioned ties to different reserves throughout the province and that they continue to visit family on them with varying frequencies.

The ties to a community are not solely based on those of heritage but are also based on the place one calls home with residence in Gilbert Park connecting those who live there. Emily Staff explained how within Gilbert Park there is “a freedom of movement” which links in to how

everyone who lives in the community is very connected um in a really neat kind of way. And I’ve seen people really rally when bad things happen and really come together as a community and uh I find that pretty amazing and I I think that people here have a lot of trust in their neighbours in a certain way and um a lot of the kids are playing outside all of the time and people feel okay about that part.

The trust amongst community members was evident when observing the Hockey Day in Gilbert Park, held on a Saturday during the participant observation phase of the research. A number of dads, uncles and older brothers come out to play in the street hockey games with their family members, making apparent the sense of community when the other kids knew these older men who had joined in. Violet Child expressed this, “that I know

everybody”, as one of the best parts about living in Gilbert Park, a sentiment reiterated by Max Child. One young girl with whom I spoke told me about how she was so very proud that her older brother, who was 18, had come to visit her that day and was also playing hockey with the older kids. The sense of pride for both her brother and community was unmistakable. While the majority of kids came out to play on their own, with older siblings about 10 years old generally looking after their younger siblings, a few grandmothers/moms came out to watch them play but did not join in on the action themselves. It is important to note that during observation of GP² many kids spoke about how their moms were involved at their schools, attending meetings and helping out. While they may not have been in attendance during Hockey Day in Gilbert Park it is clear that for many mothers it is important to play an active role in the lives of their children. Connections within families can also be attained through engagement in sport as Amber Child talked with pride about how her “Dad came and watched at Billy Mosienko”, the arena across the field from Gilbert Park, when she was playing in a Little Moose game there. The Club brought out any kids who had come to their programming to engage in the day’s events and took responsibility for the game that the youngest children were playing. Through encouraging kids to play they also began to develop relationships with the youngest participants for whom there is no programming offered at Club or GP². Doing so will help to develop relationships in the future when they are eligible to begin attending programming after-school and on the weekend. During Hockey Day in Gilbert Park relationships between Citizen on Patrol Program volunteers, other community agencies’ staff, and residents of all ages were evident. The connections and warmth

exhibited between individuals when they were playing hockey occurs on a daily basis as Lucy Staff expressed that

you'd think that being brought up in Gilbert Park they'd be really hard and they'd you know be hard to approach but like even some of the older kids who you only have contact really through some programs like they're, they they're still very pleasant to you and you know they talk to you like you're just anybody else.

These kinds of relationships, as well as the friendly attitude expressed by many in Gilbert Park, rather than being skeptical of outsiders, is responsible for the generation of strong ties between individuals. This sense of support within Gilbert Park was expressed by Brittany Child when stating "like if something bad happened to me all the way over there she [her mom] wouldn't like be notified right away but like in the community here all the parents are notified". It is for reasons such as this that the majority of the children interviewed indicated that their parent(s) allow them to play freely throughout the bounds of Gilbert Park while many regulated their activity outside of its borders. The strong sense of community has been enhanced through children participating in sport and they have also reaped the benefits of developing social skills and building friendships.

Social/friends. Amongst child participants, the desire for social interaction and meeting new people was a primary reason for engaging in sport. The existence of friendships and relationships within the community was also a significant contributor in terms of the child participants' favourite things about living in Gilbert Park. For Emily Staff, being "in a community such as us where our kids are facing maybe extra special challenges um that social aspect of being part of a team is just that much more important". This is because kids need to have individuals in their life whom they can rely

on for support. For kids, sport also “gets them out, gets them connecting with kids, building relationships with adults and kids in a positive way”, which for Lucy Staff represents an important tool in building community capacity. The social benefits of living in Gilbert Park and participating in sport were evident from the perspective of child participants, as Amber Child and Joseph Child suggest in the following exchange:

Amber: “There’s lots of people to do things”.

Joseph: “To make friends”.

Amber: “And meet other people to get better at that sport”.

Joseph: “And meet new people”.

For Max Child, one of the best things about living in Gilbert Park is “playing with friends” while for Luke Child and Stacey Child it is their friends who make their community a good place to live. The social aspect also will determine who participates in each activity or program as for Amber Child her participation “depends on who’s all there”. As previously mentioned, one of the benefits of living in Gilbert Park is the sheer number of other kids there are to engage with when growing up. Marcus Child talked about how “lots of people play sports here, they run, they jump, they play, they chase, they tag and stuff like that, like younger people mostly. The old, like teenagers, like, they play basketball” while “other kids like my age or something, they just like running around Jigtown”. For some of the child participants the opportunity to make new friends, including those outside of Gilbert Park, is an exciting benefit of engaging in sport. Stacey Child and Marcus Child came to realize in their interview that they both attend the same summer camp outside of the city every year and spoke with enthusiasm about all of the

new friends they had made last year and their excitement about sharing stories from the past and hopes for the coming year's camp was contagious.

Participating in sport can also provide opportunities to build friendships with those outside of your gendered social network. When interviewing Luke Child and Brittany Child they both identified that they enjoy participating in sports that are co-ed. Sport can also be an avenue through which gender relations, both between and within genders, can be enhanced. Brittany Child stated "I feel comfortable with girls", while also suggesting that co-ed sports can also be fun. During several staff interviews it was suggested that GP² has had to deal with children who are still exploring their sexual orientation and which gender they identify with. To assist children in coping with this and developing an understanding amongst their peers, they have worked alongside local agencies that seek to expand the definition of gender such as the Rainbow Resource Centre. Through educating community members and staff on what gender means in relation to sex they have been able to develop a more inclusive environment for all. One of the ways in which they have been able to accomplish this is through the suggestion that all sports are gender-neutral and encourage co-ed participation rather than a division based on gender or sex. Doing so has made it easier for children who are questioning where they fit in on the gender spectrum to feel at ease to develop friendships with their peers.

Given that participants spoke about the significant influence their friends have on activities, friends also play a role in where they will go to participate in sport. One location for which access is often mediated by friends or social ties is the Northwood Community Centre. Staff spoke about how programs run out of Northwood Community

Centre have failed in the past because most children will not or are not allowed to go there without an adult for a variety of reasons. For Luke Child and Brittany Child, however, they often make the short walk over to Northwood because they are not alone and instead “go with a lot of my friends” and “go with like two friends and we all meet up”, respectively. Having social ties to other individuals enables the child participants to expand the locations accessible to them, enhancing opportunities and therefore potential benefits that are available in the future.

Specific benefits. While many of the aforementioned benefits of engagement in sport are applicable at a community level there also are many specific benefits that take on a more individual perspective. A major benefit of engagement in sport is the positive impact participation can have on the lives of those engaged in an activity. When asked if they thought sport could help to reduce some of the constraints in the neighbourhood of Gilbert Park, Amber Child and Joseph Child replied as follows:

Joseph: “Yeah”.

Amber: “Yeah I think sometimes they are”.

In light of the identification that sport can play a role in alleviating the presence of and aid in the negotiation of constraints, several specific benefits have been noted by participants.

The first of these specific benefits is that participation in sport enables that child's parent to have a break, whether from all of their children or just one, for the duration of their engagement. Cameron Staff identified that in the eyes of parents one of the main benefits of their child participating in sport is that “it's an hour away from their kids and I think a lot of parents need that, in any, in any community, like I need some space”.

Related to the break for parents is Cameron Staff's suggestion that "the physical activity piece is huge um for parents I would imagine. I'm not a parent, but um a kid coming home tired is probably a good thing". While it may seem like a rather unusual benefit, the residual benefit of having a more rested or relaxed parent can have a significant positive impact on their interactions with their child.

One of the most frequently mentioned benefits of participating in sport by the child participants was that of it being fun. Drawing from the previous category, that of social and friend related benefits, Stacey Child discussed how sport could help reduce boredom by providing an opportunity to engage in a fun activity as

you can have like um different activities that are like like instead of like sitting in your room like you need to get exercise and playing. Playing around, running a lot, and uh, it's lots of fun. The activities in the summer, they don't have anything, anything to do. The people can say no, just find another one and if all the people say no, just make their own, they might find something, like just find their own.

That's what I like about sports.

The ability to participate with a group or on your own in sport creates endless opportunities for the children who live in Gilbert Park to find activities they deem to be rewarding based on their own standards.

Both staff and child participants identified the holistic rewards of engagement in sport as a significant benefit. For children in Gilbert Park who are participating in sport

Emily Staff identified

the health benefits of just being active and participating in sport are huge and um being part of a team or even just getting active more often helps build self-esteem, helps build confidence and uh social skills all really important things.

The realization of health benefits, the development of life and social skills, as well as physical abilities make up a large majority of the specific benefits addressed by all participants in their interviews. Cameron Staff reiterated the importance of sport as “the physical activity piece is huge um. Learning that it can make you feel good, uh *laugh* is a big one.” Meanwhile, Violet Child suggests that a reason people “would want to join is for their health because its good for their bodies”. Statements such as this by 11-year-old Violet Child show the positive effect educating children about the benefits of participating in their communities through sport from an early age. Encouraging participation in sport is also important because as Lucy Staff stipulates,

it’s also good because a lot of kids are developing health issues or weight issues so it’s a really great way to get them out and get active. Um and I know a couple of our participants have had um concerns from like doctors about what they’re eating, like in terms of sugar and stuff and they’ve let us know. Um so its good to get them out and doing something. Also it keeps them busy, like a lot of kids who aren’t doing sports, they could be out doing god knows what or whatever til the end of the night, so I think it’s a good thing to get them involved in positive activities that develop their skills.

The acknowledgement that engagement in sport can also have a positive influence on an individual’s use of time is imperative when trying to negotiate the constraining factors of violence and crime, which as will be discussed later on, play significant roles in the lives

of those in Gilbert Park. Health benefits were also identified by Amber Child who finds that participating in sport “helps [you] to lose weight” while Marcus Child suggested sport is important “because you lose weight and not gain weight from it. But you can still gain weight but you lose some weight too”. The awareness of good versus bad weight in terms of gaining muscle instead of fat illustrates how through education children are learning more about how their bodies respond to activity. All of the child participants were very aware of the relationship between involvement in sport and the health benefits, particularly in relation to achieving a healthy body weight. Brittany Child talks about the importance of being active “so you’re like not obese and sit on the couch all day and waste time playing games [on the computer] all the time. And so you’re taking breaks. I’m a couch potato. *laughs*”. Given the high prevalence of diabetes amongst Manitoba’s Aboriginal population, an awareness about the health benefits of maintaining a healthy body weight and being active is a central tenet of health promotion, which is one of the Health Centre’s areas of focus.

The desire to be involved in sport is also related to competition as Brittany Child likes “softball because you, like it puts you against all the others and you get to run more”. Through observing GP², competition played central roles in many activities such as cooking club where there was a contest to see who could make the healthiest, best tasting and best looking yogurt sundaes, and board games where individuals compete against one another or as part of a team to win the game. Competition is not a desired quality for all children in the community though as Marcus Child pointed out he preferred to participate in sports “for fun”. When asked whether the games she played with her friends were competitive or not Stacey Child said that they were “just for fun”, reiterating

that the preference for competition or recreational activities is dependent upon the individuals involved.

Through the aforementioned Little Moose hockey program, participants reap many of the previously iterated benefits of getting out into the community, developing athletic skills as well as teamwork and other life skills, with the addition of receiving their own equipment that they may keep at the end of the season. Marcus Child describes Little Moose as follows:

people get chosen to go be on hockey for Little Moose. First we had to go get equipment and we had to have we get to we have our date to do and it was my day tomorrow and we got our and then we got our equipment and then we went to our Subway to go eat and then we went back and after we got our equipment and then after our first practice and then the last practice, it wasn't actually a last practice but it was the last day of Little Moose um so we worked like a hockey team, the same team that we lost against last year.

The sense of excitement that all of the child participants expressed about being involved in Little Moose illustrates the positive impact that it is having on their lives. Throughout Max Child's interview he spoke about how "we get to choose our own sticks" and "we get to choose our own equipment and our own bags" giving each participant a sense of ownership and decision making in the process of attaining hockey equipment. This translates into a sense of pride about their equipment, with some participants sharing with me why they had chosen the stick that they had during GP² one day. The same children were then guarding their sticks but also showing them off when they came to play at Hockey Day in Gilbert Park. The combination of benefits mentioned illustrates the

important role that sport plays in the lives of children who call Gilbert Park home as well as in further developing their community.

The Constraints Associated with Sport in the Community

When an individual is unable to participate in sport to their desired level or type of involvement or form of activity it can be said that their participation is constrained. For children who live in Gilbert Park their participation can be constrained by a number of factors. The constraints identified through interviews with children and staff in the community include *disciplinary, behavioural and skill-related challenges, facility-related, economic, gender-related, health concerns, a lack of consistency amongst the group they are planning for, isolation, the lack of organized sport, parental challenges, a lack of role models and family support, staffing-related, partnerships or the lack thereof, and violence, crime and safety concerns*. A summary of the methods and participants through which each of the key constraint themes were identified are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Key Constraint Themes

Theme	Staff Reported	Child Reported	Observed
Disciplinary, behavioural and skill-related	Cameron, Emily, Lucy	Marcus, Violet	✓
Facility	Cameron, Emily, Lucy, Jake	Marcus, Joseph	✓
Economic	Cameron, Emily, Lucy, Jake	Alyssa, Max, Brittany	✓
Gender	Cameron, Emily, Lucy, Jake		✓
Health concerns			✓
Inconsistent group to plan for	Cameron, Lucy, Jake		
Isolation	Emily, Lucy, Jake		✓
Lack of organized sport	Cameron, Emily		
Parental challenges, lack of role models and family support	Emily, Cameron, Jake	Joseph, Violet, Stacey	✓
Staffing	Cameron, Emily	Stacey	✓
Partnerships (lack thereof)	Lucy, Jake, Emily	Stacey, Marcus, Amber, Joseph	✓
Violence/crime/safety	Cameron, Lucy, Jake	Stacey, Marcus, Marvin, Amber, Joseph, Brittany, Luke, Max, Violet	✓

Note. The names listed represent the research participants who reported each of the identified constraints.

Disciplinary, behavioural and skill-related. A category of constraints that came up in several discussions and interviews with staff has to do with disciplinary, behavioural, and skill-related issues. Cameron Staff identified some of the constraints he faces when working with a group for whom behavioural challenges, such as not following rules, ignoring authority figures and acting out, are present:

I think uh again we're lacking it but with our MENtorship group there is a bit of structure to it. You have to follow certain rules and treat each other with a little bit

of respect but even that, it's getting so hard to discipline the kids in the same way every time, I don't know how to go about it differently.

As will be discussed in greater detail later on, staff have suggested that additional training is necessary in order to understand how to best discipline participants and effectively deal with any problems as they arise. While the need for more structured programs is something that has been recommended by several of the participants during the course of their interviews Emily Staff suggested that

with the teens anything too structured um like they don't like really like games, they like to have their free time and sort of flow from area to area so anything too structured with the teens is pretty much a no go.

However, given that the age group focused on in these interviews were between the ages of 10 and 12 this point is important to note when planning programs beyond the reach of this particular research project. The challenge of how to promote and reward positive behaviours while also ensuring consistent treatment of all children causes some distress to staff. It can be difficult to have disciplinary continuity because, as Cameron Staff stipulates,

we're um trying to show kids alternatives a lot of the time and the message that we're showing might not be consistent with their home life, their school life, um things that go on on the playground and sometimes I think we forget our expectations or we don't really keep them in check so um when the kids misbehave so to speak, um, after a while it gets challenging to deal with it and not be frustrated.

The need to discipline participants can often arise because of anger expressed by the kids, as Cameron Staff shares:

I think what we run into which which might happen everywhere but I know we run into a lot of issues with anger and um *sigh* you know a need for us to focus on coping mechanisms rather than um I know when I grew up, when I was growing up, we we could do a little problem solving on our own and that's expected and here I find that we're trying to teach that a little bit more but I don't know if that's specific to Gilbert Park again, but it's something that I've noticed in the last year anyway.

With respect to the MENtorship group and the impact that instances of anger have on their activities, Cameron Staff talked about how

little scums have started for sure, particularly with the boys playing floor hockey. It's just a kid takes a hockey stick to the shin. It hurts, they get mad but usually it dies down pretty fast but that's the sort of things that we can also pick up on fairly easily and get in the way of it. Um, discipline, *laugh* as much as you can.

While observing the MENtorship group playing floor hockey one day, one of the participants spent the majority of his time in the "penalty box" because of swearing and unsportsmanlike behaviour. This was dealt with by not allowing him to continue to play the game, with staff members coming to talk to him about why what he did was wrong in the hopes of turning it into a teachable moment. Anger can also negatively impact the lives of staff as Lucy Staff talked about how at the end of programming kids may just go home "or it could be them upset and doing something like jumping on your car or something crazy". Determining the correct way to discipline participants is something

that the majority of staff express they learned about in prior education whether it is while studying social work, applied counselling or other programs. The different approaches learned and adopted by staff also can create the added challenge of ensuring that discipline is consistent between staff members in the program.

Another challenge for staff is to ensure that the priorities of programs are kept intact despite the presence of competing interests for the attention of staff and space in the facility. One such program where this occurs, as expressed by Cameron Staff, is

Homework Club. I mean the two [participants] we had yesterday were, I don't, the first in a month. And it's a hard thing to enforce cuz we don't want to kick kids out but... if kids do bring homework they kind of get the priority but even then you probably noticed yesterday, it's really hard to ask kids to leave, you know.

In terms of Homework Club, it was observed that for those who were not there to do homework but rather hang out, if they caused enough of a stir they would get their own way, whether they wanted to go on computers or have a snack. This challenge is exacerbated when staffing is lower as observed one day when only two staff members were present and were trying to simultaneously run two programs. In the end, both staff members had to help with one program while I helped out with the two girls who had come for Homework Club that day.

Another challenge that is presented in terms of behaviour and skills has to do with the ability of staff to connect with children. Emily Staff talked about how

lots of kids struggling with lots of issues at home and I think that translates into some really tough behaviours so um I've certainly been challenged in terms of

dealing with behaviours and uh uh yeah that probably wouldn't happen to the same extent in maybe some other neighbourhoods.

The aforementioned behaviours can also lead to additional struggles for staff when trying to work with child participants. Emily Staff shared that

it can be tough to connect with some of the kids too. A lot of them have some pretty big walls up and uh so really have to be dedicated and patient and show them that you're, that you care, in order to build that connection so that can be challenging as well.

As will be discussed later on, these constraints impact the staffing requirements for both voluntary and paid positions. Disciplinary issues pose a significant challenge for staff who also are unable to see the long term effect of their programming because, as Cameron Staff explained, for

participation within programs we can see that its documented and we can look back um and we can see our successes um which is which is nice in the short-term. The long-term that gets frustrating because who know like I don't think I'll be here for five years.

The turnover of staff, the significance of which was discussed in terms of the effect that staff have on children as role models, reinforces the need for a positive work environment for those in community organizations.

While staff must deal with the behavioural and disciplinary issues presented by some child participants, "the lack of confidence to start" participating in sport is a constraint facing children in Gilbert Park, according to Emily Staff. Cameron Staff has found that in sport there is the

potential to lose some confidence, um we've seen it, um where where kids for whatever reason isn't very good at a sport or hasn't picked it up as fast as the others have so I think that that is a pretty important one.

Marcus Child hinted at the lack of necessary skills when he suggested that sports can be “really hard to participate in because you have to do so much work and you have to do like personal training and stuff before when a game happens. And people will quit anything”. Also supporting this sentiment was Violet Child when saying that sport can be difficult to participate in “because some activities it's hard to do”. Lacking the perseverance and other essential life skills can instigate anger or other behavioural challenges within an individual who is not able to participate in an activity to the same skill level as their peers. Ensuring that participants have opportunities to develop physical, social and life skills in their childhood can help to alleviate the aforementioned constraints from impacting their sport engagement.

Facility. For GP² and the Club, which run their programs out of Manitoba Housing townhouse-style units in the centre of the community, their facilities can constrain the opportunities available to residents. Emily Staff talked about how

being in a unit presents some unique challenges for supervision because there's a lot of small rooms so it is very easy for a kid to sort of get into a room and nobody even notice so we try to keep rooms closed and kids out of them if we're not using them for a specific program.

One of the ways GP² is trying to counter some of their facility-based constraints is through expanding their space. By the end of the interview process GP² had moved into

their new space, a fully-renovated unit next door to their old unit. Following renovation of their old unit the two will be combined. Lucy Staff talked about how

with the new space we're hoping to have um an area that's more quiet, well not more quiet but we're for like my purposes and the other social worker's purpose to have more quiet counselling space so that's what we hope to have and then um run more than one program at a time in the building so it could be um a more quiet type of program when we're doing counselling or um I don't think we could really do anything really active in it because the opening to the next unit are just going to be a door shape.

The limited space available to offer programs to community residents means that, as Lucy Staff explains,

we can only offer it [GP² programs] to so many kids just given our space so when you get over to see GP²'s space they are going through a renovation so from one unit they will be expanded to two. But essentially they are offering a youth program in what would be deemed an apartment so that said you can think of doing a cooking program and you only have so many kids cooking and then there's just no more room so that's the beauty of having the gym so we can offer um different sports but um ultimately we have [a] certain kind of carrying capacity and we can't accommodate other kids.

On numerous days while observing GP² an average of six kids had to be turned away during each session because the facility was full or over its capacity. This is something that child participants noticed as Marcus Child talked about for some programs "you like have to like wait on their waiting list for somebody to get kicked out of" the program

while Joseph Child commented that there was “too much watching and waiting” usually “for instructions”. In contrast, on other days programs had to be altered to accommodate low participant numbers. An example of this is during the scheduled activity of board games when, with only one or two children in attendance, the participants would be offered the opportunity to play or do something else, such as go on the computer. Based on my observations it would seem that there is no correlation between program attendance and the day of the week or what activity was offered. Child participants who were not interested in participating in the scheduled activity often still came to GP² and played games or hung out with staff instead.

The facilities available in the community, outside of the spaces run by GP² and the Club, according to Jake Staff are the “renovated playground area... community gym... local school K-8 across the street that has two gyms too”. While it is clearly beneficial that the community has places such as these at their disposal, Cameron Staff suggests that the Gilbert Park gym is

a great resource for us but it’s a pretty small gym um it’s loud you can’t hear people talk in it so unless it’s out there like soccer is a great one for us to do because if kids see they can come play and it’s not a big deal you don’t need any equipment and it’s visible where I think just a lot of it, the sporting activities that we do are indoors in a small place and kids might not know about them. Parents, families might not know about them so I think that that certainly holds the participation down a little bit.

The Gilbert Park Gym, with its small capacity, also must be shared as Jake Staff mentioned that while “we’re thankful we have a gym but um it isn’t the best space once

you see it and it's only one like so you have the two clubs [GP² and Club] not fighting but competing for the gym". With space being such a commodity for programs operating in Gilbert Park, Cameron Staff suggests that "if we did just make everything a little bit bigger like the gym, the skate-park um just having more space" would enhance the opportunities that they are able to provide. Another facility that Cameron Staff suggests would be beneficial for GP² on a seasonal basis would be to "have a proper hockey rink um I mean not that Northwood [Community Centre] is far away but it's far enough away when it's minus 20 or 30 out". During some of the staff interviews it was mentioned that Northwood is considered too distant to go to without adult supervision, while child participants cited concerns about safety for not utilizing Northwood's space. Threats of and incidences of violence while attending Northwood's facilities have created a significant divide between the community of Gilbert Park and Northwood in the eyes of child participants. Lucy Staff mentioned that "basketball we can easily do because we have the gym space but if we didn't have that it would be really difficult to do" during the winter. While more opportunities are available for programming during summer months, when outdoor spaces can easily be utilized, during the colder months offering active programming can be a challenge.

Economic. Cameron Staff identified one of the most prevalent constraints when suggesting that involvement in sport would be increased "if the costs were subsidized". Costs of participating in a program include registration fees, necessary equipment and clothing to be able to participate, and transportation to get to and from scheduled sessions. While there are concerns about funding programs on an agency-wide basis, as staff participants discussed, it is also a problem on an individual basis. Lucy Staff talked

about how “parents usually don’t have money to put towards signing them [their kids] up for like baseball camp or something like that”. Generally, in order to increase participation in sport it is necessary to create partnerships between the organization offering the program and an agency that can support their economic needs. For this, Emily Staff talks about how “there’s some programs out there that are supposed to um like programs like KidSport for example that families can access to help pay for the the fees of sport which is a major barrier”. All of the programs that the Club offers, as well as those that GP² runs, are free of charge to all participants, thus mitigating constraints felt due to the cost of registration. The organizations however can be inhibited in terms of what they are able to offer due to economic constraint. To illustrate this Emily Staff shared that the Club’s

goal is always to get kids participating in sort of the real city wide leagues and yeah that can be a really big, well because we have not so many resources we have to make a choice about well we can’t have a basketball team for every age group, we can’t have a basketball team and a ball hockey team for the same age group, things like so we have to be always making choices and cutting back what we’re offering.

A challenge that the Club faces each season involves determining what age and gender groupings should receive priority treatment and in what sports. Having the opportunity to participate in the same leagues or activities as your peers in the city, regardless of economic and living circumstances, can help to reduce social and geographic isolation, the presence of which will be discussed further in the coming pages. In order to reduce the aforementioned isolation Jake Staff will “do a lot of fee waivers for families to get

free swim passes or um free theatre classes anything sport related”. To apply for these benefits Jake Staff must submit a

registration subsidy through community club and then KidSport to do the hockey equipment... be a stretch to do all that um I think it’s probably overwhelming for parents um you know I couldn’t just give them the paperwork I’d have to sit down and fill it out with them.

The ability of an individual to adequately fill out the necessary paperwork requires the literacy skills, forethought, and understanding of how the process works in order to successfully obtain subsidies and support. Jake Staff discussed how in terms of

trying to build some community capacity it would be great to have community volunteers actually work with residents [to] help fill out the forms and submit the paperwork um because it’s a great resource that I don’t think is utilized as much as like the fee waivers I’m submitting fee waivers all the time and people know about them now and even with that from what I’ve heard the City’s refined it so it will be more accessible to people of low income to participate with fee waiver.

This exhibits the need to build the capacity of residents to take initiative to acquire their own sources of support and to develop the skills needed in order to be able to successfully complete the aforementioned applications. Doing so also would support one of the Health Centre’s priorities, which is supporting individuals as they seek employment. Jake Staff spoke of how at the Gilbert Park Resource Centre they have “people coming in, getting resumes, um people looking for work and not even knowing that they need a resume”. To address this issue the Resource Centre has brought in outside assistance to help community members develop the necessary materials for their

job search. Undertaking a similar system for those applying for sport subsidies and support would further help to build capacity in the community.

Another classification of economic constraints relate to, as Emily Staff says, “not uh being able to get equipment”. A lack of equipment constrains not only individuals but also community organizations as Lucy Staff discussed that “even program equipment like floor hockey sticks like we have a few but they break really easy because they’re the cheap plastic so we’re always having to worry about paying for that stuff”. At GP² Lucy Staff shared that “we don’t have funding for a lot of equipment” resulting in them generally offering programs that are not equipment intensive in nature. The Club however receives assistance in procuring equipment for the teams that they field from a national retailer:

Canadian Tire is a really big funder for our sports programs in Manitoba. We can often outfit kids with the gear they need, as well for soccer, we bought all the kids cleats and shin pads and all that stuff and same with basketball, sometimes the kids will get new runners or something like that.

Through agencies such as the Club and their relationships with organizations concerns over having the necessary equipment to participate in an activity can be alleviated. For individual families however, the economic constraint also mediates the equipment and clothing available to them on a daily basis. Jake Staff pointed out for a street hockey program that

they need the mitts, then they need their jackets, then they need the right footwear so now it’s getting into is that what hockey program [we] should offer or is that what parents should be doing on their part so. How can kids play street hockey if

you don't have mitts, so now we're trying to have extra jackets, extra mitts...

because we know kids that will [find this to] be a barrier just not being prepared for the outdoor weather.

While observing Hockey Day in Gilbert Park it was evident that parents exhibited less care in terms of ensuring that older children were dressed appropriately for the weather than for the youngest in attendance. It was not uncommon to see children running around on the snow hill in capri leggings, sweatshirts, and shoes on that Saturday in February while the staff were all wearing parkas, toques and gloves. For those who wanted to participate in an ice hockey program Jake Staff said "well then you know um then it's just a lack of resources for hockey equipment, let's just say they are wanting to play hockey, so they wouldn't have the equipment". While this would not be a concern for children who are participating in the Little Moose program, children who attend a different school such as Stacey Child or choose not to participate in Little Moose are not privy to receive equipment. A common identifier of a sports team is often the uniform and accompanying team moniker and logo. For children who are playing for an unofficial team, however, uniforms are often not a priority and can add to the isolation from mainstream sport that some children experience. Jake Staff talked about how

even um uniforms so giving the kids and that's part of sport, part of team is you know having a uniform so you know we'll do our best, you know, playing pick up hockey but if they actually could put a uniform on it would be like, hey, I'm a Flyers and all that would be pretty cool for the kids.

As previously discussed, participation in sport can help to enhance community pride, something that could be accomplished through team uniforms for the teams that are

fielded in Gilbert Park. Child participants also keyed in on how the availability of equipment influences their sport behaviour. In her interview, Alyssa Child talked about how despite not particularly enjoying the game, she played “basketball because then you just go to the park and the hoops are there”. This illustrates that convenience has a strong influence on the activities that children in Gilbert Park engage in. Most of the child participants discussed how they had sporting equipment at home in the form of the requisite balls needed to play a game, however, the specific equipment needed to participate in sport as they get older was something that was lacking. An example of this is cleats, shin pads and socks for soccer. For those who participate in the Little Moose program they have access to their hockey equipment at all times, and are able to exchange pieces they outgrow from one season to the next as long as they are within the program. An important aspect of this support in terms of equipment is that they would be able to participate on another team without having to find a source to supply their equipment. Equipment, however, is not only related to participation in physical activity as Brittany Child spoke about how she enjoys painting pictures, however because she needs to get more canvases she cannot paint anymore right now. While equipment support for those who wish to participate in sport specific programs can be challenging to obtain, it is more so for those who want to engage in an arts or cultural activity. This is because there are fewer organizations operating with the mandate of assisting children who wish to participate in an arts or cultural activity obtain the necessary supplies and equipment.

Another of the major economic constraints deals with transportation, which Emily Staff identified as playing a significant role in the Club’s and GP²’s operations. For

children in the community Jake Staff talked about how “even just going around and about in your community trying to participate in sport and rec and you’re you know, relying on the buses and that”. A reliance on public transportation can be related to either the lack of other forms of transportation such as a car or the absence of family support to get to an activity via the family’s vehicle. This translates into “not being able to get to games, not being able to get to practices”, which as Emily Staff and Jake Staff pointed out limits an individual’s ability to participate in activities beyond the confines of Gilbert Park as “they wouldn’t have the transportation to get around like other kids in the city have access to”, in Jake Staff’s opinion. Max Child even mentioned that he would be more likely to participate in sport programs “if there’s car pooling”. One of the ways suggested by staff to overcome the constraint of transportation is by having buses or vans available to the various organizations in Gilbert Park to get out to events and activities throughout the city.

The culmination of these economic constraints is often a direct result of living in poverty. As Jake Staff concluded

ultimately some of these kids come from pretty troubled and uh lives that they had no choice, that’s what they were born into so being exposed to the addictions and mental health and ultimately there’s poverty mixed in. It’s, um, it’s a challenge when kids are wanting to eat and eat you know and we can allow them to do that but we’re there for recreation and sport and that, so that’s a challenge.

Addressed by all of the staff interviewed, Cameron Staff talked about how “we’re in a community with a lot of barriers”, the presence of which can be a challenge in

accomplishing what they have set out to do in their jobs but also on an emotional level.

Emily Staff also expressed this sense of challenge when sharing that

a challenge for me has certainly been seeing uh the challenges that some of the kids are facing in their lives. Certainly that's probably the most difficult part of my job is when you have, ah you see a lot of kids that have some really big struggles that uh yeah can be frustrating when you can't so much do anything about it. You can't help everyone. That kind of thing so, that can be hard.

A challenge that community organizations are more apt to assist families with is that of reducing hunger. One of the reasons that Jake Staff points out as to why kids attend their programming which “says a bunch of things right, like they know there's snacks, so there is food”. When GP² was moving to its new unit they were emptying out their kitchen cupboards and sharing the food with the children who they could not let in to programs that day because of their closure. Coming out of the facility with grocery bags of food the kids were ecstatic to take home the bounty they had received. In Lucy Staff's interview, linked to my observation that most kids were pretty hungry by the time they attended GP² after school, she expressed that

when we kept our door open [rather than keeping it locked at all times] we noticed that there would be some kids who just come in and go to the kitchen and take food and take off and we know that there's like some hunger issues in some kids, like some kids have no food at home or very little and we're fine with giving kids food. But when they come into the kitchen we don't know who's taking it or if it's just to, just to you know eat when we won't have any program food for our kids. That's one of the reasons [for keeping it locked].

To counter the heart of the issue of hunger several different strategies have been adopted by agencies in the community. One of the approaches taken to reduce hunger in Gilbert Park is through a breakfast program at the elementary school across the street that most children attend. In her interview Brittany Child talked about how going to the breakfast program was part of her normal morning routine when getting ready to go to school.

Another approach is through connections to local food banks, such as Winnipeg Harvest, where GP² receives the majority of its food, according to staff participants. Finally, the community of Gilbert Park has developed a local garden where children can help to grow vegetables as a source of nutritious food for their families. Not all constraints that face children in Gilbert Park in terms of their engagement in sport are because of economic reasons however nor were they frequently referenced by child participants. When asked if they thought it would be difficult for them to pay if they wanted to participate in sport, none of the participants thought that would be a problem for their family. This lack of awareness of their socioeconomic situation supports the idea that while children may grow up in poverty they are not aware of the economic reality that their families face.

Gender. Throughout the participant observation phase there was a common theme: where are all the girls? This sentiment was echoed by many of the staff participants, including Cameron Staff who said

we've noticed that in the last uh I'd say half a year, six months or so, that there's been a lot more boys than girls. Um I don't know why it tends to go in cycles.

When I first started it was all, it was all girls with a couple of guys coming and that slowly transitioned um but for specific programs we try to do mostly gender neutral stuff.

When talking about the group that attended the program throughout the research process, Cameron Staff said

we've got a pretty consistent group um and some of those girls I just haven't seen in a long time which I think is part of turning 12 or 13. Transition into other things and go do new things but I don't, I don't really know what they're up to.

Lucy Staff has noticed, "that when we [GP²] have a group of boys there might be one or two girls that come join but um usually it's just a boy group and a girl group, like, and that's it". During the participant observation it became clear that the two girls who most frequently attended the program, Violet Child and Joy Child, were always with the same group of boys with whom they came and travelled in a pack throughout the community.

Emily Staff discussed the gender differences as they relate to the Club, where "in the club overall, what's interesting is that we have more girls in the younger age group, more girls than boys, but in the teen group more boys than girls. So that's kind of an interesting switch". The lack of awareness about what a large portion of the children in the community are up to, especially amongst teenage girls, is concerning as that is the age where children most often begin to engage in high-risk behaviours. When asked what she thinks most of the girls in Gilbert Park are up to after school, Lucy Staff expressed that

I kind of have a feeling that some of the younger ones [girls] might be going to Club but I know that a lot of them do walk around or are doing their own type of thing so I don't know if they're just not finding anything that's meeting their needs in program, like, I do see them walking around a lot of the times with older girls.

Given Emily Staff's comments about the lower involvement of the older girls, it is interesting to note that neither of the major players in terms of sport in the community are aware of what this demographic in Gilbert Park is up to.

As previously discussed in relation to the influence of staff on the benefit of role modeling through sport, who is working for an organization can play a significant role in who attends programs. The same can also be said to be true based on gender. Lucy Staff said that

we find that sometimes we have um days with the girls coming in and then the boys they go do their own thing I guess at Club or they kind of switch um or it's like just boys. It could be because just recently before we used to have like mostly a women um staffed program, except for the exception of one person, so I don't know if it's because we have two skill development workers who are male now, um, could be that, um, it could be a number of things though... I know it's like really weird, it's like just a group of guys coming in but then again the group that usually comes that are usually good friends, you know so that could be something to look at.

Presently at GP² the positions of Community Development Social Workers are filled by women while men fulfill the roles of Skill Development Workers.

In terms of the sport participation between genders, Cameron Staff noted that the girls definitely do not participate as much as boys do in the more athletic activities, however,

in the last summer and the fall we were doing football like we were just playing catch in the skate-park while because we've only got 7 or 8 skateboards so we

can't let everybody use them and um while we were playing catch it was definitely 50/50 boys and girls playing. Um, soccer was probably more like a 70/30 split for guys and I think generally for sports that's the case, a little more boy heavy.

It is interesting to note that in the majority of child interviews with girls an interest to participate in a more organized football program was expressed, a sentiment that was not echoed by the boys who were more interested in the possibility of a wider variety of programs in the future. Lucy Staff has

notice[d] that a lot of boys are participating in sports um, like, even when we have floor hockey, like, some of the girls who come to the gym just stand off to the side and they don't want to participate really which kind of sucks cuz it's like what's the point of coming into this place if you're just going to watch. Well, not watch, but they just, like, they just stand there or complain that they don't want to do that. But it also depends, cuz like dodgeball, it's like something that everybody seems to really get into, so I don't know if it's maybe since dodgeball is not really a male or female dominated sport. I don't know if it's that but yeah boys usually tend to be geared towards the more um sport programs, girls not so much.

While observing Hockey Day in Gilbert Park it was evident that the girls were not participating, and that there were very few, if any, over the age of 10 present at the event.

It is also interesting to note that there were absolutely no kids of African descent present at the event, with everyone who participated being either white or Aboriginal. A potential reason for this dichotomy is that new immigrant children have had less exposure to the sport of hockey than their Canadian peers in terms of enjoyment and understanding of it

as well as skill development. Emily Staff described one of the offerings at the Club where there is a

program that [they] call Girls Night Out which is just specifically for girls and um it focuses mostly on physical activity for girls and getting girls engaged in sport, physical activity um but also kind of building self-esteem and talking about girl stuff.

There is a fairly good turnout for this enhanced program, which, as Emily Staff explains, is also supported through having

once a month also a girls only gym which gets them engaged too but they'll play no matter what. Um and I'm just thinking like in terms of the enhanced programs. For example, I have this ball hockey team was supposed to be, was open to co-ed, but none of the girls were interested in playing on a ball hockey team. I think that was partly because there were boys on it. Maybe had there been a girls only ball hockey team they would have played.

Given the aforementioned economic constraints that limit the different teams and activities that the Club is able to offer, there is the added difficulty of ensuring correct levels of gender representation. Emily Staff talked about how the girls may not have wanted to play on the co-ed ball hockey team because she

would imagine [they were] just worried about the way the play would go with the boys and maybe they are a little bit more aggressive or less supportive of teammates. Um some girls were at first said "yes" but then were like, oh, boys on the team. Then no.

In the end, for Emily Staff, it is

the challenge of getting the girls and uh the young kids involved in sport at a younger age and yeah and we uh think that's really important and we really want to do that but um that can just have a lot of extra challenges. It's harder to get that regular attendance and they have so many autonomies. Um getting them in there is certainly a challenge.

Health concerns. From what I observed during the course of the interviews and attending GP² programming, several potential health concerns arose as possible constraints to participation. The choice of food available to participants through programming was often not of an overly healthful nature. During Hockey Day in Gilbert Park, food was provided to all participants in the gym and included wraps, doughnuts and hot chocolate for them to snack on while warming up. From what was observed the kids were generally taking two doughnuts at a time and frequently coming back for more. In stark contrast, during regular programming at GP², one participant never ate anything despite being offered snacks on numerous occasions. Based on conversations with her, it seems as though a concern about obesity and diabetes was present.

Another potential health concern in the community is that of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). While playing board games one day at GP², the kids were talking about how they were learning about the effect of alcohol and inhalants on babies in school. All of the kids said that they knew a lot of other kids whose eyes are too close together, a tell tale sign for a diagnosis with FASD. Given that this is a concern within the community, while not necessarily with the group who is presently attending the program, it is likely that this and other health concerns alters the type of training required of staff. Individuals with FASD often have greater challenges dealing with social

situations and with managing their anger, which places significant demands on the time and skills of staff who are working with these individuals. The health concerns of children attending programs in the community can also influence the type of programs that are offered, as there has been an increased focus to support a healthy lifestyle amongst Gilbert Park residents.

Inconsistent group to plan for. Another constraint, which has a significant impact on those planning the programs, is the lack of consistency among attendees and community members in general, a side effect of the drop-in format. Cameron Staff, when speaking with regards to the popularity of soccer within the community, said that

last summer was pretty wild in terms of um vacancies in Gilbert Park because they are doing renovations. So we lost I think it was upwards of 70 to 80 families Um, I think you could ballpark it and say that there's at least two kids in each of those homes that could access our programs; I know for sure some of them did leave.

Coined the Refresh project, the renovations in Gilbert Park have helped to build community capacity through employing local residents to assist with renovating units. While some families have been forced to leave to accommodate the ongoing renovations during the summer, Jake Staff mentioned that “lots of kids go away back to reserves during summer” which also effects the programs that are offered on a regular basis when renovations are not taking place. For Lucy Staff it can be a challenge because “we have a lot of people moving in and out” and there can be great variation in the interests of potential participants because for “like arts and crafts, kids just like to paint so it could be like a really popular program one month and then the next not be, so yeah, it sucks to try

and plan”. In terms of sport specific programs that are offered, another constraint is that the sports are pre-selected by the City of Winnipeg in terms of what sports SPIN¹ offers rather than what the community identifies as sports of interest. One example of this is when table tennis was offered which Lucy Staff said did not go over well, however, GP² would not be able to switch the program to another activity because it falls within the realm of SPIN. Establishing more independent programming with SPIN, such as each community being able to choose from a variety of sport programs rather than having one prescribed, could help to better meet the needs of those who reside in the community at the time the program is being offered. This would be in contrast to offering a program that was once desired by a different population.

Isolation. As previously stated, programs such as SPIN can contribute to the isolation experienced by residents of Gilbert Park and other low income communities, through dividing individuals based on their socioeconomic status. Only offering children the opportunity to participate in sport with others from low income families does not enable children the chance to expand their boundaries and relate to their peers from other communities. Programming is not the only isolating factor experienced by those in the community as Emily Staff succinctly described Gilbert Park as “almost like a little island in the surrounding neighbourhood”. What this translates into is a community that is close but also isolated from the broader city of Winnipeg. Jake Staff talked about how

it is an isolated community... and I mean it is changing. It's not just First Nations people anymore, it's now becoming large waves of newcomers are coming in and

¹ SPIN (Sport Programs in Inner City Neighbourhoods) is a free, tournament-based sport program operated by the City of Winnipeg aimed at eliminating some of the barriers to sport participation faced by children in Winnipeg's inner-city.

that's mainly because Gilbert Park has lots of 4, 5 bedroom units and with that then it's just more accommodating to the larger um African nations who are moving to Canada and to Winnipeg and now into Gilbert Park, so um, so that's even interesting, seeing the dynamics within culture. Between cultures and how that kind of plays out with sport and rec.

The aforementioned isolation can be classified as being of both geographic and social natures. Geographic in terms of the barriers between it and the greater community, and social in that individuals are bracketed away from the rest of the population based on their socioeconomic status and even their culture. Jake Staff explained that the community is isolated because

of geographical distance from being out here in the northwest corner of the city you know, we're surrounded by heavy industry, there's big commuter routes, Route 90, Keewatin, Logan, um and then just barriers. Barriers just over here, Weston Shops, so then you have the train yard.

From Lucy Staff's perspective, another source of geographic isolation comes from the reality that "there isn't that much around here anyways so it's not like they can go to like a mall or anything else because it is so isolated around here". In contrast to isolation based on physical barriers, some of the recent immigrants who call Gilbert Park home express being socially isolated based on their racial and ethnic diversity within a largely Aboriginal community. One of the ways social isolation takes its toll is through sport as Emily Staff discusses the challenge of trying to engage community children in sport leagues outside of the community and without the confines of other kids from impoverished areas:

at the Club we have some, we try to run sports teams that are actually participating in leagues, but um we do have our ball hockey team which is sort of an intramural type league but with our basketball teams for example, um, we've had softball teams, some flag football teams and soccer teams actually participate. Our goal is always to get a team participating in a city league, like a league that a kid from another community would participate in as well. So, um, I mean we support kids in doing that or whatever possible but as an organization we face challenges to that as well, so, um, yeah, I guess having something like the Club in the community does help more kids access sports but the Club faces challenges itself.

A challenge presented by SPIN programming is that it isolates poor kids from playing with others from different socioeconomic backgrounds. While it is beneficial that the City is offering sport programs, Jake Staff discussed how

the only thing with the SPIN programs too is it is typically kids playing other impoverished communities. It's not kids playing kids in Tuxedo and being able to say I'm from Gilbert Park and we beat kids in Tuxedo. It doesn't matter that they have more money, they have nicer equipment, we beat them. So I still think there needs to be more work with that.

Providing kids the opportunity to participate in sport, regardless of their family's socioeconomic status or living situation, enables the opportunity to reap many of the aforementioned benefits.

Lack of organized sport. Another constraint facing children from Gilbert Park in terms of their sport participation is the lack of organized sport accessible to them.

Cameron Staff explained that they

get soccer through the SPIN program with the City and that's again an 8 week program so we only get together for two or three tournaments but there's no team drop-in thing so I think there's a lot in the way of drop-in sport but definitely I don't know of anything in Gilbert Park in particular that's offered.

Structured activities are not only available for sport specific offerings as organization and structure can be utilized to enhance programs in the arts and interdisciplinary areas.

While Cameron Staff feels that

there is decent opportunity for kids to get involved in sport, um, it just lacks structure, so again drop-in is there but the more structured you have a coach, you have to show up on time kind of thing, I don't think [is available].

It is the structured, organized sport that Cameron Staff feels would be beneficial to children in the community and would enable the facilitation of skill development, both physical and life, to a greater extent. Emily Staff agreed with Cameron Staff

in terms of sort of more casual play [being offered in Gilbert Park] um maybe even to a greater extent to kids in less recognized area of need but in terms of organized sport, they certainly see some really big barriers and I don't think that kids in Gilbert Park are involved in organized sports to the extent that kids in other neighbourhoods are for sure.

This can translate into difficulty facilitating positive youth development through sport, as the physical aspect of sport in and of itself is not responsible for youth developing life skills such as responsibility, goal setting, and teamwork.

Parental challenges, lack of role models and family support. A common constraint brought up by staff participants is related to a lack of family support and role models, a problem often compounded by the challenges parents are facing in their own lives. Emily Staff discussed how a major challenge for children in Gilbert Park who wish to participate in sport is

not having the support of your parents. I know when I was a kid if my parents hadn't said, oh, soccer registration is this weekend are you going [to] play, I would never have been on a soccer team. Um just having a parent that is or sorry not having a parent that is thinking of that or having a parent that has so much else on their plate that how can they manage to think about, um, is probably one of those biggest barriers.

The challenges facing parents who live in Gilbert Park in terms of meeting necessary deadlines to participate in sport goes beyond being aware of such dates and details. Emily Staff has found that for parents wishing to sign up a child

some challenges to that are like, uh, you still have to be able to read the forms or you know meet the intake deadlines sort of, so it sort of takes full a) literacy and b) the forethought and planning to be ready for that. And some of them you need things like copies of your provincial income tax or something like that or sorry not provincial income tax but you need to prove your finances through that kind of thing that, um, I think especially in such a community with such a high

Aboriginal population, that lots of Aboriginal families don't have to pay tax so they don't bother doing their tax. So they wouldn't have things like that and um so what can be done I guess is help finding ways to get around that through making access to funding easier uh for families.

Based on conversations with Jake Staff, the City of Winnipeg has sought community feedback on how to alter forms for ease of filling out, however, the City is only one entity amongst many for whom residents may need to apply in order to participate in sport. Other such organizations include community centres, schools, and individual programs or clubs.

An individual's participation also can be constrained because of a lack of awareness or knowledge about the opportunities that are available to them. In Stacey Child's interview she mentioned that right now for softball she "just like play[s] with my Dad cuz um there's like no one else and there's no baseball team. I have to find one. My Dad said he'd find one for me". An additional challenge that Stacey's Dad may face while trying to find his daughter a team to play on is that program staff may not have a great enough understanding of the options available to be of any help. Additional implications of staffing on children's participation in sport will be discussed in greater detail later on.

Parental support is also needed, as Emily Staff explains, to ensure that participants are attending games or programming for their team or activity:

for example our ball hockey team, um, is very good at attending, very regular, but for our boys, older boys basketball team it takes a lot of reminders and a lot of calling them before the games, that kind of thing, to make sure that they are

coming out and to ensure that we can play the games and that that was my experience with softball as well. A lot of tracking people down, sometimes some last minute play switches, just picking up any kids who can come because you don't know where kids are and I, a lot of times, have heard from kids like, oh, uh, my mom, I had to do this, and you can hear that that support from the parents isn't there for them to be in this sports program, it's not a priority. It's not seen as a priority.

One of the challenges associated with the prevalence of drop-in programming in the community is that when more organized, structured programs are implemented it is difficult to ensure consistent attendance of participants who may not be used to the responsibilities associated with a structured activity. When GP² tried to run a biking program it ended up falling on the staff's shoulders to "like wake up a kid on a Sunday and get him out", which Jake Staff explained was a major reason for the discontinuation of that program. A common thing staff members such as Emily Staff have heard is that when your family "need[s] a babysitter, softball is not a priority". This responsibility can be even more prominent when it is a single parent family, which accounts for a large portion of families in Gilbert Park.

Cameron Staff explained that with the MENTorship program they "look at boys that are generally coming from single parent home, um and try and get them involved in sport as a way to uh address issues of respect and sportsmanship and stuff like that". According to Jake Staff, the MENTorship program was established to address the need that

at least for the single parent moms, a lot of the youth are just looking for that adult male, particularly role model, so it's fun to walk to through the community and kids want to give you a high five and talk and for them to just tell you and share a bit about their day. That's, that's pretty cool and rewarding really.

It is important to note that while there is a large portion of female-headed single parent families in Gilbert Park there are also some single parent dads. As Jake Staff mentioned trying to get the family to support, you know, their child with being involved in sport but it's tough if you're a single parent or just... two-headed household in poverty and you know with five kids you know how can you possibly attend a hockey game on the other side of town.

Supporting this statement is Joseph Child, who has seven brothers and said that his parents would never come to watch him play hockey with Little Moose. Lack of parental support can also feed in to a dearth of support from other members of your family.

Without the support of your family and parents to participate in sport, chances are that there is also a lack of role models in terms of involvement in sport as well, whether in the form of a parent, sibling or member of your extended family. Jake Staff brought up the idea that

when you don't have peers around you or siblings that have been involved it's hard for kids to know what's involved in being in sport. I take it for granted right, it's like I played hockey and you practice. Well, if you're not around or exposed to that, how do you know, well I need to practice basketball... physical health or I mean physical activity is not a priority. Um I think like families are going through so much struggles um they aren't taking care of [themselves]. Self-care's not

happening; their well-being isn't what maybe you or I might be doing to look after our, um, our stress and what not, so um part of constraints I think is just the family structure and that they don't have the support at home.

The general lack of positive role models in the community also constrains the engagement of other residents, regardless of age. Jake Staff mentioned that

when I think of modeling, um, kids aren't involved in sport, partly too because their parents or their guardians aren't involved. They're not looking after themselves. That's poverty, um, so, um, having more role models in the community that are active, um, you know so I told somebody I go skiing on the weekend for 2 hours in minus 30, they think I'm crazy, like people can't comprehend that you would do that. Them walking to Sobey's is a struggle right and that's what comes out of poverty I think, so, um, if kids had more role models they may be apt to participate. Um, so, um, having I think, um, at least with the Aboriginal community more Aboriginal role models to look up to, that come out of Gilbert Park so, like, I can do that, so um, I think, yeah there's a correlation right. Obviously with kids not being involved because their folks, that they live with or whoever or grandparents.

For the girls who participated in the interviews there was very little mention of any sisters who were involved in sport of any kind, whereas it was more likely for someone to mention that a brother also participates in activity. This reinforces the need for positive female role models who also are active in the lives of girls growing up in Gilbert Park.

In terms of modeling as well as family and parental support it can be challenging for staff to walk the "fine line as to when it is parenting, you know when is it a parent"

that should be doing something rather than a support worker, in Jake Staff's opinion. Jake Staff mentioned that at strategic planning meetings

there is the thought, you know, should we be having midnight basketball, should we be 2 am soccer. When is it a service provider doing sport and recreation.

When is it more of a parent's role and responsibility. So that's tough cuz we get them and we don't know exactly what goes on at home and we can do the best to support them and we have a good team which includes social workers so they can work with the kids and that.

Determining the responsibilities of family in relation to the programs and services offered by agencies in the community places a significant load on the shoulders of staff.

Throughout interviews with staff, participants' frustration was often evident with regard to the lack of support they receive for the programs that they offer and what they are trying to achieve in them from the parents whose children attend.

Staffing. Throughout the participant observation phase a constraint that continually came up was that of staffing. The individuals that lead programs in the community have a significant influence on the sport engagement of children in Gilbert Park, with this category of constraints relating to a lack of awareness and knowledge, appropriate training, and consistency amongst staff members. Throughout Cameron Staff's interview, several mentions were made about different organizations that come into the community to deliver programs, but he was uncertain as to who they were and what exactly they offered. This was expressed through Cameron Staff mentioning that "I don't know exactly what Northwood is doing" and "I don't know if there's a baseball or a soccer team at like a club level". The concern generated by this lack of awareness is

because the families and children who live in Gilbert Park are coming to staff members to find out what opportunities exist for them, both within and outside of the bounds of the community. Extending beyond the opportunities available to children in the community is an awareness of the constraints that children must negotiate on a daily basis. One specific constraint, which several staff members expressed a lack of knowledge and awareness about, was with respect to gang involvement and activity. Emily Staff stated that she'd never had a specific sort of encounter or sort of awareness of gang issues. I mean I know there are gangs in the area and that some of the youth are gang involved but I guess nothing more than sort of whispers of what other kids are saying to each other.

The lack of awareness of gang activity was a sentiment that was reiterated by several other staff participants.

One of the ways the awareness challenge can be combated is through enhanced training opportunities for staff. During Jake Staff's interview he expressed that at times he felt that having a degree in Social Work, rather than an undergraduate education in Recreation, would be more beneficial for the work that he does. Having such an education would seemingly result in a greater understanding of some of the core issues children who live in Gilbert Park may be dealing with on a daily basis. Cameron Staff discussed that "we haven't necessarily been trained on how to pick up on that stuff or what to do about it, so there's a risk with it" in reference to how to deal with kids whose skill development is progressing at a slower rate than their peers. For programs offered by GP² that require more specialized knowledge in order to facilitate the skill development of participants, such as the Hip Hop program, additional staff are brought in

to lead the sessions. Cameron Staff expressed this need for “having appropriately trained people to guide kids through whatever sport they want to do”. Finding qualified individuals to lead such programs can present an additional constraint for community organizations. In terms of coaching athletic endeavors, and to a certain extent leading other sport activities that children may be involved in, Emily Staff addressed the issue in greater detail:

another issue I guess is just coaching. Um and actually something that I’ve witnessed for sure, um, I guess when you get a team from an area like Gilbert Park and the kids are maybe like some of the challenges I mentioned early on where you have a hard time building the relationship and getting that cooperation from the kids right off the bat, um you need, you really have a greater need for a really skilled coach. And that can be very hard to find and uh we think that sort of as an agency like that, um, we might need to start stepping up and paying coaches for such a vulnerable group, just with all of the issues that you might encounter and given that you maybe need to be a bigger support and be ready for that and so if you are just having volunteer coaches they might not be willing to kind of go that extra mile and you know a team might just not go anywhere because [of] conflicts with coach and kids.

Given the aforementioned economic constraints, both for organizations delivering programs as well as child participants, the additional costs of hiring staff to lead programs rather than relying on volunteers is a significant barrier. The impact that a negative experience with a coach or staff person could have on a participant, however, is immeasurable. During Stacey Child’s interview she told a story about how one of her

friends had a negative experience with her soccer coach, which resulted in her being benched and forced to carry all of the equipment for no reason. From Stacey Child's perspective it seemed as though the coach was not treating all of the players fairly based on their skill level. While it is important to ensure that volunteer coaches are comfortable and able to fulfill their roles, it is also essential that staff feel in control of the programs that they are leading. Emily Staff, when discussing the cut off number of kids they can have in a program at a time, said that

for supervision say we wouldn't like to put more than say 15 kids in the gym with one staff. That would be our cap, depending on the staff too and depending on how comfortable they are in the gym setting.

One of the best ways to make staff comfortable when leading a program is through ensuring that they have the necessary training and experience to do so. During Cameron Staff's interview it came up that staff are not always sure about what the rules are as they had been informed that staff are not supposed to be alone with kids unless they are in a public space. The classification of the gym as being public or not was being debated by Cameron Staff and David Staff when trying to decide on how to divide the programs for the day given the shortage of staff available to lead programs. Having clear cut guidelines and procedures explained during training can help to ease uncertainty felt by staff as well as ensure the safety of all parties involved.

A lack of consistency amongst staff in Gilbert Park is another constraint to sport participation for children in the community and was witnessed first hand during participant observation. On a few occasions the second program of the day was cancelled because a staff member was away, resulting in GP² shutting its doors earlier than

scheduled. On other days the planned programming had to be altered because of changes to staffing, such as altering hours and the availability of students who are volunteering for their field placements. Another challenge to offering consistent programming occurs when the social workers have appointments with clients at the Resource Centre. Late appointments have led to GP² not opening on time because staff are not able to open the program on their own. An issue that was encountered during the interview phase was the unscheduled closure of the whole program for several days, due to staff being on holidays and in training sessions, with no notice to those who attend the program. The same thing occurred when the decision to move GP² over into its new unit was made. To ensure a consistent presence in the life of children who attend programming it is important that every effort be made to ensure children are aware of unscheduled closures.

Partnerships (lack thereof). One of the constraints expressed by many of the staff participants is in relation to the lack of effective partnerships between different organizations, including levels of government and the local school division. With respect to constraints faced because of government regulations, Lucy Staff mentioned that “because Gilbert Park isn’t inner city, um, it tends not to get the same type of funding for programming that an inner city program would get... even though we do have a lot of the same circumstances”. Further explaining this sentiment, Jake Staff mentioned that

being outside of the kind of the downtown core area we don’t receive the funding like the Neighbourhoods Alive!² in particular and I think they’re working, them as in, you know, government folk or whoever within the province to expand

² Neighbourhoods Alive! works with community organizations in designated neighbourhoods to assist with revitalizing the community. Areas of focus include housing, education, recreation and safety and crime prevention (Manitoba Housing and Community Development, 2011).

boundaries, um, and we've kind of worked, told our area politicians that this a concern and being you know, um, when you think of Lord Selkirk housing complex and that they have not only the more even access to funds but um the research, more academics wanting to do more research in Lord Selkirk and I think we're always open to, I know, people and this is a start, I think, people coming to Gilbert Park like yourself to do research.

Having access to additional funding programs, such as Neighbourhoods Alive!, would help to alleviate some of the economic burden placed on organizations in the community. In terms of the need for greater access to research that is based on the community of Gilbert Park Jake Staff expressed concern about how

we're reaching probably more of the younger youth than the more older teens and then I guess the youth that are at-risk and that they are just not interested at all in coming out to these programs. Um and trying to work with them: what are their needs, what do they want, um what would get them not to do at-risk activities and be involved in sport and rec, what would, so we're always trying to work with parents and youth to strategize what would introduce sport to more youth in the community and be involved in sport and rec.

Ways to incorporate additional research into programming offered in Gilbert Park to enhance the lives of residents are posited in the discussion chapter.

Through the development of new partnerships, local organizations could be in a position to utilize additional facilities, a previously stated constraint. Realizing that they under-utilize some of the resources available to them such as KidSport, Jake Staff spoke

about how the relationships between organizations in the community need to be enhanced to better serve their target market:

I think one of the SPIN programs was run out of the school so the school's open to um us as community folks in Gilbert Park running programs so, um, but I, um, I still think when you think of 550 kids under 23 and what Club can accommodate in an evening or... GP² in an evening, I still think it's not, we're not reaching all the [children in the community].

More specific to relationships with the local school division in terms of accessing their facilities, Jake Staff acknowledged the challenge of gaining permits for their use and that

I just think my thought with schools is that they should be more of a community centre, um, so they have the infrastructure, they have the computer labs, they have the kitchen. We could be doing a lot more um within um schools, but um, I realize it comes down to permits and who's going to pay for the janitor to be there til 11 at night so it's kind of out of our hands.

However, the additional space and resources that would be available through being able to offer programs through the school's facilities would significantly expand the opportunities that GP² and the Club are able to provide to the children and youth they serve. With respect to the relationships with the school system it is interesting to note that many of the children observed and interviewed expressed a lack of respect from their teachers who often underestimate their academic abilities from the students' perspectives. One girl spoke about how she had asked to be moved into an accelerated math class because she is bored in class while everyone else tries to catch up, and another asked for a higher level of book that they were reading in English but neither received positive

responses from their teachers. Stacey Child, the only participant who does not attend the local school, spoke about how she didn't like going to Public School No. 10 earlier in the year because of unfair treatment by her teachers. The lack of respect between students and teachers was evident throughout many discussions both in interviews and throughout regular programming. In an unexpected comment, Joseph Child stated that at Public School No. 10 staff "don't let you play sports. They don't let you have basketballs and stuff out" during lunch hour. When asked for the reason behind this rule neither of the kids in the interview knew why. Amber Child added in that "they don't even let you have frisbees outside". While it is certainly possible to engage in an active lifestyle without the use of equipment, by banning the engagement in such activities during their recesses and lunch hours, opportunities for students to expand their skill sets and interests are reduced.

One of the most surprising constraints that came up in relation to partnerships has to do with the relationships between agencies in the community and those from the broader sport community. Emily Staff mentioned that for the Club their

biggest challenge has been getting them sort of into the leagues themselves um so because we're not I guess Clubs aren't typically attached to a community centre although we are near a community centre in Gilbert Park. For example, we're right near Northwood. When we have our basketball team and when we had our softball team last summer they don't, um, they're not attached to Northwood. We have to find a community centre that is willing to say yeah you can register your kids through us so we've been running most of our sports teams are run out of Weston Community Centre.

Geographically speaking, having to operate programs out of Weston Community Centre rather than Northwood Community Centre means that participants have to deal with the constraint of transportation to engage in an activity. Something that they would not have to if they were trying to access Northwood's facilities. This lack of support from the community, as Emily Staff discusses, has also been felt when offering specific sports teams for "things like soccer and basketball [which] can be really tricky and with the sport associations there can be a lot of conflict if your kids aren't maybe from the certain exact defined area". The ineffective partnerships, which are preventing children from Gilbert Park from easily accessing sport, suggest that there may possibly be a stigma linked to being affiliated with the Club or Gilbert Park. The aforementioned stigma may be related to the negative representations of the community in the media that have been presented because of past violence in Gilbert Park.

Violence/crime/safety. The fear of violence, crime and for your own safety is a constraint that was addressed by the majority of child participants and also by some of the staff. Lucy Staff, who expressed the greatest sense of fear amongst staff, said that

sometimes like you fear for your safety just because of some of the things that happened in Gilbert Park like with the stabbing this [past] year in April um the baby incidences that happened a couple years ago. So like there's a fear for your safety, um, not so much during the day but like if there's evenings where you have to come back to, yeah, so at times you do feel unsafe.

Going further into the source of her fears about safety in the community, Lucy Staff said that

the safety issues is a challenge because you're always worried about um something like that happening to you or witnessing it and um a couple years ago myself and another staff were witness to one of the events that did happen and it was really challenging having to come back to work after that to be um in that situation cuz you feel really unsafe not that you wouldn't if you weren't there to experience it, but just added on to it.

It is not just staff who have expressed concerns about their safety as those who call Gilbert Park home have shared similar fears with staff, as Lucy Staff mentioned

like we do have families who move into Gilbert Park finding that it's a big safety concern for their families so we've had a few families who have approached like myself and the other social worker to um move their family out of Gilbert Park.

To combat the safety concerns that residents and staff in the community have, Jake Staff mentioned that the Manitoba Housing Authority has arranged security to roam the community

24 hours on weekends and then up until 11 at night I think on weekdays so they hear it's a lot of youth and it's a lot of them you know revolving door and our youth go to one end of the community they go after the youth and then the youth go over here and the youth kind of treat it as a game. It's like, hey, that guy in the yellow jacket's giving us attention, let's run around.

Having seen the security staff during Hockey Day in Gilbert Park I can definitely understand how they do not really accomplish much as I would not "fear" them, making children unlikely to alter their actions in any way because of the security staff's potential presence. For the children who grow up in Gilbert Park, Lucy Staff has found that, "they

do see quite a bit and the stuff we hear from them is really graphic and it's scary but they seem to be able to cope very well with it". When asked what they thought would make Gilbert Park a better place to live, Joseph Child and Amber Child said "no shootings" and "I don't know something like some guy would come and he'll have to check you and see if you have that stuff" before coming into the community, respectively. Reverting back to previous comments about the resilience of children who live in Gilbert Park it is important to keep the constraints facing them because of their place of residence in perspective as there are also benefits and positives that they reap for the same reason.

The majority of staff interviewed spoke about the presence of gang activity in the community on a cursory level. When asked about the impact that gang activity has on their programming Cameron Staff said "as far as rules go, um, our doors are open to anybody until things become unsafe and that goes for the safety of kids as well as staff". The proverbial open door policy means that staff would have opportunities to interact with children who are in or are being recruited by gangs in the community in the hopes that they can convince them otherwise. Cameron Staff said

if kids are gang involved we want them here. Um that said, though, we've had issues with recruitment and there's a zero tolerance for that. Um, I mean we'll definitely invite that person in to talk to us about that because I doubt the 13 year old is wanting to be in that position where he has to recruit his friends to hang out and do certain things. I mean there is a bit of a cool factor [in] it for sure.

When speaking about the experience of gangs in relation to GP² programming, Lucy Staff stated

well we've had a few kids who have been recruited so um we don't like to say you can't come because he's in a gang or she's in a gang. Um we've tried to, you know, just work with the kid if it's an issue that the kid brings up. We try to work with them on it so like if I could say like a couple of kids that have been recruited and currently are not in gangs that I know of, um, but yeah, like even some kids using drugs, that type of thing, like, we don't let them come if they, I don't want to say if they are like intoxicated, we don't let them come for sure, especially if they use it during our program time. We kick them out pretty much and it has happened in the past. Um for gang involvement I don't really see it affecting our program too much just because it's a big presence in this community and I know I can see whose gotten into it but it hasn't affected us.

While safety concerns in the community are not solely related to gang activity, gangs play a significant role. For a child the attraction of joining a gang is focused on the immediate benefits, such as getting a cell phone, rather than the potential consequences down the road. Cameron Staff explained that

I think when it's this, this in your face, it's hard to avoid it and when there are certain things that are really attractive to a ten year old such as cell phones, kids come in with cell phones, you know you're happy about a cell phone; you're not really thinking about where I'm gonna be in twenty years.

Finding ways to combat the appeal of gangs and to ensure that youth in the community are aware of the consequences of gang involvement should be part of the mandate of agencies in the community. To further explore an individual's decision to join a gang in their youth, Cameron Staff suggested that they often do so because

this isn't across the board but I think generally there's that need to be needed and valued. Whether or not it is completely honest or not is up for discussion but I think that's a big thing. I know that 10-15 years ago there were like a handful of gangs and now there are dozens, so I think it's easier now to join something and flip flop. Um, I can see a lot of appeal. I mean it's protection. You know bullying is one of the biggest things we deal with here. Um all of a sudden you've got 5 or 6 or a dozen or so friends behind you getting bullied. Might not happen in that way. There's the whole part of that is bullying itself but there's an acceptance I think and mainly in Gilbert Park, I don't know what the figures are, but gang involvement per unit is probably quite high and that shows up in the news right with deals going sour and people being hurt, that's gang related.

As previously stated GP² opens its doors to anyone regardless of their involvement in illegal activity provided they fit within the age category they have set out to support. Lucy Staff, when talking about whether it was the older youth for whom they do not provide programming who often caused trouble in the community, said that

I find that like a lot of kids who have caused problems they even come to our programs but I don't know if it has an age range. Even the really, really small kids we don't see, like, they're you can always tell they're up to no good, they're like running around. They're cute but I mean... so I could see the older ones just because we've tried teen night before and it hasn't worked, um, I don't know if we have to change our way of going about that but even Club has their Teen, I believe it's a Teen Night, that they have, they usually have a little bit more success with that, um, but then I think it's more the younger teenagers but I could

be wrong, but yeah, I could see a real big concern just because a lot of these kids grow up in single parent families and, um yeah, the gang involvement is super high here, yeah, so I could see it not having anything to do [with] how it would effect them.

When asked about the types of problems that have been caused by children in the community in the past, Jake Staff said

in the summer there's sometimes bin fires um so kids will break into units. They've been broken into. GP² has been broken into a number of times by kids who actually participate in their programs. Kids have broken into the gym, all sorts of different places and it's just sort of boredom.

Another problem that Jake Staff alluded to throughout his interview was children stealing construction supplies such as nail gun rounds and using them to blow out tires of passing vehicles. A potential reason as to why kids in the community have acted out by breaking into different facilities is because they were actually looking for a safe place to go. Jake Staff said that

in the Gilbert Park Strategic Plan it was actually to have a 24 hour youth centre, so, um, like, what Ndinawe has on Selkirk. Um, some kids have gone there, um, but, and kids themselves will identify that too, as having a 24 hour safe house so you know; Where do I go when my mom's drinking with her boyfriend. I don't want to go home. Is there a place to go?

Further delving into the activities that take place when programming is not offered, when asked what children who attend GP² and Club normally do when the programs are finished, about 6:30 and 8:30 respectively, Jake Staff stated that

no they don't go home, um there's probably a lot of kids lingering and hanging outside... with that club [Boys and Girls] they were open later I think in the summer months. I think it was 9 - 9:30 and then they thought the lingering outside was then til 10, 10:30, 11 and, um, and then ultimately I'll hear about it at Resident Advisory meetings because the kids are out all night. So part of it was to end programs earlier so kids can hopefully be home at a more reasonable time and not lingering outside all night. Um, but we know that, like, some of the research out there, more of the well one of the most at risk windows, is that 3 to 7, so if we can cover that and we can, between both clubs, um, that's great.

Trying to negotiate the role that parents or guardians play in the lives of their children is perhaps one of the greatest challenges facing staff in the community. Without familial support, children are running about the community at all hours and can get up to no good, which furthers the fear of safety and violence that other members of the community express.

One area that has a direct impact on the safety of residents in Gilbert Park is the sex trade, both for those participating in it and for bystanders, because of the proximity of high trafficking areas. Cameron Staff said that he knows

that the strip down Burrows and Railway is apparently a pretty high traffic area for that. Um an old co-worker did a workshop or participated in a workshop and the Winnipeg Police department had said that this is a hotbed for that.

In a similar vein Lucy Staff said that

there's been rumors that there's a couple of girls in the community so we don't know if it's just joking and saying that they do that or if it's a legit concern so um

we haven't had any girls like come up to us and identify that with us. I know with adults though its been a concern some adult women in Gilbert Park.

Given the existence of the sex trade within the community it seems that a greater awareness of the issue as well as preventative measures need to be developed. Due to the service providers in the community being uncertain as to what a large portion of girls are up to, it is concerning.

Drugs and illegal activity have an impact on the daily lives of children who live in Gilbert Park and constrain positive participation in sport for those who are not involved in negative behaviours. These repercussions occur because children in the community no longer have a safe outlet in which they can participate without being exposed to gang activity and related behaviours. Most often referred to as "bad stuff", the children interviewed would always mention it but rarely go into greater detail, just stating that it is what they do not like about Gilbert Park. In their interview, Brittany Child and Luke Child had the following exchange with regard to their least favourite things about living in Gilbert Park:

Brittany: "The bad stuff".

Luke: "Shootings. Fighting".

Brittany: "The drugs".

Luke: "Drive-bys".

Brittany: "The beer. Everything".

To think that these are ten and eleven year old children bringing up concerns such as these is alarming but a trend that continued with Stacey Child and Marcus Child who described the bad stuff as:

Stacey: “Mean people. And kids get in trouble too. The teenagers. Stealing.”

Marcus: “And some people get hit by cars”.

While for Violet Child and Max Child, who mentioned that he has been stabbed before,

Violet Child: “It’s that there’s bad stuff... um killings”.

Max Child: “The police always coming here... And... people are doing bad stuff”.

From Marvin Child’s perspective there is “too much killing” while Amber Child said that “people get hurt”. The existence of these concerns amongst all of the children interviewed illustrates the significant role that crime and violence plays in their daily life. However, staff felt that kids in the community possess enough knowledge about the activities that go on to apply a modicum of common sense when moving about Gilbert Park. Cameron Staff spoke about how he’s

sure that the kids know about certain homes that uh have a different kind of traffic to them than maybe theirs do. Um, I don’t know it personally so I can’t speak to that but we’ve, we’ve noticed just looking out the window, wow, that house has a lot of people coming out of it. Leaving with things that they didn’t come in with and so for kids in our program we’re not gonna go hang out at that house or anything and I think that, I was about to say, think kids have a good sense but I don’t know, I would hope so though.

Lucy Staff also brought up that there are some units in the community where illegal activities regularly take place:

I know there are some homes in Gilbert that they hear from other kids that you know that this is a drug house or something like that so I think through one

another they have that awareness because they live here but like even they're not aware of houses that even the police might deem unsafe.

The impact that negative behaviours in Gilbert Park have on the residents appears to be limited in terms of boundaries and rules issued by family. When speaking to Stacey Child and Marcus Child about whether they have been given any guidelines about where they can and cannot go in the community by their parent(s) they said:

Stacey: "Matthew he's 12. And he's allowed to go anywhere he wants. I can't wait until I'm 12. It's no fair... Can't go to my friend's house because she lives all the way over there on Burrows".

Marcus: "I can't go see my cousin, he lives like at the North End".

Stacey: "Can't see my sister named Elsie. I don't even know where she lives but my Dad does. He goes there. I I just can't go there. I know what she looks. She exactly has hair up to right there, brown eyes, brown hair, um, I don't think she has another brother. And I just can't go over on Burrows alone."

It is interesting to note that Stacey Child, who had previously lived in Gilbert Park but had left due to safety concerns, was the only participant for whom rules included a portion of the community. When Stacey Child mentioned that she is not allowed to go on Burrows alone this meant that she is not allowed to go to the house of her friend, who also lives in the community, without accompaniment. While trying to understand why children in the community have a tendency to not make use of the facilities available to them across the street at Northwood Community Centre Violet Child said "they suck... There's rapists there" with Max Child saying that "people try to beat me up". Amber Child on the other hand said that she cannot go to Northwood Community Centre "so I

don't beat up people", which has been a problem for her in the past. These negative experiences with respect to Northwood Community Centre has resulted in GP² and the Club not utilizing its facilities for their programs as children would not cross the street to attend them like they would had they been offered in the community.

One of the first things that I experienced during the participant observation phase was that the door of GP² is always kept locked and in order to gain entry one must knock and wait for a staff member to answer it. Lucy Staff mentioned that one of the reasons for this, in addition to the aforementioned problem of people coming in to take food, is that they've "had issues where kids hide in the unit and then we lock the door and then when we leave the alarm goes off and yeah, then you have to deal with that". Based on my observations I wonder what the impact of keeping the door locked is for some potential attendees, i.e. creates the impression that you are not invited or that they are closed. If someone was new to the community they may not be aware of the policy that you must knock to get in, leaving them from being able to access the programs. The same is the case for the Gilbert Park Gym where you must knock and tell the staff who are running the program in the gym your name in order to get in. This is done because without a window to the outside, staff would have no idea who was trying to gain entry to the facility. With the constant knocking at the door, opportunities for staff to connect with the kids who are attending the program as well as the general flow of activities are interrupted. It was also interesting to learn from the staff at GP² that the bathroom must be kept locked at all times; only staff can use it while kids must go home in order to use the bathroom. This policy is in place because of previous violent incidents that have taken place in there. It would seem that while child participants may not have expressed

constraining factors related to violence and safety concerns in terms of their participation in sport, it instead constrains what programs are available to them.

While getting out into the community is seen as a benefit for participation in sport as previously detailed, there are additional constraints in terms of the safety of all parties when undertaking such excursions. Throughout the participant observation phase I was able to observe preparations for an outing to a local college's information evening. With a new staff member starting on the same day as the excursion, the other staff were briefing her on how going into the community can be a negative experience for staff in terms of having to drive the kids in your own car. While experienced staff members were comfortable with taking kids on their own, for a new staff member additional measures, having another staff member in the car for the drive, were put in place to ensure her level of comfort during the trip. While transportation poses one challenge another has to do with dealing with the aftermath of negative behaviour exhibited during the outing. In this specific instance some of the kids were caught stealing from the college during their excursion. The lack of respect for others' property and the privilege that they had received being allowed to go on the field trip upset the staff members who were present. Deciding on the appropriate disciplinary actions also presented a challenge for staff.

Concerns about safety and crime also have a direct impact on the programs that can be offered. One such program that GP² had tried in the past involved biking however, as Lucy Staff mentioned, there was a

bit of an issue regarding safety. Some kids were much faster than other ones and take off or some even decided part way they didn't want to bike anymore and they just sat on the sidewalk, so that gets frustrating.

Crime also has an impact on sport as Lucy Staff said “that some weeks we used to see kids with a bike and then 10 minutes later they’ll tell you somebody stole their bike which is common everywhere but” was frequently happening in Gilbert Park, a sentiment echoed by Jake Staff. Another unfortunate reality of criminal activity in the community is that no equipment can be left unwatched for even a moment, as the risk of anything being stolen is too high. During Hockey Day in Gilbert Park, staff and participants had to go around and pick up all of the equipment such as hockey sticks, pucks and balls, and the nets to take inside so that the silent auction draws could be held, then set up again to continue playing afterwards. Having to constantly keep an eye on equipment rather than on fostering relationships with participants or developing their skills is a negative side effect of the violence, crime and safety concerns in the community.

As previously discussed, it can be challenging for staff to ensure consistent disciplining of inappropriate behaviours that children exhibit. On a few separate occasions while at GP² such behaviours were observed with staff having a difficult time trying to deal with them and keep the actions of participants under control. On the first occasion one boy who was hanging around outside of GP² after being told that he could not participate in Cooking Club because the program was full that day threw an apple against the window. After doing this there were not really any ramifications for his actions and instead, one of the staff members actually made the boy promise her he would not do it again in exchange for Smarties. On the same day, David Staff said that he was going to have to talk to another boy who had been throwing snowballs at the building and who tried to take the staff member’s hockey stick. For the boys who are involved in the MENTorship program it appears that most disciplinary action is taken through

conversations with the parties involved rather than suspension from attending privileges. On a separate occasion a 9-year-old boy, Jeremy Child, was let in to the club after his third attempt at coming because he was too young for their programming but was really hungry. Two other boys, who did fit the age range, came to the door but after Joseph Child's brother answered the door on behalf of the staff he was told to not let them in because they were full. The two boys pushed their way in and then started threatening Jeremy Child, calling him white, etc. It is interesting to note that Cara Staff, the other social worker, said that both of the boys who were chastising Jeremy Child were white, while Jeremy Child is part Aboriginal. Cara Staff got them out of the club and then they started throwing snowballs in the window because it was open. They then started to threaten Jeremy Child again resulting in Cara Staff going outside to talk to them when they started to say racial slurs, such as the "n" word, towards Joseph Child's brother. The two boys are now banned from the club until their parents talk to Cameron Staff and David Staff, the two male skill development workers who were not present during this session. There seems to be a need or a desire from the perspective of female staff members to have the presence of a male staff member to deter the violent behaviours that began to emerge today. Cara Staff seemed to be hesitant to get involved in the issue, which may suggest that there is a fear of safety amongst the staff. It is also interesting to note that concerns about safety came up far more frequently in interviews with female staff members than with male staff. Following up on the relationships between different ethnic groups in the community, Lucy Staff mentioned that

there's a lot of issues regarding racism, like kids will say like the "n" word or like bash each other based on the colour of their skin so we try to be, um, really on top of that thing and not allow it to happen, especially during program.

With respect to the aforementioned diversity, Jake Staff reported that there is little conflict between different races and ethnicities however,

it's so diverse of a group that then kids will kind of get hold of buzz words um at one point kids were saying the "n" word or talking about Hitler and not realizing man that kind of stuff impacts us. Like he wouldn't have liked all of us in this room, um so then there, I mean with that said, there's then a lot of education on you know, what is racism, prejudiced.

It is clear that determining different baseline disciplinary actions for exhibiting behaviours such as racial slurs, threats of violence, etc. is needed to ease the burden staff face when ensuring equal treatment of all participants.

The safety of staff and children can also be at risk based on behaviours that participants engage in during programming. While observing the program one day it became clear that Violet Child and Joy Child have begun cutting themselves. Violet Child kept asking for a tack during the program and when one was not given to her she instead used a large bread knife to scratch her wrists until just bleeding. To my surprise nothing was really done about their behaviour although Cara Staff acknowledged it afterwards by saying that they have now reached that stage. It is my opinion that more should have been done to address this serious issue, especially given that Cara is a social worker and could have easily taken the two of them upstairs to talk about why they are hurting themselves. A challenge with dealing with issues as they come up during

programming is that doing so often leaves one of the groups without any staff as most frequently there were two staff members working at one time.

The presence of constraints relating to violence, crime and safety concerns are often exacerbated in the eyes of those who do not live in Gilbert Park because of how the community is represented by the media. Jake Staff stated that the stigma associated with living in Gilbert Park is based on

how the media covers and will spin stories on the negativity in Gilbert Park and um it's as former, well as politicians have said in the past, you know, Gary's Ghetto, and, uh knowing that it's a neighbourhood and there are good families that live there so I guess the media light, it does take a bad rap.

An instance of this took place while observing the program one day, as there was a news crew filming and interviewing residents on Gilbert Ave when I arrived. I initially thought that it might have been related to the standoff that had occurred ten days prior when a man had been spotted walking about Gilbert Park with a gun, however, it was with regard to a woman agreeing to lesser charges for abducting and then smashing the head of a baby on the sidewalk in 2009. The constant reminders of past violent actions in the community heightens fears and does little to improve the reputation of the community. Through greater awareness of the positive activities and behaviours taking place in Gilbert Park it is hoped that this negative stigma can be reversed, to reduce any social isolation it may support.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Following a thorough analysis of the benefits of and constraints to participation in sport for children who live in Gilbert Park, discussion of the impact the aforementioned points have on the community and its programming is imperative. Moving beyond the realm of Gilbert Park, what the findings of this research mean in the context of the literature base will help to establish the significance of said research. Finally, it is necessary to explore what can be done in the future to enhance the number of benefits and decrease the number of constraints facing children who live in public housing communities in terms of their participation in sport. Drawing on the work of Tirone (2003), doing so can help to ensure that the playing field for all children is truly equalled.

Recommendations for Community Programming

Benefits. Each aforementioned benefit and constraint (denoted by italics) can have an impact on the sport engagement of children who live in the community as well as the children themselves. In order to better understand the influence these items have it is necessary to further explore their implications individually and as a whole. The first benefit, *expanding opportunities*, is straightforward in its impact on the community as it helps to reduce isolation experienced by children in Gilbert Park. Therefore, in an effort to limit the isolation felt by children in the community, organizations need to work together to facilitate additional opportunities for residents to get outside the confines of Gilbert Park when participating in sport. This does not solely mean leaving the geographic environment of Gilbert Park but also involves expanding social connections through developing friendships with individuals outside of the community. Programs such as Little Moose have been successful in developing new relationships between

children on different teams; however, there is limited contact between the various school teams that play throughout the year. To enhance opportunities for social exchange between children of different backgrounds a greater emphasis must be placed on developing sport programs with broader catchment areas and accessibility. The opportunity for children to participate in programming with their peers from the rest of the city on a regular basis would significantly help to reduce isolation experienced. For GP² this could mean teaming up with another after-school program from a different part of the city to offer joint programs once a month where an exchange of participants takes place to broaden the horizons of children involved in both programs. The Pet Pals and Careers for Kids programs already run by GP² do an excellent job of exposing child participants to the experiences of others in the city. Developing stronger relationships between partners and participants would help to reduce isolation as well as provide the opportunity for a partner to serve as a positive role model in the life of the child participant, which leads into the next benefit of participating in sport.

The second benefit, having *role models and developing life skills*, is imperative when trying to foster an environment that facilitates positive youth development. To do so, an organization must pay attention to the specific skills their programming aims to achieve, in terms of physical, social and emotional development. Within each organization, awareness of the impact that the backgrounds and personalities of their staff have on children in the program can be used to facilitate positive relationships between participants and staff. This may mean channeling a greater focus on a workforce representative of the community they are serving or in the very least ensuring that staff are aware of cultural and gender diversity in Gilbert Park. An area where greater focus

can be placed is on facilitating the development of youth role models in the community. The successful experiences GP² has had with youth role models in their skateboarding program should be replicated in other programs. This can be done through the organized approach of specialized programs that teach youth leadership skills or via a more casual route having older participants team up with younger ones when engaging in an activity. One particular program, which may immediately benefit from implementing a focus on youth role models, is the MENtorship program. Engaging young adult males in a safe environment where they can develop their leadership skills, an employable skill, as well as give back to other boys in the community could have a positive effect on all parties. Staff would facilitate the development of positive relationships between role models and child participants through involvement in scheduled sport activities. For the boys involved in the MENtorship program having a positive older male role model to look up to who lives in the community could help to reduce the lure of gangs through developing a sense of belonging and connection to others in the community. The development of peer role models helps to build community capacity, the third benefit of participation in sport.

Helping to build capacity amongst residents and the community as a whole impacts the *community* directly as participation in sport sees benefits far beyond those reaped on an individual basis. The enhancement of community pride can be facilitated by offering programs in the community to those beyond its borders and by getting the name Gilbert Park seen in a positive light, both by the media and the greater community. One of the ways this can be achieved is through offering Gilbert Park teams in citywide leagues, such as the Winnipeg Youth Soccer Association and the Winnipeg Minor

Basketball Association, as their own entity rather than through a community centre.

Doing so would eliminate the constraints related to developing a strong relationship with a local community centre through whom teams could be offered and instead utilize the significant population in Gilbert Park as the base for teams. Community events drawing on the cultural diversity of Gilbert Park could also help to enhance local pride related to being a resident of Jigtown. Enhancing the many positives of calling Gilbert Park home can help to push out negative behaviours, reducing the stigma that constrains the participation of some children in sport. Building relationships amongst those who call the community home can also encourage the development of friendships and social relationships amongst residents, the next benefit to be addressed.

To help reduce social isolation and enhance opportunities for positive youth development, engaging community members in *social interaction with the aim of developing friendships* serves as an important benefit. For the children who already attend GP² many positive friendships are already in place, however, additional focus should be placed on reaching out to those children who are not involved in community programming to ensure that they are not isolated or involved in high risk behaviours. This can be accomplished through encouraging participants to bring friends, family members, and neighbours to programming. As has been previously stated by the children who were interviewed, one of the best things about living in Gilbert Park is that there are tons of people around with whom you can play and become friends. Given the high concentration of children in the community and the relatively low number who are actively engaged in programming at GP² and the Club, additional effort needs to be taken to increase involvement.

Finally, the range of *specific benefits* such as providing a break for parents, being beneficial for one's health, and just generally being fun, relate to the more immediate rewards experienced by children participating in sport. Having short-term benefits rather than solely relying on the potential for benefits in the long-term helps to sustain interest in programs that are offered as well as the development of a more engaged, active lifestyle in the future. Keeping this idea in mind when planning programs is essential to ensure that the interests of children and the aim of the organization are kept at the forefront at all times.

Constraints. While local organizations can utilize an enhanced understanding of the benefits of children participating in sport to improve the programming they provide, by developing a thorough knowledge of what may constrain said individuals' participation progress could also be helpful in reducing their presence. The first category of constraints relates to *disciplinary/behavioural issues and a lack of social skills*. One of the most commonly cited challenges facing staff in Gilbert Park is ensuring consistent discipline for children who exhibit negative behaviours. In order to counter this challenge there is a need to establish clear guidelines of disciplinary actions to ease the burden on staff and to ensure equal treatment of all participants. Having straightforward rules and consequences means that staff would be able to spend more time with participants and less time determining punishments and dealing with unwelcome behaviours. Another step that would be valuable is to work with delinquent children to address the root causes of their behavioural issues, such as a lack of discipline at home and undeveloped anger management skills. It is likely that many children act out in response to a desire for attention from the adults and peers surrounding them. Finding alternate outlets for this

need, such as participation in sport, can support the conversion of negative behaviours into positive ones. When planning programs additional focus should be placed on developing specific life skills within a certain timeframe. From a sport-oriented lens, the idea of periodization where a skill is introduced, opportunities for practicing and working on the skill are provided, and then the skill is perfected through its implementation in everyday activities could enhance facilitation of life skills. Within each distinct time frame a different skill would be focused on to enrich the portfolio of skills that participants are able to draw upon as they go through life.

When facilitating the development of skills it is imperative that participants have a safe environment in which they can learn and grow. To ensure that this occurs there is a need for adequate *facilities* to be available to community members and organizations, the second constraint addressed. It is clear from interviews with staff that in order to better meet the needs of community residents in terms of their engagement in sport, a closer examination of their facility needs is essential. By providing spaces which meet the needs of the specific programs, organizations would be able to ensure that no child is turned away from its doors due to space restrictions. Through enhanced funding for capital projects and strengthened relationships with other community organizations access to facilities can be improved. Within Gilbert Park there is limited space for the addition of new facilities, however, the resources available at both Public School No. 10 and Northwood Community Centre are significantly underused for a variety of reasons, which have been previously discussed. Developing and strengthening partnerships between the local school division and the Community Centre can help to mediate enhanced access to the excellent facilities they offer. Staff of GP² and the Club need to reach out to

Northwood Community Centre's leadership to try to build a relationship between the organizations. Showing that staff of the organizations can work together would help to lessen some of the divide that presently exists between Gilbert Park and Northwood. Specific to Northwood Community Centre however, it is acknowledged that additional challenges based on safety are present and are unlikely to be altered in a short timeframe due to the number of people involved. To proffer an alternative to hoping that children will head over to Northwood Community Centre to utilize its ice rinks, an outdoor rink could be built on Gilbert Park's basketball court during winter months. By engaging community members to volunteer their time and skills to assist in constructing the rink, the capacity of community members will be enhanced and provide experience utilizing employable skills such as carpentry. Volunteers would also be called upon to assist in maintaining the rink, a role youth attending programs at GP² and the Club could fulfill. Finally, with the additional space available at GP² there is a need for more staff or volunteers to ensure that their doubled space is being utilized to its full potential. Given the layout of their facilities, especially the number of small rooms, it is necessary to have at least one staff person in each room that children are using. More staff means greater variety and access to programs offered, reducing the constraint overcrowding has caused in the past.

The third constraint has to do with *economic* challenges, which include a lack of equipment and limited access to transportation. When money is as tight as it is for organizations such as the Club in their program delivery, it is important to work with kids in the community to decide which programs to offer rather than making decisions based on past successes or failures. On an individual basis, staff are often called upon to assist

in completing fee waivers and equipment requests so a child can participate in an activity outside of the community. As previously stated there are often many constraints associated with filling out such paperwork. An approach to negotiating this constraint is to develop registration workshops with parents to fill out and submit paperwork each season for whatever programs their family members are interested in participating in. This also ties in to the suggestion of developing a stronger relationship with KidSport as they have a warehouse full of resources waiting to be utilized by children in the community. To increase the access to programs, community organizations could look into partnering with Winnipeg School Division No. 1, which offers the Little Moose program, to expand their current offering outside of school hours or to explore the development of another program using a different sport. Given the success of Little Moose in both the eyes of staff and child participants it is an effective program delivery framework to adopt. In terms of transportation concerns it was pointed out by some of the child participants that their parents do have cars. However they are often too busy to drive them anywhere. Incorporating older siblings as coaches, leaders or even drivers with programs could help to reduce the constraining effect transportation currently has on programming. When approaching individuals to take an active role in providing programs it is important to ensure that gender equality is promoted.

The fourth constraint revolves around *gender* and suggests that it is imperative to find out what it is that the older girls in the community are doing after school. The change in sport participation based on gender, with more boys than girls now, could be related to the more hands on roles played by the Skill Development Workers, who are all male, in the delivery of sport programs. The desire of the girls interviewed to have a football

program may be a method to empower girls to take a more active role in community life. This would help to balance out the current boys only program offered at GP², the MENtorship program, through the provision of a girls only football program. Finding out what older girls in Gilbert Park are engaging in during after school hours instead of attending GP² or the Club is imperative to ensure that all children in the community have the opportunity to engage in sport. Rather than applying a one size fits all approach to sport programming it is essential that the particular needs of all groups are explored in order to best meet the needs of as many participants as possible. Doing so can help individuals who may not currently be accessing programming to reap the benefits participation in sport can facilitate. Encouraging involvement of girls as well as boys is necessary to promote a healthy, active lifestyle and reduce the prevalence of health concerns.

The fifth constraint is based on *health concerns* within the community, especially amongst the Aboriginal population, which has a higher prevalence of diabetes and obesity. One approach to reducing health-related constraints faced by children in Gilbert Park is by ensuring a consistent message is presented by organizations. This would entail endorsing a healthy, active lifestyle including proper nutrition by advocating for healthier snacks and prizes being offered to participants. The Cooking Club is a very popular program currently in GP²'s repertoire. To further enhance the program, excursions to local grocery stores could be incorporated where children can help to buy the ingredients. Doing so would teach children how to shop, what to look for, the basics of budgeting and also gets kids out in the community. Encouraging participants to also look for recipes that they would like to try would likely provide enhanced skill development as opposed to

cooking frozen pizza or canned food. Another health concern that came up in the research process was that of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). It was also good to see staff encourage children to engage in a discussion of FASD during programming as awareness of the effects of alcohol and drugs on a fetus, especially from a young age, is a highly effective prevention tool. By ensuring that staff members are aware of health concerns amongst participants and placing more focus on health promotion, benefits to children in the community can be enhanced.

The sixth category of constraints has to do with children in the community being an *inconsistent group to plan for*. While nothing can be or should be done to alter the plans many residents make to head back to their home reserves during the summer, organizations can learn from the past in terms of who they should be organizing programs for in the summer months. The varying interests of child participants are often related to the staff working at an organization and as such a greater emphasis on the programs that staff are passionate about are likely to result in increased engagement on the part of kids. Promoting autonomy in terms of which sports to offer can also help to increase involvement in programs as it is their interests rather than those on the SPIN schedule, for example, that should be the focus. Creating opportunities for children to be more engaged in activities, as well as supporting connections to culture, aids in the reduction of isolation, the seventh constraint identified.

Isolation, of both geographic and social natures, has negatively impacted the involvement of children from Gilbert Park in the greater community of Winnipeg. An opportunity to reduce isolation experienced by children who live in Gilbert Park in terms of their participation in sport could be developed by instituting a graduated fee scale

based on a family's income. This would eliminate the programs offered by SPIN and instead allow all children, regardless of socioeconomic status, to participate in mainstream activities. Working with the City of Winnipeg and other stakeholders to grant Gilbert Park status as a Community Centre in its own entity or as an off-site location of another existing one would help to bring children and youth into the community for teams and programs rather than always focusing on how to get kids out of the community. In an effort to promote opportunities that are available it would also be beneficial to develop a board within the clubs to display outside programs such as theatre and film classes and teams. Doing so would boost awareness amongst children in the community of what is available to them outside the bounds of Gilbert Park.

Currently, there is a *lack of organized sport* available within the community, which constrains the participation of children who are forced to gain this experience outside of Gilbert Park. The need for an organized program is because through sport, participants can learn commitment, responsibility, and teamwork, amongst other essential skills. Focusing on positive youth development would enable this development of competencies and knowledge transfer from leaders to participants as well as between peers, an approach that has proven effective based on past literature. Having positive leaders at the helm of programs helps to fulfill the need for role models in the community, a central component of the ninth constraint.

The *lack of role models and family support*, often due to challenges that parents are facing in their lives, can be reduced through programs building relationships with parents. To accomplish this, registration workshops and soliciting family support through volunteering would help to build connections that may encourage parents to seek help

through the Gilbert Park Resource Centre to address their own constraints. One existing program in the community, Triple P – Positive Parenting Program, should be linked in to provide parenting role models and help to facilitate positive youth development as their children go through their school years. Educating parents about the importance of sport in their child's life is important so that their child also sees it. Creating opportunities for families to engage in programs together such as family soccer, street hockey or crafts also supports parents in developing stronger relationships with their children and service providers. Increasing the role of parents and family in the lives of their children also eases some of the burden faced by staff.

The tenth group of constraints relates to *staffing* of programs offered to children in Gilbert Park. One of the items that came up in interviews with staff, and to a certain extent with children as well, was the availability of quality coaches who are in a position to handle both the skill development and positive youth development aspects of their role. An approach to dealing with the potential need to pay coaches because of the significant load to carry in terms of supporting the children on their teams or in their programs is to adopt the sport for development approach of training older teens and young adults in the community to be the coaches. This would enable children in the community to have positive role models from Gilbert Park as well as enhancing the skill set of those who would be leading the programs. As previously stated, there is a need to promote awareness of programs in the greater community amongst residents and staff. The development of a board advertising such programs is a vehicle that could be available to enhance awareness. Engaging staff in researching potential opportunities to promote

would help to facilitate a greater understanding of what programs and opportunities are available, enabling them to support children in their quest to be involved.

Relying on staff to support children's engagement in sport is necessary because of the *lack of partnerships* between organizations serving the community of Gilbert Park. A lack of cohesion seems to exist amongst different governmental departments, school divisions, and sport organizations. Linking with school divisions to offer programs in their facilities and asking for their help in promoting activity at lunch hour and during recess would greatly enhance the opportunities available to children in the community. Additionally, Sport Manitoba should be approached regarding how Community Centre and sport organizations constrain the participation of kids from Gilbert Park. In an effort to learn from past mistakes, programming should ensure in the future as many children who wish to partake in an activity are able to do so. One of the reasons that this research was undertaken is because of the lack of literature and knowledge about the specific constraints experienced by children who live in public housing in terms of their participation in sport. To better understand the situation within the broader realm of public housing as opposed to this specific community, additional research needs to be undertaken. Working with local universities to facilitate research opportunities can help to enhance the knowledge base surrounding public housing in Manitoba. Approaching faculties, staff and students with potential questions could help to open up additional research possibilities beneficial to all parties involved. One area where there is a dearth of knowledge is in relation to violence in public housing communities, a component of the twelfth and final constraint.

The role that *violence, crime, and fear for safety* play in the lives of residents of Gilbert Park needs to be explored in greater detail. Within this constraint is the impact that gang involvement and activity has on both children directly and the organizations providing programs in the community. Given the repeated statement that Gilbert Park is so overwrought with gangs that nothing is done to prevent gang members from participating in programs needs to be addressed. Greater awareness of gangs and an active focus on their prevention are imperative to decreasing violence and safety concerns in Gilbert Park. Community organizations should ensure that gang prevention is incorporated into their mission and goals in order to facilitate its focus within their programming. We cannot simply rely on children being involved in GP² or the Club as the sole prevention strategy. Educating children about the consequences of gang involvement and implementing sport programs that are focused on fostering the development of those attributes children are seeking when they join a gang, such as loyalty, belonging, and adventure, would go a long way in decreasing gang involvement. Given that many of the older youth in the community are also involved in high risk behaviours, there needs to be an effort to stay in contact with the current cohort of participants as they mature. This could be achieved through focusing drop-in programming on the current age group of 10 to 14 year olds with additional scheduled programs being open to past attendees who have outgrown the program. These programs could be offered later in the evening as older youth do not need to be done their programming as early. While developing a greater understanding of gang activity in Gilbert Park is necessary, so is an examination of involvement in the sex trade by community members. By having a thorough understanding of constraints that are

presented, staff are better able to assist community members by educating them to enhance both their own safety as well as that of their neighbours. Understanding the reasons behind GP²'s locked door policy, it is necessary to advertise that they do so, to let new community members know that they are welcome to join in on their programming. A simple poster stating such could go a long way in encouraging newcomers to attend programs. In order to protect staff, more definitive policies are needed, whether it is through a buddy system or additional support at all times, so that staff do not have to deal with delinquent behaviours on their own. Addressing the aforementioned constraints would help to facilitate a new representation of Gilbert Park through the eyes of residents, the community and media, effectively negating pre-existing stigmas.

Overall, effort needs to be made to develop an environment that is conducive to participation in sport for all children in Gilbert Park. Given the large number of children in the community who are not involved in either of the two main service providers' programming (GP² and the Club) suggests that either the organizations are not meeting their needs or their participation is constrained due to any number of potential factors. A summary of recommendations for community programming with specific examples that could be implemented are shown in Tables 8 and 9, featuring benefits and constraints, respectively.

Table 8
Recommendations for Community Programming - Benefits

Benefits	Recommendation(s)	Example(s)
Expanding opportunities	-Opportunities outside Gilbert Park	-Broader catchment area and joint programs -Field trips
Role models and life skills development	-Staff representative of diversity -Youth role models	-Enhanced cultural/gender diversity of staff -MENtorship program with older youth as role models
Community	-Community pride	-Gilbert Park teams -Community events focused on diversity
Social/friends	-Reaching out to others	-Bring a friend/family member days
Specific benefits	-Promote short-term benefits	-Focus on fun, positive experiences

Table 9

Recommendations for Community Programming - Constraints

Constraints	Recommendation(s)	Example(s)
Disciplinary, behavioural and skill-related	-Clear disciplinary guidelines -Address root causes	-Straightforward rules and consequences -Find alternate outlets for unconstructive behaviours
Facility	-Strengthen partnerships with community organizations -Additional facilities and staff/volunteers	-GP ² fosters relationship with Northwood -Outdoor ice rink with help of community -Concerted effort to recruit volunteers for programming
Economic	-Enhance ability of residents to seek support on their own -Expand Little Moose	-Registration workshops with parents/guardians -Additional sports/offered outside of school
Gender	-Girls only programming	-Football program for girls
Health concerns	-Endorsing a healthy lifestyle -Enhance Cooking Club -Increase awareness of health concerns	-Providing healthier snacks and prizes -Teach how to buy groceries, budget, etc. -Specific training for staff related to FASD, etc.
Inconsistent group to plan for	-Focus on staff and children's interests	-Offer programs based on children's interests not solely on SPIN options -Engage children in different versions of an activity such as making video of program
Isolation	-Graduated fee scale for programs -Community Centre -Increase awareness of programs	-Work with City of Winnipeg to enhance access to mainstream activities -Gilbert Park as its own Community Centre or off-site location -Board in GP ² and the Club promoting outside opportunities
Lack of organized sport	-Additional structured, organized programs	-Official ice hockey team with scheduled practices and games outside of school hours
Parental challenges, lack of role models and family support	-Family programs -Enhance connections between family members and service providers	-Family sport activities -Solicit family members to volunteer -Triple P – Positive Parenting Program partnership
Staffing	-Seek coaches/leaders from the community	-Training older youth to coach and lead programs
Partnerships (lack thereof)	-School sport -Work with Sport Manitoba to reduce administrative constraints -Additional research opportunities	-Offer programs in school facilities -Promotion of activity at lunch and during recess -Enhance awareness of how Community Centres and sport organizations constrain participation -Work with local universities to enhance knowledge base
Violence/crime/safety	-Gang prevention -Awareness of locked door policy	-Staff training and professional development opportunities about current issues -Educating children about gangs -Additional programs for older youth beyond GP ² current cohort -Advertise that must knock to gain entry to program

In order to implement many of these recommendations changes to policy and resource allocation in all levels of government may need to be made, in addition to those directly related to community organizations. Based on my experiences in Gilbert Park, and other public housing communities throughout Winnipeg, the amount of resources allocated to Gilbert Park is substantial in comparison to other communities, with the notable exception of Lord Selkirk Park. Very few other communities throughout the city have access to funding, service providers and community programs to the extent that Gilbert Park does. However, additional resources are needed to enable capital projects such as new, larger facilities that would help to reduce constraints related to capacity as well as the purchasing of assets such as equipment. In terms of human resources, however, special attention should be paid to conducting a critical analysis of the roles that all staff members play within community organizations. Based on my experiences throughout the research process it would seem that staff resources may be better used by reallocating hours to those when child participants are present with less time set aside for planning each day. Ensuring greater coverage during holidays and professional development days would also ensure seamless program delivery when staff levels are reduced. One important thing to note about staff, however, is that given the significant turnover of hands-on program staff it may be worthwhile to explore enhancing the salary and benefits for program delivery staff as an incentive for staff retention. Therefore, by directing additional resources towards the capital and physical asset needs of community programs may be more beneficial than focusing on the addition of human resources.

The aforementioned recommendations also link in with the program planning process that organizations such as GP² and the Club should be following throughout the

program lifecycle. Drawing on Rossman and Elwood Schlatter's (2003) program development cycle there are several implications for organizations serving Gilbert Park to keep in mind when implementing changes. The first, and potentially one of the most important, is to ensure that all programmatic decisions retain the intentions of the organization's mission. Given the lack of active gang prevention currently taking place in Gilbert Park, especially through programs such as GP² and the Club, focusing on the mission and goals, which include gang prevention, at all times is necessary. It may also be possible that the mission and goals of an organization may need to be revised to keep up with the times and current situation in Gilbert Park so as to stay relevant. In terms of program development it is imperative that a needs assessment be conducted on a regular basis to find out what it is that children in the community are looking for in a program as well as how they view current offerings. One area where additional focus should be placed in the needs assessment phase is at how current programming is meeting the needs of different cultural groups in the community, such as new immigrants. Given the absence of new immigrants from Hockey Day in Gilbert Park illustrates that this special event may not have met their needs. Finding and developing programs that meet the needs of all residents is necessary so that no one feels isolated by program offerings. Soliciting the input of children is essential to developing programs that meet their needs, one of the main goals of programs offered. Additional program goals should focus on skill development, positive development, gang prevention, and a reduction in constraints. Evaluating whether the programs that are currently being offered in Gilbert Park are meeting the needs of residents or not is another important step that needs to continuously be undertaken. Program evaluation should also explore whether the program is being run

effectively and whether or not the organization has all of the necessary resources in order to be able to run the program. Continual program evaluation with corresponding disposition decisions being made will help to ensure that relevant programming is always being offered that meets the needs of the residents of Gilbert Park. Doing so will help to minimize the impact of constraints on sport participation for children in the community while maximizing the benefits experienced.

What This Means Within The Literature Base

The completed research provides insight into the role that public housing has on the lives of Canadians in terms of their sport participation, a knowledge base that is severely lacking, with the exception of Tirone's (2003) work. The impact the findings from the completed research have within the established literature base can be broken down into four main categories: public housing literature, benefits and constraints literature, positive youth development literature, and sport for development literature.

Drawing on the work of Tirone (2003) the findings of a negative stigma surrounding living in public housing is supported. Thinking back to Bennett et al.'s (2007) work, concerns about living in an unsafe environment constrain the sport involvement of children who live in Gilbert Park. Unlike the suggestion in Bennett et al.'s work, however, there is not merely a perception of it being an unsafe environment as the amount of "bad stuff" children mentioned in interviews is actually taking place. The impact that violence, crime and safety concerns have on children's engagement in programming or unstructured play supports the findings of Holt et al.'s (2009) work in Edmonton's inner city. The distinction between an inner city neighbourhood and a public housing community, such as that of Gilbert Park, is essential as many staff participants

pointed out additional constraints because their classification does not fall within the boundaries of the inner city. Fear based on previous experiences was expressed by most children and female staff, unlike the findings reported by Alvi et al. (2001). Therefore, in Gilbert Park, fear of crime is established because of past violent incidents that have taken place, rather than due to harassment or neighbourhood decay. For those who do not live in the community, however, there is an established fear that extends beyond reasonable concerns because of the negative light that the media portrays of the community. This representation by the media assists in further isolating community members. The built environment of Gilbert Park significantly contributes to the geographic isolation experienced by kids in the community as was previously identified by Mohl (2003). Reducing this isolation requires additional opportunities for children to engage with programs and people outside of the community or for drastic changes to the Manitoba Housing Authority's neighbourhood planning policies. Isolation of a social nature played a significant role in Tirone's work with children feeling as though they were unable to interact as equals with their peers. This finding was supported by the interviews conducted with children and staff in Gilbert Park as they confirmed not being able to participate in community-wide sport constrains individuals' involvement and experiences. In terms of the constraints identified by Tirone many of them were again represented throughout the completed research as transportation and financial costs often determine an individual's participation. All of these constraints can also be placed within the benefits and constraints literature previously explored.

The work of Collins (2010) provided a basis of the benefits of participating in sport for those who have been marginalized in the past, such as those who live in public

housing. Many of the benefits he identified came up again throughout the interviews of children and staff in Gilbert Park. The ideas of the health benefits, skill development, reduction in isolation, and fostering a safer environment that result by encouraging community members to participate in sport provides the basis upon which to further its role in the community. Thinking back to Redeker's (2008) discussion of the "spiritual poverty of sport", the importance of drawing on the abilities of staff to facilitate positive youth development through children's involvement in sport is essential to achieving benefits rather than merely providing equipment and infrastructure. Comparing the five main dimensions of constraints identified by Nadirova and Jackson (2000), isolation, knowledge, skills, costs, and time and commitments, represents nearly all of the aforementioned constraints that came up throughout the course of the research. Breaking the related constraints into their respective dimensions suggests the following categorization:

- Isolation: Isolation, Lack of organized sport.
- Knowledge: Staffing.
- Skills: Discipline/behaviour/social skills.
- Costs: Facility, Economic.
- Time and Commitments: Parental challenges, lack of role models and family support.

While not all of the constraints expressed throughout the research process fit neatly into one of the above dimensions it is evident that gender, health concerns, and safety concerns, among several others, all constrain the participation of children in their own way. Drawing on Godbey, Crawford and Shen's (2010) work discussing the hierarchy of

leisure constraints, which suggests that each level must be negotiated prior to the next does not apply to the situation in Gilbert Park. Each child has a different set of constraints that they must negotiate in order to have meaningful participation in sport. As such, each individual does not necessarily face constraints in the intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural categories nor do they all carry the same weight in terms of their influence on an individual's participation. What the completed research does accomplish is provide additional support that leisure constraints do in fact exist and must be negotiated in order for an individual to negate the factors that may outright prohibit, inhibit or limit their desired level of participation (Jackson, 2000; Nadirova & Jackson, 2000). Through the application of leisure constraints theory to the context of children's sport engagement in Gilbert Park potential methods of negotiating the aforementioned constraints were devised in an effort to limit those experienced by residents in the future.

When planning occurs for programs offered at GP² and the Club particular attention needs to be paid to the implications for positive youth development. Providing children with the opportunity to learn new skills, practice them and then be able to transfer their use from one setting, such as sport, to the next, such as their home life, is essential to fostering growth of life skills in children. The children who call Gilbert Park home possess such perseverance and a resilient attitude that they are able to draw on these characteristics to enhance their lives. Drawing on the eight key features of a positive development setting discussed in the literature review, a number of linkages between the features and the findings of this research have been identified. A summary of how each of the benefits and constraints identified, in terms of the sport participation of children in Gilbert Park, relates to the setting features is shown in Table 9. The only key

theme that did not have a significant application in terms of the features of a positive development setting was that of the children in Gilbert Park being an inconsistent group to plan for. All of the other benefits and constraints can be linked in to the aforementioned features, whether it be through a positive or negative effect. The need to reduce violence, crime and safety concerns in Gilbert Park is essential to achieving physical and psychological safety. Staff participants, who acknowledged the lack of organized sport opportunities in the community, also keyed in on the positive impact adopting more structured programming could have on children. Determining the correct balance between structured and unstructured activities is a challenge that will continue to face staff, especially when working with those entering their teenage years. Fostering the development of positive role models and family support is necessary for there to be supportive relationships between participants and the rest of the community. Presently this is not happening because family and community members are often struggling with their own set of constraints in daily life and can be unable to place their focus on the needs of others. This can be seen through some parents giving their children boundaries and rules about where they can or cannot go in the community but not following up to see whether or not they are actually followed. Additionally, the presence of positive role models and mentors help children to develop positive social norms because they are exposed to constructive behaviours and attitudes. As previously discussed, one of the reasons that children are drawn to gang involvement is because of the sense of loyalty and belonging they feel as part of the group. Creating additional opportunities to belong through sport and facilitating a sense of admiration of older role models could help to alleviate some of the constraints associated with the prevalence of gang activity in Gilbert

Park. Support for efficacy and mattering relate to the need for children in the community to play a role in determining the programs that are offered as well as the future direction the community takes. Ensuring that participants have access to opportunities for skill building, whether focused on physical or life skill development is another setting feature that supports positive development. The Club's plans to adopt a long-term athlete development approach to their sport delivery suggests a greater focus on the development of basic skills as opposed to competition and can aid in reducing skill inequalities identified by Tirone (2003). Programs offered through GP² such as Skills and Thrills and MENTorship are already focused on skill building, however, ensuring that all children have access to such programming is necessary. Finally, creating and strengthening partnerships between the different environments of participants' lives; family, school and community, is necessary to ensure that life skills are developed. Based on the findings it appears that the policies of different entities such as Public School No. 10 and Northwood Community Centre can at times clash with the goals of GP² and the Club resulting in an unfavourable environment in which to facilitate positive development. The application of current programming discussed in previous literature focused on positive youth development also proffers additional suggestions on how to improve sport delivery in Gilbert Park.

Table 10

Summary of Key Features for a Positive Development Setting to the Context of Gilbert Park

Setting Feature	Benefit(s) and/or Constraint(s)	Explanation
Physical and Psychological Safety	-Facility -Health concerns -Violence/crime/safety	-Focus on making GP ² a safe place i.e. no gangs -Inconsistent health promotion -Need to reduce fear and unsafe relationships and environment
Appropriate Structure	-Disciplinary, behavioural and skill-related -Lack of organized sport -Staffing	-Need clear, consistent application of rules and consequences -Continuity of staff is needed (i.e. reduce turnover)
Supportive Relationships	-Parental challenges, lack of role models and family support	-Lack close connection with others (i.e. difficulty connecting with staff)
Opportunities to Belong	+Community +Social/friends -Gender -Isolation	+Sense of community pride, belonging amongst peers -Fewer opportunities because of gender -Feel excluded, marginalized from the surrounding community
Positive Social Norms	+Specific benefits i.e. health, fun -Disciplinary, behavioural and skill-related	+Exposed to positive values and lifestyles -Lack of rules and inconsistent position on negative behaviours (i.e. can still participate if in a gang)
Support for Efficacy and Mattering	+Role models and life skills	+Empower youth in community who serve as role models in skateboarding
Opportunities for Skill Building	+Role models and life skills +Expanding opportunities -Disciplinary, behavioural and skill-related -Economic	+Opportunities to learn certain skills +Application of past learning through Careers for Kids at GP ² -May lack skills necessary to participate as equals with peers -Fewer options because of costs of participating
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	-Partnerships (lack thereof)	-Lack of synergy between different life environments

Note. A + sign indicates a benefit while a – sign indicates a constraint. The key setting features are adapted from *Community programs to promote youth development* (p. 90-91), by J.S. Eccles, J.A. Gootman, National Research Council (U.S.) Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth, Institute of Medicine (U.S.), & National Research Council (U.S.) Board on Children, Youth, and Families, 2002, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

One of the aspects of positive youth development that came across throughout the research process is the need for children to take an active role in deciding what programs are developed in the community. Danish et al.'s (2004) work on the Hokowhitu Program with Maori youth embraced the focus on self-determination that needs to be replicated within Gilbert Park. Doing so can also enhance the pride that many children express towards living in Jigtown and, for many, their Aboriginal heritage. Additionally, Guest's (2008) work exhibited the potential for sport to bring children together when investing in a team activity. This work is pivotal in terms of replicating the desired characteristics of loyalty and teamwork that are sought by those involved in gangs in a safe, positive environment of sport instead. Drawing on these works and positive youth development fundamentals will assist in utilizing sport for development in Gilbert Park.

While not firmly adopting or generating a sport for development framework, the completed research draws on some basic principles to establish a link between sport for development and sport engagement of children in a Canadian community. There is a dearth of literature, with the notable exception of Nicholls and Giles' (2007) work that explores the use of a sport for development framework within a Canadian context. The aforementioned need for self-determination to become a central tenet of programming in Gilbert Park has also been effectively used with the Mathare Youth Sports Association, which establishes programs based on community-defined needs (Brady & Khan, 2002). The aforementioned suggestion of engaging older youth in Gilbert Park as leaders and role models in the community through sport was previously a success in the community of Braunstone as discussed by Collins (2010). Working with the Youth Advisory Committee in Gilbert Park to find ways to incorporate youth into programs that are

offered as leaders will help to strengthen the pre-existing bonds and relationships in the community and reduce some of the constraints organizations face in terms of staffing.

Through the completed research, additional links between different fields and segments of the literature have been developed to enhance an understanding of children's involvement in sport within a public housing community.

Limitations and Future Considerations

Potential limitations of this research include the possibility that staff participants may not have expressed their true thoughts and experiences of working in Gilbert Park because their employers would be reading the end product. At some points throughout interviews it did seem as though participants may have been giving pre-rehearsed answers, however, for the most part I believe that through participant observation, developing relationships with the majority of staff participants, and discussions with staff, ultimately the true reality of the situation was revealed. Being more flexible on the age category chosen for participation in the research may have enhanced some of the discussions engaged in with child participants. Given that the majority of children who attended the program on a daily basis were thirteen years old I was unable to interview those who engage in GP²'s programming to the greatest extent. I do, however, feel that I was able to represent their experiences adequately by getting to know them throughout the participant observation phase in order to enhance what their younger peers expressed during their interviews. An additional limitation is that, while several child participants identified with an Aboriginal culture, only one participant was representative of the new immigrant population. The unequal representation of new immigrants in my research is likely linked in to the severely limited involvement of new immigrants in sport programs

in the community as a whole. Throughout my time in Gilbert Park I did not see a single new immigrant girl playing in the community or engaged in an activity, while there were several boys who were outside but with the exception of Joseph Child and his brother not involved in programming. While observing GP² programs, and recruiting participants, Joseph was the only new immigrant to attend the program. Based on my previous experiences in Gilbert Park the lower involvement of girls is likely related to different religious beliefs where the involvement of girls with boys in an activity is discouraged. In the past this was accomplished through the development of women only dance and social programs aimed at new immigrant women. It may be necessary to explore the potential of developing programs specifically for girls in an effort to reach out to girls from new immigrant families to participate in sport in Gilbert Park. Finally, an additional limitation of the research is that I was unable to interview staff from the Manitoba Housing Authority who would have been able to broaden my understanding of how the community operates outside of the sport world. I do however believe that based on my previous experiences working in the community, that my knowledge base of public housing in Winnipeg ameliorated the lack of input on the research from the Manitoba Housing Authority.

In order to better understand the role that sport plays within the lives of children who live in public housing, additional research is needed. Potential areas to explore further include comparative examinations of the impact that living in different public housing communities has on the children who call them home in terms of the sport opportunities available to them. It is important to remember that public housing is not isolated in where it is located, rather pockets of public housing are located throughout

cities and towns, not discriminating between locations in inner city or suburban neighbourhoods. Chances are that the experience of a child growing up in public housing in a wealthy suburb is different from that of a child living in Gilbert Park. However, the starker contrast between life in public housing versus life in the general community may be more prevalent for public housing tenants surrounded by higher socioeconomic communities. Another area to explore would be a longitudinal look at the role sport plays throughout the lifespan of children who grow up in public housing, with a special focus on those who spend their whole childhood in such communities. Doing so would provide evidence of the effect that sport programs have in the long run given the dearth of anecdotal justification of a program's results. Additionally, learning more about when children tend to disengage from community programming and what it is that they are doing instead, would help to enhance service providers' understanding of the needs of community members at different stages in their lives. For those researchers with a greater understanding of the physiological and skill development of children, a look at the development of children who live in public housing as opposed to those who do not, may help to narrow any gaps that exist because of an individual's skills and abilities. The shift in priorities for the Club, as identified by Emily Staff, from community sport involvement to long term athlete development with a focus on building fundamental skills may provide a starting point for understanding how the skills of one cohort develop in comparison to another. However, the focus of community-level programming in Gilbert Park should not be on developing elite athletes, as is supported by the long term athlete development model, but rather on the development of children who have the necessary skills to be able to participate in sport to their desired level and extent. This can

be accomplished through a focus on early childhood skill development rather than through application of the long term athlete development model. Future research is also needed to explore the constraint of violence, crime and safety concerns. Working directly with children utilizing principles of participatory action research could help to determine ways to reduce violence/crime/gang involvement in Gilbert Park. It is imperative that community members take an active role in any research that takes place within the bounds of their community. Doing so helps to facilitate building community capacity as well as enhance the likelihood that community leaders would support findings from said research.

Conclusion

The experiences of children who live in Gilbert Park in terms of their involvement in sport illustrate the benefits they reap from doing so as well as the many constraints that can play a role when trying to engage. It is necessary to understand what constrains a child's participation in sport in order for service providers to better or best meet their needs, as well as achieve the mission and goals of their organization. The benefits attained through supporting sport in a community such as Gilbert Park extend far beyond the individuals involved. Instead, the community as a whole feels the impact as negative stigmas are diminished and the capacity of residents, strengthened by the development of employable skills and competencies, and the community itself, are poised to flourish. While understanding the experiences of children in Gilbert Park only paints a picture of one particular community, this research provides the base upon which additional research in similar communities throughout Winnipeg can be realized. Doing so would help to

ease the negotiation of constraints for children to engage in sport and ultimately work towards abolishing their existence and effectively evening the playing field.

Postscript

Looking back on my research there are a few key ideas and lessons that struck me throughout the research process and have stayed with me since. The first is that the amount of resilience the kids who have grown up in Gilbert Park exhibit while overcoming constraints on a daily basis is not something that can be taught. There are very few people I have encountered throughout my life thus far who would be able to talk about how much they enjoy their life while at the same time sharing stories of drive-by shooting and being stabbed, much less at the age of ten or twelve. Secondly, when planning programs for kids, or really anyone, the most important element of the program planning process is to truly listen to what it is that potential participants say they want. Many child participants seemed surprised that I, as an outsider coming into the community, was interested in hearing what it is that they want to see happen in their community rather than focusing on what it is that staff want to make happen for them. Each of the child participants had something unique to say and were willing to welcome me into a corner of their lives as I observed GP² and interviewed them, something that at their age I certainly would not have been keen on. Overall, I think the most important thing I have learned from completing this research is that you can never underestimate the positive impact just taking the time to talk to someone can have on their life as well as your own.

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3. Risk Assessment

There are no undue risks for participants in this study.

4. Confidentiality

The interviews will be tape-recorded (voice). These tapes will be used only to aid the researcher in accurate recollection and analysis of the information and will be destroyed after transcription. Complete confidentiality of all records will be maintained. No response will be connected to any individual participant by name. Only the researcher and her advisor will have access to the full transcriptions and notes, which will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure location.

5. Participation

Participation is completely voluntary; participants are free to withdraw at any time for any reason, without consequences of any kind.

6. Feedback

Following completion of the interviews participants will be invited to provide feedback based on the researcher's initial analysis of the information gathered. This will occur through informal discussions at *GP*² programming. A copy of the final report also will be made available to all participants upon request.

4. Confidentiality

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5. Participation

Participation is completely voluntary; participants are free to withdraw at any time for any reason, without consequences of any kind.

6. Feedback

Following completion of the interviews participants will be invited to provide feedback based on the researcher's initial analysis of the information gathered. This will occur through informal discussions at GP² programming as well as the opportunity to verify the accuracy of their interview transcript. Making sure I have recorded your thoughts accurately is important. As such, if you are willing to review your interview transcript, please check off the box below your signature on the following page. Once the researcher has transcribed your interview a copy of your transcript will be sent to you to review. A brief meeting, no longer than 30 minutes, will then be scheduled to discuss your thoughts at a date, time and location that is convenient for you. A copy of the final report also will be made available to all participants upon request.

Appendix F

Child Participant Interview Guide

1. Read the informed consent statement to the participant. Ask them if they have any questions and if they are willing to participate. Ask if the participant is willing to have the interview tape recorded. Remind the participant that they can go “off the record” at any point if they choose to do so. This means that their comment will not be recorded.

2. Start off with acquiring some basic demographic information.
 - a. How old are you?
 - b. What school do you go to and what grade are you in?
 - c. Tell me a little bit about your family. Who lives in your home with you? Do you have any siblings?
 - d. How long have you lived in Gilbert Park?

In this interview, I would like to talk about three general topics: 1) your experiences living in Gilbert Park, 2) your after-school activities, and 3) your experiences with sport. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions, what is important to me is to hear about your experiences and any stories that you would like to share.

3. What are your favourite things about living in Gilbert Park?

4. What are your least favourite things about living in Gilbert Park?

5. Can you tell me a story about what the average day in your life is like?

6. What do you normally do after-school? Do you participate in any activities or programs?

7. Have you ever been involved in sport? If so, can you tell me about your experiences? If not, can you tell me about why you have not been involved? If you have siblings, are any of them involved in sport?

8. Why might someone want to be involved in sport? What is it about being in sport that you think is important?

9. Do you think that there are many opportunities for you to be involved in sport in Gilbert Park? What sports are popular in Gilbert Park? What sports are not popular?

10. Is it hard for you to participate in some activities? When that happens what do you do? Do you do something else or find a way to make it work?

11. Have your parent(s)/guardian(s) given you any rules about where you can and cannot go after-school? Why do you think these rules are in place?

12. I want to make sure that I understand what you have told me. Based on what you have said so far do you think that some of the benefits of participating in sport are (fill in with what has come up during interview)? Also, do you think that some of the reasons that make it hard for you to participate are (fill in with what has come up during interview)?

13. Closing
 - a. To close off the interview is there anything else that you would like to add or any questions you wish that I had asked you?
 - b. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me?
 - c. Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me today.

Appendix G

Staff Participant Interview Guide

1. Read the informed consent statement to the participant. Ask them if they have any questions and if they are willing to participate. Ask if the participant is willing to have the interview tape recorded. Remind the participant that they can go “off the record” at any point if they choose to do so. This means that their comment will not be recorded.
2. Start off with acquiring some basic demographic information.
 - a. What organization do you work/volunteer with? What is your role within the organization?
 - b. How long have you worked/volunteered in Gilbert Park?

In this interview, I would like to talk about three general topics: 1) your experiences working/volunteering in Gilbert Park, 2) the after-school activities that children participate in, and 3) your experiences with sport involvement of children in Gilbert Park. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions, what is important to me is to hear about your experiences and any stories that you would like to share.

3. What are your favourite things about working/volunteering in Gilbert Park? Least favourite?
4. What have been the most challenging aspects of your work/volunteer position within Gilbert Park? The most rewarding?
5. Tell me about the children who live here. What are they like? What are their strengths?
6. What do children in the community normally do after-school? What programs or activities do children participate in? What programs or activities most often have low enrollment/involvement? Are there differences based on gender?

7. Based on your experiences, are children in Gilbert Park involved in sport to the same extent as their peers in the broader context of Winnipeg? How so? If not, what could be done to increase their involvement?
8. Do you think that there are many opportunities for children to be involved in sport in Gilbert Park? What sports are popular in Gilbert Park? Which are not popular?
9. In the context of Gilbert Park what are the benefits of sport participation? Why should children be involved in sport? What are the downsides of sport participation?
10. Do you think there are constraints for children living in Gilbert Park to participate in sport?
11. At your organization's programs are there any rules about where children can and cannot go? Why are these rules in place? If not, are there any places where children know that they should not go?
12. If you had unlimited resources, what kind of sport program would you offer in Gilbert Park?
13. I would like to check with you to make sure I understand what you have told me so far. Would it be correct to say that you feel some of the benefits for children in Gilbert Park participating in sport are (fill in with what has come up during interview)? Also, do you think that some of the constraints to participation in sport are (fill in with what has come up during interview)?
14. Closing
 - a. To close off the interview is there anything else that you would like to add or any questions you wish that I had asked you?
 - b. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask me?
 - c. Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me today.

Note: Printed on University of Manitoba letterhead.

Appendix H

Observational Protocol

Date, Time, and Location:	
Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes