Hi,

I need some ideas for this. What would you say? I’m very nervous. This is to work with at-risk kids in sort of an ‘inner city’ center. (I also need some questions you believe they will ask and how to answer based on this type of job.) I need to have some sort of revitalization plan, just in case. I am meeting 8 people.

What essentials do you believe they’ll be looking for? I am qualified (public health, community prevention, proposal writing etc., I know how to build trust) but I don’t what I can say for 5 minutes! What would you say?

Email from the recruiter:

The Board is requesting that you be prepared to speak on "why you are interested in this position and what you feel that you bring to this role". You will have this opportunity at the beginning of the interview and are being asked to speak on this for no longer than 5 minutes.

**The mandate:**
- Community development and safety
- Finding proactive solutions to solve the problems of youth violence in the neighborhood
- To provide cultural/social, recreational, educational and enrichment programs for children, youth and families
- To provide employment training, life skills coaching and other opportunities for marginalized “at risk” youth

Found this Interview with the Director they now have:

Is the Executive Director for the SR Revitalization Association? She is responsible for securing funds to ensure the sustainability of the association, acting as the association's chief liaison among public and private partners, managing and supervising the implementation of programmes, and reporting to a voluntary Board of Director. Originally from………… and formerly trained as a nurse, S…brings a variety of skills, expertise, and talents in developing initiatives designed to strengthen the community she belongs to. She holds a Master’s degree in Education from the O Institute for Studies in Education from the University …….

ICPC: Can you begin by describing the SR neighbourhood and highlight some of the developments which led to the creation of the SR Revitalization Association?

SP: Sr is s a neighbourhood located on the North East quadrant of the intersection in the…community. I will begin by saying that the community is very dynamic and eclectic. There are three buildings in SR: 892 units housing 4,400 residents, of which more than twenty eight hundred (2,800) are children and youth. The majority of youth in SR are living in single parent households which are primarily headed by women. This is a very diverse neighborhood with over 50 languages represented, a high level of new immigrant residents from parts of Europe, South Asia, South East Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa.

In 2000, there was a community crime profile conducted which identified some of the key challenges that SR was facing such as high youth unemployment, and a recent rise in youth-related crime. At the time the survey was conducted, there was very little social programming offered to address the diverse needs of the community.

As a resident of the wider J & F community, I became involved in this particular crime prevention initiative about four years ago, when the President of I Security, and the property management company contacted me to assist with the revitalisation of the neighbourhood.

ICPC: Who are some of the key partners involved in the work of the association?

SP: We work with all three levels of government. They mostly provide funding and support of the work of the association. For example, one of the ways to address some of the challenges I mentioned was for SR to launch the Cultural Social Enrichment Program in July 2002. For this programme, we received funding…over the course of three years from the Business Action Program of the country’s National Crime Prevention Strategy. The programme was administered by the Business Network on Crime Prevention.

Also, we have some support from the Ministry of Human Resources and Skills Development who paid for the salaries of counselors for a nine-week children’s day-camp program during the summer. HRDC provided funding for a youth internship project for "at risk" youth for nine months in partnership with Jewish Vocational Services of the area.

We have also had serious engagement from private partners since the inception of the association in SR. For example, the building owners and property management staff have taken an interest in the association up until this day. Additional support (monetary or in kind services) for our programmes has come from the local Mall, local unions, Home Depot, Rogers Cable and the Tennis Club.

Finally, we have to acknowledge the support of our volunteers - those who have freely given their time to contribute to building a safer community within SR.

ICPC: You have mentioned some of your private sector partners (from large, to medium and small size businesses). Can you describe how the private sector has contributed to strengthening the community of SR?

SP: Well, I would say that they have helped us develop a support network. The President of the Board and I have done a lot in the area of networking. The private sector has helped us highlight the positive things happening in the community through their commitment to revitalising the area. They helped construct a neighbourhood playground (Home Depot), expanded our office space, contributed to renovations, and provided job opportunities for high school drop outs or those previously involved with the criminal justice system.

For example, one of our partners from the labour sector committed (USD) $175, 000 in hiring and training youth in the construction industry.

Rogers Cable donated computers and Internet access for a computer centre, Tennis Canada refinished the run down tennis court and the Tennis Association provides free tennis instruction during the summer months.

So as I have outlined, the private sector has assisted us in many ways. Local residents and others are aware that great things are happening in this community and that change is possible. This has been truly an inspiring experience. There has been a lot of momentum built around sustaining efforts to reduce incidents related to crime.

ICPC: In engaging the private sector, where did you feel that the ‘Buy in’ took place, in terms of committing their expertise, time and resources?

SP: I think that the ‘buy in’ took place when people recognized the needs of the community. You often hear in the media of incidents taking place in the JF area, and I might add, that sometimes even when incidents do not happen in the immediate area, given previous media reporting, they are described as if they did happen here. It is also a community identified by the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety. Overall, there has been a lot of mobilising of various sectors towards initiatives that work to strengthen protective factors of youth, children, and families.

ICPC- I understand that many of your programmes are designed to reach at-risk youth, for example, those which aim to provide meaningful job experiences for youth. Have youth in SR been consulted in the planning of these initiatives?

SP: Yes. We have a Youth Committee, and this is a platform for youth to express their concerns about the lack of initiatives in the neighbourhood, and send the recommendations from the Youth Committee, via its Chair, to the Board at our bi-monthly meetings.

However, there are still those youth in the community that are hard to reach. There are some youth who you will reach, and those you will not. So, I would say there are definitely challenges in this area. On any given day I may get numerous referrals from the Juvenile Probation Centre in the community, telling me to expect a call from this young person, and most times this person may never call but end up back in the youth criminal justice system. At the same time, there are youth that you may reach, but who may become really dependent. For example, someone may want you to help them get them back into school, find them work, and walk them to and from work. There are only a few of us in the association, and I do what I can, but there is a definite need for a support network.

ICPC- When serious crimes are committed in and around JF with subsequent media representations of those crimes do you think that the association loses ground or legitimacy in light of these incidents?

SP: Well partly yes. It is a challenge because the complexities surrounding issues related to crime and its causation require multiple interventions. However, what many community residents often feel is that when serious crimes happen outside the immediate area and are reported as happening within the area, this further portrays a negative depiction of the community, and works to increase levels of insecurity about accessing space safely.

Our new crime-based survey will be released in May 2005 at the official opening of our new location, and you will see a dramatic difference in the results from the previous survey in 2000, which acted as a precursor to the development of SR.

ICPC: *I would like to thank you…for taking the time to inform us about a promising and integrated practice in prevention, that actively harnesses the support of large, medium and small scale businesses to revitalise the neighhbourhood of SR, by providing a variety of services, and recreational opportunities for children and youth.*