



Algoma Youth Action Alliance: A 2013-2014 Snap Shot of Your Student's Successes

Since 2001, Algoma Public Health has been fortunate to work with representative students, graduates and teachers from the Algoma District School Board and Huron Superior Catholic District School Board in **promoting health and wellness within their schools and their communities** as members of the **Algoma Youth Action Alliance**.

Currently, the Algoma Youth Action Alliance consists of four youth-led committees:

1. Schools Without Borders (Sault Ste. Marie)
2. S.T.E.A.L.T.H (Blind River)
3. Teens in Action (Elliot Lake)
4. Teens in Motion (Wawa)

Committee Membership:

Each committee consists of youth from different schools (grades 7-12). Adult supports are provided with youth engagement training and include public health staff, school staff and community partners who are linked with the youth-identified priorities.

How the Committees Work: Meetings are held monthly after school with snacks.

Youth identify key priorities focused around tobacco prevention and correlated risk factors (i.e., mental health, injury prevention, substance misuse, physical activity, healthy eating). Once key priorities are identified, youth are supported in the planning, implementation and evaluation of health promotion campaigns. Youth representatives have opportunities to work at local, regional, provincial and even national levels.



Training opportunities are provided depending on the issues youth identify and committee needs. At the end of each year, youth celebrate their accomplishments and are presented with a certificate of recognition.

Purpose of the Committees:

AYAA youth reps at regional conference in Sudbury that was hosted in November 2013 and May 2014. Youth received health promotion training and also identified key tobacco prevention priorities shared throughout the region.

The committees use best practices to create meaningful leadership opportunities for youth of diverse backgrounds and experiences to solve and prevent problems, develop fully, and engage in community life.

Youth and adults partner together sharing their knowledge, talents and skills to help build a healthier community. Youth gain a network of caring and supportive adults, friends and peers. They learn valuable knowledge and skills that support their future educational and career aspirations.

The Algoma Youth Action Alliance is proud to offer you highlights of their 2013-2014 initiatives on the following pages. Enjoy!



Algoma
PUBLIC HEALTH
Santé publique Algoma

Sault Ste. Marie's Schools Without Borders:

Schools Without Borders representatives from **Korah Collegiate** include 6 students. **Superior Heights** is represented by 1 student and 1 alumni. **White Pines** is represented by 3 students. **St. Basil** has 1 student representative, who was also recently hired to be a Test Shopper with Algoma Public Health's Environmental Health department. Adult support is provided by a Canadian Cancer Society Volunteer and retired teacher from Huron Superior Catholic District School Board in addition to the Youth Engagement Coordinator.



Two Schools Without Borders leaders at the National Conference on Tobacco or Health in Ottawa, which included an advocacy event at Queens Park.

Smoke Free Movies Campaign:

Schools Without Borders partnered with the Canadian Cancer Society and continued their Smoke Free Movies campaign. The goal is to increase critical thinking skills in order to reduce the impact of on-screen tobacco use and images in youth rated films on youth tobacco use.



Youth facilitated presentations for the Sault Ste Marie Library Board, the Project ABCD feeder school event at Korah, and partnered with New Mentality Algoma at the Shadows of the Mind Film Festival.

The Environmental Impacts of Commercial Tobacco:

Schools Without Borders youth reps have also focused on the environmental impact of commercial tobacco. Last year, youth partnered with Clean North, Algoma University and Sault College to clean up cigarette butts and planted 45 trees. This year, youth reps continued their work by helping to care for the seedlings and cleaning up more cigarette litter. Within approximately one hour, 7 youth leaders cleaned up 3,370 cigarette butts!



Cigarette butts are
TOXIC
to children
and animals.

4.5
TRILLION
cigarette butts
are littered
WORLDWIDE
each year.

Cigarette butts
NEVER
completely
DECOMPOSE.

Tobacco
KILLS TREES.

Tobacco is
TESTED
on
ANIMALS.



Algoma
PUBLIC HEALTH
Santé publique Algoma

Blind River's S.T.E.A.L.T.H:

There are 12 STEALTH student representatives from W.C. Eaket. Youth representatives have been greatly supported by W.C. Eaket Guidance Counsellor and teacher, as well as Algoma Public Health Public Health Nurse and Youth Engagement Coordinator.

As a result of their work through STEALTH, 3 youth leaders were recipients of the Ministry of Citizenship and immigration's 2014 Ontario Volunteer Service Award!



Reducing the Stigma of Mental Illness and Promoting Mental Health:



Based on STEALTH's youth engagement work focused on destigmatizing mental illness and promoting mental health over the years, 2 STEALTH reps attended the National Unite and Ignite Youth Conference in May. They participated in focus group designed to inform national youth training program and also got to attend conference sessions and visit Queens Park.



During Education Week, STEALTH reps facilitated presentations to grade 8 students from Blind River Public School and St Mary's Public School in partnership with Project ABCD. The focus was destigmatizing mental illness, promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and challenging myths around chew tobacco. STEALTH received excellent feedback from evaluations from participants and a kind letter of appreciation from their teachers.

Substance Misuse Prevention Campaign:



STEALTH helped organize a chew tobacco focus group to learn more about the issue. An unexpected outcome was that many chew tobacco users chose to quit after the focus group!

STEALTH reps presented their accomplishments to Town Council and were successful in having May 25-31 declared Substance Misuse week to coincide with World No Tobacco Day.

Other campaign efforts included the creation of a PhotoVoice project, a Lunch and Learn presentation, adding key messages to Valentine's Day candy grams. STEALTH also added a twist to Christmas carols to promote awareness of the danger of chew tobacco. STEALTH members wore reindeer antlers and sung their hearts out in the W.C. Eaket hallway. The carols were well received and the audience laughed in all the right places!



STEALTH reps bring their energy and health messages to the Blind River community day parade!



Algoma
PUBLIC HEALTH
Santé publique Algoma

Elliot Lake's Teens in Action

Teens in Action includes 9 student representatives from **Elliot Lake Secondary School**. Youth representatives have been supported by Elliot Lake Secondary School teacher, Algoma Public Health Nurse and Youth Engagement Coordinator, as well as a Pharmacist and member of the Council on Drug Awareness.

Substance Misuse “Think It Thru” Campaign:

Teens in Action has partnered with Project ABCD and Council on Drug Awareness to develop a substance misuse campaign through an injury prevention lens.

As part of their partnership with Project ABCD, Teens in Action reps facilitated interactive displays and presentations for GLS classes. Elliot Lake youth have also facilitated brain injury work stations as part of the Preventing Alcohol and Risk-related Trauma in Youth (P.A.R. T.Y.) program designed to reduce alcohol related trauma in youth.



P.A.R.T.Y. Program



Teens in Action reps facilitating interactive health promotion displays and activities for GLS students in partnership with Project ABCD.

Tobacco Industry Denormalization:

Teens in Action reps have been using a Tobacco Industry Denormalization (TID) strategy for their tobacco prevention work. TID focuses on learning about target marketing and how the tobacco industry uses the media to sell their product and generating awareness among young people.



Teens in Action reps created a hockey shoot-out game to generate awareness about the different ways the Tobacco Industry targets youth. The game was unveiled at the Elliot Lake Secondary School Copper Cup ball hockey tournament and used in conjunction with a chew tobacco display, which exemplified many of the strategies used by the tobacco industry to target youth.



Algoma
PUBLIC HEALTH
Santé publique Algoma

Wawa's Teens In Motion:

Teens in Motion includes 7 student representatives from **Michipicoten High School**. Youth representatives are supported by Algoma Public Health and Youth Engagement Coordinator, who is a Schools Without Borders alumna!



Teens in Motion reps with 2 Canada World Youth Volunteers from Ukraine and Kempville Ontario

Supporting Smoke Free Outdoor Spaces:

Similar to Schools Without Borders, Teens in Motion reps have focused the environmental impact of commercial tobacco. For every 300 cigarettes manufactured, one tree is destroyed...not to mention the litter!



In June 2013, Teens in Motion reps demonstrated their support for Smoke Free Outdoor Spaces by cleaning up 1,820 cigarette butts from around the community including Lady Dunn Hospital Centre (1,020), Queens Park (500), and the Tourist Information Centre (300). Youth received media attention for their work on wawanews.com!

In 2014, Teens in Motion followed up their efforts with an advocacy letter to municipal council celebrating the inclusion of hospital property as part of municipal by-law and encouraged Smoke Free Parks and Recreational facilities in Wawa to protect the environment and reduce exposure to second hand smoke.



On February 14th, Teens in Motion hosted a free community skate to demonstrate support smoke-free outdoor spaces and to generate awareness about impact of commercial tobacco on our environment.

Smoke Free Movies Event:

As part of their Smoke Free Movies campaign this year, Teens in Motion hosted the regional North East Outdoor Movie Tour, which involved a large inflatable screen. As a result of youth advocacy efforts, Disney has made a commitment to keep tobacco use and images out of their children's rated films. The celebration event was incredibly successful with approximately 200 people learning about the issue and enjoying the film!



Youth reps facilitated Smoke Free Movies awareness games leading up to the screening of Disney's Muppets Most Wanted, which earns a thumbs up for being smoke free!



Algoma
PUBLIC HEALTH
Santé publique Algoma