

# YOUTH

leading the way in Algoma

**Photo Credit:** Mike Trudeau

Skateboarding is a big recreational sport. The skatepark in Sault Ste. Marie is a success story showing what can be accomplished when youth are given the opportunity to lead the way.

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

*The question is not how to transform youth but how youth can help transform society."*

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Historically, organizations have planned and delivered programming to youth with hit and miss results of reaching this audience. Today, across Algoma these same organizations are embracing a new model of youth engagement and development that's producing much more rewarding and successful youth outcomes. By providing opportunities for young people to use their talents to help set priorities and develop strategies for reaching their peers they are making a difference in their communities.

## A message from Dr. Northan, Medical Officer of Health

Algoma Public Health has always recognized the invaluable contributions of the youth of Algoma in helping us to promote health. The volunteer services of our many young people at their schools and in the community have helped successfully reach their peers. In many instances, youth actions have had the adult world take notice of emerging health issues impacting society today.

Over the last 5 years the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport has also recognized the opportunity to reach youth with healthy lifestyle messages through their peers. The funding of Youth Action Alliances (YAA) across Ontario provided youth with opportunities for skill development through advocacy, media work and community involvement. In Algoma, our YAA youth committees have supported smoke-free parks and recreation bylaws, identified the increased use of chew tobacco among teenage males, and challenged the unscrupulous practices of the tobacco industry targeting youth.

Today Algoma Public Health has moved to further embrace the concepts of Youth Engagement and Development through the implementation of an agency-wide model. With revised and renewed Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport funding, we look forward to working further with our community partners to provide youth with more opportunities to learn and make a positive impact now and for the future.



Dr. Northan presents Kyrena Yun with a certificate of appreciation for working with schools without borders

## A message from David Oraziotti, MPP, Sault Ste. Marie

Our government's funding for programs under the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy continues to support youth engagement and development strategies in Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma. I applaud the work of those in our community who mentor young people so they can achieve their fullest potential.

Having worked with youth representatives in our community, their dedication and commitment is exceptional and I greatly appreciated their support on Bill 11, a private member's bill I introduced to protect children from second hand smoke in automobiles, which was adopted by the government and amended the Smoke Free Ontario Act 2009.



AYAA reps thank MPP David Oraziotti for his leadership in protecting youth from second hand smoke in cars



# ALGOMA PUBLIC HEALTH: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO LEAD THE WAY

Algoma Public Health is integrating youth engagement and development (YED) into its agency's fabric. A YED model will help enhance staff capacity for working with youth, expand community partnerships, and identify meaningful opportunities for young people within the organization and our communities.



AYAA youth in wawa present campaign postcards to MPP, Mike Brown, Algoma Manitoulin

## Algoma Youth Action Alliance (AYAA)

The AYAA is made up of youth-led, adult supported health promotion committees in Wawa, Sault Ste Marie, Blind River and Elliot Lake.

With the support of Algoma Public Health staff and caring community partners, students aged 12-24 get together once a month after school to identify health related issues that are important to them and their peers. The youth then come up with creative events and activities to make positive changes. In addition to being a fun way to earn high school community hours, the AYAA offers youth valuable experiences and skills to include on job, university or scholarship applications.

For more information on meetings and upcoming events, contact the Youth Engagement Coordinator at 705-759-6390 or [cartuso@algomapublichealth.com](mailto:cartuso@algomapublichealth.com). You can also visit [www.algomapublichealth.com/ayaa](http://www.algomapublichealth.com/ayaa).



Stephanie Kwolek and George Smitherman (former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care)

## Stephanie Kwolek, From the Sault to Legislation

*"Commitment unlocks the doors of imagination, allows vision, and gives us the "right stuff" to turn our dreams into reality."* James Womack

Algoma Public Health and the Schools Without Borders Committee (Algoma Youth Action Alliance) have provided me with wonderful opportunities in my professional and academic career. The commitment of Algoma Public Health staff toward youth engagement and empowerment allowed me to become a committed advocate for tobacco-free living. With the support of my adult mentors, I was able to advocate for smoke-free communities at our municipal council, present at a Legislative Committee at the provincial level, and present at a national conference in Edmonton, Alberta. With their guidance, our youth committee planned initiatives to discourage thousands of students in the Algoma region from using tobacco products. I learned how to lead, how to advocate and how to promote health at the community level.

My passion for health issues has inspired me in my academic career. Furthermore, my experience volunteering at Algoma Public Health has motivated me to continue my anti-tobacco crusade at the university level.

An Algoma Youth Action Alliance volunteer experience was anything but typical. My committee membership enabled me to chair subcommittees, organize awareness events, and act as a media spokesperson. My involvement as a Schools Without Borders Committee member provided me with an exceptional opportunity to make a difference in our community and endowed me with the tools necessary to succeed in my future career.

# ALGOMA YOUTH ACTION ALLIANCE: UNITING YOUTH ACROSS ALGOMA



Vanessa Gastaldo, Central Algoma

Working with the Algoma Youth Action Alliance was an experience that continues to impact my career choices, education and advocacy work. I have been able to transfer the skills I learned, including teamwork, event planning and advocacy strategies into many environments, taking leadership roles in local and regional levels promoting the issues of my peers.

I always wanted to get involved with my community and having the opportunity to learn strategies to engage more youth has transformed the way I work and live. Working with the AYAA was the opportunity that I needed to transform my passion into action.



Carley Ingles, Elliot Lake

From 2004 until 2007, I had the opportunity to work with the Algoma Youth Action Alliance in developing a youth-led coalition focused on promoting health awareness, mainly tobacco advocacy. It was my job to plan, develop and initiate events within my community and on occasion within the region. I have always said that becoming a part of the AYAA was always my stepping stone to success in my current career path and my future goals. Currently in school for accounting, I have extended my knowledge and leadership abilities in numerous youth-led coalitions such as the Cambrian Accounting Club and the Sudbury Youth Council. My experience with the AYAA has shown me the strength youth engagement brings to the development of a community and I hope to continue promoting these benefits through my future endeavors.

*“Never think that a small group of committed people can’t change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead*



Katherine Dubreuil, Sault Ste. Marie

Working with Algoma Public Health has allowed me many different opportunities to promote healthy living. I was able to travel to Sudbury to participate in a district-wide smoke-free movies event and network with other youth representatives while informing the public about the Tobacco Industry’s tactics. I have also had the opportunity to facilitate displays and presentations in front of a wide variety of audiences ranging from school board representatives, elementary, high school and post secondary students, as well as important community members. Each of these presentations has helped me discover my voice, build communications skills and form an impressive resume.



# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT + (EDUCATION + PARTNERSHIP) = SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES



Link Crew creating a lasting bond

## Huron Superior Catholic District School Board

“Link Crew” at St. Mary’s College (SMC) and St. Basil Secondary (SBSS) is a resounding success in welcoming grade 9 students. We’re proud of our senior students who mentor our incoming grade 9 students and build community in our schools.

“It has helped me feel welcome, that I belong.” Erica Brescacin - Grade 9 SBSS

“It has provided a chance for me to be a role model and it has created a bond.” Molly Harper, Grade 12, SBSS

“Link Crew made you very feel welcome and part of the St. Mary’s family.” Jayme Ricard, Grade 9 SMC

“You see grade 9s going up to grade 12s asking questions, having a talk, having some laughs. It’s great to see that,” Matt Sicol, Grade 12, SMC

## Algoma District School Board

Congratulations to the students of the Algoma District School Board who are taking on leadership roles in their schools and getting involved in their community through character. Our students are encouraged to make a difference through action-based initiatives and many students are participating in school and community based activities.

Students lead and participate in service learning activities at school through student-led committees, and community partnerships. At a School Board level, students participate in the Student Senate and can serve as a Student Trustee. Students across ADSB also apply for and participate in Speak Up grants which are provincially funded action-based student-led activities.

Our young leaders of today continue to make a positive contribution and a difference in our schools and in our community.

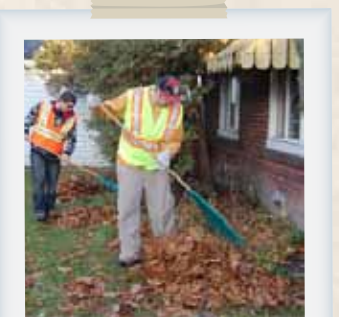


Youth Leadership Character Conference, May 2010

## Sault College

Sault College and United Way SSM partnered in a project to help seniors reduce their energy/or utility costs. Clients were chosen on the basis of their need of lower energy costs. Community businesses were asked for their support and Sault College students spent the day working on designated homes throughout the city.

In total, seven households were assisted. 14 Sault College trades students and 5 Sault College faculty participated, accompanied by Leo Tiberi, Vice President, Academic and Corey Meunier, Chair, Skilled Trades and Board of Governors member, Bob Wilding. Students began their day at 8:30a.m. with projects that included caulking windows, raking and bagging leaves, and showing homeowners how to properly set programmable thermostats. Students and faculty were commended on their efficiency, politeness, cleanliness and compassion with the seniors they assisted during the project. Congratulations to Sam Spadafora and his team for their achievements and commitment to community.



sault college students helping seniors

## Algoma University

Algoma University dedicates itself to opening the minds of its students to infinite possibility. It is a university that sees learning as a cooperative effort, where professors and students share ideas and together advance into new territories. Our students are not just participants in their education; they are viewed as partners in both their personal and our organizational success. We are building, with the cooperation of our students, a strong University that promotes and nurtures youth engagement and empowerment.

*In the past three years, I've held positions with the Algoma University Students' Union and the Shingwauk Anishinaabe Students' Association and it has changed my perspective. I used to be apathetic and say I'm just one person I can't make change but now that I've seen the power a little time and money can do for clubs in the university, in addition to attending conferences organized by the Canadian Federation of Students proved to me that advocacy works.*

*My volunteer work was challenging, it wasn't that much different from the working world and definitely a valuable experience. Not only is volunteering good on a resume it made me eligible for numerous scholarships and bursaries. Bursaries have allowed me concentrate on my classes and graduate with honour. Jennifer Perron, BBA*



Jennifer Perron, BBA, class of 2010



# YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS = GREATER IMPACT. OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN ALGOMA

## Sault Youth Association

Sault Youth Association is an advocate for youth that publishes young talent in Fresh magazine, hosts Buskerfest annually, and provides support for youth-led ventures like Clusterfolk, Youth Shout Out, Battle of the Bands: Downtown Show-down and the Action Riot Guild.

We provide free art workshops via the Fresh Art Project and are currently conducting a massive research study and series of focus groups that will operate as the city's Youth Strategy and possibly stem the tide of youth out-migrating from our city.

Youth can visit our website at [www.saultyouthassociation.com](http://www.saultyouthassociation.com) for full details on how to volunteer, information about our projects, or to give feedback. Also, add us on Facebook for the latest up-to-the minutes news.



Emma Piirtoniemi 'shouts out' on behalf of SYA

## Community Living Ontario

Passport Mentoring is an initiative offered through the provincial non-profit advocacy organization, Community Living Ontario.

Mentoring is offered to students in high school between the ages of 14-21 who have an intellectual disability.

Through Mentoring, students are encouraged to gain insights and develop skills into potential opportunities for their future. By making community connections, students can enhance their learning and become engaged in a variety of roles. Passport Mentoring facilitates exploration into a particular area of interest that a student holds for their future. It is about harnessing the power of a dream, and translating that into a pathway for a successful future.

If you are a student, or know of a student who would benefit from Passport Mentoring, or if you are an individual who is interested in Mentoring a student, call or e-mail Lynne Brown at [lbrown@communitylivingontario.ca](mailto:lbrown@communitylivingontario.ca) or 705-254-9340.



Lynne Brown, Passport Mentoring

## United Way Youth Empowerment Council

The United Way of Sault Ste Marie's Youth Empowerment Council (YEC) is a membership of youth aged 14-29 who want to empower their peers to take change into their own futures and create an environment where youth volunteerism is the norm.

The YEC includes members from all local high schools, both post-secondary institutes, as well as young professionals in Sault Ste Marie. Members can choose to sit on the Communications or Special Events committees, or only attend monthly meetings and volunteering at events. To date, the YEC's first year included the highly successful Community Carwash for Charity, a soon-to-be annual event.

If you are interested in getting involved, contact Maureen Dodd, United Way, 705-254-7476 x 216.



St. Mary's Knights were all smiles during the community car wash for charity

## John Howard Society

"Work—It—Out..." is the slogan that Korah's Peer Mediation group developed to describe their role in the school. The group was trained by the John Howard Society to understand the underlying causes of conflict and how to facilitate peer mediations. The program is supervised by staff of the John Howard Society and funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Peer Mediation and social skills training is currently available at Korah and Superior Heights. The John Howard Society is hoping to expand the program to all high schools over the next year. Students interested in becoming Peer Mediators at Korah or Superior Heights can sign up in the guidance office at their school. Volunteers interested in becoming peer mentors can contact the John Howard Society at 705-759-1703.



Peer Mediation Group



# YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS = GREATER IMPACT. OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN ALGOMA

## Blind River Youth Council



Kids having fun at the beach during one of Blind River's Youth Excursions

By engaging our youth, we can encourage them to expand recreation in our area and to leave their legacy in our community. The Blind River Youth Council has been promoting the Blind River Community Centre as the recreational hub in our community for youth to their peers!

In the fall and winter, youth can play hockey, figure skate, public skate, toboggan and cross country ski on the trails located within 3 km of the Community Centre. In the spring and summer months, youth can play tennis, utilize the basketball courts, and enjoy the skateboard park close by. They can also rollerblade and play baseball. The Marine Park is another option for fishing enthusiasts. Blind River youth can also enjoy the biking and hiking trails located within 3 km on the Boom Camp Trails. All recreational areas will be promoted as smoke free zones. This is all part of Youth Council's achievement to contributing to the recreational goals of our community so far.

Currently, there are opportunities for youth to get involved in the building of our extreme bike path and outdoor rink. Youth who are interested in joining the Blind River Youth Council can contact [sally.hagman@blindriver.ca](mailto:sally.hagman@blindriver.ca) or **705-356-2251**.

## Sault Ste. Marie Public Library



Teens enjoying after school gaming at Korah Branch library

Youth involvement is an important component of the Sault Ste Marie Public Library. Recently libraries have empowered youth to improve library services and programs. Through employment and volunteer opportunities, teens and young adults have the chance to make a difference in their community, develop their leadership and team-building skills, and gain valuable experience.

Community service hours can be earned by volunteering with the Bestsellers Café, the Friends' of the Library bookstore and used book sales, by assisting library staff with programs, and by joining the Teen Advisory Group.

To volunteer, please visit the library's website: [www.ssmpl.ca](http://www.ssmpl.ca) or call **705-759-5236**.

## Algoma Family Services



The New Mentality Group

We know youth have a powerful role in helping to create positive changes in our community. As such, Algoma Family Services has hired a client and youth engagement intern, Megan Petingalo, to help create a client and youth engagement framework for our agency. Currently, we have a youth-driven, volunteer group called "The New Mentality Algoma," in which members seek to help reduce the stigma surrounding youth mental health. The group is led by youth facilitators Hilary and Lizz. The group is currently working on an awareness campaign and planning a mental health carnival for children's mental health week in May 2011, which will be both fun and educational. Here are some thoughts from our youth group:

*"As a high school student I have seen the stigma in the hallways and in the classrooms. I have seen the effects it has on each individual and I am hoping that by joining the New Mentality Algoma group I can help to prevent the stigma that surrounds mental health."*

Hilary Lorenzo

Contact: [youth@algomafamilyservices.org](mailto:youth@algomafamilyservices.org) or call **705-945-5050**.

## YMCA



Keira Gagné, YGAP

My involvement with YMCA Youth Gambling Awareness Program (YGAP) began when the Outreach Worker, Carly, came to my grade 11 class as part of Youth Engagement workshops to discuss youth gambling. The sessions guided my class to create videos portraying the consequences of the issue. We presented the videos to parents and professionals at the Shadows of the Mind Film Festival. This venture gave me the opportunity to attend a Youth Gambling and Co-addictions Conference. After the conference, I began volunteering with Carly and we have since worked with community partners to create a YGAP sculpture entry for a local parade. My YGAP experience has improved my leadership, communication, and presenting skills, as well as my self-confidence. These experiences have given me a feeling of connection to the community.

If you are interested in a youth engagement opportunity, please contact Carly Smith at **705-943-3500** or [csmith@sault.ymca.ca](mailto:csmith@sault.ymca.ca).

Gone are the days of youth participating in activities that they don't have a significant role to play. Across Algoma organizations are starting to generate opportunities for young people to take on important roles in which they can develop skills, share their talents and make meaningful decisions.

The results of these efforts demonstrate that when given the opportunity and support, young people want to make a difference in their communities and have the power to make positive changes.

## Attention businesses and community organizations!

Are you interested in building partnerships with youth?

This publication has highlighted some examples of organizations leading the way, but there are certainly many others out there. If your business or community organization is interested in youth engagement and development, connect with the Youth Engagement Network.

The Youth Engagement Network of Algoma brings together community organizations involved with or interested in youth engagement and development. The network helps members share information, resources, and training opportunities and identify collaborative initiatives. For more information on joining the network, contact Corina Artuso, Algoma Public Health at 705-759-6390 or [cartuso@algomapublichealth.com](mailto:cartuso@algomapublichealth.com).

Things all adults can do to make a big difference for young people:

- \* Smile at young people
- \* Learn the names of young people
- \* Greet them when you see them
- \* Ask young people about themselves and their interests. Listen to them.
- \* Attend a school function for a young person (e.g. a play, game, recital, concert, etc.). Make sure they know you are there.
- \* Teach young people how to solve problems with the values they have.
- \* Notice when young people have stood up for themselves, resisted a dangerous situation, or asked something they needed. Tell them how you admire their actions.
- \* Invite young people to share their gifts and talents.
- \* Walk the talk. Be a good role model.

[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)



Algoma  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
Santé publique Algoma



Algoma Family Services  
Services aux familles d'Algoma



Sault Ste. Marie  
Public Library



John Howard  
SOCIETY OF SAULT STE. MARIE