



## Living Like Champions Youth Conference

**Target Risk Factors:**

Healthy Eating  
Physical Activity  
Drugs/Alcohol

**Target Population:**

Teens (13-17 yrs)  
Adults working with youth  
Community leaders  
Parents

**Project Leads:**

Susan Spindler, Michelle Berthelette

**Community:**

Blue Water

**RHA:**

North Eastman Health Association

**Project Partners:**

NEHA  
École Powerview School  
Wanipigow School  
East Beaches Wellness Coalition  
Pineview Recreation Commission

**Project Details:**

Single event

**Description:**

This full day event focused on the risk factors associated with chronic disease. It was also used as a vehicle to report back the results of the Youth Health Survey (YHS) to the youth, but more importantly it was an opportunity to give youth a voice so they could let the community, and all those who play an important role in their lives, know what they saw as real concerns and to voice their needs and wishes.

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**Time:**

The event was developed and pulled together over a four month period. There were eight people on the planning committee.

**Objectives:**

We wanted to address the health, behaviours, and risk factors of youth in surrounding communities. We wanted them to leave with increased knowledge, feeling empowered and knowing they hold their health in their own hands.

**Planning Supports:**

We asked teachers and youth what they felt students would respond to and how to best present it. The YHS was used for key information when planning. The "Why Prevention" video, along with other CDPI resources, was also used. A group of students, with the help of their teachers, also prepared a very powerful presentation entitled "Student Voice" for the conference as part of their health curriculum. They were given a simple statement to work with: What is and isn't healthy in my community...

**Results:**

- 174 participants attended (including 9 NEHA staff involved in delivery, 2 displayers & 2 speakers)
- 135 Evaluations completed (107 youth & 28 adult)
- 71% of youth and 86% of adult participants rated the conference as good or excellent
- 4% of youth and 0% of adults participants rated the conference as poor (1 or 2 out of a scale of 5)
- 85% of youth and 82% of adult participants indicated they could make lifestyle changes based on what they heard at the conference

**What worked:**

The school and teachers incorporated the day into the phys-ed and health curriculum, making attendance equivalent to a health project.

The "Student Voice" project - the resulting photos and commentaries opened the way to meaningful conversations on healthy eating, physical activity and tobacco, alcohol and other drug use.

Youth appreciated the opportunity to voice their opinions and be heard. One student commented "teachers and the community only have expectations for certain students, but today we can all have a say." In reality, what surprised us most was those who volunteered to come up to speak. It was not just the usual class leaders and high achievers, but many who often do not normally come forward to share had very profound thoughts to share.

Further successes include:

- Youth-led energizers to break up the day
- Including bowls of fresh fruit on the tables throughout the day
- Inviting a Keynote speaker that youth would relate to and choosing to have him speak at the end of the day so they kept anticipating more. We had Troy Westwood come out and youth really related to his message. They left energized.
- Door prizes – small and large, students appreciated them all.

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**What didn't work and any changes made:**

- Although 6 municipal and 3 band councils were invited, only one councilor attended the conference. There was also a lack of board representatives from groups such as recreation. As these are mostly volunteer positions most cited a conflict with work schedules.
- There were comments in the evaluations from teachers and youth suggesting more videos, and that some presentations could have been shorter, more interactive and/or "jazzier".
- We were unable to get a full return on signed photo release forms from parents. As a result we had to track down signatures from students or parents (for those under 18) for any photos we wanted to use. Everyone was very cooperative, it is just that some high school kids aren't very good at bringing notes to and from school.
- Because of a mix-up with the "Student Voice Project" we were not able to obtain a copy for community use. In the future I would ensure a written agreement is in place between all parties as verbal discussions and agreements are easy to confuse or forget.
- We had display tables set up around the gym, but most students didn't stop to visit them except to pick up a few giveaways

**Unexpected Outcomes:**

- The large number of student participation and the insightful comments. We had allowed for 3-5 minutes per presentation following group discussions, but some students spoke for up to 10 or more minutes. Because of the keen interest and response, we chose not to limit their time.
- How much the adults in attendance learned from the youth and how much they were inspired.
- A summary of the results of the group discussions was shared with the recreation commission's board of directors.

**Other notes:**

Participants were divided into groups and each group was given one of the following discussion questions:

- What things could be done to get your community interested in healthy eating? What are the barriers?
- What things could be done to get your community interested in physical activity? What are the barriers?
- What things have to happen to reduce smoking and addictions in your community? What are the barriers?
- What do you consider your role is in Chronic Disease Prevention in your community? What are the barriers?

Many students appreciated the fact that the day was set like a "real" conference with conference packages, name tags, etc.

## **Resources**

### **Volunteers:**

Several staff and community members

Students: 2 youth-led energizers, 1 event photographer, several for setup and take down

### **Facilities:**

School gym and multipurpose room

### **Equipment:**

Extra-large screen, laptop, LCD project, speakers, microphone

### **Other:**

Tables, chairs, podium, stage (the shop class built us a platform and reused the material after the event for other class projects)

Conference packages were made up for participants with donated folders, note pads and resource materials.

### **Total Costs:**

Plus in-kind donations from Sunrise School Division, Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba In-Motion, local newspaper

### **Materials developed for program:**

[Poster](#)

[Pamphlet](#)

[Schedule](#)

### **Contact Information:**

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