

THE STUDENTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2005

2005 saw The Students Commission employing close to 20 full and part time staff in offices across the country and supporting seven co-op students to develop their graphic design and written skills in the Toronto office. In 2005 The Students Commission hosted one major conference in Ontario, one regional conference in Saskatchewan, and supported several youth events such as the Ontario Child and Youth Summit, the National Forum on Youth and Young Adult Tobacco Control Issues, the March 21st Winner's Weekend and the Drug Strategy Roundtable.

In 2005, more than 400 young people were directly involved with Students Commission programs and events and countless more have been influenced by SC projects nationally.

2005 also saw a number of young people returning to the organization in different capacities. For example, of the 17 summer staff more than half were delegates at one of the major conferences hosted by The Students Commission in either 2004 or 2005. As well, the majority of those youth facilitators present at Students Commission (and Students Commission supported) events such as Cornwall, or the Ontario Child and Youth Summit Youth Program were at one time conference delegates.

2005 FACTS AT A GLANCE

Summer employed youth worked with researchers from the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement on a very successful research project that explored youth stereotypes.

SC staff and youth volunteers developed and promoted a video contest for Project PEACE and also continued to shape future goals and plans for the project.

Staff traveled to 13 communities in Ontario, and targeted other communities through conference calls, emails and bulletins as part of The Ontario Trillium Foundation funded project to develop new partnerships and increase awareness of youth engagement practices.

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

Overall, the year has seen an explosion in interest in the topic of youth participation, engagement and positive youth development, from researchers, policy makers, and youth-serving organizations. Major studies are being released, and networks of researchers and policy makers coalescing in different aspects of the subject area, including positive youth development, civic engagement, political engagement, resiliency among at-risk youth, recreation and sports, children's rights, school to work transition, informal learning, and service learning.

Our major communication piece: What is Youth Engagement? which contains our key messages, has been highly praised by policy makers and service providers as extremely useful, and is in wide circulation, now in English, French and Spanish.

Our Centre is uniquely positioned to provide to policy makers and others, integrated leadership and timely responses from youth, academics, and non-profit organizations that work with youth at both the community and national levels. We can and do provide customized

consultation, reports and policy briefs to specific requests, complemented by access to on-the-shelf research summaries, policy briefs, how-to tools and workshops.



OUR PROGRESS SO FAR...

IN 2005, WE ACCOMPLISHED SOME SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES

"I feel cautioned, drug abuse can cause more than mental health problems, it can cause real bad physical problems too."

- Conference Delegate

March Conference - Held again at the NavCanada Centre in Cornwall in March, this conference was the final event in the Go Mental, Get Physical! series of conferences hosted by The Students Commission. Here, young people from seven provinces and one territory, and three language groups (French, English and ASL) came together to create a series of recommendations for developing and maintaining opportunities for positive physical and mental health. A 14 page report containing these recommendations was created and distributed to all participants.

This conference was held in conjunction with another youth meeting regarding Canada's renewed Drug Strategy, facilitated by two SC staff who were active in the Drug Strategy Roundtable held earlier in the year. As well, a representative of the Canadian Public Health Agency attended the conference and hosted a focus group of approximately 12 interested delegates about the recently released CPHA Cannabis and Impaired Driving initiative.



Knowledge + Passion = Action, National Forum on Youth and Young Adult Tobacco Control Issues

As a continuation of their involvement with Health Canada's Office of Programs and Mass Media, Tobacco Control Programme's Youth Action Committee on Tobacco Control Issues (YAC), The Students Commission was sub-contracted to take notes on each of the sessions, oversee night facilitation, develop a

video documentary of the event and support the members of YAC at the National Forum of Youth and Young Adult Tobacco Control Issues. The Students Commission was also asked to create a "youth-friendly" report and evaluation based on the final reports developed by D. R. Dunlop & Associates, Inc. and produced a CD

ROM for each of the Forum participants which included a copy of the *Forum Story, Evaluation* and video.



Racism. Stop it! National Video Competition

Ten winning 90 second video submissions were selected from among the 274 eligible entries. These videos were then edited into a 30 second Public Service Announcement format and aired nationally on CBC for six months following the awards ceremony. The winning French videos were aired for two months in the province of Quebec.

In addition to the Awards Ceremony held at the Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec, members of the winning teams and their chaperones were invited to the National Capital Region for a three-day mini-conference event. Winning videos were screened, teams were encouraged to meet one another and interact, discuss racism, and visit some of Ottawa's

sights. They were also given a tour of the recently opened CBC headquarters on Sparks Street.

The Awards Ceremony included speeches by the President of Panasonic Canada, the Honourable Raymond Chan Minister of State (Multiculturalism) and the unveiling of the "Winners Message" developed by members of each of the winning teams over the course of the mini-conference.



Drug Strategy Roundtable

As part of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement's commitment to the Drug Strategy Roundtable, The Students Commission staff were called in to assist in the delivery and facilitation of the Roundtable in February. Here, approximately 40 participants of diverse life experiences met to dialogue with Health Canada on appropriate youth-directed methods of prevention and reduction of problematic substance use and abuse.

The Drug Strategy Roundtable was an excellent opportunity to showcase authentic youth involvement in all aspects, and was labelled a success by all involved.

The work accomplished over the three-day meeting is helping to shape new government frameworks and modify existing policies to help educate young people, parents and service providers.



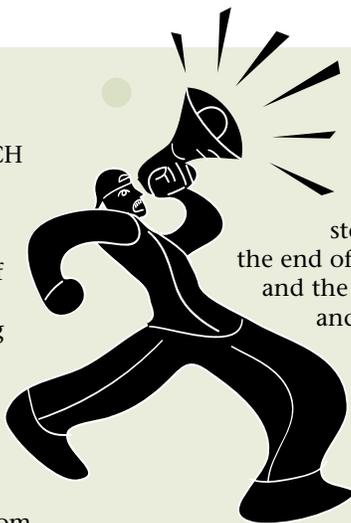
"I have never seen these kids come back with bigger smiles on their faces."

Community Centre Youth Worker after greeting young people returning from the March Conference

PROJECT NOT SO MUCH

Two major milestones for PROJECT NOT SO MUCH were achieved in 2005. Walk With Me the PNSM magazine was completed, and is ready for release to schools, community organizations and project partners. The completion of this special edition of Tiny Giant Magazine is an exciting achievement for the group, as the months of hard work writing content for the magazine, laying out the articles and finalizing the minor details related to Walk With Me's publication and release have finally paid off.

PNSM also entered their third phase. In July of 2005, Lights, Camera, Action! received funding from the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, The Rotary Club of Toronto, the Laidlaw Foundation, CIBC Mellon and The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. This phase of the project, led by members of the early stages of NOT SO MUCH was geared toward creating videos that dealt with issues chosen through discussions. Weekly Friday night meetings were held to discuss the issues, brainstorm video ideas and develop



storyboards for the videos. As of the end of 2005, the project is in full swing and the two documentaries on violence and one mini-movie on gun violence are nearing completion.

The young men in the project are having significant impact in the city of Toronto, joining the Mayor's and Police Chief's Advisory Committees, leading workshops, and earning

recognition and awards for their work. "These are the kind of young men who usually aren't at the front of the room, who need to be at the front of the room, if change is to happen."

– Teacher



First Nations Gathering Regional Conference, Blackstrap Saskatchewan

Delegates came together for a three day regional conference in the deep freeze that was Saskatchewan in February. Held at Cedar Lodge, overlooking Blackstrap Lake, 23 young people and nine Elders from three provinces and nine Nations came together to examine cross-culturally and cross-generationally the issues of racism and its effects on physical and mental health. The Regional used the circle as a plenary tool, and breakout groups for small discussions to further talk about the topics dealt with in the plenary. The process of the weekend brought to light some very interesting issues of communication. The lessons learned at this event about cross-generational and cross-cultural communication have been of great value to this organization. Currently, these learnings are being examined in context with other research by the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement on cross-cultural and cross-generational methods of communication.

Summer Student Employment

Once again, The Students Commission was host to a number of summer students across the country. In conjunction with six partner organizations (including the Centre for Research and Education in Human Services in Kitchener, the Kainai Youth Council in Standoff, Alberta, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, Youth Launch in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Ma Mawi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba and YouthNet in Ottawa, Ontario) The Students Commission was able to support 17 young people as summer staff.

Summer projects ranged from a needs assessment of youth-friendly initiatives that are happening in the Kingston area, to a video project on Aboriginal youth, to work with Canada's Renewed Drug Strategy. As well, summer staff in Ontario spent a large portion of their summer on developing and delivering focus groups to young people throughout Ontario in preparation for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ontario Child and Youth Summit, held in October of 2005.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The continuation of the Students Commission's contract with Canadian Heritage to oversee and administer the delivery of the 10th Annual Racism. Stop it! National Video Competition resulted in an excellent opportunity for partnership development with CBC television and the National Film Board of Canada.

In the winter of 2005, the NFB and Students Commission worked to deliver 10 professional development workshops for teachers and adult influencers with great success. It is hoped that this partnership will continue as fruitfully on many other projects in the near future.

As part of the PROJECT NOT SO MANY initiative funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate, The Students Commission has been given the opportunity to work more closely with the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club of Canada. The

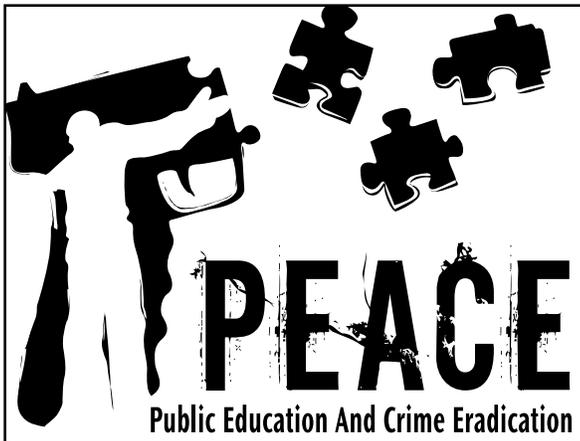
possibilities for future partnership with these two groups are very promising.

For the Ontario Child and Youth Summit, we worked with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Children's Advocate office, and YouthNet to host five focus groups across the province in the summer.

In the fall, we brought together selected youth from those focus groups to prepare a 1.5 hour presentation on youth issues to the Summit.

The 10 youth presenters received a standing ovation from the crowd of 300 professional delegates.

Another key partner this year has been the Toronto Police Service.



The Public Education And Crime Eradication project - also known as PEACE - was launched to build on the Toronto Police Service's crime prevention strategy. This comprehensive initiative targets gun use and gang activity among those directly and indirectly involved, in an effort to increase the safety of our communities. Through education, prevention and enforcement techniques, PEACE will accomplish the following objectives:

- Remove guns and weapons from the hands of young people
- Educate youth on the grave dangers of gang involvement
- Support the safe termination of gang membership
- Enforce the laws when violations occur

The Students Commission was selected by the Toronto Police Service as its strategic consultant on the engagement of youth in the project and to lead partnership development with young people and other community-based organizations in Toronto. The Youth Team began to meet weekly and developed a strategy for different activities that greatly exceeded the original plans for two videos for the police to use with elementary and secondary schools. Plans included monthly showcases around the city to discuss the issues, bring youth and police together and demonstrate youth talent and youth action on the issue. The police began to ask the youth to give workshops to them on police/youth relations and individual officers commented on what they were learning by working directly with youth. The youth project team is continuing to promote the project around the city of Toronto at events that bring together young people, policy makers and police officers to develop solutions to the issues facing Toronto's urban youth population.



"This is the sort of thing I need to see. This is the sort of thing I need to know. Knowing his story is something that will make me so much better at what I want to do."

"NOT SO MUCH" Participant

SMOKEFREE SPACES: ACTIVIST TOOLKIT

Another of The Students Commission's major, ongoing contracts is the dissemination and distribution of Health Canada's *Smokefree Spaces Activist Toolkit*, CD Rom, Facilitator's Guide and the creation of workshop promotional materials. The Students Commission was still able to distribute more than 10,000 toolkits across the country.

The Centre's framework for engagement and its research was adapted to the smoke free activist activity and incorporated into the promotional materials to show teachers how activism and being involved was beneficial for youth. The framework provided an evidence-based rationale for the kit and provided specific ideas for use in the classroom.

"I come here, to these meetings because this place makes me feel welcome. You're all like a family."

"NOT SO MUCH" Participant

"The Students Commission of Canada recognizes that a diverse work force and volunteer complement, comprised of both youth and adults, is critical to accomplishing our mission. We also recognize that many individuals have been denied full participation and meaningful engagement in society due to barriers such as race, colour, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, language, health status, class, sexual orientation, and gender identity. We are committed to reducing these barriers within our organization, not simply with pro-active policies and procedures such as these but also, and equally important, in our behaviors, actions and commitments."

Students Commission of Canada Equitable Hiring and Employment Policy

"This place, this office is the only place that I really get appreciated for who I am. You guys get excited about me, and that's nice."

"My pleasure is that I too am learning..."

"If it was not for The Students Commission... I would not have been able to broaden my horizons."

SMOKEFREE SPACES

Activist Toolkit

Facts Ideas Action

TRY STEP BY STEP ACTIVITIES

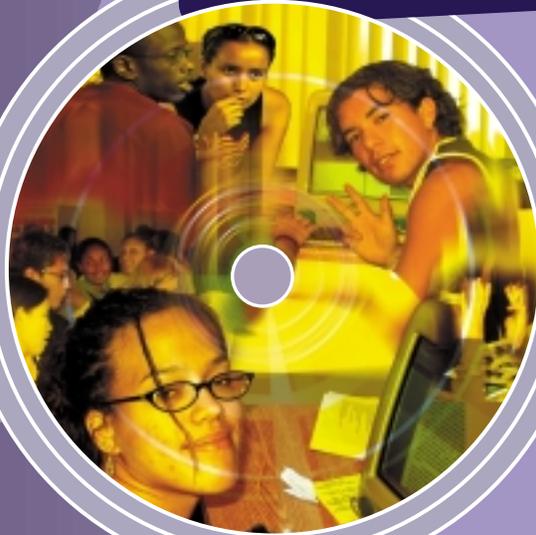
Step 1: Recruit team

Recruit a team of students to do the work. Find adult allies to help.



Step 2: Plan survey

Develop your questionnaire. Decide how you will conduct the survey: which students to target and how the survey will be delivered.



Step 3: Conduct Survey

Distribute survey, promote its importance and then collect them once completed.



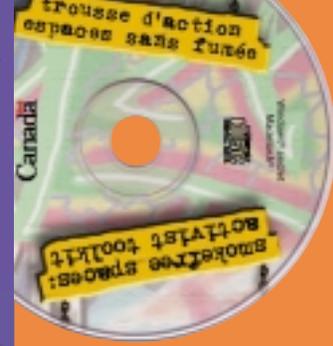
Step 4: Publicize your findings

Share your findings with students, school staff, parents and community.

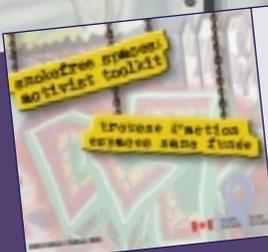


ADVOCATE 4 CHANGE

Do you want to live in a smokefree world or make the world a healthier place for all? The *Smokefree Spaces Activist Toolkit* provides a framework for those who want to create positive change. The CD-ROM contains facts about second-hand smoke, steps you can take to advocate for change and resources that will help. Get the free printed *Facilitator's Guide* as well.



GET THE CD



To order your own free **Smokefree Spaces Activist Toolkit** and **Facilitator's Guide:**
GO TO
www.tmag.ca/smokefree

THE STUDENTS COMMISSION

The Students Commission is a diverse, global-minded organization run by youth, in partnership with adults, for youth across Canada. We create opportunities for youth to take action on issues that affect them.

Our vision is a Canada where all youth have the opportunity to participate fully in their community, government and the economy.

As a national, registered charity, The Students Commission works to:

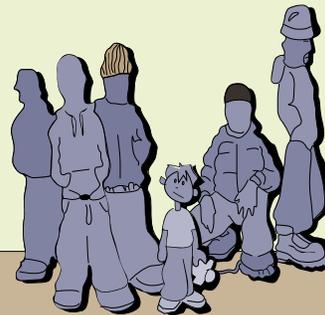
- Develop innovative and educational processes, products and programs with and for youth.
- Build and support networks of youth and adult allies practicing youth engagement.
- Conduct research and educate communities, governments and businesses on youth issues.

Our work is accomplished through outreach, new communications technology, multimedia production, expert consultation, events that bring together youth and adult allies, and partnerships with youth, youth-serving agencies, governments, businesses and academics.

Our foundation for taking action to improve lives and society are the four pillars of our process: Respect, Listen, Understand, Communicate™.

THIS YEAR WE WORKED WITH:

Alberta Youth In Care And Custody Network	Meadow Lake Tribal Council
Brock University: Youth Lifestyles – Community University Research Alliance	National Crime Prevention Centre, Department of Justice Canada
Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada	Natural Resources Canada, Science and Technology Cluster
Canada Career Consortium	Ontario Trillium Foundation
Canadian Heritage	Pape Adolescent Resource Centre
Canadian National Institute for the Blind	Public Health Agency of Canada
Children’s Advocate Office Ontario	Queens University
Covenant House	Saskatoon Action Circle on Youth Sexuality
East Metro Youth Services	The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
Environmental Youth Alliance, BC	The Saskatoon Action Circle on Youth Sexuality/Integrated School-Linked Services
Exchanges Canada	Toronto Police Service
Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française	Seneca College
Health Canada	Wilfrid Laurier University’s Community Psychology Program
Health Canada, Tobacco Control Program.	Youth Conference Delegates
HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development	YouthCO AIDS Society
Human Resource Development Canada	Youth Driven Coalition, BC
Immigrant Services Society	YouthNet /Réseau Ado – The Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario
Kainai Youth Council	YWCA
McCreary Community	



THE STUDENTS COMMISSION OFFICES

Ottawa Office

Nishad Khanna
c/o CHEO & YouthNet
401 Smyth Rd.
Ottawa, ON
K1H 8L1
Tel: (613) 737-7600
ext: 2181
Fax: (613) 738-3917

Kingston Office

Pytor Hodgson
172 Montreal St., Unit 1
Kingston, ON
K7K 3G4
Tel: (613) 544-4213

Toronto Office

23 Isabella St.
Toronto, ON
M4Y 1M7
Tel: (416) 597-8297
Fax: (416) 597-0661
tgmag@tgmag.ca

Saskatoon Office

Kesha Larocque
411 – 11th St. East
Saskatoon, SK
S7N 0E9
Tel: (306) 683-2728
Fax: (306) 657-3951

Blood Reserve

Tanya White Man Left
Tel: 1 (800) 527-8627