



# The Students Commission of Canada

Annual Report 2012



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**The Students Commission** is a charitable organization that, since 1991, has been dedicated to providing positive opportunities for youth and supporting them as equal Canadian citizens. We believe that youth engagement and youth-adult partnership can drastically change a young person's life. Research has shown that young people who are engaged in meaningful activities, not only build skills, but broaden their understanding of issues, develop new perspectives and gain valuable experiences.

Such opportunities not only create beneficial health and social outcomes for the young person, but impact their family, peers and/or social group. With supportive adult allies, youth are better enabled to initiate change in their communities, their schools, and beyond. Using our knowledge of youth engagement and guided by our Four Pillars: Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate™, we have been able to encourage and sustain partnerships between youth and organizations as we all move forward.

## The Students Commission: Annual Report 2012

The Students Commission was founded in 1991 with a mission to help young people put their ideas for improving themselves, their communities and their world into action. We work with young people, youth service providers, researchers and policy makers to ensure that young people's voices are heard and their ideas are realized. This happens through conferences, leadership opportunities, trainings, workshops, research projects, youth strategies, and by supporting youth to participate in governance structures. As outlined in our strategic plan over the past year we focused our efforts on providing opportunities for youth, influencing those who influence youth, and planning for the future. Reaching approximately 94,433 youth and young adults across Canada, 2012 was a busy and successful year for the Students Commission!

### *Provide Opportunities for Youth*

The Students Commission creates opportunities for young people to develop personal and professional skills, to be engaged in organizations and their community, to gain work experience, and to attend youth conferences with other young people from across the country. In 2012 we supported and partnered with **37,165 youth** (aged 12-17) and **57,268 young adults** (aged 18-24) through our national projects!

#### Highlights:

- We held 9 regional and national youth conferences addressing issues important to young people across the country
- 9 high-school co-op students and 5 summer students were supported to gain practical and transferable employment skills
- We collaborated with youth and young adults across the country to lead workshops, facilitate events, and to create activities, resources, videos and websites

- At our annual Unite and Ignite conference young people created 21 short videos exploring the findings from the report, *The Health of Canada's Young People: a mental health focus (2011)* which have been viewed, promoted, and shared at events through the year. This was the first time a national government report, engaged youth in its development and promotion
- Youth and young adults advising Health Canada on tobacco awareness, prevention and cessation were supported to develop and administer the [bettertobreathe.com](http://bettertobreathe.com) blog which has received over 10,000 views
- Through our strategic advice and support, YMCA Canada now has a functioning youth engagement strategy which supports youth and young adult participation in YMCA Canada's national governance structure



"I just wanted to write a quick note to thank you all for the part you played in supporting, organizing, entertaining, looking out for, teaching, and empowering the little group of Fort Good Hope youth who had the chance to come to Ottawa for the conference.... I want to assure you (though I'm sure you know) that it was an extremely meaningful experience for all us. The whole trip back (and quite the trip it was) their excitement was very evident: at the new friends they had made as well as the new possibilities for action and thought they had had presented to them. They were inspired. I'm so grateful that we had this opportunity, and I know, as was the case with the youth who attended Unite & Ignite last year, that the effects of this week will be long lasting and significant. Thank you so much for all your hard work in making it happen!" ~ Adult Ally

"I felt that I really mattered in this conference and I felt good about myself coming." ~ Youth Participant

"I feel like I have more confidence in myself and I feel like I got a lot to share with my friends/family" ~ Youth Participant

"I felt that we grew together as a family. By the last day we respected each other and learned about each other. From the different sessions and activities today, we learned how to move forward in making a positive change!" ~ Young Adult Facilitator



## ***Influence Those Who Influence Youth***

At the Students Commission we understand that supporting effective youth engagement is also about collaborating with community partners to conduct research and evaluation, to share promising practices, and to develop policies and strategies to support young people's positive development. Over the past year we worked with at least **400 different organizations** (including YMCA Canada, Girl Guides of Canada, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Government of the Northwest Territories, Chiefs of Ontario, Health Canada, Canadian Women's Foundation, Status of Women Canada, YMCA du Québec, and Youth Centres Canada).

### Highlights:

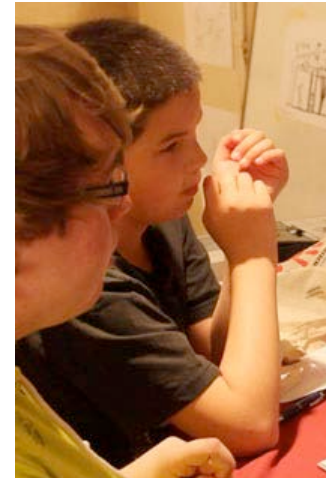
- We've collaborated with approximately 114,434 adults
- Working with approximately 18 different academic and community partners, we created an online database of research and evaluation tools to help organizations study and report their outcomes related to youth engagement and youth-adult partnerships
- We held approximately 15 Adult Ally Trainings for youth service providers across the country including the Government of Northwest Territories, the New Brunswick Youth Centre, a closed custody youth facility, and the National RCMP.
- We have supported over 8 organizations and government bodies to develop comprehensive youth strategies and integrate youth into formal decision making structures (including YMCA Canada, Health Canada, and the City of Kingston)
- Through partnerships, events and trainings, we worked with approximately 114,434 adults and participated in approximately 1500 opportunities to influence organizations that work with youth.



*“Feeling like a valued member has been one of the biggest highlights.... Knowing that our opinion is valued and taken into consideration by our government.” ~ Youth Advisory Member*

“Being involved with Y2K has strengthened Immigrant Services Kingston & Area (ISKA), part of Kingston Community Health Centres (KCHC) connection to the community and other organizations who support young people. Y2K has built relationships, solidified partnerships and created an environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected and heard. ...ISKA is grateful to be part of an evolving partnership between youth, young adults, adult-allies, community members and organizations all working together to create a youth friendly city.”

~ CAST Member; Immigrant Services Kingston and Area



## Plan for the Future

Our ability to do good work in the community depends upon the capacity of our staff, awareness of our services, and the effective governance of our organization. Over the past year we have invested in professional development opportunities, promotion efforts to make the Students Commission a better-known name in the right circles, and activities to strengthen our internal governance.

### Highlights:

- We reach approximately 33 000 people through our Facebook posts each month
- In an average month our 228 Twitter followers re-tweet our messages more than 20 times to more than 23,000 followers. That’s approximately 54,720 re-tweets a year!
- The 53 videos on our YouTube Channel were viewed 4692 times, a 290% increase from 2011
- Our staff have attended over 6 professional development opportunities
- We sat on 9 provincial and national government advisory committees and task forces and delivered 20 keynote speeches

Thanks to all the young people, adult allies, and partner organizations who made 2012 a success! We are continually inspired by your ideas, motivation and commitment to improving your communities. We look forward to working with you for years to come.



**THE  
STUDENTS COMMISSION**

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**With Gratitude and Appreciation for Our Clients  
and Funders in 2012**

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Chiefs of Ontario  
City of Brockville  
City of Dryden  
City of Kingston  
City of Toronto  
Denis Franklin Cromarty High School  
Department of Public Safety  
Girl Guides of Canada  
Health Canada  
Human Resources and Skills  
Development Canada  
Kids Help Phone  
ManuLife Financial Helping  
Hands Grant  
Meadow Lake Tribal Council  
Ontario Trillium Foundation

Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for  
School Health  
Parks and Recreation Ontario  
Province of Ontario, Ministry of  
Children and Youth Services  
Public Health Agency of Canada  
Royal Canadian Mounted Police  
Saskatoon Community Foundation  
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Status of Women Canada  
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