

Exhausted & Exhilarated!

Canadian Youth Taking Charge of Change

“...sex, sexuality, self esteem, family, friends, racism, drugs, alcohol, poverty and media.”

On Wednesday, August 14th, more than 150 youth from across Canada arrived at Kemptville College. Youth arrived from every part of Canada; Vancouver Island to Nunavut and all the way across to Newfoundland and Labrador. Several delegates met Joe Clark at the Ottawa Airport and exchanged phone numbers after explaining the goals of the conference to the former Prime Minister and current leader of the Progressive Conservatives, while others had to convince airline staff that they were who they said they were, (oops - no ID).

It was a busy day for the conference staff and facilitators. Youth filled the main hall, waiting to be registered and shown around the campus. As the staff, facilitators and delegates waited for everyone to arrive throughout the day, friendships were quickly made. After an orientation, delegates enjoyed the afternoon by running through the sprinkler, engaging themselves in a game of volleyball or basketball or simply strolling through the campus.

This diverse group of youth quickly bonded, joined together by their common goal to examine their relationships and the influences upon them such as sex, sexuality, self esteem, family, friends, racism, drugs, alcohol, poverty and the media.

The goal of this conference was to create an action plan which can make a positive difference in the lives of other young people and influence decision makers and research in government, schools, businesses and youth organizations.

By 8:30 in the evening, delegates piled into the gym to take part in the opening ceremonies. After conference rules, regulations and expectations were established, Myron and Caroline presented a short presentation on the **Four Pillars**, which we all now know are Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate.

After a day of travelling and introductions, the delegates retired to the main hall where they had the opportunity to relax, play pool, watch TV, and establish what will surely be long lasting friendships.



Friends, fun, and lots of hard work

Ask Tiny - A Daily Dose of Good Guidance

Dear Tiny,

I just arrived here at Kemptville yesterday! This place is really awesome. I have met some wonderful people but my roommate drives me nuts. Last night while I was trying to sleep, my roommate kept having visitors and being really loud. When I asked them to take the party elsewhere she said that I should quit being a bag. I know that she is just trying to have fun and meet as many people as she can but I think that she should be a little more considerate of my needs as well. Also last night they spilled juice all over my clothes! What am I going to do!!!! I need some sleep!

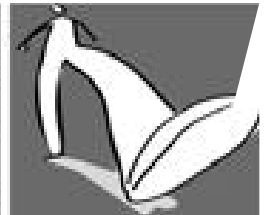
Please Help - Sticky and Tired

Dear S& T,

Whenever I have a problem with someone I remember something that my good friends at the Students Commission taught me - The Four Pillars: Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate. When you respect someone you are better able to listen to them. When you sincerely listen you can fully understand what someone is trying to say to you. And only when understanding occurs are you truly able to communicate. It might be a good idea to sit down with your roommate, explain the Four Pillars and then see if the two of you can reach an agreement. It is wonderful that you are able to have a good time while you are here and meet many people.

Cheers,
Tiny





Anti-Racism Gets Top Spot!

Young people bid for change

The morning plenary session in the gym began with an icebreaker and moved into a values auction, complete with a fiddler and an auctioneer. Each delegate had a \$1000 to spend on their favourite values. A few of the items up for auction were:

- a year with all of your needs being met
- a new car every year
- knowing when and how you will die
- finding a cure for cancer.



All of the delegates were given an opportunity to participate, and bid on the items that they most valued. The purpose of this activity was to have fun while examining the

values that underlie bids. Each bidder had a bidding limit of \$1000 to be spent on at least three values with a minimum bid of \$50 required.

A total of 89 people submitted for analysis, their bids on the values that were on the block. Listed are the 3 most popular bids, and the 3 least popular bids:

TOP 3

(number of bids/ percentage of total people who bid)

- Ending racism/discrimination (49/ 55.1%)
- Family Health (44/ 49.4%)
- Cure cancer (42/ 47.2%)

BOTTOM 3:

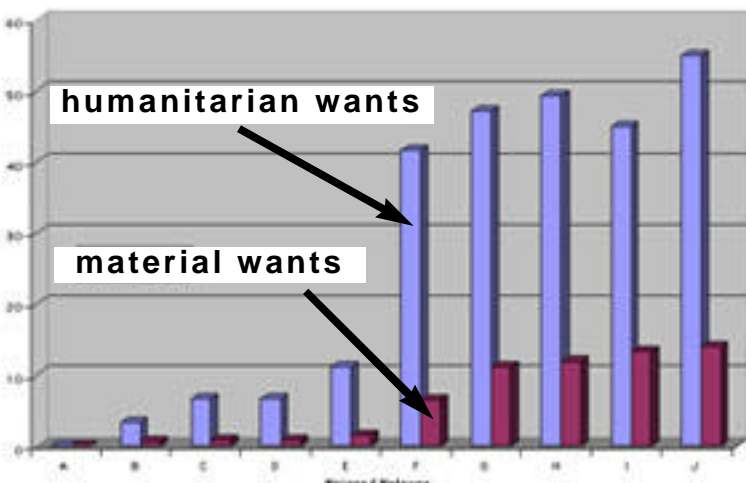
(number of bids/ percentage of total people who bid)

- Stop Aging (10/ 11.2%)
- Year of massages and fine dining (6/ 6.7%)
- having a "hot" partner (6/ 6.7%)

"The auction was a lot of fun, it felt like I was in a real auction with the auctioneer yelling out bids...I think that it should have been a bit more organized, but it was great".

Participant

Continued on next page



This chart represents the divide between "material wants" and "humanitarian wants."

Hope you enjoyed the **All My Relations X-Press**. It was brought to you by the Report Team; Adria, Damien, Jamie, Chris, Tyler & Lea.

If you have any comments or suggestions feel free to email us at tgmag@tgmag.ca.

Be sure to check out our website (www.tgmag.ca) for more information about upcoming projects and events!

Be happy,
Tiny

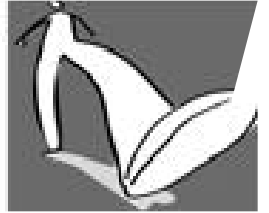


One Sexy Workshop!

On the evening of Thursday, August 15th, an open-minded group of young people met to discuss the controversial issue of sexuality. It was an intimate group, and stories were shared under the facilitation of Kaitlyn. The conversation among the discussion group talked about issues relating to what it felt like to be a gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgendered youth. Things were brought up such as coming out stories, sharing advice and experiences, communities and schools' effects on growing up gay, same gendered parents, and effective ways to start a gay-straight alliance within your community. It was agreed that this was a fully successful meeting and so similar workshops were held throughout the week.

For more information on healthy sexuality check out www.tgmag.ca

"I will respect other people's values and try to learn from my experiences."



Research Shows What Youth Believe...Continued from last page

The results showed the top three are all global issues and/or concerns, while the bottom three are much more materialistic. Each of the top three were bid on by 40-50% of the delegates, however there is obviously still a very wide range of values which were important to the delegates.

This activity stimulated a discussion within their breakout groups about values, what their values mean to them, and how they prioritize their values in their own lives.

The afternoon session was filled with facilitators sharing personal stories about the obstacles they have overcome in their lives.

The panel was composed of Lanny, Dan, and Kaitlyn. Each had very different stories: Lanny talked about moving from one country to another due to violence. Dan recounted how others react to his unconventional family decisions, and Kaitlyn spoke about sexuality. To get up on stage in front of more than 150 people and to share such personal experiences with people you don't really know took a lot of guts, which makes us believe that the panelists are very admirable and should be commended for their contribution.

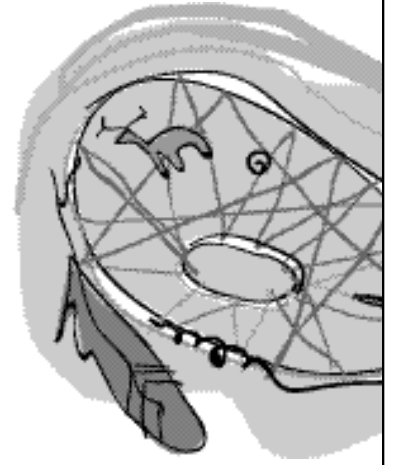
Lanny spoke about her sadness for her people, and her anger towards the people who made her leave her country, and who hurt her family. Lanny said she is trying to stay true to her values of love and forgiveness, but it is hard when she harbours so much anger. She also shared struggles of trying to explore what values are of importance to her and why she finds them important.

Kaitlyn shared a very personal story about her sexuality and how she was not sure of how to classify it. She explained how she explored different options of how to classify herself, but none seemed to work. Sharing her experience of having to tell her parents of her sexuality was powerful and moving for many delegates. Kaitlyn inspired a lot of young people with her speech which was evident later on that evening when she held a workshop called "Sexuality 101". Kaitlyn's workshop was an enriching experience for people that attended the session. She modelled bravery, and showed everyone that understanding, tolerance, and education can overcome fear.

Ultimately this is a message that will impact on each individual.

All My Relations - a term used by Aboriginal people to reference how everyone in a community is connected.

Using an online poll over the summer young people identified their choice for the conference topic - sexuality. We can't talk about this without talking about our values, how our communities and culture affect these values and how all of our relationships are connected. In fact, how everyone in **our** community is connected.



Vertical Urination

Ten guys and a campfire. That's how it all began. Little did I know that what initially seemed like an introduction to a new project would become an amazingly open discussion about what it's like to be a young man in today's society. We didn't all agree on everything, but there was no animosity or ego stroking. Everything everyone said was extremely honest, and almost nobody seemed uncomfortable sharing their experiences or opinions with the rest of the group. At first I was shy about talking with this group, but I opened up after a while. All of us in the group have had different experiences, and it's very important to realize that they are all valid, and we all suffer the different stereotypes. This was easily the most positive aspect of the whole conference for me.



For more info on Vertical Urination: A Young Men's Guide check out www.tgmag.ca

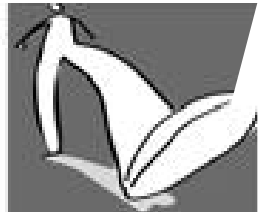
Dear Tiny,

This is my second day of Kemptville 2002, and things are going really well. My group has really come together and I made some new friends in the evening workshops yesterday. I know that we have just arrived but I am really homesick. I haven't ever been away from my family for more than one night. I told this to my friend but he just laughed and said, 'In the morning you'll feel better' because Kemptville is the best conference in Canada. I know that I shouldn't feel this way, and if the guys ever find out I would never hear the end of it. What should I do Tiny?

Sad and Scared

I must say that I feel for you. Although you are having fun, you really miss the people back home. Perhaps you should call them and let them know how you feel? I know that they would probably tell you that everything is fine and that you should just try to enjoy your self. Don't worry about the guys, if they give you a hard time just explain your situation and then invite them to go to one of the young men's guide discussion groups which meets every night at the W.B. George at 8:30 PM. I hope that this can help you with your problem and remember to have fun at the rest of the conference!

Tiny



Courageous Youth Share Experiences

Conference Participants Talk Openly About Relationships, Family and Friends

This morning's plenary session went off without a hitch. The "Butt Spelling" group numbers were up considerably from yesterday, which was great to see. The "safe zones" for personal belongings are still the Production room, the Report room and the dorm rooms. Jeff and Marie are continuing to do wonderful job as MCs. We also had guests this morning; two Exchanges Canada staff were here to observe the plenary session which was wonderful to see. Exchanges Canada provided us with a travel budget for all the staff and the delegates for the next four years of conferences! Thank you!



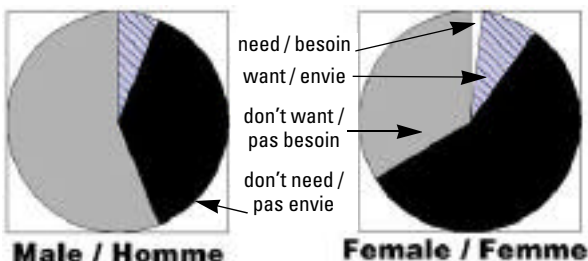
The focus of this morning's discussion was on relationships and we had 5 wonderful panelists. Shauna, Ryan, Michelle, Isabelle and John all shared their experiences with relationships with us. The panelists all captivated our attention with their touching stories and comic witi-cisms. The panelists talked about relationships with family and good friends. This plenary gave the teams a chance to

talk about different types of relationships in their lives and what they mean to them as individuals.

The research team (Michael Belanger, Kayla Krasnor, and Rachel Abbs) presented the statistics from the Values Auction, which took place yesterday.

Who says youth don't care about anyone other than themselves; according to the values auction we value equality, world peace, and cures for lethal diseases over great sex and other material items!

Research Shows Young People Want Tall People With Good Listening Skills



*a pie graph showing the selections when it comes to "shortness"

In the large group activity on Friday in the plenary session in the gym, the delegates started to classify the character traits that they looked for in a partner, through a fun game called "Partner Fishing." They classified them into four categories: need, want, don't need, don't want. With the assistance of a computer and a statistics program, the research team concentrated on figuring out from the results which were the characteristics which youth needed and didn't need. The characteristics which youth "needed" most often were confidence (90%), honesty (87%), optimism (66%), friendship(69%), and being a good listener (75%). The percentages in brackets reflect the number of delegates that assigned importance to these traits. There wasn't a significant difference between the responses of men and women except for the characteristics of friendship and being a good listener. It seems that in their choice of partners, women at the conference value being a good listener and friendship much more than men at the conference. One controversial result was that most men and women didn't want "short" partners....

Dear Tiny,

I really enjoy my group and the discussion is really intense! I feel really close to the rest of my group and we have really been sharing personal stories. Yesterday during our breakout session someone made a comment that reminded me of something that I am really struggling with. I suddenly broke into tears and had to rush out of the room so that I could calm down. I feel really bad and many members of my group have come to ask me if I am ok. I feel really bad about how I acted, what should I do?

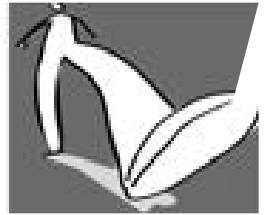
-Upset and Frustrated

Dear Upset and Frustrated,

What happened to you is not at all uncommon and I would say that all of us are feeling triggered on some level. When you speak about issues that are personal and close to home it is only natural that you are feeling a little sensitive. Next time you are triggered by something that comes up in your group I suggest that you deal with this in a way that works for you. Perhaps talk with someone that you are close with, go for a walk (on campus), or take a warm shower. It seems that your group is really caring and that they are really concerned for you. Explain to them what happened and continue on from there. Also, remember that you can talk to your facilitator about finding someone to talk to here as well. Peace and love.

-Tiny

"I learned that relationships are based upon trust, and once trust is betrayed, things can hardly ever be the same again."



Let's Talk About Sex!

According to teenagers at the conference, some youth are comfortable speaking about sex openly with adults, as they become more familiar with the subject. This afternoon in the gym, Barb, Vanessa, Curtis, Priya, and Sonia all spoke on a panel about their different experiences with what they have learned about sex and sexuality. This session was in place to help encourage respectful conversations about healthy sexuality in their teams later in the day.

With Barb moderating the session, Vanessa shared how she learned about sex from her grandmother and her difficulties with a good friend after taking their friendship to an intimate, physical relationship. Vanessa spoke of how she dealt with the situation, and though the friendship was compromised,

she holds no regrets.

Curtis told the crowd that he learned about sex through much experience, and is willing to try everything once. Pyria described casual discussions about sex that she had at school with her friends. Sonia said that she learned about different elements of sex from talking with her parents about practicing safe sex, what to do, and what not to do. It became clear that young people are learning about sex from many sources: their own experiences, parents, extended family, friends and the media.

The discussion between the five was very educational for the delegates at the conference and sparked lots of discussion.

Here is what a few had to say :

"They approached the subject well, for what the topic was. I felt very comfortable in the situation, although I thought that each individual should have stayed focused on the one area that they said they were going to touch upon instead of jumping all over the board."

Samantha, team five

"The content of the whole discussion was really good, the best one I've heard yet. The only thing that I would change is to put more males up on stage, there was only one guy."

John, team twelve

"The discussion was great. Maybe more people would participate if it were smaller groups. Definitely add more guys. At least have two up there to get the different perspectives."

Trevor, team eight

"They gave a lot of moments, life scenarios, but they didn't really give any solutions, maybe if they had more time."

Alisha, team eleven

"I felt that the panelists should have approached the subject differently. I think that if you meet a person and you know you're interested in them as more than friends then, I don't think you should be friends, just date. I suggest this because it cuts out a lot of those mixed feelings and you wouldn't find yourself in a confusing situation like Vanessa did."

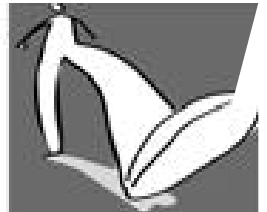
Ian, team seven

"There wasn't a lot of time for the panelists to speak, I had so many more questions. I guess with a subject like this there never is enough time."

Anonymous

The discussion provided an open environment about an often uncomfortable subject. The delegates became more at ease and were able to talk about sex and ask potentially difficult questions. The panel also showcased Barb's experience and knowledge. The discussion was educational and a great learning experience for everyone.

"I feel that people should be more accepting in smaller communities towards the gay and lesbian community."



Pushing? Pulling? Neither? Does Your Community Influence Your Values?

This morning started off a little rough. In an exclusive interview with X-Press, Gus, the guy with the really cool mustache, claimed that over 45 people were late for this morning's plenary session. He then went on to say that the nice "dinner bell Gus" would be replaced with the old "door bashing Gus" and everyone would be on time tomorrow.

My faith in humanity was reaffirmed when Dan announced that his cigarettes that had gone missing had been returned to him, he then went

"...she had been alienated in her community and the struggle she had..."

on to say that this conference gave everyone the opportunity to change.

We had a wicked panel speak on how community and sexuality are linked; Mona spoke about how coming from a family that has raised her with some really strong and reserved values was really difficult for her. She spoke on how she had been alienated in her community and the struggle she had trying to sway her parent's decision to not let her date.

Jackson told us of the struggles of being openly gay in Saskatoon. He said that there were not a lot of supports available to the homosexual community except for the bar scene and even that is sparse.

Lea has grown up in Toronto. She has only told her mother, friends, half sister and us that she is gay. There are lots of supports for the gay community in Toronto but she feels that the community has not played a role in her sexu-

ality. Lea claims that she would have been gay no matter where she lived. She



wonders if not having a father figure growing up had an effect on her sexuality.

Jaime then followed Lea sharing what life was like growing up in catholic community. She shared that in the Catholic religion, people believe if you were in a homosexual relationship you would go to hell. She told us about her sister who was the "rebel in the family and how she had been motivated to not be like her. Jaime chooses not to have sex before she gets married, but she says that the community did not play a part in that decision.

Finally Jonathan presented on what it is to be a "player" and how guys are stereotyped and expected to treat women that way. He said that the media plays a part in encouraging guys to be unfaithful to their partners.

The five panelists all did an excellent job explaining the effect that community had on their sexuality and the decisions that they make.

Dear Tiny,

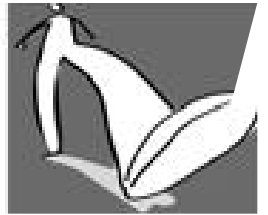
I met someone here that I really care about. I think that she could be the one Tiny! I know that I have only known her for a week but I can't stop thinking about her. I don't know if it is possible to have a long distance relationship with her but I think that I would like to try. When I asked her about what she thought about this, she said that she felt the same way. Could this be love Tiny? When I told my friend about it he said that I was crazy. I don't know what to do?

Sick with Love

Dear Sick with Love,

When you spend a lot of time sharing information with new people relationships can develop on the fly. What you are feeling could be only physical. During the first phase of a relationship people are often so infatuated with each other that they really don't notice anything else about their partner. I really think that you should wait until after you go home. See what you both develop by being far apart. Keep in touch through the phone or e-mail or whatever. What you found, could be what you are looking for, yet could just become a lifelong friend. Only time will tell.

Tiny



Culture Shock: Delegates Share Stories of Their Unique Cultures

People of different cultures attending the conference led an interesting discussion during the afternoon plenary session. Chafic spoke about how a person's values may change when moving from one country to another, having himself moved to Canada from Lebanon.

He felt that since moving from his original country his morals have changed a great deal.

"In order to fit in, when in new surroundings, a person must adapt. My morals have changed since I have moved to Canada, so that is how the community around me has changed my values."

Kisha and Tanya shared about their life living in First Nation communities and different aspects of Aboriginal culture. Kisha feels that her culture is not fully appreciated across Canada

"No we aren't respected at all; people don't even know who the Blackfoot are. They think that all aboriginal people speak the same language, while most of us have our own language."

The Sundance is a Sacred Ceremony that is held by their Tribe. There are certain things that Tanya and Kisha couldn't share because the Sundance is very sacred, and needs to be experienced not told. They were able to tell us the Sundance is for praying, healing, and for protection. A Sacred tradition that is practiced is painting your face; this signifies protection and strength which gives a sense that nothing bad can happen to you.

Kisha made a point of stating that all Tribes are not the same and that some have different beliefs. For example, because hair is a woman's strength, if they want to cut their hair, they will braid it, cut it, and then go to the barber shop and get it cut professionally. Later on in life, if an elder passes away, the braid is buried in the coffin as a sign of respect. Tanya pointed out that in her culture this tradition is done a bit differently.

This panel helped the delegates to think about the aspects of their culture which affect their life.

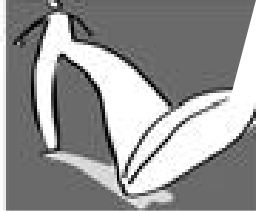
"That everybody has their own set of values and each person is affected by their environment. Also that each set of influences in our lives somewhat pass on to us the same set of values."



"Wanting equality throughout my community is a big issue. Taking it back to my community is now very important."



Want to learn more about culture, Aboriginal issues and experiences of Aboriginal youth in Canada, or how you can fight racism in your community? Check us out online at www.tgmag.ca for great resources created by youth and for youth. You can hold a workshop in your school, share your experiences online or connect with other young people who are working to create change! Check us out...www.tgmag.ca



To Abstain Or Not To Abstain?



“We’re all going to leave with what we learned and gained and should try to apply it to our communities to improve society.”

Steph

On Sunday morning delegates attended the standard morning plenary session discussing abstinence. It was a short discussion but powerful topics were brought up, such as:

- waiting for marriage
- how values regarding sex change as you get older

It was a great opportunity to remind delegates of the ‘no-conference baby’ expectation before the topic shifted.

The subject of discussion was moved to the conference, and how much fun participants have been having and how meaningful the experience had been. Many heart-warming thank-you’s were shared as delegates, staff and facilitators all shared their gratitude towards one another. It was really great to hear how much everyone enjoyed the conference, what people are planning to do when they return home and how everyone is excited about returning next time.

Steph made an excellent comment on how nobody should be sad about leaving and looking at this as the end. We should try to be more positive because this is only the beginning.

RESEARCH VITAL TO CONFERENCE SUCCESS

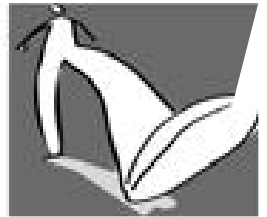
Research at this conference proved to be vital in processing and presenting participants’ issues and concerns. Each participant was assigned a group and submitted results to the research team, consisting of staff, facilitators, and delegates.

Daily activities allowed individual participants to discuss topics in groups and the research team summarized their general opinions. Research assisted participants to interpret findings by summarizing large amounts of information. Participants learned what youth value and what to consider when making recommendations that will help better their communities.

Without research, information could not have been collected and presented. With the help of research, participants gained a clearer picture of the concerns and issues affecting today’s youth. Adults and youth can now have a better understanding of themselves, their community, and their future, and begin to make change!



“I learned about how culture and religion affects the ethical perspective of various communities.”



Extra!!! Extra!!! Youth And Adults Work In Partnership Students Commission Hosts Mini-Conference In Ottawa

7:15 AM. That's what time the busses rolled out of Kemptville, Monday morning heading to Ottawa. Filled with delegates, facilitators and staff they were taking part in a mini-conference with adults from government and national youth organizations.

After registering, the adults were lead down the stairs by a youth from their assigned team...blindfolded! Starting with icebreakers, the hosts, TJ and Chris welcomed everyone to the conference and gave a short overview of the morning's activities. Barb led a panel discussion on healthy sexuality with the group from Saturday's panel in Kemptville. This discussion laid the framework for teams to begin small group discussions and craft messages to be used in the Agree/Disagree activity.

Following a short break, which gave the opportu-

nity to showcase the teams various projects and have adults and youth mingle and the Agree/Disagree activity, delegates were encouraged to write themselves a letter that will be used in the research process and mailed back in six months. Stoney and Eric spoke about what was happening in the future of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement and the successful morning was wrapped up.

In short, it was a great experiment in youth/adult partnerships and a strong indicator that young people and professionals do have much to share and a desire to sit together to have meaningful discussions. It's exciting to think of what's next for the Centre and the movement of youth and adults working side by side!

Tears, Hugs and Goodbyes: The Conference Wraps up

The night was filled with group presentations about what they have learned from this conference. Each group had a unique approach to presenting their ideas. The presentations ranged from powerpoint and video to a comic book. Groups even gave themselves henna tattoos representing the values that are most important to them. The videos that were presented varied from the stereotypes that society puts on young people, a talk show about teen pregnancy, and the reality of having to deal with death. The videos, comic book, and powerpoint projects were all a strong representation of what each delegate is taking away from the conference.

After the presentations it was time for the talent show. Delegates signed up in advance and auditioned to show off their talent. Each was extremely talented and did a great job of preparing themselves for their big debut.

Singers, dancers and comedians filled the stage! By the end of the show, the time was about 11:30 and the



dance began though for some it was time to start packing and get ready to leave. Not many delegates slept the last night; it was filled with writing warm fuzzies, and saying one last goodbye to the friends that they made here in Kemptville. The goodbyes are always the toughest part of the conference, but it is inevitable. The week was spent working hard and having fun, and in the end all the hard work was worth it.

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Centre of Excellence
for Youth Engagement



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