

The Students Commission of Canada

Annual Report 2011

Welcome to the magic.

Celebrating 20 years of providing opportunities to youth, influencing those who influence youth and planning for the future of our organization, communities and country.



The Students
Commission
*Centre of Excellence for
Youth Engagement*



La commission
des étudiants
*Le centre d'excellence pour
l'engagement des jeunes*

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The Students Commission: A Year in Review

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. Twenty years later with more than 10,000 alumni from every province and territory, hundreds of youth conferences, projects and programs we continue to engage and partner with youth, organizations, governments and communities to fulfill this mission. 2011 was an exciting year for us at the Students Commission: moving forward while continually celebrating our 20th Anniversary and recognizing those who helped us become a recognized leader in youth engagement in Canada.

“I loved getting to work with my community this summer. I very much enjoyed getting to hear the issues and ideas people are passionate about. The times of just sharing each other’s knowledge and opinions were the most memorable times at work. The opportunity to learn so much about my adult allies was incredible. I got to hear their stories that lead them to where they are today and I even found similarities in their stories to mine. Thank you so much for a very life changing summer.”

- Students Commission Summer Employment Program Participant, 2011



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.

20 Years of Life Changing Experiences

“Well... As soon as I arrived I was absolutely blown away. The minute we deplaned we were greeted by two very cool and enthusiastic volunteers and a group of delegates from another part of Canada. So I was meeting new people before we had even arrived at the conference site.

When we did get to the conference I was surprised to see how many youth there were in attendance from all over our great country. Over the course of the conference I not only made friends and had a great time, but I also learned many things about poverty and what I as an individual could do to help combat it. I even co-wrote and read an address at St. John's City Hall. On top of all that, I was never once looked down upon or made to feel like less of a person because I was a teenager. My opinions and ideas were taken seriously and I remember at one point I organized and led the entire conference in a spirit building exercise. No adults had ever treated me as an equal before. I'll never forget Gus coming up to me on the first day and telling me how much he loved my mohawk and asking me to give him one. “

- Sharing Resources 2000
Youth Participant

National Highlights

In 2011 the Students Commission:

- Connected with more than 13,955 youth across Canada
- Worked with 8,734 adults, through 707 organizations
- Supported or hosted 12 national, regional or local conferences, trainings, events or gatherings
- Had 121,973 views of posts on our Facebook page
- Had 1760 views of SC videos on our Youtube Channel

Our 20th Anniversary



We held several events and activities to mark 20 years of working in partnership with youth across Canada. Optimists Gus Croteau (right) and Paul Mills receive the Founders Circle Award from Director Liz Panighel (left) and Executive Director Stoney McCart as part of our 20th Anniversary celebrations.

Optimist Gus Croteau was one of the founders of the Students Commission in 1991. During the early years, Gus was the organization's National Chairman, worked on fundraising, facilitating, bus driving and was always there to help out. He remembers with pride how a young SC delegate from Newfoundland, on returning as a facilitator to a later SC conference, shared how the SC had changed his life.

Paul Mills is one of The Students Commission's founding members. As an active member of the Moore Optimist Club, Paul has been working with young people within the community on numerous youth initiatives. His dedication to community service and fundraising for the Students Commission with Gus and fellow Optimists helped keep the Students Commission alive in its early years..

In December 2011, we held an 20th Anniversary Open House at our Toronto office, hosted by Students Commission Alumni and volunteers. With SC friends 'Skyping' in to say hi, it was a wonderful night of youth, alumni, former staff and volunteers reconnecting, visiting and recollecting on the power of youth and SC's affect on thousands of youth across Canada and around the world. Showcasing the work of our first 20 years and optimistic about our next 20, the night (like so many of our programs) connected people's heads, hearts, feet and spirits.

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

The Students Commission continues to be the lead of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement along with our partners:

Brock University Youth Lifespan Development Centre; Youth Launch / Nutana Integrated School-linked Services; Wilfrid Laurier University's Community Psychology Program; Youth Net / Réseau Ado (YN/RA) The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO); City of Vancouver Youth Outreach Team; St. Thomas University; St. Mary's University; Town Youth Participation Strategies/Youth Centres Canada; YouCan

The Centre and its partners are a diverse network of Canadian health, social, youth and research organizations, working to establish best practices for meaningfully engage youth. To this end, The Centre aims to identify, document, build and implement models of effective practice in youth engagement.

We are very grateful of the support and contributions from CEYE partners who help continue to bring together the expertise of youth, youth service providers, academic researchers and policy makers to identify, build and implement models of effective practice for meaningfully engaging youth and to document the results.



Development of the Students Commission Hubs

Throughout our first 20 years, the Students Commission has operated, either independently or with local partners, youth staffed offices in communities across Canada. These have included SC offices in St. John's, Newfoundland; Montreal, Quebec; Ottawa, Ontario, Kainai First

20 Years of Commissioning Youth Via Conferences

Youth and Technology:
Improving the Health of our
Future Generations
March 2010

YDM National Meeting
February 2010

Youth Assembly on Gambling
and Co-Addictions
April 2010

YDM National Meeting
November 2008

YDM National Meeting
November 2007

Students Assembly on Electoral
Reform, November 2006

Young Decision Makers' national
youth delegation to the Global
Youth Assembly July 2009

Ontario Children and Youth
Summit 2005

Governor General's Consultation
with Youth Community Leaders,
February 2002

Youth Forum of the Americas
March 2001

Youth Forum on War-Affected
Children September 2000

School-to-Work Transitions
Conference May 2000

Sharing Resources 2000
1998 – 2000

Asia Connects October 1997

APEC Ministerials 1997

Global KnowlEdge '97
July 1997

1991 – 2011 Annual Students
Commission Conferences

Nation, Alberta; and Vancouver, British Columbia. In 2011 the Students Commission, recognizing the need for a more strategic approach to fulfill our objectives and mission worked with our existing partners to develop a new Hub model. Each Hub would focus on one part of Canada while continuing to partner and work collaboratively on national projects from the other sites. The Hub model provides a more focused geographic approach recognizing and valuing regional expertise while continuing to link regional and national projects on issues facing youth in Canada.

Western Hub - Saskatoon



As the Saskatchewan office and Western Hub, Youth Launch is a youth leadership development program based out of Nutana Collegiate in Saskatoon. One of Youth Launch's specialties is providing facilitator training to young people so that, with the support of adults, they can plan and lead their own meetings, projects, and conferences to address their issues. Youth Launch delivers in excess of 100 workshops a year across Saskatchewan, reaching thousands of youth. The Victoria office of the Students Commission is linked to the Western Hub, as well as our partners in Western Canada.

Central Hub - Toronto



The Central Hub is where the administration and co-ordination of national programs and research projects occurs. The Central Hub takes the lead on Ontario, Quebec and Territorial based projects supporting provincial organizations and partners. Finally, the office located in Toronto, supports young people in putting their ideas into action: supporting weekly youth group meetings and other Toronto-based youth serving organizations. The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, the Kingston office of the SC and our national partners are all supported through the Central Hub.

Eastern Hub - Fredericton



In Eastern Canada, our Hub will be providing a link for our Atlantic partners and the young people who live there. Youth Matters was launched in 2008 at a youth leadership conference held at St. Thomas University, much like the birth of the Students Commission. A network of young people from high school and university, Youth Matters develops and implements youth forums, participates in policy discussions, prepares and delivers innovative teaching workshops in collaboration with schools and produces materials in the form of documentaries and short videos. Hosted at St. Thomas University within the Centre for Research on Youth at Risk, the team specializes in linking university students and high school students while working with young people experiencing difficulties with the law.

Meeting Our Strategic Objectives

As we celebrated our 20th year, the Students Commission Board of Directors, staff and volunteers continued to work towards balancing our mission with our goals, strategies and activities.

Provide Opportunities for Youth

- Provide development opportunities for youth & youth employees
- Encourage youth participation
- Employ youth
- Access to pan-Canadian conferences

These are snapshots of our programs and successes providing opportunities to youth across Canada.

Unite and Ignite 2011

In March 303 youth and 88 adult allies representing 30 organizations from across Canada participated in our annual conference, held in partnership with Youth Centres Canada. At the 3-day Unite and Ignite 2011 conference, participants chose one of six possible themes to discuss in their small themed groups. Youth facilitators worked with their teams through the Young Decision Makers (YDM) process for each of the six themes: Youth Homelessness, Community Youth Engagement, Youth Substance Use, Suicide Prevention, Aboriginal Youth Perspectives, and Bullying.



A presentation of the draft 2011 Chief Public Health Officer's Report, highlighting key themes, was prepared and presented to all youth at the conference. The youth then provided specific feedback for the report to representatives of the Chief Public Health Officer. The presentation served as an introduction to studying youth issues as part of the YDM cycle for all of the groups. Each group had a content advisor or expert for the particular theme, as well as a representative from the Public Health Agency of Canada (CPHO Reports Unit or Division of Childhood and Adolescence) to assist with the discussions.

20 Years of Opportunities

"I made more connections with other youth leaders and made some good friends. I find it very helpful hearing about what is working in other communities and sharing stories, tips, resources and positive solutions."

"Well this subject is really important considering I was homeless for about 9 years staying at different places, walking around all night and wishing I had my own place to call home."

"(I learned) That youth are very good at summing stuff up when given a chance and they are wonderful!! (Of course I knew this already:)"

- Unite And Ignite 2011
Participants



"I feel great and loved how everyone listened while everyone shared their stories from their community."

"Youth have their own voice and adults do too much for them without giving them a chance to be themselves."

"By speaking and not feeling shy at all I felt very good about myself."

"(I learned) We can make a difference."

- Unite and Ignite 2011
Participants

Unite and Ignite Conference

This year, PHAC had the opportunity to participate in the 13th annual "Unite and Ignite" youth engagement conference, a partnership between Youth Centres des Jeunes Canada and the Student Commission of Canada, and led by the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement.

The conference brought together approximately 400 young people to discuss important issues facing youth in Canada today. The conference attendees were a diverse group of Canadian youth, including representatives from a variety of cultural heritages and different socio-economic backgrounds from urban and rural Canada.

Themes covered at this year's conference included youth homelessness, community youth engagement, community youth retention and attraction, substance use and abuse, action and prevention of youth suicide, bullying and Aboriginal youth perspectives.

The conference also included a session on this report. A presentation provided background information and included key highlights on youth health, focusing on mental health and mental illness, physical health, and health and risk-taking behaviours. These particular areas were discussed with all participants in small groups and youth provided their input and thoughts on the key topics featured in the 2011 Report.

It was important to engage youth in the development of this report as youth make tremendous contributions to the communities in which they live. Youth engagement is about empowering youth, giving them meaningful participation and involvement in decisions that affect their lives.

Participants gave their recommendations and final thoughts on the last day of the conference. Some key points of interest included discussions on the significant influence parents have on their children and the importance of good parenting skills and supports. Also discussed was that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people could gain a greater awareness of each other's culture through respect, understanding and communication. Also identified was the need for "honest," non-judgmental and stigma-free solutions-based education concerning substance use and abuse for youth and parents delivered by someone with first-hand experience.

These recommendations as well as the themes from the conference provided valuable input for the 2011 CPHO Report. The conference confirmed the importance of establishing initial good health and resilience as a healthy transition into adulthood. It is clear that for Canada as a society to move forward, building relationships between youth and adults will be about creating opportunities for communication and respect, and listening to young people's perspectives.

From: The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada, 2011

The HYPE Conference

The *How Young People Engage (HYPE) Conference* brought together 140 youth and 40 adult allies from throughout Saskatchewan. Youth had the opportunity to organize and lead the daylong conference. Youth members of the SC-run Youth Committee on Tobacco Control from British Columbia and Alberta joined the conference. The conference effectively mobilized youth from First Nation communities, rural areas and urban high schools. HYPE built connections between aboriginal and non-aboriginal youth, as well as connections between aboriginal youth from rural and urban communities. The conference led to the

formation of partnerships with Martinsville Youth Centre, as well as to increased participation from grade nine students from Nutana Collegiate Institute, the school where our Western Hub is located. Youth participants were encouraged to take what they've learned back to their communities through community action plans.

Youth Matters

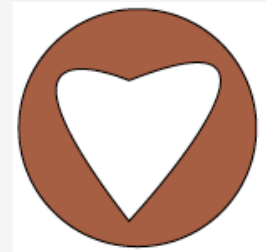
The national team of the Students Commission of Canada supported the New Brunswick Youth Matters conference in Miramichi working to study, discuss, decide and inform decision-makers on the key issues for youth in Northern New Brunswick. 170 youth and 30 adults allies presented their recommendations on the issues of national connection, youth engagement, culture, stereotypes, self-esteem, the right to play and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The conference wrapped up with young people speaking directly to regional representatives from the Police, local town councils, Rotary Clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, and community colleges, sharing their recommendations and personal stories.



HSBC Youth Action Group

The Students Commission organized for the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Social Program Evaluation Group of Queen's University the inclusion of youth voice, ideas and analysis in *The Health of Canada's Young People: a mental health focus*.

This group was first consulted in March 2011 in Ottawa regarding the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study, which formed the basis of the report. HBSC is a continuing, cross-national survey conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe. The survey is done every four years in more than 40 different countries. This survey provides an overview of young people's health, aged 11 to 15. Fifteen youth from across Canada, aged 13 to 16, met in Ottawa, Canada and reviewed draft findings from the HBSC Study for 2011 prepared by researchers from Queen's University's Social Program Evaluation Group. The youth reviewed a series of graphs and charts on findings from key areas related to the physical and mental health of youth aged 13 to 16 in Canada. Their analysis formed a significant contribution to the report and researchers reported that both their interpretation of the findings and the way they would work in the future had shifted because of the interaction with youth facilitated by SC staff.



20 Years of Heart:

How Do You Feel Being Involved with the Students Commission?

"I feel pretty AWESOME about my work with The Students Commission summer staff program. ☺ Overall, I had an AMAZING summer. ☺"

20 Years of Building Youth Capacity

"Meeting everyone felt really good, I learned how to come out of my shell, voice my opinion, and connect with people. I feel confident and like I can be myself because you guys made me feel confident. I came to learn more facilitation to use in YDM. I learned from the kids and from reading the Manual. I learned about myself, I thought I was a lot shyer then I was and now I realize that I'm not that shy. This was fantastic, you could tell they learned a lot and had a blast. We didn't need the HHFS to tell that.

I thought I would be more comfortable with the grade 7's then the grade 10's (because I'm in grade 10) but when we switched groups it still felt natural to be facilitating kids my age."

- 2011 Students Commission Youth Facilitator



Health Canada's Youth Action Committee and Young-Adult Leadership Team

In 2011, the Students Commission continued providing support to the engagement of Health Canada's Youth Action Committee (YAC). These youth give advice about anti-tobacco programs targeted to youth and ways to reach their peers. Complementing this group was the Young-Adult Leadership Team (YLT), who provide an opportunity for members to provide insight into the unique challenges of designing tobacco-related messaging for the young adult audience. YAC and YLT each include 13 members from across the nation who participate in and inform the development of Federal Tobacco Control Strategy (FTCS) programs and activities. The objectives of the YAC/YLT are to:

- enhance the capacity of the FTCS to engage youth and young adults in tobacco control initiatives;
- provide opportunities for youth and young adults to engage with the federal government;
- enable youth and young adults to develop knowledge and skills;
- and build leadership capacity for youth and young adults.

The YAC comprises a team of individuals aged 14-18 and the Young-Adult Leadership Team (YLT) comprises individuals aged 19-24 from across Canada, reflecting the diversity of Canadian society; males and female; Francophone and Anglophone; Inuit; First Nation; Métis; persons with disabilities; first generation Canadians, and a mix of smokers, former smokers and non-smokers.

The Students Commission organized and executed face-to-face meetings of the two committees as well as supported 27 actions across Canada by the YAC and YLT members in 2011. This included the development of The Young Adult Leadership Team (YLT) blog, www.bettertobreathe.com, an on-line open space where youth and young adults can post ideas, have discussions, and exchange strategies on the issues surrounding tobacco awareness, prevention and cessation.



Employing Youth and Young Adults

Each summer, the Students Commission runs a National Summer Employment Program. Working with local partner organizations, the Students Commission hires, trains, and supports young people to work in local community-based organizations. In 2011, we had 17 young people participate in the Summer Employment Program, with strong support from our partner organizations.

As they do each year the summer team worked on a national project along with local youth engagement initiatives in their own communities. This year they explored youth adult partnerships. Their work, including interviews with adults and sharing their own experiences on weekly calls and video meetings helped shape and inform the project. Our year-end evaluation informs us of the positive affect the Summer Youth Employment Program has on the youth employed, and our organization and partners benefit greatly too. The youth contribution helps ensure that the voice of youth is heard in all of our activities.

Complementing the Summer Youth Employment Program, our offices engage youth across Canada for part time, contract work and co-op education placements. Between our three Hubs more than 20 youth and young adults participated in these roles in 2011. The combination of youth employment and co-operative education students ensures that youth voice and ideas are part of The Students Commission work every day. It also ensured that our teams include youth, even when adult consultations and meetings are held at non-youth friendly times.

The National Summer Employment Program was a success because of the support from our partners: Youth Centres Canada; Project Respect; Kainai Children's Services/Kainai Youth Council, iHuman, Street Culture Kidz Project, Youth Launch, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Regional Multicultural Youth Council and our Central Hub.

20 Years of Employing Youth

"I am going to use the skills I've learned in my future activities whether they be in the clubs at school or when I do activism work in my community. Not only the facilitation skills but also the people skills I've learned will come to very good use. But most of all, the confidence I gained and the people I met will be staying with me for a long time."

"I have learned that it is good to self-reflect and it's ok to say "NO." I have also learned and came to realize that, "I am not ALONE!" It's important to ask for HELP and talk about how you're feeling. This is what I have learned from the challenging moments."

"I've learned that youth want to be engaged and will if you give them the chance to "lead" themselves. With this I will try and kick-start programs in my community to have the youth get involved in our community and culture."

- 2011 Students Commission
Summer Students



**20 Years of Introducing
New Perspectives**

“The program is called, Don't Believe The Hype, and from now on, I'm not going to believe the hype because nothing is as it seems, there's always another side, there's always a deeper meaning. You always have to take a second look.”

“I learned that the word 'aboriginal' refers to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.”

“I learned that my reserve isn't the only place struggling with educational problems.”

- 2011 Students Commission Program Participants

Don't Believe The Hype

Project PEACE, which The Students Commission co-developed with the Toronto Police Service delivered 1700 workshops reaching 100,000 plus students over a three-year period. Police officers and youth with life experience of gang culture, developed the workshops and videos and then co-delivered them in all Toronto elementary and secondary schools.

Following this success of Project PEACE, Don't Believe The Hype was developed in partnership between a PEACE facilitator and the Students Commission. The goal of the program was to educate youth about the multi-faceted nature of Hip-Hop culture, and help youth develop their critical thinking skills by highlighting and discussing the ways in which Hip-Hop is linked to their own lives and society in many intricate ways. In 2011, this program was delivered in Western Technical-Commercial School and Sir Robert L Borden Business and Technical Institute in Toronto. With excellent feedback from students, administrators and police officers the program will return again in the 2012 – 2013 school year.

Influence in Action

Influence in Action addresses substance use by training youth who are peer influencers. In 2011, 218 youth were trained across Canada and participated in the program. With the information and skills from the training, these youth influenced the decision-making of their peers through informal conversations.

This program was an excellent opportunity for influential students from different social groups in each school to learn some new life skills, gain new knowledge and methods of communicating with their peers. It also was an amazing opportunity for the greater student body to be positively influenced in their decision-making.

Our Eastern Hub delivered the training and supported the project with students in middle and high school from Fredericton and Grand Falls. 95 youth in total participated. Our Central Hub had ten schools in the Greater Toronto Area participate, as well as 42 youth in Brant District which also included follow up leadership development training.

Each high school in Thunder Bay participated. Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School (DFC), of the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, hosted the training and it was the first time many other Thunder Bay students visited or participated in any activities at DFC.

In Kainai, First Nation youth from Kainai High School and Tatsikiisapo’p Middle School participated. An adult ally training was conducted for the youth influencers supporters.

A completed report and evaluation were submitted following the conclusion of the program and the Students Commission began to explore how to engage new schools in the program for the 2012 – 2013 year.

Influence Those Who Influence Youth

- Collaborate with partners to leverage key research (develop programs, train, advise) and conduct key research, evaluation
- National presence through partnerships

Organizations, who hire the Students Commission to support their work via research, evaluation and training, are often much more than clients – we are partners. Creating a body of work that will benefit youth across Canada, we develop reciprocal relationships where each organization is able to build upon existing assets and strengths while generating new processes from our shared learning.

These partnerships in 2011 included the National Youth Serving Agencies, National Drug Prevention Advisory Committee, Mamow Shaway-gi-kay-win: the North South Partnership for Children, and YEP4, a coalition of 30 organizations in Ontario exploring youth engagement.

YMCA

Following our work in 2010, the Students Commission has continued to assist YMCA Canada to host a Young Leaders Forum prior to its Annual General Meeting and support the Young Leaders participation at AGM. We support YMCA Canada and the Young Leaders throughout the year in the area of youth governance. This involves training and support for youth from all YMCAs across Canada.

Our support included meeting the following objectives:

- Build upon the interest and learning of the 40 young leaders who attended the AGM by keeping them connected
- Engage young leaders in developing and executing concrete, meaningful activities that contribute to achieving the objectives of YMCA Canada as ratified at the AGM
- Engage young leaders with YMCA Canada management in developing the shape, mandate, and activities of a year round National Youth Forum that will provide space for young leaders voices and input into governance for YMCA Canada

Through conference calls, subcommittees and working groups and ongoing communication, the Students Commission supports the young



“Whatever small things I do can change something. You are capable of making a change.”

- 2011 Students Commission Program Participants

leaders year round. Our partnership with YMCA Canada grew in 2011, as together we hired a new Students Commission staff person to support this initiative directly.

Kids Help Phone

In 2011, working with the Kids Help Phone, the Students Commission consolidated an evaluation and review of their existing youth engagement programming, interviewing key stakeholders. We held a series of working group meetings with youth (KHP youth ambassadors, KHP service users and non-users) and staff members to explore options for future youth initiatives linked to their mission and mandate. We assisted youth to review potential program options and prioritize them with hands-on activities relating to priority setting and budget allocations. The Students Commission produced a comprehensive “Roadmap”, with strategic and implementation options, as well as projected resource implications, over a five year period. KHP is currently working with this Roadmap.



Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada

In 2011, we continued our partnership with Girl Guides of Canada - Guides du Canada (GGC) to assist them in improving their capacity to work with Aboriginal girls and women. Engaging Members of GGC - from six year old Sparks to adult volunteers who have been involved with Guiding for more than 50 years - we produced an Aboriginal Partnership Building and Outreach Strategy for them. Two new projects started examining girls and women living in low income communities in Canada and the engagement of Francophone girls.

Drug Endangered Children

The Students Commission, through its eastern hub at St. Thomas University worked with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police to gather information and recommendations to inform policy and legislative initiatives regarding drug-endangered children. A child is considered 'drug endangered' if they are - or are likely to be - harmed by an adult's drug activity. They are deemed especially endangered if they are growing up in a home where drugs are being produced or sold, whether through an indoor marijuana grow operation or a synthetic drug lab.

Youth researchers, in partnership with adults examined the literature on drug-endangered children and facilitated a series of discussions with young people across Canada to get their perspectives and recommendations on this issue. From this work, a report was submitted to the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police

Chiefs of Ontario

In 2011, the Students Commission began a two year process working with the Chiefs of Ontario to conduct a series of workshops and information gathering sessions in urban centres and First Nation communities to assist the developing policy recommendations for the Province of Ontario on the pathways for positive youth development for Indigenous youth as well as an Indigenous Youth Engagement Strategy for the Chiefs of Ontario.

We supported the engagement of First Nation youth in the planning and delivery of multiday youth forums in Thunder Bay, Toronto, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Bkejwanong First Nation.

The Young Decision Makers Network

"Where are young people when decisions are being made?"

The Young Decision Makers Network continued to grow in 2011 and be used by communities and governments to engage youth in informed discussions and decision-making, providing a process and space for youth voices to be heard in Canada.

The YDM model was used during Unite and Ignite 2011 with almost 400 youth and adults being trained on how to use the model in their own communities.

A YDM team including youth, young adults and Students Commission staff supported a group of 40 youth and adults who are working to develop the Dryden Child and Youth Strategic Plan. The three-day process was very successful in identifying what youth are looking for in adult allies in Dryden and a final series of youth recommendations for the group to move forward with as they develop their Plan.

With growing interest from youth and organizations, in 2011 a series of YDM groups began to appear across the country. In communities such as Flying Dust First Nation, Saskatoon, Miramichi and Toronto, small groups of youth and young adults were coming together to begin exploring issues facing youth locally.

Supporting these local movements, the Students Commission began hosting regular national conference calls with a YDM Planning Group. These were youth and young adults who believed in YDM as a way to ensure that youth voice was heard in decisions affecting them. An average of 5-7 youth contributed 2250 volunteer hours through weekly YDM conference call meetings to plan and develop the YDM process in 2011. There is a strong commitment to providing space for youth voice in Canada and YDM has been proving to demonstrate how it can be achieved successfully.

20 Years of Introducing New Experiences

"I never had this in grade 10 and 7, so I'm glad its available for them. When I was in grade 7 they didn't talk about this stuff so I was learning how to be an influencer too."

"I gained more facilitation experience, I feel the groups did really well so I feel more confident. I'm going to another conference and now I can take the skills I learned here and share them with that group and then my community"

"The 4 Pillars helped. The kids really liked them - if people were talking over each other someone would say respect and they would stop talking."

– 2011 Students Commission
Youth Influence in Action



Understanding Contexts of Youth-Adult Partnerships

In 2011 we received a Social Sciences Humanities Research Grant to explore the nature and outcomes of effective youth adult relationships in a variety of organizational and government youth program contexts. The "Understanding Contexts of Youth-Adult Partnerships" project is an opportunity developed by youth, community-based organizations and academic researchers to understand the ways in which adults' partner with young people in contexts that are typically based upon unbalanced asymmetrical relationships.

Again, we are very grateful for our partners and their contributions to the success of this project to date. They include: Regional Multicultural Youth Council (Thunder Bay), Boys and Girls Club of Canada, The John Howard Society of New Brunswick, Youth Launch, Frontier College, Population Growth Division of the Government of New Brunswick, Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, YOUCAN, City of Kitchener and the YMCA of Greater Toronto.

2011 RCMP Youth Leadership and Project Development Workshop



Teambuilding

The Fall 2011 Youth Leadership and Project Development Workshop, hosted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's National Crime Prevention Services (NCPS), took place at the RCMP Training Academy (Depot Division) in Regina, Saskatchewan from October 29th to November 2nd, 2011.

The goal was to bring together youth and members of the RCMP to discuss youth crime and victimization issues. The workshop also explored potential root causes of the issues, identified existing programs/resources relating to the issue and developed an action plan to address the issues.

Plan for the Future

- Provide development opportunities for Board members, staff
- Involve alumni
- Make SC a household phrase
- Strengthen governance

We hear regularly about the affect the Students Commission has on young people, organizations and decision makers in Canada. In order to continue to do our work we have concrete plans and strategies to continue building on what have learned and experienced to ensure that our work is broadly seen and used across Canada.

2011 Students Commission AGM and Board Members

On April 21st we held our Annual General Meeting and elected our Board Members for 2011. They include:

Bindu Dhaliwal
Darroch Crewe
Gus Croteau
Eric Costen
Kingsley McCart

Liz Panighel
Peter MacLeod
Sarah Keelan-Bishop
Stephanie Collins Di Trepani

We value the contributions of these dedicated volunteers who continue to move our organization forward as a leading national youth organization that connects youth and adults head, heart, feet and spirit.

Continued Development of our Alumni Fund

Driven by the Board of Directors, donations to the SC Alumni Fund help secure the long-term financial health of the organization and it continued to grow in 2011. This fund generated and built by those who have had a Students Commission experience and who want to share that with a new generation of Canadian youth.

Youth, Staff and Board Collaboration

2011 brought a new level of collaboration and engagement of youth and young adults with our Board of Directors. Youth began attending special meetings of the Board, who shared information, consulted and engaged in discussions and decision-making with the young people.

Youth, staff and the Board of Directors worked together to develop the plans for our 20th Anniversary this year, the Board led Strategic Review and other activities of the organization. Learning by doing, we are committed to having meaningful roles for youth in our organizations decision-making processes.

20 Years of Memories

“Forget equal, all of a sudden adults were treating me as friend. I guess what I'm really trying to say is that when I left Newfoundland, I felt very different about myself and what I could accomplish.”

“I had two other great experiences with the SC crew in the next couple of years (one in Kemptville. and the other at the filming of a video in Alberta) thanks to efforts to keep me involved. Both just as eye opening and uplifting as that unforgettable as my first one.”

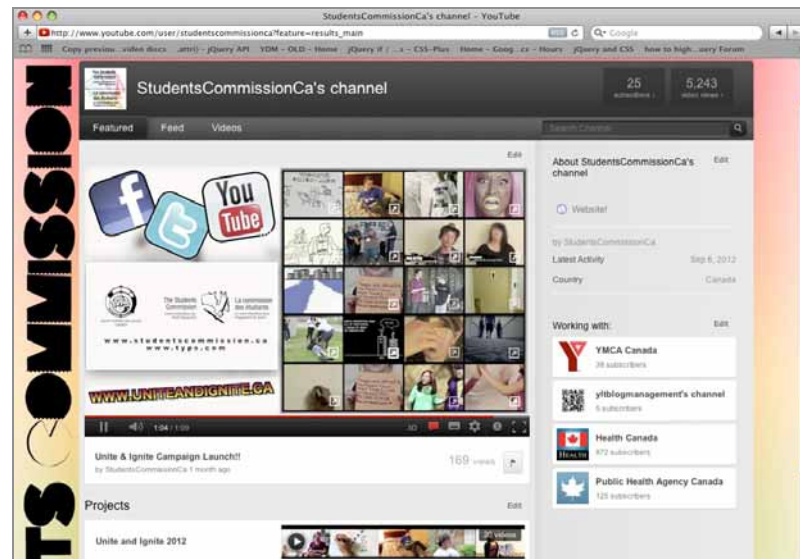
“The Students Commission changed my views on many things in my life. I'm sure I would be in a very different place right now if it wasn't for you guys and I want to say thank you. I really regret not staying in touch and involved but if there is anything I can do to help out I am certainly willing. Please let me know.”

- Former Students Commission Participants Reflections on Their SC Experiences



Social Networking and Online Presence

For many years the Students Commission has been on the forefront of technology and using it to link, connect and engage youth across Canada. Since first being introduced to Facebook, by youth, in 2006, we continue to grow our online platform and presence. In 2011 our Facebook page, Twitter account and YouTube Channel gained greater numbers of followers and users. We continue to use these tools not simply to share information but engage youth, partners and other organizations in discussion and dialogue about our Four Pillars Respect, Listen, Understand and Communicate™ and our work.



THE STUDENTS COMMISSION

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With Gratitude and Appreciation for Our Clients and Funders in 2011

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Chiefs of Ontario
City of Dryden
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
Social Sciences Humanities Research Council
Status of Women Canada
YMCA Canada
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Youth Launch Saskatoon

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