

Engaging Youth in HIV/AIDS Activities for Their School

A Public Health Summit
October 26-29, 2008

Presented by Karen Verhoeve,
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Region of Waterloo Public Health AIDS/STD Program

- Canadian AIDS Memorial Quilt High School Tour
- AIDS Awareness Week Planning Forum for Youth

The Impact in Waterloo Region

- “A great way to raise awareness.”
- “Absolutely moving and heart wrenching.”
- “I have an uncle that’s dying from AIDS and seeing how many others there are helps somewhat.”
- “I lost my sister to AIDS. It amazes me how many stories are in these quilts.”
- “This exhibit made the fact that so many people die of HIV/AIDS more hands on and more of a reality.”
- “The quilts were an eye-opening for me. I now realize that HIV/AIDS is not just for ‘certain people’.”
- “I will protect myself.”



**The Canadian AIDS
Memorial Quilt**
is coming to
Waterloo Region
November 13 –
December 3, 2008
for a high school tour.







Involving Students

- information sent to new student government in May
- 2 students invited to late spring workshop for more information
- fall meetings are held for student leaders from schools that book the quilt

Student Responsibilities

- arrange for gym to display Quilt
- prepare teachers and students to view the Quilt
- develop plan for students to view the quilt
- recruit volunteers for set up, supervising and taking down the Quilt
- liaise with school staff and school nurse as needed

Supports Provided by Public Health

- school Quilt tour manual
 - preparing for the Quilt
 - displaying the Quilt
 - post-viewing activities
- Canadian AIDS Memorial Quilt sections
- guide to focus student viewing
- HIV/AIDS information display
- 2 PHNs to assist with supervising the quilt
- community volunteer to hang some sections

learnings

- booking a gym is often the biggest barrier
- preparing the students enhances the impact of the Quilt
- students and school staff agree that the Quilt is highly effective in raising awareness of HIV/AIDS in their school
- students and staff recommended displaying the Quilt on a regular basis



AIDS Awareness Week Youth Forum

- students invited to a workshop to motivate and prepare them to organize AIDS Awareness Week activities for their school
- annually since 2000
- modelled after program developed by Peel Region public health and school board
- joint initiative with local ASO

Youth Forum Content

- brief overview of HIV/AIDS
- PHA speaker
- how to plan activities
- detailed planning of one activity





Role of School Nurse

- Resource/support for students in planning/organizing events
- Final evaluation – both of events organized at the school, and the youth forum in preparing students for this task

I find over all as a school after experiencing such a powerful presentation, that most accept and understand HIV and AIDS. I hope too that it has shown other students safer sex options and practices, and that most listened and learned something during this day. It was a highly successful event that every school should host. It changed our schools dynamic and personally made me think in a more global manner. It changed the lives and perspectives of many, and hopefully we helped save a few too.

Zoe Miller, student