

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Summer Campers Learn How Tobacco and Sports Don't Mix at Tobacco-Free Summer Olympics

Peterborough Youth Action Alliance Leads Unique Activities for More Than 200 Youth

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More than 200 local campers are taking part in this year's Tobacco-Free Summer Olympics program organized by the Peterborough Youth Action Alliance (PYAA) Speak Up! Speak Out! of the Peterborough County-City Health Unit (PCCHU).

Featuring unusual activities like tobacco-free Simon Says, obstacle courses that reveal campers' lung capacity, a "Flavour Danger" jello station, and "Kick the Habit" soccer, the Summer Olympics program was designed by the PYAA to creatively demonstrate how sports and tobacco don't mix.

"Tobacco use is unfortunately still part of the culture for many sports," said Carley Gilbert, a youth leader with PYAA. "We developed the Tobacco-Free Summer Olympics program as a way of simulating how tobacco diminishes athletic prowess so campers could learn the importance of avoiding tobacco use altogether. It made sense to fashion our program after the Olympics as Canada prepares to host the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver and the International Olympic Committee is a strong proponent of the tobacco-free sport and recreation movement."

The premise of the tobacco-free sport and recreation movement is that well informed and supportive coaches encourage voluntary compliance with smoke-free by-laws by setting an example for players and others, including parents. Many local sports organizations have adopted a tobacco-free policy which promotes the following community benefits:

- Preventing youth from starting to use tobacco industry products
- Giving everyone a chance to perform at their best
- Protecting the environment
- Creating a tobacco-free culture

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- Protecting children from second-hand smoke
- Helping smokers quit

Tobacco-free sport and recreation is a movement that took hold on May 31, 2002 when the World Health Organization celebrated World No Tobacco Day with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), Olympic Aid and other regional and local sports organizations.

The PYAA, Speak Up! Speak Out! is a youth-driven community alliance focused on the denormalization of tobacco use. The PYAA is funded by the Ministry of Health Promotion under the Smoke-Free Ontario strategy. Youth from Peterborough have been hired to work with their peers to:

- Prevent tobacco use initiation and addiction among children, youth and young adults;
- To reduce tobacco use in Ontario; and,
- To eliminate involuntary exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

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