



Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon

Active Yukon Schools

Spring Issue

2016

Yukoners are springing in to action

It's official, spring has arrived.

As the days begin to get longer and the snow begins to melt, skis and snowshoes that once lined school, and rec center halls, are now being traded for bicycles and sneakers. While this may make our Winter Active for Life coordinator a little, sad, there is nothing like hearing about the flurry of activity in the communities to put a spring in our step. Cycling, fitness classes and new and exciting training opportunities have Yukoners springing into action.

~Working Together to Build Active and Healthy Communities ~

Yukon
Community Services
Sport and Recreation Branch



Active schools = happy students

Did you know?

Regular physical activity is good for your body and your brain? Being active improves not only your physical health but your mental health too.

Even a short ten-minute workout can improve your mood and build self – confidence.

RPAY is feeling Inspired

The fourth annual Arctic Inspiration Prize Ceremony was held in Ottawa on January 27, 2016. The Arctic Inspiration Prize encourages innovative projects that mobilize knowledge into action and benefit people and communities in Canada's Arctic. Recognizing the power and potential of recreation, the Selection Committee awarded \$600,000 to the Tri-Territorial Recreation Training (TRT) initiative Project.

Nominated by Yukon's two-time Olympic cyclist Zach Bell, and led by the Recreation Parks and Association of Yukon (RPAY), the TRT initiative will strengthen the capacity of recreation leaders in rural and remote communities through the delivery of a specialized training program. Across the three territories, recreation coordinators and directors, youth leaders, board members, coaches, fitness leaders, camp counselors, and after school leaders will have access to meaningful learning opportunities based on 13 foundational competencies. Through recreation leadership, people and communities will be empowered to collectively enhance individual, community and environmental wellbeing.



Building 'confidence, skills and friendships'

"In Northern communities there are always people who are willing to support positive recreational programming, but a lot of times they are ill-equipped," says Olympic cyclist Zach Bell.

Bell grew up in Watson Lake, Yukon, and knows first-hand how important recreational activities are to young people in the North.

"Positive programming doesn't just give youth a new thing to focus on that may take them away from the more negative distractions.

"Getting kids outside their comfort zone, allowing them to try new activities; that builds confidence, skills and friendship."

(CBC interview January 26, 2016)



Kids are in the kitchen

Kids in the Kitchen (KIK) is a kid's cooking program that provides children 6-11 years old with an opportunity to develop new skills while they learn healthy nutrition practices in a fun and social environment! Through our RHEAL leader program, RPAY is proud to support KIK programs in Faro, Teslin, Watson Lake, Takhini River subdivision and Hidden Valley. During our Yukon Moves training workshop, seven new leaders were trained, two of whom were kids themselves, and are now helping deliver the program in Hidden Valley. For more info about KIK contact adrienne@rpay.ca



Smells like teen spirit

January saw a second call out for applications for our Teen Challenge Action Grants. These small grants, funded through ParticipACTION, allow teens to come up with innovative ways to get active. By removing barriers we are not only helping teens establish healthy habits for life, we are facilitating stronger connections to the community and fostering social interactions that help build confidence and self-esteem.

1.

Girl Power: We love this as only 2% of Canadian teenaged girls are getting enough physical activity.

2.

Back to nature: ParticipACTION stated that the biggest risk is keeping kids indoors.

3.

Getting pumped: Fitness and weight training, weighs in as another top teen pick.

Interested in applying for the Teen Challenge Action Grants? Next intake will be August 2016.

Cycle Smart is gearing up

Cycle Smart is back for its sixth spring in Yukon elementary schools, with bicycle safety training for students and, new this year, the opportunity for teachers to participate in leader training.

Teachers interested in offering bicycle safety training are invited to attend the Cycle Smart leader training session **Sunday, May 1**.

In Whitehorse, the bicycle safety training program is offered to all Grade 4 and 5 classes (other grades may participate subject to space availability). In participating rural Yukon communities, all elementary aged students can participate subject to scheduling availability.

In Whitehorse, the in-class portion of the program will be offered **April 25-27**. The **40-minute in-class workshop** covers basic bicycle safety including the rules of the road, bike fit, helmet fit, and how to avoid accidents. The **on-bike playground portion** of the program is scheduled for the week of **May 2-6**.

Cycle Smart will tour rural communities during the week of **May 9 - 13**. This 80-minute program takes students through a series of stations to learn and practice practical bicycling skills. A fleet of "loaner" bikes and helmets is provided for those students unable to bring their own.

For more information, contact jenyfer@rpay.ca





It's Time to Make Room for Play

HOW TO SWAP SCREEN TIME FOR ACTIVE PLAY

CHILDREN AGE 5-11

The Canadian Paediatric Society suggests limiting screen time to less than 1 to 2 hours per day for older children. Make family rules that limit how much screen time your kids are allowed each day, and stick to them.

Explain to your kids the importance of outdoor and active play and establish active play as the norm at an early age. This also helps reinforce that minimal screen time is not a punishment.

Eliminate background TV. If the TV is turned on — even if it's just in the background — it's likely to draw your child's attention. If you're not actively watching TV, turn it off.

Throughout the school year, after-school is a key timeslot for kids. Register your child in active after-school programs in the community, encourage them to participate in intramural sports, and arrange active after-school playdates with their friends.

Kids naturally play more actively when they're outdoors, so send them outside, or better yet, head out with them.

Before you switch on the TV or the computer for your children, stop and think — could they spend the time being active and have some 'small screen' time later on?

Have a list of active indoor and outdoor games or activities, so you can suggest alternatives to watching TV or playing on the computer.

YOUTH AGE 12-17

Don't allow a TV, computer or cell phone in your teen's bedroom. Keep them in a common area of the family home so you can monitor use.

Set a good example. Be a good role model by limiting your own screen and cell phone use time.

Put mobile devices (including yours) "to sleep" in a designated spot in the house one hour before bedtime. Late-night chatting online, surfing and texting with friends shouldn't cut into important sleep time.

Encourage participation in active after-school programs at school and in the community. Urge your teens to walk (bike, skateboard) home from school rather than getting a ride.

Make screen time active time; challenge the family to see who can do the most push-ups, jumping jacks or leg lifts during commercial breaks.

If you teens need an extra push away from screens, plan active family outings, like skating, hiking or a family yoga class.

Unplug for a day. Designate one day a week or month as a screen-free day for the whole family.

Make family rules that limit how much screen time your kids are allowed each day, and stick to them. The gold standard to strive for is two hours or less per day.

Unplug & Play





Give me shelter

RPAY's Winter Active for Life (WAFL) is building on its success with our Winter Adventure Shelter program.

After years of quality snow fun opportunities, RPAY decided it was time for an adventure! RPAY has joined forces with two of the Yukon's wilderness veterans, Jane Vincent and Hector MacKenzie to offer the Adventure Shelter Program.

Since it's debut in January, the program has already been hosted in Pelly Crossing, Golden Horn and Old Crow.

Kids of all ages dig in to create a variety of shelters such as a wall tent, lean-tos, snow caves and quinzees using the environment around them.

Jane says the program is appealing to youth. "It's something that is close to their heart, being on the land, using the shovels and tools." In all groups she saw youth choose to break off after the

main cave was built and start their own smaller ones. "It's about play, creativity and being able to make it their own."

After the shelters are completed, it is time to test them out. Lunch and hot drinks are served and for a brave few in Old Crow, a caribou hide and sleeping bags were unrolled for a good night's sleep.

Yukon Moves - A Leadership Experience

January saw RPAY host our biggest leadership gathering to date. Over 40 individuals from all over the Yukon came together during the Yukon Moves leadership workshop. This five-day workshop series saw individuals who encourage increased physical activity in children and youth

at school, after-school and in the community, participate in a wide variety of training opportunities. Workshops included: Kids in the Kitchen, Adventure Shelters, Self-Care, Managing Behaviors, Physical Literacy, Building Community Relationships and DancePl3y training. It



also provided a valuable opportunity for communities leaders to network and share their triumphs. Thanks to all who participated.

TALES FROM THE TRAILS

HOW A SPORT CAN GROW

A winter sport for everyone. Dog mushing can be the sport of choice in long, very cold winters; a pastime where you can really get bundled up. Cross country skiing is more challenging in -30 to -40 temperatures. I remember seeing one or two cross country skiers braving the cold when I moved to Dawson 14 years ago and I wondered how we could convince the community to embrace this sport that I loved so much.

When working for Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation, I scabbled together some ski gear so that I could do some outdoor winter programming. We started off with a snowshoe/cross country ski program. About this time I heard how RPAY and Cross Country Yukon were encouraging communities outside of Whitehorse to take on the sport. A relationship was formed and we were one step closer to really getting skiing off the ground in Dawson.

The school had purchased gear for the Kindergarten to Grade 3 program and we were able to borrow enough gear from around town and the Recreation Department to outfit the high school students. This left just one gap in our program the Grade 4 through 7 students

had nothing. A phone call to Jan Downing from her sister in the Sovereign Lake Ski Area solved the problem. A whole suite of cross country gear was available. Through KATTS, our local trails club, we were able to purchase enough gear to fit all students, Grades K through 12.

With kids learning the basic skills through the FUNdamental program families began picking up the sport generating a renewed interest in cross country skiing in the community. The City of Dawson Recreation Department started doing after school programming and upgraded their gear so now have a great rental program.

The goal has always been to promote a barrier free sport, to introduce families and neophytes to a fun way to enjoy our winters and to foster life long learning of a healthy outdoor activity. Our recently enhanced groomed ski trails furthers that ideal. And lo, the sport of cross country skiing continues to grow in Dawson!

Thank you to Cathie Findlay, a long-time RHEAL leader and skiing enthusiast, for providing us with this article. Have a story to share? We'd love to hear from you. Email rpay@rpay.ca



Dear RPAY

"I learned that you have to believe in yourself."
~ Student

"The grant allowed me to share with my students the importance of an active lifestyle. I also noted an improvement in positive attitudes, work habits, and being calmer in class so they could learn."
~ Teacher

"I think the gathering (workshop series) is a great idea; a place that experiences can be shared and RHEAL leaders can grow." ~ RHEAL Leader

RPAY and Sport Yukon are engaged! Are you?

This past month RPAY and Sport Yukon staff travelled to Ottawa to attend “Community Engagement- The Next Generation.” The conference explored many aspects of engagement and how it has changed over the years with technology. Good old fashion face-to-face chats, emails and phone calls still top the list in the North, but social media is on the rise as cell service increases across the Yukon. More and more people are turning to their phones and tablets and using platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram for information and communication.

Upcoming Opportunities

I'M FIT YUKON April 30 – May 1st

Fitness and wellness buffs will be out in full force in Whitehorse for the I'M FIT YUKON Fitness and Wellness Conference. The conference will include a wide variety of workshops and presentations suitable for fitness instructors and general health enthusiasts who just want to learn more about leading a healthy lifestyle. RPAY is proud to support rural Yukon fitness instructors interested in this opportunity. For more information please email adrienne@rpay.ca

Junior High REM May 17-18th

Faro will host 80 rural grade 7-8 students for the Rural Experiential Model (REM). This program brings together rural students for an intensive experience with engaging hands-on activities, lead by local Yukon Experts and First Nations Elders. RPAY is thrilled to sending contractor Mia Lee, who will be leading a session on Playground Leadership. Youth learn to become mentors and leaders and have a lot of fun as their confidence soars.



Tell us how you engage? RPAY wants to know your preferred ways of engagement. Do you want something you can hold in your hands such as a newsletter, or do you prefer to surf websites? Do you post on Facebook or re-tweet on Twitter? Let us know by following us on Facebook.ca/goRPAY or Twitter at RPAY1

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of the Yukon

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