

PLANET YOUTH TIMISKAMING

Project Update: September 2025

PLANET
Youth®

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TIMISKAMING

Building supportive communities for children and youth.

Planet Youth Timiskaming is a 5-year pilot project based on the Icelandic Prevention Model, a proven approach to reduce alcohol and drug use among young people. Planet Youth empowers communities to work together to build strong foundations for youth well-being.

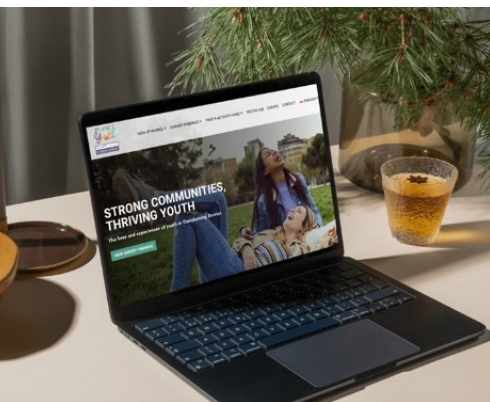
Planet Youth focuses on strengthening key protective factors for youth like positive relationships with family and friends, participation in after-school activities, and engagement in school and community life. Using the Planet Youth approach, our communities will gain valuable insights into the health and wellbeing of young people, co-creating effective local solutions, and track changes over time.



Building on Our Momentum

Over the past year, Planet Youth Timiskaming has made big strides in bringing communities together to support youth in meaningful ways. Here's a quick look at what we've achieved together:

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UPTO:



Planet Youth Timiskaming Website:
<https://timiskamingyouth.ca/>

Launched Our Website

This year, we officially launched the Planet Youth Timiskaming website, your one-stop shop for updates, events, resources, and local survey results.



Local Action Team members meeting to discuss monthly updates of Planet Youth Timiskaming.

Developed Local Action Teams

We now have **three** Local Action Teams: one in the North, Central, and South zones of our district. These teams are made up of community partners, caregivers, youth, and service providers who are passionate about making positive change.

These teams have been gathering community feedback to inform next steps, helping deliver local programs and building strong community connections to improve the environment for youth.

Set Our Goals and Action Plan

Based on what we heard from youth in the 2023 survey, each action team set local priorities and created community-driven action plans to improve youth wellbeing.



WE'RE FOCUSING ON THREE BIG GOALS:

Strengthening youths' sense of belonging and connection to their community.

Creating more positive and fun things for youth to do in their free time.

Raising awareness of the protective factors that help youth thrive.

Secured Federal Funding

This funding has helped us to:

- Create **2 new staff positions** to plan and coordinate PYT initiatives.
- Implement **community action** to reduce youth substance use and improve well-being.
- Partner with a Brock University researcher to **evaluate our impact** and share lessons with other rural communities across Canada.

Planet Youth Timiskaming received

\$743,859

from the **Public Health Agency of Canada** to strengthen youth substance use prevention efforts over the next two and a half years.

Youth Engagement Training

In February 2025, we partnered with Future North from Sudbury to deliver **Youth Engagement Training**, a hands-on workshop designed to build real skills for working with youth in meaningful ways.

The training brought together service providers, community partners, and youth from across the district to explore what true youth engagement looks like. Together, we learned practical tools to better involve youth in programs, planning, and decision-making. The training was an important step toward creating more inclusive and youth-led spaces in our communities.



"If you want to engage youth, it should be at the table, not to clear the table." ☆ ☆

Community partners and youth participate in youth engagement training led by Future North.

PLANET YOUTH IN ACTION

Using the first Planet Youth survey results and input from youth and the community, the Local Action Teams created an Action Plan. From this, we designed and launched our first three community initiatives:



Floating Youth Hubs

We started piloting floating Youth Hubs in four communities: Kirkland Lake, Englehart, Cobalt, and Temiskaming Shores.

These are free, after-school drop-in spaces where youth can hang out, get support, and build connections.

12 Youth Hubs held so far

120 Youth reached

Check out the promo video created by Russell O'Byrne, a local youth, on Youth Hubs: <https://timiskamingyouth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/PlanetYouth4.mp4>



Youth participating in activities and gym time at the Floating Youth Hubs in Temiskaming Shores and Cobalt.

Youth Activity Fund

We launched a Youth Activity Fund that supported dozens of youth-informed projects across the district, from cooking workshops and graffiti walls to providing free gym passes for youth who might not otherwise have access.

\$28,250 Distributed across Timiskaming

28 Projects funded for 2025

These projects are run by community members and organizations, and they're helping expand the options for fun, meaningful activities that matter to youth.

See the full list of all the funded projects here: <https://timiskamingyouth.ca/youth-activity-fund-2/>



Highlights from projects funded through the Youth Activity Fund, including the Graffiti Wall by Temiskaming Art Gallery, Englehart High School's pottery club expansion, cooking workshops in Englehart, and free film workshops led by Alyssa Kostello.



Parent Cafés

With training from **Be Strong Families**, a handful of community members were trained to host Parent Cafés. Cafés are cozy, welcoming spaces for parents and caregivers to talk, listen, and support each other in the journey of parenting.

Each Café has a theme and is hosted by a local parent or caregiver, with guided conversations in small groups.



Community members take part in Parent Café host training delivered by Be Strong Families in March 2025.

23 Local parents/caregivers were trained.

5 Parent Cafés held so far

54 Parents/caregivers reached.

OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

Community Engagement Events

We joined dozens of local events to hear from youth and families from pow wows to school events and community days to continue to listen, share, learn and build connections across Timiskaming.

A few highlights include the Youth Mental Health Carousel at KLDCS, a skate social in Kirkland Lake and the local Bike exchange festivals.

19 Events and presentations so far.

900 People have been reached through these community engagement events!



Scenes from community events where Planet Youth Timiskaming engaged with youth, families, and community members. Events pictured include the Youth Bonfire (September 2024), the Temiskaming Bike Exchange booth (June 2025), Kirkland Lake District Composite School's Mental Health Week (April 2025), and the Powwows at Timiskaming District Secondary School and for National Indigenous Peoples Day in Earlton (June 2025).

Drug Free Kids Canada Presentations

This Spring, we invited Steve Keller from **Drug Free Kids Canada (DFKC)** to give a series of presentations for both youth and parents across the district.

It focused on helping young people and families gain skills to have open **conversations about substance use**, healthy coping, and making safe decisions.



Parents take part in a Drug Free Kids Canada presentation at Timiskaming District Secondary School.



One-page educational resources from Drug Free Kids Canada provide information on various substances and their effects; A parent participant wins a gift basket sponsored by DSB1 in Kirkland Lake.

7

Student presentations

3

Parent presentations

442

Students reached

48

Parents attended

Community Spotlight



Calling all Community Experts!

In collaboration with Planet Youth Timiskaming, The Town of Englehart is looking to host a series of workshops for youth focusing on arts, culture and life skills. If you have a gift you would like to share with the next generation, please reach out!

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Cooking & Baking
- Drama & Improv
- Basic sewing skills and quilting
- Bicycle repair
- Art (felted, painting, needle-point, beading)
- Knitting or crochet
- Cursive writing or calligraphy
- Music
- Wood working
- Gardening & Plant Care
- Wreath making or centerpieces
- Resume, Cover Letter and job search resources



All materials will be provided and workshops will take place monthly, after school on a weekday.

Englehart youth participate in the cooking workshop organized by Johanna Paradis, Town of Englehart and led by Amy Hiscock, community member.

The small town with a big heart!

The Town of Englehart is making waves in building a more youth-friendly community.

They regularly host cooking, arts, and other skills workshops for young people, hire summer students to plan and lead inclusive summer programming, and play a key leadership role with the Planet Youth Steering Committee and Central Action Team.

Their work shows what's possible when a community builds on its own strengths to create opportunities for young people.



For more information or to volunteer, please call (705) 544-1952 or email jparadis@englehart.ca



What's Next?

Planet Youth Timiskaming Survey 2.0 is coming in the 2025-2026 school year!

We're preparing for our second round of the Planet Youth survey in the 2025– 2026 school year. All students in Grades 10 and 11 will be invited to participate. The survey helps us track progress, learn what's changed since 2023, and identify new areas for action.

For more information or to get involved please contact:

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Tera Blackburn, NEOFACS, Erika Aelterman, Northeastern Public Health, and Johanna Paradis, Town of Englehart welcome youth at the sign-in desk during a Youth Hub.



<https://timiskamingyouth.ca/>



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