

Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund

The Youth Expo 2017

Final Report

Goal and Objectives

The goal of the Youth Expo is to build an event that incorporates as many ideas as possible where youth of all ages can walk away better informed, more knowledgeable and connected to resources that will allow them to pursue new activities, attend or join community programs or groups and/or apply a new approach to better health and wellness.

Our objective is to remove as many social determinates as possible providing our participants with opportunities regardless of money, gender, and education. Kids attend for free, businesses participate for free. We host as many vendors as physically possible in an effort to expose, educate and inspire.

Each vendor is required to be as interactive as possible in order to engage our audience, providing them a hands-on experience.

We include high profile personalities and performers as they play an important role in representing to our youth the results of hard work, passion and motivation.

South Colchester Academy students are invited to participate in the delivery of the expo in the hopes of obtaining service learning skills. This opportunity provides students from South Colchester Academy creditable co-op hours.

Outline and Work Completed

Project development started in September of 2016 with budget build and an initial mailout to potential sponsors and supporters.

September through to December fundraising initiatives were pursued through tradeshow, events and written communication. Grant applications were submitted and presentations were delivered when necessary. Initial mailout to vendors was sent with all pertinent information regarding participating in the expo.

January through March the website was built and sponsors, supporters and vendors were added on a daily basis. Social media accounts were updated daily with continued recognition to supporters and event information.

March and April printing and physical items were purchased and built. The layout was designed and vendors were allocated space.

April lottery license applications were submitted, printing was finished. Facility and layout was evaluated and approved by Fire Marshall. Pick up and set up of all materials required was completed. Sound system was tested. Signs and directions were posted. Coordination of shuttle service was completed. Fire Department traffic control was arranged. Broadcasting notices were executed.

April 22nd, doors opened at 9 AM.

End of April, we do a debrief and record ideas, improvements for next year. Complete reports and financial statements. Send out thank you letters, post pictures on social media sites.

Results

81 vendors inspired 3,200 guests. It was an action-packed day from 9 AM to 4 PM.

Assessment, lessons learned

Based on prior year results of 56 vendors and 1,700 guests, we surpassed our goal of vendor participation and attendance. We have confirmed the majority of vendors are returning for the 3rd Annual Youth Expo along with at least 5 new ones.

Many vendors provided free memberships and passes to their facility. MacQuarries gave away 2000 frisbees. Marmac Athletics provided 500 water bottles. Golden Green provided 1000 packages of seeds. Roop Esso provided 100 pair of sunglasses. Truro Police provided 250 back packs. Sobey's provided free health snacks for all participants.

The vendor's interaction with youth went beyond our expectations. The Brookfield Fire Department built a life size Janga game and had kids squeezing tennis balls with the jaws of life. The Salmon Association had their youth members teaching other youth how to tie flies. The Truro Cheer Club was building human pyramids, the Police provided a dog services demonstration and the Cyber Bully walked around all day. The Brookfield Cadets had a paper airplane competition. There were endless line ups for the trapeze, the fly fishing pond, the climbing wall, golf, laser tag and more. Vendor's are realizing what it takes to engage youth, there is a special type of interaction required.

We were fortunate to have Steve Clapperton attend and teach at the Fly Fishing pool. We had Emmett and Jillian, from Amazing Race Canada attend and speak to the guests about their journey and experience on the show. We had local Timber Jacks, Dance Clubs and Martial Arts performances.

South Colchester Academy students managed the entrance, door prizes, ticket sales and the craft table. They are a huge asset to the expo. It has been discussed with South Colchester Academy that the Youth Expo be incorporated into the curriculum of the O2 program in its entirety, starting in September, capturing the initial development stages providing a more in depth level on service learning. This would allow students to get involved in the development of the project from start to finish.

Recommendations

Each year we host this event we learn valuable lessons. A big issue this year was crowd control. We need to become professional people movers. Improve the flow and direction of the crowd in an effort to implement a more pleasant experience.

We want to continue to host the Expo at the Don Henderson Memorial Sportsplex. It provides economic development to a rural community and supports a community facility. We need to better evaluate the space and maneuver vendors accordingly. We also recognize the facilities limits and need to bring in support like portable washrooms, a sitting area and another food source.