



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Bryna Warshawsky, Acting Medical Officer of Health

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'ONE LIFE ONE YOU' HOSTS SUCCESSFUL SMOKE-FREE OUTDOOR MOVIE EVENT IN VICTORIA PARK

Recommendation

It is recommended that Report No. 122-12 re "One Life One You Hosts Successful Smoke-Free Outdoor Movie Event In Victoria Park" be received for information.

Background Information

Smoking and the use of tobacco products in movies rated for children and youth is a serious public health issue. Research has shown that the more youth see impressions of smoking in movies, the more likely they are to start smoking. In 2011, 85% of movies that showed tobacco use and tobacco industry products were rated as appropriate for children and teens by the Ontario Film Review Board. On-screen smoking and tobacco use promotes tobacco industry products to children and teens. On April 14, 2011, the Board of Health reviewed Report No. 036-11 re "Call For Action Against Smoking In Movies" (attached as [Appendix A](#)) and endorsed the Ontario Coalition for Smoke-free Movies Policies to reduce youth exposure to on-screen smoking and tobacco.

The Youth Engagement Program (under the Chronic Disease Prevention and Tobacco Control Team), **One Life One You (OLOY)**, is made up of seven high school-aged youth (Youth Leaders) who are employed part-time with the Health Unit. The program engages youth in the development and implementation of youth-to-youth health promotion campaigns and programs with a focus on tobacco and co-related risk factors like alcohol and other drugs, energy drinks and sugar sweetened caffeinated beverages and physical inactivity. The Youth Leaders reach out and engage other youth and youth groups yielding positive health promotion program outcomes and youth development outcomes for the Middlesex-London community. **One Life One You** is strongly opposed to tobacco in movies and has been working diligently to prevent a future generation of smokers by asking for no smoking or tobacco use in any future children and youth- rated movies in Ontario.

The Event

On September 21st, **One Life One You (OLOY)** hosted its first Smoke-free Outdoor Movie event in Victoria Park. **OLOY** partnered with the Canadian Cancer Society and the YMCA of Western Ontario to provide a free community event in an effort to bring awareness to the smoke-free movie issue and to garner support for a film rating change in Ontario to protect children and youth from viewing smoking and tobacco products in movies.

The movie, *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*, was chosen because not only is it tobacco-free and family friendly, but the movie contains excellent messages about environmental responsibility. Tobacco butts are the world's most littered item (4.5 trillion cigarettes per year) and are non-biodegradable, taking up to 12 years to break down into smaller particles; they also leach harmful chemicals into the soil and water. The outdoor tobacco smoke is also an environmental health hazard.

The event was promoted through a variety of channels in the two weeks leading up to the event. Advertisements were placed on the radio, in local newspapers and on Facebook. The Child Health and Young Adult Teams assisted in the promotion of the event in elementary and high schools. Additionally, the City of London's Parks and Recreation division and the London Public Library assisted by putting up posters throughout their locations.

Outcomes

The outcomes of this event were extremely positive from both a youth engagement perspective and from a smoke-free movie advocacy perspective. Highlights of the event include the following:

- It was a youth-led, adult supported activity which is the top rung of Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation for engaging youth in a meaningful and sustained way.
- Sixty (60) youth volunteers engaged in actively promoting the impact of smoking in movies rated for children and teens at the event. This peer-to-peer model has proven especially effective with children and youth.
- The event was attended by 1300-1500 people who were made aware of the impact of smoking in movies through their conversations with the youth and through a Public Service Announcement (PSA) that was shown on the screen prior to the film. The PSA was developed by youth from the Ontario Lung Association.
- Six interactive stations including such activities as trivia, face painting, and free popcorn provided further opportunity to engage children and parents in the conversation about smoke-free movies.
- Four hundred (400) postcards were signed and forwarded to the Ontario Film Review Board calling for a change to the movie rating system. Community support for a rating change at the event was very high with an estimated 95% of those asked, signing the advocacy cards.
- The event was done in partnership with the Canadian Cancer Society and the YMCA which extended the reach of the program and its messages about exposure to smoking in movies for children and youth.
- All media coverage surrounding the outdoor movie night was very positive.

Conclusions

Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario. Smoking in movies challenges Ontario's tobacco control efforts. **One Life One You** and the youth engagement program will continue to actively engage and support youth to take action to address health issues of importance to them, following youth engagement principles including inclusiveness, positive youth development, and flexibility and innovation.

This report was prepared by Ms. Michelle Alvey, Health Promoter, and Ms. Linda Stobo, Manager Chronic Disease Prevention and Tobacco Control Team



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This report addresses the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards:

Comprehensive Tobacco Control; 1, 3, 7, 11