Real Food Active Living

YES! empowers youth, in partnership with adults, to create community change.

Wednesday March 14, 2012
Bronwyn Lucas, Executive Director
Rich Burris, Youth Staff: Real Food Active Living
Katie Spears, Team Lead: Real Food Active Living
Who is YES!

http://youtu.be/oRblmm93CLs
Who is YES!

- Statewide non-profit
- Offices in Asheville, Charlotte, Raleigh, NC
- More than 50% of staff are high-school aged youth
- Youth-Adult partnerships/intergenerational effort (mission)
- Youth trainings/adult trainings
- Focus on achieving policy, system and environmental changes that impact adolescent health
- Organizational and adult capacity building
Who is YES!

- Started in January 2008
- The YES! Youth Empowerment Model used since the early 2000’s
- Flagship Program: Question Why, Teen Tobacco Prevention
Who is YES!

Youth Empowered Solutions
YES! empowers youth, in partnership with adults, to create community change.
MYTHS about Youth Participation

• Myth 1 Youth participation is accomplished by placing one youth on a board or committee.
• Myth 2 Youth participation means that adults surrender their roles as guides and educators.
• Myth 3 Adults are ready for youth participation.
• Myth 4 Youth are ready to participate; they just need the opportunity.
Skill Development Critical Awareness Opportunities

Youth Empowered Solutions
Youth Empowerment Checklist

Assessment of your work with youth!
Up the River Activity
The Social Justice Tree

Leaves

Roots

Youth Empowered Solutions
Skill Development Critical Awareness Opportunities

Youth Empowered Solutions
Skill Development

- Learning How to Make Change
  - Practicing how to speak in front of policy makers and the media
  - Learning about effective teaching techniques for peers and youth
  - Studying media for advertising messages
  - Discovering how to run a group and create action plans
Critical Awareness

- Asking Why Questions
  - Why do some communities have grocery stores and others don’t?
  - Why are unhealthy food items advertised with youth icons?
  - Why are there more sidewalks in certain neighborhoods?
Opportunities

- Takings action to create community change
  - Bring youth to the decision making table…and KEEP them there!
  - Put youth in front of the microphone
  - Allow youth to develop and conduct peer programs
2/3 Activity

Skill Development – Youth strengthen their skills to effectively make decisions, positively interact with their peers, and act as community advocates.

Critical Awareness – Youth gain a deeper understanding of issues that impact their lives and environments, and how to create systemic change within their communities.

Opportunities – Youth identify platforms for decision making, public speaking, and utilizing their skills and heightened sense of awareness.
Empowering Outcomes

Individuals

Train youth on media advocacy
Train youth on public speaking
Train youth on peer education

→ Youth write and publish pro health articles/LTEs
→ Youth present to School Board
→ Groups engage in advocacy work after youth conduct peer education
Empowering Outcomes

Agency/Org

- Shared decision making
- Clear roles & responsibilities
- Agency becomes more diverse
- Youth are part of planning
- Trust grows between youth and adults
- Capacity increases
- Increase access to more parts of the community
- Urgency/relevance of solutions is increased

Youth Empowered Solutions
Empowering Outcomes

Community

Youth consistently quoted in the press
Youth as decision makers (not just window dressing)
Engagement of more of the community

Positive perception of youth grows
Youth participate in campaigns and sit on community boards
Programming becomes more diverse, democracy is more fully achieved

Youth Empowered Solutions
What does a Youth Look Like?

Characteristics? Trends? Defining Moments!

Music, Arts, Culture?

Youth Empowered Solutions
83% want to own a car.

95% said saving was important.

70% want to live in an urban area.

50% want to travel domestically and abroad.

Food and entertainment were most important.

75% participate in social media.
The Evolution of Food and Exercise

http://youtu.be/fmGylf4F3AY
Real Food and Active Living

- Originally funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2008-2010)

- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of NC Foundation invested in 2010 to continue the RWJF investment

- 2011 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina made a significant investment in YES! to expand the reach of our work to build capacity among organizations to address childhood obesity

- 3 Full Time Adults, 9-10 youth staff

- Currently located in Asheville and Charlotte, NC
Real Food and Active Living

• YES! does not set local or statewide policy priorities but we promote best practices set forth by ESMMNC and the CDC.

• Provide training and technical assistance to build capacity, mobilize youth, impact change.

• YES! focuses on sustainable system, environmental and policy changes.

Youth Empowered Solutions
Real Food and Active Living

- **Adult Leader Trainings:**
  - Youth Empowerment 101
  - Understanding the Generation
  - Youth Recruitment and Retention
  - Advocacy and Action Planning
  - Health Issue 102

- **Youth Leader Trainings:**
  - Real Food 101
  - Active Living 101
  - Media Literacy/Advocacy 101
  - Youth Advocacy 101
Real Food and Active Living

• Asheville Team: advocating/planning with Asheville High School to implement a second-chance breakfast and revenues will help to support a healthy salad bar.

• Charlotte Team: advocating with the CMS SHAC and The CORE to pass a stronger healthy vending wellness policy.

• Laurinburg, NC youth team: advocating/action planning to gain community support to renovate a building for a youth-friendly wellness/fitness center.

• Hamlet, NC youth team: advocating to secure town land for a large-scale community garden in an identified food desert.

• Collaborating with the Southern Obesity Summit to bring their event to Charlotte, NC, engage 100+ youth from across the south and to create strong outcomes.
YES! Custom Services

- Youth Trainings
- Adult Leader Trainings
- Learning Collaborative
- YES! Appraisal
- Technical Assistance
- Resource Creation
Empowering youth, in partnership with adults, to create community change

http://youtu.be/oCXppM9MM70
http://youtu.be/wyoIppuWSi4
Questions?

For more information visit
www.youthempowerededsolutions.org

Contact Info:

Bronwyn Lucas: Bronwyn@youthempoweredsolutions.org

Katie Spears: Katie@youthempoweredsolutions.org

Rich Burris: Charlotte@youthempoweredsolutions.org