

Lifestyle Tips



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Promoting Physical Activity to Youth

We constantly hear about the multitude benefits of physical activity, so it may be surprising that only 12% of Canadian children and youth meet the physical activity guidelines of 90 minutes per day. What is more alarming is that physical activity levels decline as children get older, with 15% of 5 to 10 year olds, 12% of 11 to 14 year olds and only 7% of 15 to 19 year olds meeting the guidelines¹.

Sogo Active is a national physical activity program, targeted at youth aged 13-19, created to help address the physical inactivity crisis among our young people. The initiative is presented by Coca-Cola Canada in collaboration with ParticipACTION and a network of partner organizations in every province and territory across the country.

Launched in December of 2008, the first phase of Sogo Active built on the power of the Olympic Winter Games to inspire participation. As a presenting partner of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay, Coca-Cola selected over 1000 Sogo youth for the experience of a lifetime—the opportunity to carry the Olympic Flame in the longest domestic torch relay in Olympic history.



So far, over 12,000 youth have joined Sogo Active, supported by over 1200 local Community Host organizations in neighbourhoods across Canada. Over \$500,000 in micro grants, each up to \$500, have been awarded to support youth activities, and Sogo Active has supported teens to get active and inspire others in ways that mean something to them:

In Halifax, NS, the African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes and its weekly youth group used Sogo funding to expand the organization's physical activity program for African immigrant youth living in the Halifax area and invest in some new equipment to support ongoing activities.



In Gravenhurst, ON, a P.E. teacher used a Sogo Active grant to buy pedometers for 14 high school students she teaches with developmental challenges such as Down syndrome and autism. The youth have been able to work together to get active and track their progress.

In Port Hardy, BC, four youth in the Kwakiutl Youth Group got together with the idea to get more active with their peers. They recruited friends and developed and completed a 10-week fitness plan, using a Sogo grant to reward themselves with lift passes, rentals and lessons for a three-day ski trip to Mount Washington.

The second phase of Sogo Active, launched in July of 2010, builds on the momentum created by the Olympic Torchbearer incentive, and gives young people across Canada new reasons and new opportunities to get active. The next Sogo asks young people to get moving by taking the Sogo Active Challenge, attending Sogo Active Events, and working together to overcome the inactivity crisis.

Through extensive research conducted with youth and Sogo users, ParticipACTION learned that, while teenagers knew they should be active,

they didn't see inactivity as a 'cause' they really cared about. However, when they learned more about the inactivity statistics, they told us they cared about physical inactivity as much as other issues that mattered to them, such as poverty, the environment and AIDS.

Sogo Active is committed to educating teens about the importance

of physical activity for health, wellbeing, chronic disease prevention, academic readiness and mental health.

Sogo Active asks youth to take control of their lives and take responsibility for their physical activity levels, and then supports them with the tools and expertise they need to get active. The goal is to have teens increase their physical activity levels to the recommended 90 minutes per day. By joining Cross-Canada Challenges, taking local Challenges offered by Community Host organizations or by creating their own Challenges and getting their friends to join, youth can find new ways to be active and motivate each other.

<http://www.sogoactive.com/>



¹ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. (2009). Kids CAN PLAY! Encouraging children to be active at home, at school, and in their communities. Retrieved from http://www.cflri.ca/eng/statistics/surveys/documents/CANPLAY2009_Bulletin01_PA_levelsEN.pdf