

Paddling Together to Prepare Young Leaders

Workshop Summary of Participant Input
First Alaskans - Youth and Elders Conference
Facilitated by Association of Alaska School Boards
Allan Hayton and Andre' Layral

Youth Identify BIG Issues

- In this workshop we asked youth participants to identify the BIG issues they face (or are on their minds) growing up in their village or community.
- The purpose was to gain a youth perspective about the issues that are important to them
- The following slides are youth responses

Substance Abuse Issues

- Drugs coming into villages and communities
- Drug use by community members
- Drug use by teens
- Issues related to drug use and abuse
- Changing the situation when drugs are all around us
- Alcohol use by community members
- Alcohol use by teens
- Issues related to alcohol use and abuse
- Tobacco use by young people

Family Issues

- Neglect
- Divorce rate
- Non-support by family members
- Having someone to turn to in a crisis
(chronic sickness, depression, suicide)

Abuse Issues

- Effect of domestic violence on families, children and youth
- Sexual Abuse
- Teen Pregnancy
- Fighting

Racism Issues

- Non-native toward natives
- Natives toward non-natives

Education Issues

- Desire for more language instruction
- Desire for more instruction in traditional cultural skills
- Increased drop out rate

Negative Teen Issues

- Making bad choices
- Lack of Self Esteem
- Depression
- Suicide
- Boredom
- Limited activities
- Mischief and vandalism
- Lack of opportunities - leadership

Respect Issues

- Loss of respect for elders
- Lack of positive role models
- Concern about how others judge youth

Supporting and Connecting with Youth

- Participants were asked to identify how adults/elders can better support and connect with youth?

Encouragement

- Provide general encouragement to youth
- Provide encouragement to students for pursuing higher education

- More communication between elders and youth

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Connect and Support.....

- Participants were asked how can adults/elders better support and connect with youth?
- The slides that follow reflect the ideas from teen participants who attended the 2005 AFN Youth and Elders Conference.

Get to Know Us.....

- Provide positive communication and encouragement to do well and make good choices
- Provide encouragement to pursue educational/training opportunities beyond high school
- Support us when times are difficult – model courageousness
- Get to know us by listening more and judging less

Useful Roles in Community.....

- Let us plan community functions
- Let us lead community cultural activities
- Let us help at dinners/ potlatch
- Let us cook together

Be Positive Role Models

- Be positive role models
- Don't use drugs or alcohol
- Be a Mentor - simple things help us
- Talk with us about harmful effects of drugs and alcohol

Prepare Us.....

- Provide more employment options for teens
- Provide internships and other career exploration opportunities that will prepare us for the world of work

Empower Us....

- * Have an elder-youth council
- * Allow teens to lead/manage an organization

Spend more time together teaching and doing things with us

- cultural knowledge classes:
 - (beadwork, tanning hides, snow shoes, etc.)
 - (dance, carving, hunting, sewing, language)
- subsistence and survival skill classes
- teaching language, work in the community, social gatherings)
- Subsistence – fish camps
- Storytelling
- Preparing native foods together

Spend more time together teaching and doing things with us

- Teach us our native languages
- Share subsistence and survival skills
- Pass on oral stories
- Help us prepare traditional foods
- Share cultural knowledge with us:
 - beadwork
 - tanning hides
 - snow shoes
 - Dance
 - Carving
 - Hunting
 - Sewing

Provide more opportunities outside of school day

- Expand school activities to reflect interests of youth
- Support more open gym nights
- Provide other places where youth and adults can do things together
- Indian-Eskimo Olympics Activity

Schools can.....

- Provide more frequent speakers/presentations @ schools
- Provide healthy after school activities
- Help students understand the opportunities for job training for life beyond high school

Useful Roles for Communities to Engage youth in Decision Making

- Involve Teens in Village Council and School Board
- Have village youth councils
- Youth involvement in community council
- Teen on AFN Board
- Have teen/adult committees
- Community meetings of youth-elders
- Elders and youth get together monthly
Provide mentoring, job shadowing and internships