

Dover, NH

Youth **2** Youth

↓ Presentation Handout

EMPOWERING YOUTH IN POLICY CHANGE & ADVOCACY

Thank-you for joining us for today's training. This handout is designed to support this workshop and will be referenced during the training. The contents of this handout represent the original and proprietary work product of Dover Y2Y. Participants in this training are welcome to utilize these materials ***within their own organizations*** for non-profit, drug prevention purposes.

Dover Youth to Youth provides a wide variety of technical assistance, support materials, and customized training services. There is more info on our resources on the last page; and our contact info is below.

↓ Contact Us

Dover Youth to Youth

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www.DoverY2Y.org

*One Voice Model of
Youth Empowerment*

KNOWLEDGE



SKILLS



ACTION

www.DoverY2Y.org

Sample Policy Change Letter To a Local Business: *The Citgo Project*

July 18, 2014

Manager or Owner
Dover Travel Stop (Citgo station)
52 Central Avenue
Dover, NH 03820

Dear Owner or Manager of Dover Citgo/Dover Travel Stop:

Our group, Dover Youth to Youth, is contacting you because one of our main goals as a group is to reduce tobacco use. We have recently noticed that your business operates on a heavily traveled bus route that Dover Middle School, Dover High School, and Garrison Elementary School use. We have also noticed that you have 15 large tobacco ads visible from the street surrounding your store.

We feel that this advertising gives a bad impression to children, and makes it look like smoking is a good thing. Underage smoking is a huge problem and we think that your ads could influence kids, especially because they appear on a busy road near schools.

Most gas stations in Dover only have from 0-3 large tobacco ads outside their store. We feel your amount of advertising is excessive. We are asking that you help Dover Youth to Youth reduce underage smoking by drastically cutting down the number of tobacco ads outside your store to no more than 3 large signs. Less than that would be great.

Dover Youth to Youth is made up of 70 students from Dover and we work closely with students from Somersworth, Rochester and Milton Youth to Youth. We are a peer-oriented drug prevention program for students in grades 6-12. We work on a variety of drug prevention programs throughout the year. These projects alert the community about the dangers of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

We would be glad to talk with you. If you have any questions or want to discuss this issue, you may contact us through Dana Mitchell, our program coordinator, at 603-516-3274 or you may email him at d.mitchell@dover.nh.gov. Thank you again for taking the time to consider our thoughts on this issue.

Hoping to hear from you soon,
Sincerely,

The Students of Dover Youth to
Youth



Key Steps for Youth Participation in the Legislative Process

- 1. Research your issue thoroughly.**
- 2. Develop your group's position on the issue. Develop your idea of how your position or change would help.**
- 3. Find a sponsor (if it's your proposal). Usually this means talking to a member of the legislative body and asking them to submit your proposal. Could be a state senator, member of the city council, etc.**
- 4. Prepare your testimony. Make it simple, concise and logical. Write it down.**
- 5. Prepare visuals that will help illustrate the issue.**
- 6. Educate others – the public, parents, and other youth groups. Create a press release. Perhaps hold a press conference.**
- 7. Practice presentation of testimony (and practice calls if contacting legislators by phone).**
- 8. Other contact with legislators – letters, emails and calls.**
- 9. Deliver testimony at public hearing.**
- 10. How did it go?**
 - ✓ If it failed to pass, start preparing for next time.**
 - ✓ If it passed: (1) thank or recognize supporters and (2) evaluate the need for public education about the new law or other steps to insure law is effective.**



Sample of Actual Legislative Testimony

Testimony by Dover Youth to Youth, Dover, NH

Testimony on: HB 110

Date: _____

Before the: Criminal Justice Committee of the NH House of Representatives

Hello I am _____. And I am _____. We are active members of Dover Youth to Youth, which is a drug and alcohol prevention program based in Dover, NH. We have 70 members in grades 6-12. We are here today to oppose House Bill 1610.

There are several reasons why we are opposed to this bill. The legal drinking age is now twenty-one. One of the reasons it is twenty-one is that a person's brain has not fully developed until their early twenties. While any organ is developing and growing it is more susceptible to chemicals and toxins such as alcohol. The legal drinking age is twenty-one and not eighteen for this specific reason. To be eighteen years old and in the military is the same biologically as being eighteen years old and not in the military.

Another reason we do not support this bill is because members of the military under the legal drinking age could easily supply alcohol to their peers who are not in the military. This could provide access to a lot of underage drinking.

Military personnel are highly trained. When an eighteen year old enlists they are sent to weeks and weeks of very intense boot camps, taught how operate advanced machinery, constantly tested in their position, and closely supervised. There is no boot camp for how to safely drink alcohol. Although military members are mature enough to fight for our country, and leave their home and family- it does not mean they can't develop drinking problems such as addiction, alcohol poisoning, or depression.

Another concern we have is that it is well known that the younger a person starts drinking the more likely they will develop drinking problems later in life. So we do not want to do anything which would encourage earlier drinking.

There are other ways to show our military personnel respect without putting their health at risk or harming them. We are asking you to vote no on House Bill 1610.

Thank you for your time and we would be happy to answer any of your questions.

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Preparing for Types of Questions

Whether you are talking to a reporter, holding a press conference, or testifying before a legislative committee, you may be asked different types of questions. Preparing for them in advance will make an enormous difference in how you deliver your response and the quality of the info you provide. There are several common types of questions. Make sure you are ready to handle any one of these common types of questions:

- **General open ended-** focus on our key message
 - “So what are you guys up to here today?”
 - “Why do you feel this event is important?”
 - “What do you hope to accomplish by doing this?”
 - “Is there anything else I should know about your event?”
- **Personal**
 - Why was it important to you to be a part of this effort?
 - What does this experience mean to you?
 - What did you learn from this experience?
 - What is most important to you?
 - How did you feel about _____ ?
- **Questions with Built-in Negative Assumption**
 - How do you keep up your enthusiasm when you have so little chance of getting change from the industry?
 - Does it bother you that you have so little chance of success?
 - Will you try that again despite the lack of impact?
- **Clarifying questions**
 - So - you feel that we should ban e-cigarettes, or what?
 - So you want big tobacco to list the ingredients?
- **Unanswerable questions**
 - How much nicotine is there in one pack of cigarettes?
 - How many beers will kill a 16 year old?
 - How many cases of beer were sold to teens last month?
- **Questions that aren't your place to answer**
 - Are all of you in favor of making _____ illegal?
 - So what would the group's position on _____ be? [*unless you know that's the group's official position*].
 - Remember if you don't know the answer to a question, or don't want to answer, that is ok. Find someone who can... or simply say “I don't know the answer to that” or “I can't answer that.”

Typical Steps in a Retail Activism Project

✓ **Step #1:** Environmental Scan (What's out there?)

✓ **Step #2:** Decide if there is a problem.

✓ **Step #3:** Attempt purchases to see if kids can buy products that encourage drug use.

✓ **Step #4:** Create a Display out of the



purchased items.

✓ **Step #5:** Prepare & Deliver Letters to Stores.



✓ **Step #6:** Inform the public of the problem & your goals.

✓ **Step #7:** Plan other activities to make the public sensitive to these messages



✓ **Step #8:** Evaluate Results

ANATOMY OF A COMMUNITY AWARENESS INITIATIVE: THE SPENCER GIFTS PROJECT

Project Description:

The members of Dover Youth to Youth decided to take on Spencer Gifts in the Fox Run Mall in the spring of 1998 after students had noticed that the store was selling merchandise that promoted drug use and glorified getting “stoned”. An action team was formed made up of Youth to Youth members that were interested in the project.

Implementation:



RESEARCH. The first step in the effort was to (1) check out and document what kind of merchandise was being sold and (2) test the store to see if kids could purchase these items without a parent present. Several members went to the mall and made a variety of purchases (examples displayed here). It was so easy that they brought a 9-year-old girl to the mall and even she was able to buy the merchandise without a parent. In no case was an adult with them in the store.

The students purchased 10 items over a 2-day period. One T-shirt had the slogan: ***Thank God It's Fry-day – Nothing but a High Day.*** A hat had the slogan: ***Marijuana – at least it's not crack.*** And a poster had the message: ***Johnny likes skinny girls, but he never turns down a fatty*** (the poster

depicts elementary-age children smoking a hand rolled cigarette).

DEVELOP POSITION ON ISSUE. The students discussed the issue as a group and decided that it was not a positive message for Spencer Gifts to be displaying these products that glorify getting high and it was even worse for them to sell them to kids. The students decided that the sale of these items such as hats, shirts, jewelry, and posters sent a message that drug use was “no big deal” and undercut Y2Y’s drug prevention message.



DEVELOP ACTION PLAN. The students decided to take the following action:

- ✓ The students decided that they wanted to go to the media with the issue. The purchases were mounted on display boards and they created a press release stating their position. They held a press conference which resulted in a front page story.
- ✓ Other students prepared and sent a letter to the store at the Mall and a letter to the national home office in Texas. The letters were ignored.
- ✓ The students decided to go to the mall and protest. Six student volunteers went to the mall and brought the large display boards with the samples mounted on them. They attached large messages that said “Spencer Gifts Glorifies Drug Use” and “Spencer Gifts sold us this”. The students went through the mall quietly, allowing shoppers to see the display boards and ask questions. At some point security was called and they were thrown out.
- ✓ The students created a short ***Spencer Gifts video*** and placed it on YouTube.

EVALUATE HOW IT WENT. Following the initial protest, Spencer’s Gifts at the Fox Run Mall reduced, and for a while seemed to eliminate, the offending items. But, as time went on, the products returned to the shelves and was as offensive as ever. However, we did detect one noticeable change. Youth to Youth continued to monitor the store by attempting to purchase products once each year. What the students found in follow up “compliance checks” was that middle school and younger high school aged kids were getting denied 80 – 90% of the time. It would appear that the media stories and attention of the students has had the affect of altering the store’s ***practice*** of selling to young kids and possibly caused the store to adopt a formal or informal policy of screening the age of purchasers.



National Policy Change Campaigns With Local Grassroots Support

In 2006, a Kentucky Coalition learned that Kohl's department stores were selling at least five different drinking games, including "Drinko," a version of the TV game show "Plinko," and games that combined drinking with ping-pong, roulette, and darts. The Coalition contacted Kohls – but also contacted the Kentucky Post and [CSPI's Alcohol Polices Project](#) in Washington, D.C. CSPI sent out a national "action alert" urging advocates to contact Kohl's and the newspaper did a story. Join Together, a prevention oriented information sharing and communications organization, circulated the alert as well. The campaign generated more than 2,800 letters to Kohl's. Within three days the company promised to stop selling the games.

In early 2007, a similar effort resulted in sales of Drinko being discontinued in all stores and on the website of Target. Linen 'n Things followed suit the day after a USA Today story on the campaigns targeting these retailers. After receiving more than 1,600 letters from prevention advocates – a Linens 'n Things spokesperson said: "Although these games are marketed to the adult population and are not meant to promote irresponsible drinking or consumption of alcohol; we appreciate your comments and are accordingly removing these items from our shelves and on our website."

- In 2005 Abercrombie & Fitch responded to pressure from advocates and stop selling a series of drinking-related t-shirts marketed to teens and young adults.
- Also in 2005, J.C. Penney responded to criticism from the Marin Institute and community-based advocates and removed alcohol branded t-shirts from its young men's department.
- [Mothers Against Drunk Driving](#) got Anheuser-Busch to pull its "Bud Pong" game and halt sponsorships of "beer-pong" tournaments.
- In October 2006, the Oregon Partnership convinced Macy's to stop selling beer-related t-shirts in its back-to-school catalog. The Partnership only asked Macy's to pull the shirts from its back-to-school catalog, but the company decided to stop selling the shirts altogether, removing them from both Macy's and Bloomingdales stores.
- In 2011 the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids found out the Orange Bowl was being sponsored by Camacho Cigars. They organized a national effort to get the Orange Bowl Committee and the NCAA to drop them as a sponsor. Their network of activists generated more than 5,000 messages. The Orange Bowl dropped Camacho Cigars as a sponsor.

Dover, NH

Youth 2 Youth

↓ Additional Resources

Dover Youth to Youth provides a wide variety of technical assistance, support materials, and customized training services. These include:

Youth Empowerment Toolkit: A binder containing dozens of Modules, where each Module provides complete instructions and support needed to either provide training on a variety of advocacy skills or to conduct specific programmatic activities. The Toolkit includes a flash drive with 10 gig of support materials needed to implement the Modules, including: lesson plans, PowerPoint, handouts, exercises, press releases, forms, project flyers, skit & PSA scripts that can be re-recorded, and other work product to speed replication of the activities in the Modules.

Youth Advocacy Training: Our students provide on-site and/or webinar-format advocacy training in Media Development, Presentation Skills, Working with the Press, Community Activism, Tobacco Prevention, Media Literacy, Pop Culture Influences on Alcohol Use, and many other topics. This includes training provided at regional or national conferences and training provided to specific youth advocacy programs locally.

Other Resources: Include flash drives containing all of our radio PSA scripts and mp3 files; our theatrical scripts; the Samantha Skunk Rx & Medicine Safety program; and other materials listed on our web site.

Free Materials to Download: Workshop attendees are invited to go to this link: <http://dover2y.org/npn-conference> and use the password **NPN2016** to download the following materials utilized during the training or in this handout:

- Electronic copies of the PowerPoint and handout.
- Any mp3 audio files of radio PSAs used in the training
- Sample press releases and examples of testimony presented by us in the past as Word files.
- Other related materials

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