

Promoting Healthy Schools "For Youth, by Youth"

Healthy Living Youth Council Kick-Off Retreat a Big Success

The [Healthy Living Youth Council](#) had its first event of the year this month, the Kick-Off Retreat which was held at Camp Fircom on Gambier Island from November 2-4. The 12 new council members, along with two alumni members from last year's council, travelled from all across the province to attend this event, and it was a huge success!

The goals of the retreat were for the council to get to know each other, to engage in discussions around healthy living and student engagement, to set goals and expectations for the year, and of course, to have fun! After arriving mid-day on Saturday, the group quickly bonded; they shared their personal definitions of health, and discussed some of the various healthy living topics that they were passionate about.

The evening was filled with delicious food, great conversation, and a campfire where students shared some of the topics they were excited to explore further this year. On Sunday morning (after the optional 7:00am yoga or morning run) the students took part in a Pro-Action Café – an interactive small-group activity where students began to dig deeper into thoughts about some of the Action Projects that they will be undertaking over the coming year. Then, after lunch, the group headed out on an invigorating canoeing adventure to connect with nature together.

That night, the group brainstormed about ways to keep in contact and provide support to each other throughout the year. The night ended with another campfire overlooking Howe Sound where the students each shared a personal "healthy living artifact" with the group and described its significance.

The group reflected that the goals for the weekend were achieved and, in many cases, far exceeded! All in all, the weekend served as a great kick-off to the year and would not have happened without the support of the amazing staff at Camp Fircom and the alumni mentors who volunteered to help with facilitation of the weekend.

While there were mixed feelings about heading back home, the group is excited to return to their communities with a range of new skills, tools, and supports for becoming healthy living champions in their schools. We look forward to seeing what this group will accomplish over the coming year!

"This was such a fun opportunity, and I learned so much! I'll be thinking about it for a long time."

– Current HLYC member