

Youth Day sparks imagination, teaches valuable lessons

By Amy Colgan-Niemeyer

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MOOERS — The Northern Tier Youth Revolution youth group presented the Second Annual Community-Youth Day on May 4 and 5 at the Mooers Fire Station. The free event offered activities and workshops for all ages.

To kick things off on Friday, there was a Teen's Brainstorming Session where ideas were

developed for song lyrics to be used the next day at the songwriting workshop with singer/songwriter Roy Hurd. Eastern Adirondack Health Care Network (EAHCN) Facilitator Michelle Hills led a discussion with teens regarding what is important to them and their communities. Five qualities of the T.N.T. Youth Revolution group were determined—patient, talkative, friendly, loving and creative—and later incorporated into the songwriting

process.

Saturday's events began with a song recorded by youth in attendance last year called "Not Me, Not Now," about making positive choices. Then came a performance by Hurd. In between songs such as "Random Thoughts of Life and Love," "Johnny Loves Trains," and "Black Fly Song," he talked with the kids about his love of the North Country and music.

"It's a powerful thing to live what you love," he said.

In addition he touched on inspiration and acceptance.

"Being inspired by the people around you is important. You never know what you'll learn from each other," he said. "It's hard to hate someone when you've taken the time to hear their story."

Next came the workshops.

Hurd gathered the kids together for the "Rhyme without Reason" songwriting workshop, which offered them first-hand experience in the song-

writing process. Participants learn about rhyme, structure, and inspiration. They work together to come up with ideas, words, and lines that eventually become part of the finished song.

Meanwhile, Tom Bull, a counselor and student advocate at Chazy Central Rural School, conducted "CRUTCHES," a stress-reduction workshop for parents and adults. He discussed the different types of crutches.

The negative crutch is a temporary quick fix or escape from painful circumstances. Over time this can hinder personal development and the development of effective coping skills.

The positive crutch offers support to encourage healing, much like that which is used to support a broken leg. Embracing the positive helps us take care of basic needs and it strengthens us physically, psychologically and spiritually.

"I encourage people to move

away from the former and gravitate toward the latter," Bull said.

CRUTCHES stands for Centeredness and connectedness, Respect for self and others, Understand self and others, Trust self and others, Celebrate life through comedy, chords, and creativity, Honest with self and others, Exercise the complete self (mind, body and soul), and Surround self with a strong social support system.

"CRUTCHES is a lifestyle management model that is designed to help individuals find balance in their lives," Bull said. "This model provides the foundation for the development, maintenance, and enhancement of positive and healthy relationships with one's self and others."

Through CRUTCHES, complex ideas are related in simple terms that can be used here and now in our daily lives regardless of our age, situation, or location.

"My purpose is to help people become aware of where they are relative to where they feel most at peace," Bull said.

Bull lives by these words: "Inspire and be inspired; love and be loved; teach so that you may continue to learn."

He began to develop CRUTCHES at the age of 13 to help manage life challenges and to make a life for himself which is self-fulfilling while also giving.

"I have used this model without fully defining its parts," Bull said. "CRUTCHES will continue to evolve and I am excited to share with others this wonderful journey."

He added, "I want people to walk away from this workshop with a framework for reconnecting with their true self, their true purpose and to become active participants in their own personal self-fulfillment."

At the end of the day, everyone regrouped to listen to Hurd and the kids sing this year's song, "Us: One Big Family," about working together to build a stronger community and better world.

"In three hours, the group created a theme song for the new youth group: The Northern Tier Youth Revolution," said Hills. "The lyrics of the song say what is in the hearts and minds of today's youth."

Hurd was impressed with the group.

"Those guys were great to work with, very enthusiastic," he said. "Each person contributed. They feel ownership of the song. The finished song is an accomplishment."

Roy Hurd wrapped up the event with more songs and stories, including "Rinderella," a uniquely humorous version of "Cinderella."

About T.N.T.:

"T.N.T. Youth Revolution embodies the oneness that connects us in the Northern Tier," said Michelle Hills, "and encourages each of us — youth and elders — to make a positive impact in our community."

The group welcomes ideas for community service projects in the Champlain/Rouses Point, Chazy and Ellenburg Depot areas.

"These youth are informed, creative citizens who demonstrate a willingness to help every person thrive," Hills concluded. "It's time that caring adults listen and help guide them to achieve their ideas for positive service in the Northern Tier."

SUNY Plattsburgh Graduate Student Assistants Amanda Garrow and Amanda Clark also took part in the event.

For more information on upcoming T.N.T. Youth Revolution meetings, youth and adult activities, and future community service projects, e-mail Michelle Hills at hillsms@plattsburgh.edu. The T.N.T. Youth Revolution Web site (www.tntrevolution.com) will be launched on June 1, so check that out too for the latest news and activities.

About the workshop:

The annual songwriting workshop is open to all from age 12 to 18, but first consideration is given to teens attending Northern Adirondack Central School, Northeastern Clinton Central School and Chazy Central Rural School.

A free CD of this year's song is available by request. Please send a self-addressed, postage-paid, padded mailer to: T.N.T. Youth Revolution c/o EAHCN Project Coordinator Michelle Hills, SUNY Plattsburgh, 101 Broad Street, Sibley Hall, Suite 277, Plattsburgh, NY 12901.

To learn more about Tom Bull and Roy Hurd, log onto their respective websites at www.thomasjbull.com and www.royhurd.com.



Roy Hurd and Northern Tier youth perform the song created in this year's songwriting workshop. Pictured are: Hillary Dann, Dan Ormsbee, Lee Ouimette, Andrew Snide, Marisa Mercaldi, Sheila Nesbitt, Patrick Parent, Ryan Parent, Matthew Coupal, Phillip C. Coupal, Jerika-Mae Manning, and Dylan Manning.