



Hastings County (Belleville, Quinte West) January 2007 to July 2009

In 2007, Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit (HPECHU) was looking for support to develop policies towards smoke free spaces. After conducting a survey that found that over 85% of individuals in the two counties supported smoke free outdoor playgrounds and playing fields, this initiative was incorporated into the health unit's operational plans.

As part of the plan, a health promoter was assigned to UNfiltered, the local Youth Action Alliance Group, who made "smoke free parks and playing fields" their main project for 2008/2009.

UNfiltered attended a workshop in Toronto about creating policies for smoke free parks and playgrounds and initiated a poster contest with Grade 4 children across the County. Through the contest the Grade 4 students learned about smoke free playing fields. UNfiltered also set up a "graffiti wall" at the Belleville Waterfront Festival and gathered public signatures of support during the event. The day following the festival, UNfiltered picked up all the butts they could find from the park and filled a large water jog (35 gallons!)

After these initiatives, UNfiltered asked the City of Belleville Council to post signs in playgrounds and parks (as a public bylaw already existed which stated that smoking was prohibited wherever signs were posted). Following that, the Program Manager for Tobacco Control was asked to speak to Quinte West Council about youth and tobacco. At that meeting, one council member asked what else they could they do to help reduce tobacco morbidity and mortality in Quinte West. The tobacco control program proposed that they allow UNfiltered to present to them about creating smoke free playgrounds and playing fields.

In response, a "briefing note" was developed about smoke free playgrounds and playing fields and sent to Quinte West and Belleville city council members prior to making the deputation. It focused on three key messages: role modeling, exposure to second hand smoke and litter and listed other municipalities where bylaws were passed.

The presentations to the Councils were conducted by UNfiltered and were well received. Quinte West moved to consider their deputation and UNfiltered returned the following month to witness council voting to pass a new bylaw to prohibit smoking in all playgrounds and playing fields. Soon after, the City of Belleville decided to move forward with posting signs to ensure their existing smoking bylaw was extended to parks and playgrounds as well.

In Spring 2010, there will be a large radio and print campaign to educate the public on the new smoke-free areas. Sports organizations will also be sent information to pass onto their registrants and visits will be made by enforcement officers to playing fields as sports seasons begin and throughout the season.

Submitted by Jordan Prosper, Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit