

# David Somppi

Lanark County, Ontario

PLANET  
*Youth*<sup>®</sup>



PARTNER *Lanark County*



## Lanark County's 5-year Journey\*

\* It's really been more than 5-years

David Somppi  
Chair, Planet Youth Lanark County

# Lanark County Overview

- Population ~75,000
- 9 Municipalities
  - Small urban, rural region
  - 4 towns > ~6000 – 12,000
- Carleton Place/ Beckwith/ Mississippi Mills population expected to double in 20 years
- Carleton Place is Canada's fastest growing town for past 4 years
- Upper Canada District School Board and Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario

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## The “5 –year” Journey

- ~2008 Carleton Place Strategic Plan community consultation identified problematic substance use as a municipal issue
- My wife, our neighbour and I were “nominated” to work on the issue



## Seeking help : Provincial Resources

- Consulted CAMH's, Sudbury based "Pan Northern Lead and Provincial Drug Strategy Coordinator" who asked
- "Does the problem disappear when you leave the Carleton Place municipal boundary?"
- "Why are you thinking so small?"



## Started Building a Coalition

- Engaged local service providers, public health, police, schools, municipal officials and community members
- Several community meetings and guidance from experienced elected officials resulted in a proposed network of committees

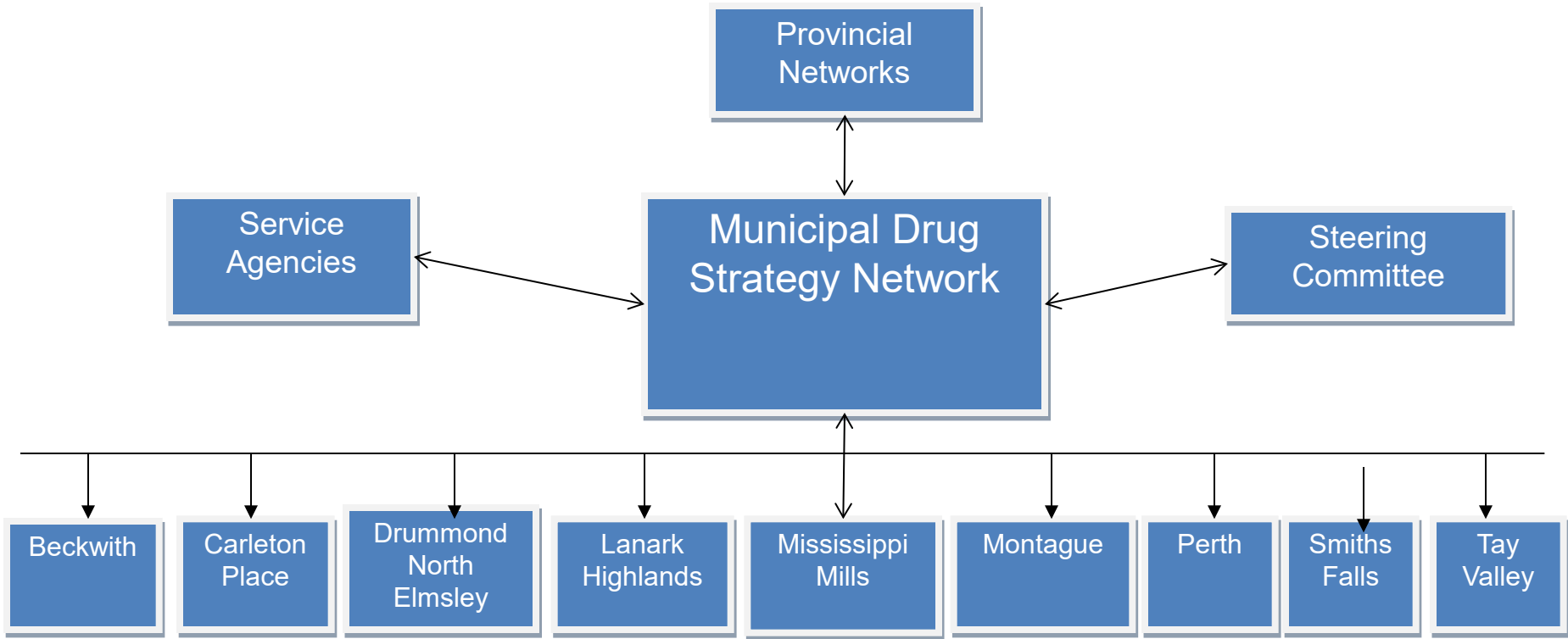


2009 View

LANARK COUNTY & THE TOWN OF SMITHS FALLS  
MUNICIPAL DRUG STRATEGY NETWORK



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# 2009: Proposed Municipal Committee Mandate

## The Town of Carleton Place MDS Committee will:

- ◆ Provide knowledge of local community strengths and needs
- ◆ Plan, implement, and evaluate prevention programs or activities that support the four pillars of prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction
- ◆ Raise public awareness about alcohol and other substance use issues, how to avoid problems, and how to access help if needed.

◆ [back](#)



# Looking For A Way To “Do” Prevention

- Carleton Place MDS focussed on awareness building
  - Participated in community events
  - A very brave Mom spoke about 15 year old’s suicide at schools.
    - Substance use was a factor
    - A few kids with suicide ideation sought assistance
    - Approach abandoned due to suicide contagion concerns
  - Police officer spoke a multiple fatality, alcohol related highway accident.
- Limited capability to evaluate → “Are we making a difference”
  - Without a clear prevention pathway, momentum waned



# A Potential Solution to A Growing Crisis?



HEALTH

## How Iceland Got Teens to Say No to Drugs

Curfews, sports, and understanding kids' brain chemistry have all helped dramatically curb substance abuse in the country.

By Emma Young



Dave Imb / Mosaic

JANUARY 19, 2017

SHARE SAVE

- In 2017, an alarming increase in opioid related deaths was impacting all communities, including Lanark County
- March 9, 2017 Opioid Information Night
  - Local pharmacist talked his experience offering opioid replacement therapy/harm reduction
  - Attendees trained and provided naloxone kits
- Local doc and resident mentioned Iceland's success
- March 16, 2017 first grass roots meeting
  - Will it work in Carleton Place?

# Decision to Embrace the IPM



- Monthly meetings led to the conclusion (again) that a Lanark County wide prevention approach is required
- One committee member attended the annual Planet Youth conference, at her own expense, because ..... "I'm just a granny who gives a shit."

# Planet Youth Lanark County Steering Committee



Planet Youth Lanark County  
Steering Committee Terms of Reference: Version 1



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Pleased to share that Sheen Wishart assumed the role of Planet Youth Lanark County Coordinating Manager in October 2024!

Community-led steering committee formalized June 2018

Everyone was a volunteer....this has been a constraint

- Strongly supported by Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit
- Open Doors for Lanark Children & Youth (provincially funded Community child/youth mental health centre) provides back office support, strategic leadership and governance oversight
- Fundraising included a concert by Icelandic Mezzo Sopran Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir accompanied by pianist Snorri Sigfús Birgisson), individual donations and one time grants

Version	Comment	Date
0.9	Initial Version	Adopted in June 2018
1.1	Proposed updates	To be reviewed at Sept 3, 2019 steering committee meeting
1.2	Adds Performance Management Oversight Committee	Nov 2, 2019
1.3	Changes made after initial review	Nov 5, 2019
1.4	Changes after additional review	Nov 6, 2019



January 20, 2020

## The first County to implement Planet Youth in Canada



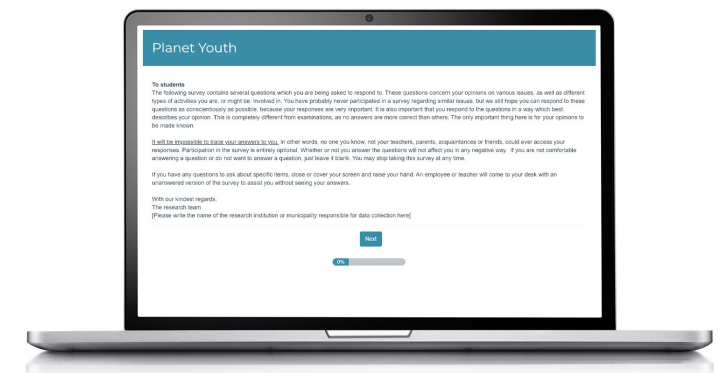
**L**anark County in Ontario became the first county to launch the Planet Youth model for substance-use prevention in youth in Canada . The launch took place on January 20 in Carleton Place.

The Planet Youth Lanark County (PYLC) is collaborating with the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario and the Upper Canada District School Board to conduct student surveys in the English language high schools . Survey reports, for each municipality, will allow communities to understand their own risk and protective factors. The surveys will be conducted among grade 10 students and it's anticipated that those surveys will start to roll out in schools this March .

March 2020



Surveys February 2022 and May 2024

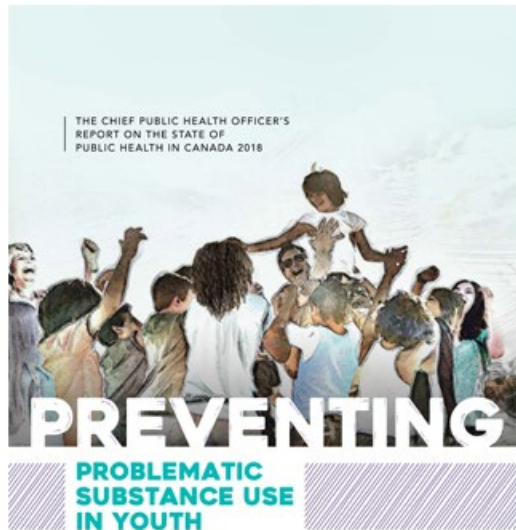


# Lanark County Grade 10 Survey Summary

- Detailed reports → [www.planetyouthlanark.ca](http://www.planetyouthlanark.ca)
- High level of Substance Use
- Alcohol access and use at home
- Participation in organized sport/leisure time activities low
- 67% feel safe at school → 33% do not
- 69% do not get enough sleep → < 7 hours
  - 2.8 x more likely to report cannabis consumption
  - 2.3 x more likely to report “not happy”
  - Self reported mental and physical health correlates with sleep

2024/2025 workplan focus!

# Reflections On Getting Started



Canada

[Download the alternative format](#)  
(PDF format, 3.9 MB / KB, 61 pages)

**Organization:** [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

**Published:** 2018-10-23

- It was lonely without peer Canadian communities
- To fill the void we leveraged
- Dr Tam's 2018 annual report
- Alfgeir's Nov/2018 visit
  - In person meetings with school board officials
  - Keynote at public meetings
  - Radio interviews

by [Adam Weekes](#) | Nov 29, 2018

Lake 88 In Focus  
Interviews

We're talking  
Lanark County  
Planet Youth:  
Chair - David  
Somppi and  
Alfgeir



Kristjansson  
from Iceland, where the program originated, join us to tell us  
all about the project and how it will help youth in our county.

To hear the interview, tap or click [here](#).

[Full Story](#)

# Reflections On Our Implementation Journey



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- Our 2 year, pandemic induced delay was a major setback. We lost momentum that took significant time to recover.
- Community is not excited by planning, collecting and analyzing data.
  - Easy to jump into “solution space” too early.
- Team members/collaborators/funders can have “dynamic” priorities.
  - Especially when senior leadership changes in an organization
  - Stronger connections would have improved risk management
- It is VERY helpful to learn from other communities.
  - Every time we asked for guidance it was freely provided.
  - I learned a lot at the 2024 Planet Youth conference
  - Very excited by the growing network of Canadian communities





# Ontario Perspective on Step 2: Funding

- Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence focus is
  - inconsistency in what services are available by region
  - uneven client and family experiences and outcomes
  - lack of data to show where to improve
- Upstream prevention is not a strategic focus for Ontario
- Major philanthropy calls for proposals focus on treatment and system navigation
- About 5% of Canadian health spending is allocated to all prevention
  - Tough environment for “Long-cycle Prevention Funding” (Step 2)
- Very grateful for financial support received to date



# Challenges Encountered



- “Every system is perfectly designed to get the result that it does.”
  - Attributed to W. Edwards Deming
- Not everyone is happy when systems are changed.
  - School board led community consultations on modifying bell times to improve adolescent sleep health
  - Avoiding early morning sports and other extra-curricular activities
- Misconceptions
  - Curfews : A common question in introductory IPM conversations
- Misinformation → Polarization
  - Our community is dealing with a recent homicide of a youth
  - Groundswell of supportive conversation
  - But also disturbing, hateful speech and activities

# Youth Leadership : ACHIEVE

## WE ASK - YOU SHARE CHANGE-MAKERS' SUMMIT

October 25  
2024

9:30-3:30

Smiths Falls Community Centre  
71 Cornelia St W

- Free to attend
- Food and snacks provided
- Free transportation from local youth centres in Lanark County
- Get volunteer hours
- Help make your community a better place for young people!

REGISTER



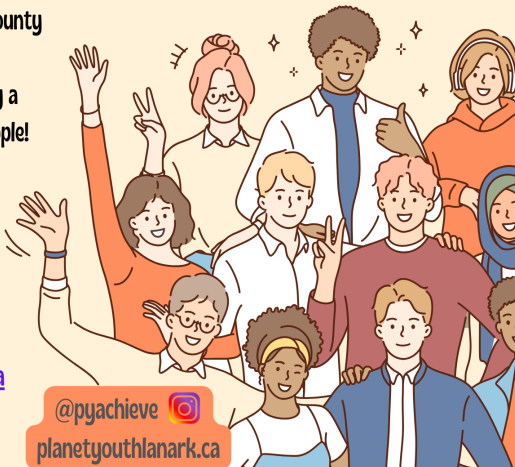
<https://tinyurl.com/vv72a>

register by Oct 22

Hosted by Planet Youth  
Lanark County

Open to all Lanark youth in  
Grades 7-12

Join the young people who are already making a difference for an interactive day of problem-solving and fun!



@pyachieve

planetyouthlanark.ca

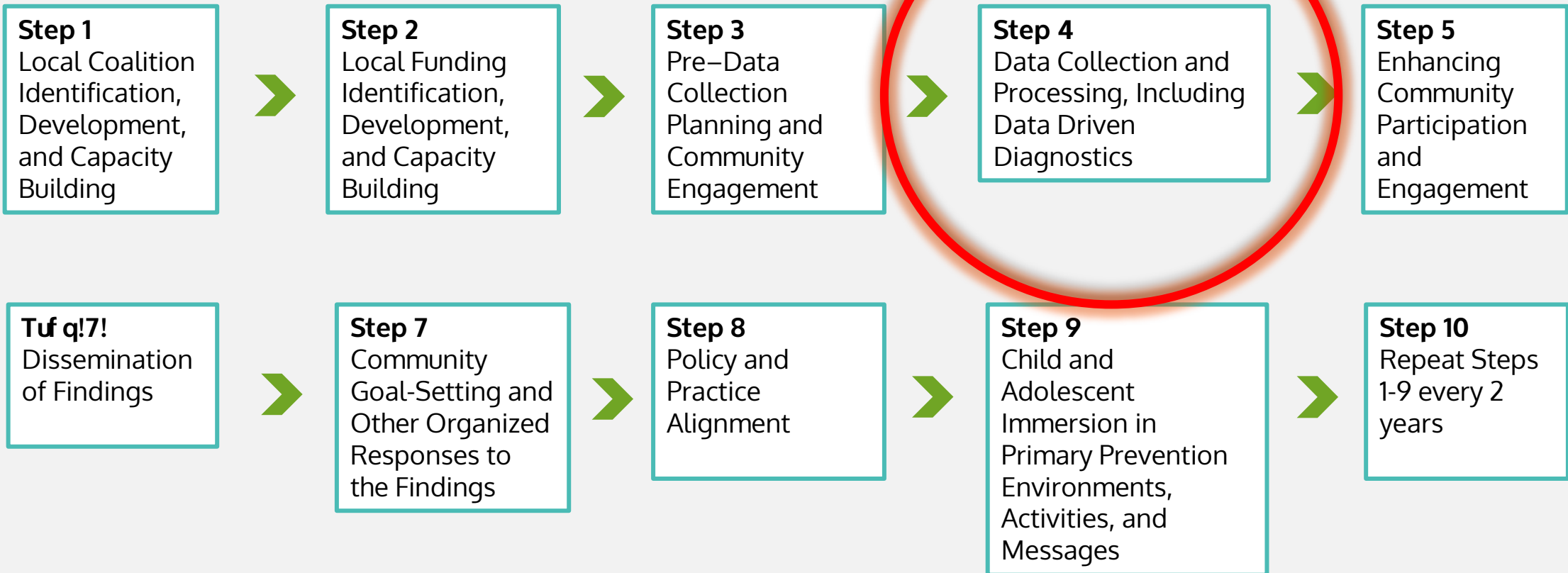
- Oct summit explored sleep health (with assistance from sleep scientists)
- Youth co-created qualitative consultation exploring “feeling safe” in collaboration with researchers
- A safe space for open discussion in a diverse group
- 3 youth leaders are attending national youth summit today



# Nov 2024 Status: Data Driven Diagnostics



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# 2024/2025 Workplan

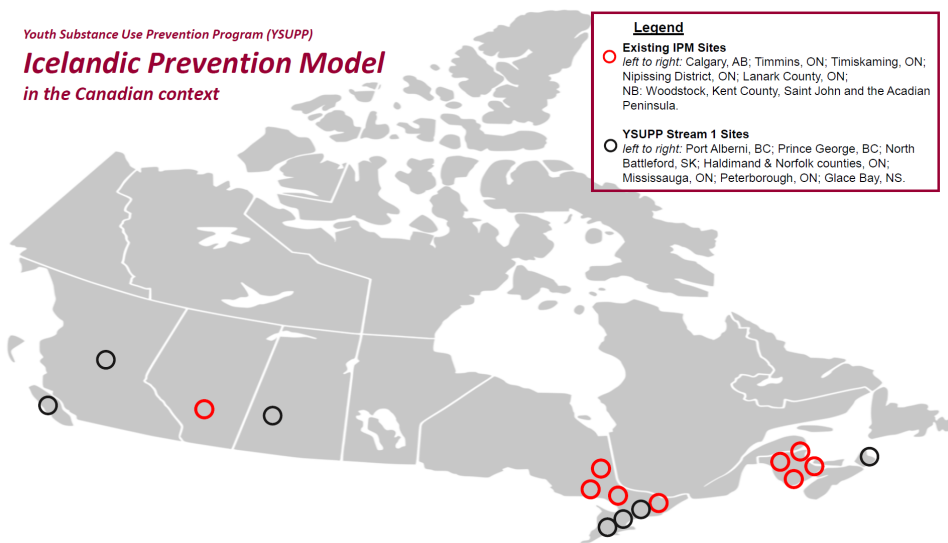
- 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of Steps 4 through 10
  - Focus on strengthening parental/caregiver engagement
  - ACHIEVE led youth engagement
  - Lanark County wide collaboration to develop detailed plan
    - Lanark County's 5 youth centers
    - Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan
    - Supporting community discussions on policy
- Working with subject matter experts within the IPM framework
  - [Tanya Halsall](#) on participatory approaches/interventions that support system change for child/youth well-being.
  - Canadian Sleep Research Consortium [About — CSRC](#) on sleep health awareness and interventions targeting families with young children and adolescents
  - [Dr. Michael Ungar](#) on family, school and community based interventions that build resilience



# An Opportunity to Encourage Upstream Prevention Across Canada

Youth Substance Use Prevention Program (YSUPP)

**Icelandic Prevention Model**  
in the Canadian context



- Upstream prevention is “a long game”.
- “Culture eats strategy for breakfast”
  - (attributed to Peter Drucker)
- Let’s nurture a national upstream prevention culture
- Share/learn [Icelandic Approach CoP - KDE Hub](#)
- Our work, as early adopters, is an important first step towards sustained upstream prevention across Canada



**[www.planetyouthlanark.ca](http://www.planetyouthlanark.ca)**

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**Society Evolves At The Speed Of Relationships**

**Relationships Are Built At The Speed of Trust**