

# Collaboration and Cooperation By Cody Welton



Cody Welton

Apathy, lethargic, lazy and indolent: words heard over and over again as students listen to the adults in the community describe the youth of their locale. More and more, students and youth are grouped collectively into one faction of uninspired and languid citizens. Students face an uphill battle to become community advocates and to gain the recognition they deserve for their community activism. They can truly make a difference and be an inspiration to their communities if the assets they possess are taken seriously.

To truly make a difference, students must be willing to step out of the shadows and take a stand. They need to avoid being just another one of “those kids” in the town, and must be prepared to take initiative. If they continue to just float along and make no effort for themselves, then the words of their elders become pertinent as they wait to be directed and told what to do.

Direction is not what is needed for students in a community; guidance and assistance are often all that is necessary. Students become deterred from making positive impacts on their own with the “right, left, right” directions continually forced upon them not only in school but at community events. Their creativity and originality becomes buried as each step of their day appears to be choreographed by adults.

The same adults who claim that the students of their community do not have the desire to take action are more often than not the same adults stifling the abilities, energy and imagination of those same students. To achieve any form of positive influence in their community, students and adults must form a cohesive bond and work together. The importance of cooperation is essential to the paradigm shift needed in many communities. Without guidance from adults and willingness from the students to accept their assistance, the community remains at the revolving door of apathy.

Once the door is pushed open, it is the responsibility of the students to break the perceived notion of youth inactivity and apathy and become

community role models. They will be well on their way to becoming positive influences in their community just by collaborating with adults, as this in itself works to break down the barrier that has held students back. This team effort is in the best interests of the entire community. One small event with both adults and students working together can create a spark of positive influence. Even so, this small event will not be responsible for an absolute turnaround in our nation’s stereotype of youth laziness; however, in tightly knit communities it does not take much for the word to spread.

Collaboration and cooperation will surely grow after each activity to the point where students are no longer considered hoodlums and nuisances, but leaders in and advocates for community involvement. Students want change; they want what is best for the community and their well-being within the community. Together students and adults can make their communities places where all citizens are involved and respectful of one another and where the time they spend there will be the best it can be. Adults can turn to students for energy, enthusiasm and ideas, while students can turn to adults for guidance, assistance and collaboration.

Students are beginning to show the country they want to be more to their communities and want to have a voice. Many adults have already taken notice and have been there to help. Students, some fresh out of high school and as young as 18, are running for political office to make a difference to their community; others are having their voice heard and respected through Student Vote, making a difference one step at a time. It is up to the remaining students and adults to forge a bond so that students are no longer apathetic, lethargic, lazy and indolent but energetic, enthusiastic advocates and activists for their communities. **ET**

*Cody Welton is the 2008-09 president of the Ontario Student Trustees Association, and a grade 12 student in the Trillium Lakelands District School Board.*

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