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Making Futures Present: A postcard from the future clears up your vision of the horizon

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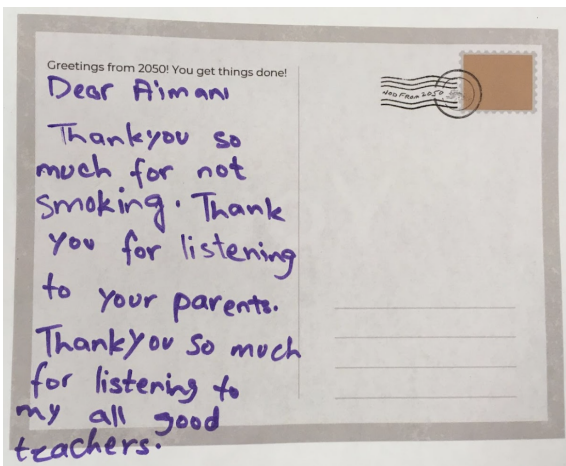
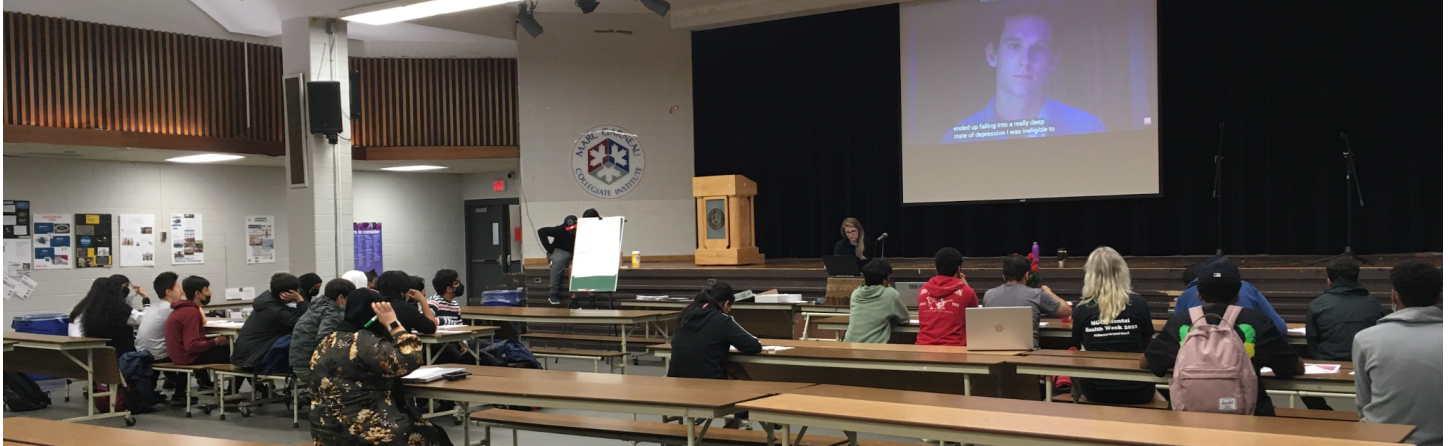
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Anti-vaping Training Facilitation

Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute, June 2022

by Maggie Greyson MDes CEO, Futurist and Researcher at [Futures Present](#)

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In May of 2022, Erin Carey, a high school teacher in the Toronto District School Board, reached out to Maggie Greyson, Lead Designer of [Nod from 2050](#), with a direct request for help, “We are having an issue with vaping at school and need the stuff you developed!! Our kids really have an addiction problem with it already, likely because of the local culture of not drinking, teenage impressions and covid stress, etc. Vaping is an epidemic in our school, and we don’t know how to stop it. They don’t seem to understand it’s not even allowed on school property like smoking. We’ve had them get caught vaping in class, the washrooms, everywhere at school.”

In response, Maggie Greyson, Hannah Allen, and Erin Carey developed an experiential learning program to teach youth about vaping. Several students from the school supported this as volunteer facilitators, with video production, and giving interviews. The vibe was fun, optimistic, informative, and provocative.

A feature of the workshop was an adaptation of the online vape cessation research tool, [Nod from 2050.ca](#). The concept was modified into a paper-based “postcard from the future” activity where youth were prompted to write to their 2022 self from their 2050 self.

They gave a powerful in-class interactive presentation aimed at creating an anti-vaping reset for students and their families. As a professional futurist, Ms. Greyson challenged the class to, “think of yourself as stronger than what is marketed to you and to make the better choice a part of your character ...where your identity is being savvy about marketing”. Student activities range from role-playing, metacognitive thinking, and exercises that posit them as their future selves in 2050, communicating a “nod of gratitude to the younger you” for decisions made in youth. - Shawnee Redford, MGCI Teacher

This resulted in 16 sessions delivered over four days in June on a needs-by-teacher signup basis during the Mental Health and Wellness Week at the school. We could have offered it again and again to other groups, or a larger assembly. Up to 770 youth from grades 9-12 and teachers attended in person. The success of this experiential learning program has kicked off a larger testing phase in the fall with an eventual creation of a website, and tool kit for schools across the country. The Ontario Research Tobacco Unit, teachers and youth from the Toronto District School Board are project partners as we develop it further.

The dynamic fast-paced presentation / workshop features:

- Experiential learning activities led by local youth volunteer facilitators
- Health Canada data and videos
- Videos from The Truth Initiative
- An adaptation of 'NOD from 2050' hands-on postcard from the future making activity to their present self about future health!
- Downloading the App 'Crush the Crave' by QR code
- An intervention role-play script facilitated by the Health and Wellness Students
- More resources, a student handout, surveys, quizzes and a takeaway
- If students had seen the original presentation with another teacher, there was a prepared secondary activity facilitated to make their own anti-vaping video with their phone and submit it

What part of the Anti-Vaping session did you like?

Writing a postcard as my future self was my favorite part of the session because it was very creative and it gives a lot of motivation to not start vaping or to quit!

Several students were involved in the creation of the event:

- Video of local school kids vaping in bathroom and standing up to peer pressure
- Designing their postcard from the future using language from the 'Nod from 2050' research tool
- Localized artifacts such as a 'you're busted! \$2000 fine' ticket from the school with the Principal's name, recorded interviews with local students about the problem, and a statement from the Vice-Principal about how many students he has suspended

Comments from staff:

"It's a program that all TDSB school students, highschool and middle schools should see on Anti-vaping. We're just catching up on this trend."

Erin Carey, OCT, B. Tech Ed., B.A.A. Assistant Curriculum Leader, Technological Education, Marc Garneau C.I. SHSM Programs Lead, Apprenticeship / OYAP Connections to Trades Lead

"I met you this morning, during your amazing anti-vaping presentation, and was inspired by your positive framing of a very serious issue!" *Teacher - Shawnee Redford*

"I worry about our kids' health and vaping." *Teacher - Tim Langford*

“Every school needs this - we deal with vaping every day now.”

Marc Garneau C.I. Hall Monitor - Mike Flash

“We think kids got the message; it was worth the investment of time and resources to make it happen.”

Carlo DiFelice - Principal

“It was a great partnership and well-structured addition for our health and wellness awareness week programming.”

Joseph Smith - Vice-Principal