

Youth Rock Concert Promotes Mental Wellbeing in Northam

We know that to be effective health promotion must move outside of traditional health service delivery programs.

Mentally Healthy WA's - Act-Belong-Commit campaign is one such campaign that challenges boundaries and shows how health can be promoted at all community events and at many levels.

When I began working with Northam Town Council to plan a youth rock concert, most people did not understand the link between rock music and mental wellbeing.

For some time, the youth of Northam had complained there was nothing to do. They said that for any descent fun, any exciting event, they had to travel to Perth. This perception of lack of opportunity and excitement in their lives has an impact on how they feel about themselves and the town in which they live.

A dedicated and enthusiastic group of people met with some youth representatives to organise something that youth could be proud of. The result was the 'Bring It On' Youth Rock Festival.

The concert went off with a bang! The usually quiet setting of Bernard Park, by the Avon River in Northam came alive with the atmosphere that only a live concert can create.



Radio Interviews, signage, merchandise and public announcements all reinforced the positive mental health message of 'being active' and 'belonging' to the community as aspects of good mental wellbeing.

The partnership between the Northam Town Council and the Act-Belong-Commit Project Officer also provided the opportunity to promote other health messages.

A chill out tent with a range of health promotion activities and information was coordinated by the Wheatbelt Public Health Unit - which also assisted with the dissemination of health messages related to sexual health, alcohol and other drugs to a difficult target group.

These health promotion initiatives were a result of the partnership between the Northam Town Council, Act-Belong-Commit and Healthway.

Young people reported a newfound sense of pride for their town, many participants learned new skills as committee members and a variety of health messages got through to the youth of Northam.

The concert helped extend the core business of the organisations involved and the partnership with young people helped create the foundations for a successful event.



Relay for Life: an outstanding community event

The inaugural Albany Relay for Life raised a record \$140,000 and was a shining example of a community working together for an important cause. Relay for Life is the world's biggest fundraising event for cancer and is now held in over 2,500 locations worldwide. In Australia, Relay for Life continues to raise millions of dollars annually for cancer research, education and patient services. Albany's Relay was held in April 2007.

The 24-hour, overnight event was created because cancer never sleeps. The 24 hours of Relay for Life honours Survivors and their caregivers and remembers loved ones lost to cancer. Relay offers fun, with the challenge of completing the walk or run style relay with team members. 32 teams entered Albany's first Relay for Life, and the Albany Hospital's "Health Hazards" team raised an amazing \$27,000. The 15 members of this team, like most of the other teams, used a variety of methods - some slightly unusual - to raise their outstanding amount. For example, our own Act-Belong-Commit team held a Philosophy Café and raised \$575.

The theme for discussion (philosophising) was "Feeling Blue? Act Green! When we are feeling blue, can getting closer to nature help us feel happier?". The Act-Belong-Commit campaign also sponsored the Relay for Life (providing free balloons for children) and Trish Travers was the inaugural Chairperson of the Relay's volunteer organising committee. Trish said, "It was truly a collaborative community effort."

Treasure Hunt: Cyclists flock to find the loot!

On a glorious March Sunday morning during Bike Week 2007, more than 120 people congregated at Middleton Beach to witness the launch of "Go Cycle Amazing Albany", a guide exploring Albany on your bike and to participate in another inaugural event in Albany - the Act-Belong-Commit Bicycle Treasure Hunt. The map highlights some iconic scenic routes in addition to the shared use paths and quiet cycle-friendly roads, and so encourages more people to cycle more often. It was developed by volunteer members of the Albany Bicycle Users Group (ABUG), and printed using funding from the City of Albany and the Department of Planning & Infrastructure.

The Act-Belong-Commit Albany Bicycle Treasure Hunt (sponsored by Healthway, as well as a host of other agencies) saw 28 teams of 4 work together to try to solve clues, many of them cryptic, along the 15km route over a 2-hour period. It's a bit like a car rally, but naturally they were all on two wheels! It was more about brain-power than pedal power, so it took the racing element out of the picture and made for a fabulous family style event, that still had plenty of challenges for competitive types.

There were lots of prizes, many donated by the Bicycle Friendly Businesses, and Great Southern Bicycle Co was there to provide riders with a free bike check service. The free BBQ lunch made it a very social event that 100% of participants said they'd be lining up for in 2008. Email albanybug@hotmail.com if you're interested in the hunt next year!

We (Act-Belong-Commit) assisted ABUG in helping them apply to Healthway to fund the Treasure Hunt. Volunteers from ABUG were on hand to assist with the hunt, hence helping not just others, but themselves to be mentally healthy too! Go Cycle Amazing Albany - it's good for you and the environment! **NB: Go Cycle Maps are available from the Albany Visitor's Centre**



Articles submitted by Pam Lincoln & Trish Travers
Act Belong Commit campaign team in Albany
WACHS - Great Southern

Esperance Festival of the Wind 2007

The Festival of the Wind was held on Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th March 2007 at the Esperance Bay Yacht Club and Adventureland Park

The Dragons roared....

in Esperance on Saturday 24 March at the inaugural Esperance Bay Dragon Boat Regatta for the Festival of the Wind.

The Festival of the Wind, Esperance Bay Yacht Club (EBYC) and the Western Australian Dragon Boat Association (WADBA) partnered for a day of dragon boating fun. All participants needed was a team manager and 20 enthusiastic paddlers who were willing to learn quickly.

MHWA Esperance sponsored a Dragon Boat in this years Festival and put together a team of 20 in conjunction with Community policing, the Blue Light Committee, the Esperance Local Drug Action Group (ELDAG), the Esperance Express and Woolworths.

Participants underwent a one-hour training session on Friday 23rd March at the Esperance Bay Yacht Club and racing commenced at 8.30am at the Yacht Club after the dotting of the eye ceremony at 8.00am.

The Festival of the Wind was well attended by many people and provided a great opportunity to promote the Act-Belong-Commit message. Festival organisers should be congratulated in their efforts, as the event was a huge success. We were extremely lucky with the weather and the Mentally Healthy WA Dragon Boat Team 'Out of the Blue' managed to get through the entire regatta without capsizing once, which was no mean feat!!

'Out of the Blue' came fourth in their first race, third in their second race, and we are proud to admit first in our final race. Unfortunately we did not qualify for the fastest heat event final (although we did only miss out on a placing by one). The team is to be congratulated on their spirit and commitment throughout the event, both during training and on race day.

For those who did not get a chance to come along to the Festival we have included some great shots from the day and more have been posted on our website www.actbelongcommit.org.au. The Esperance Express also had a great front-page spread on Friday March 30th 2007 of the Act-Belong-Commit sponsored Dragon Boat as taken during the 'Dotting of the Eye' ceremony.

