

## **Youth One**

### **Improving service delivery through the Internet**

#### **Context**

Today's technologically savvy youth can be a valuable resource for the voluntary sector. An Edmonton-based support network has partnered with students on an on-line counselling service called Youth One, [www.youthone.com/](http://www.youthone.com/), which complements its distress line and walk-in counselling services for youth in need.

#### **Program Description**

Getting youth to use its help-line and walk-in counselling services was a major challenge for the Edmonton's Support Network until it decided to partner with local youth on a Web site project called Youth One. The success of the Youth One Web site was based on two key points – it had to reach local youth in need, and it had to get youth involved in their community.

By partnering with local high school students and adding a volunteer component to the site, the Support Network has been able to get local youth involved. To get youth to keep using the site, Youth One features interactive information, stories and a community billboard.

#### **Challenges and Successes**

YouthOne.com has become a popular site for Edmonton young people. The Support Network has a few lessons to share with other organizations considering virtual programs. One of the lessons is accepting that being a virtual operation means being vulnerable to the technology - if the network goes down even temporarily, so does everything and everyone in the program. Another valuable lesson is that partnerships with other community groups are the best way to grow, and are necessary to maintain the quality of a large Web site like Youth One.

[www.youthone.com](http://www.youthone.com)

*These best practices are an excellent way of sharing your experiences with other organizations in the voluntary sector. If you also have positive experiences on the use of technology in the voluntary sector, the IM-IT Secretariat will be pleased to post your stories. Please contact the IM/IT Secretariat by e-mail at [imit@ic.gc.ca](mailto:imit@ic.gc.ca).*