



Media Release

January 15, 2019

Wouldrather... increases quitting in young adults

Grey Bruce Health Unit encourages registration for provincial contest

More young adults smoke in this province compared to all other age groups and they overwhelmingly say that they want to quit. The best way to do that? Use evidence-based quit aids and get into a program specifically tailored for young adults 18-29.

Last year, more than 8500 young adults entered the **wouldrather...** contest. Our region saw 76 entries. Research shows that up to 20% of those who enter the contest will quit smoking compared to the 5-7% success rate when individuals quit on their own.

"We encourage anyone who is thinking about quitting to register and take advantage of the support offered by this contest," says Brooke Tomsett, Youth Advisor at the Grey Bruce Health Unit. "The support seems to help people gain confidence. Every time a person tries to quit, they increase their odds of quitting for good."

To support young adults to quit successfully, the **wouldrather...** contest offers support emails, a personal support crew, access to 8-weeks of free nicotine patch or gum, and proactive support calls or texts from Smokers' Helpline.

Having the option to set achievable goals helps contestants work their way up to quitting, like 2016 wouldrather winner Teigan Sparks from Stirling.

"I tried in the past to quit smoking but it never seemed to work for me. Being involved in this contest motivated me to get started just cause I knew other people were doing the same thing. Once I was motivated to cut back on my smoking, at least when going out, I liked how I was feeling and decided to quit smoking entirely. Since then I've been smoke-free and I plan on staying that way."

Quitting smoking can be difficult and not everyone is ready to quit right now. That's why this annual contest uniquely offers four different categories in order to meet participants where they are at right now. Smokers can enter to quit, cut back by half, or commit to stay away from smoking anytime they party or drink alcohol. Non-smokers and ex-smokers can also enter the contest to commit to continuing their smoke-free lifestyle.

A healthier future for all.

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Hannah Mahaffy, the 2018 winner from Timmins said, *“Quitting smoking has given me more lung capacity to do the things I love, like enjoying all day long snowshoe adventures with my better half. Now I encourage YOU to LEAVE THE PACK BEHIND and share your story, tips and tricks for others who are struggling with quitting toxic habits such as smoking cigarettes.”*

wouldrather... is available to all young adults ages 18-29 who are residents of Ontario. Registration is open at wouldrather.ca until 11:59 pm, January 27, 2019.

Funded by the Government of Ontario with generous prize support provided by the makers of Thrive and Habitrol, the **wouldrather...** contest aims to motivate and encourage young adult Ontarians to live tobacco-free lives. **wouldrather...** is an initiative of Leave The Pack Behind, an age-tailored tobacco control program offered year-round in Ontario.

Attachment: Promotional contest image

For More Information:

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