

Power Camp National

www.powercampnational.ca

National

WHO THEY ARE?

Power Camp National's (PCN) vision is for every girl to have access to the resources, support and love necessary to bring her gifts to the world and to participate fully in society. By building a movement of active, engaged young women and organizations across Canada, PCN envisions a new generation committed to creating a just and peaceful world. PCN helps the girls to discover and learn about social justice, violence prevention, poverty, racism, healthy sexuality, community engagement, media literacy, and raise awareness and mobilize action against violence and discrimination.

WHY WAS THE ORGANIZATION SET UP?

Three young women who identified a gap in the education system first founded PCN. They wanted to address the gender-specific realities that existed in and around the classroom. Throughout their endeavours, they wanted to share the knowledge they gained, and provide preventative measures and opportunities for young women and girls. PCN now aims to

- Foster self-advocacy, critical thinking, skill-building and collaboration amongst girls and young women.
- Advance the understanding and raise the profile of issues facing young women and girls.
- Provide opportunities for grassroots projects and leaders to learn from one another, exchange resources and strengthen organizational capacity.
- Generate a strong cluster of young women and grassroots leadership to inform policy development and impact societal change.

HOW DO THEY PROMOTE THEMSELVES?

Power Camp National has a yearly retreat and performs lots of outreach. They make sure that they're connecting with first nations communities, with racialized young women, women living in poverty, and francophone communities. They are constantly striving to form friendships and relationships. Power Camp knows that this is an excellent way to promote themselves, and proves to young women that they're there as friends and partners, and not simply as recruiters for their own ends.

Another great way that PCN creates the right impression is by showing genuine interest in the activities that their target youth are already engaged in:

“One of the things we find so important is to shine light on the great things that young girls and women out there are doing. There are a lot of young people and also young girls that are doing some great things but they often go unnoticed.”

–Tatiana Fraser, Director

By approaching young women and demonstrating a genuine interest in their projects, PCN is more likely able to establish a meaningful relationship right from the start with young girls. This way, the girls are more likely to reciprocate an interest in Power Camp National and feel much more welcome to approach them and make inquiries. This is a great way for any organization to get to know some of

their target youth and demonstrate themselves to be interested potential partners for future projects. If young people see that you have a genuine interest in their work, they're much more likely to get engaged in your work as well.

WHAT ADVICE DO THEY GIVE?

“It’s very important to talk to young people in an authentic and genuine way. In a sense, you have to be willing to come in and be willing to go “inside their world”. Sit down with them as a friend and interested partner. Ask them questions and really listen to what they have to say. It’s so simple but it really works.”

–Tatiana Fraser, Director

When you go to speak with them, don't show up in a large professional looking group, as this can be quite intimidating for them. Do everything you can to level the playing field between yourself and your target youth.

Power Camp is also working on a website called the Action Website. The site is intended to be a space where they can profile and promote what young women are doing, both members of PCN and non-members alike. They're planning on having young women assess the site to see if it would be useful and how. Their goal is to have an interactive site that will allow girls and young women to participate directly using different technology and artistic expression. The site is referred to as “action-based” because young women and girls will have given input from A to Z in the process of the construction of the site.

WHAT THE YOUTH FRIENDLY GUIDE SAYS

The Youth Friendly Guide strongly emphasizes taking approaches such as the ones just mentioned in making your organization youth friendly. Demonstrating a genuine interest in the activities of your target youth and seeking out their input in the construction of a project from beginning to end are great ways to get them interested in your organization, and more likely to engage themselves in it.

“Youth are at the cutting edge of youth engagement. Youth are the experts on youth engagement.”

–Tatiana Fraser, Director

Simply put, the source for information on how to engage youth IS youth. They know what they'd like to see in an organization that they'd be willing to engage themselves in.