



## **nrG Powered by Choice: Case Study George A. Smith Middle School**

### **School Profile**

George A. Smith Middle School  
Solanco School District  
School Level: Middle school  
Grades Offered: 6 - 8  
County: [Lancaster County](#)  
Total Student Population: 467 students

### **Building Momentum**

In 2007, nrG Advisor and school nurse, Sue Myers attended the nrG Summit with teen students from Smith Middle School. The summit ignited the teens' interest in the campaign's primary issue – changing environments to support students' choices to eat healthier and be more active.

Upon returning from the nrG Summit, Smith Middle School's Student Senate began implementation of the nrG Powered by Choice campaign by "sharing" the campaign message with the student body.

Out of the Student Senate emerged one key teen leader who became the "champion" of nrG Powered by Choice efforts in his school and beyond. The teen leader, eager to change his school's lunch offerings, began regularly addressing his school administration. His determination paid off when meetings were set with State Representative Bryan Cutler; in addition to meetings with Pennsylvania Congressman Todd R. Platts and Senator Robert P. Casey in Washington D. C.

### **Campaign Implementation**

Given the level of enthusiasm demonstrated by the nrG Advisor and teen leader within Smith Middle School, the school became an early example of the success of the nrG Powered by Choice campaign within a school setting.

The student's passion for wanting to change their school environment, led the students to easily move through the three key campaign levels: own it., share it., and change it.

*own it.*

The Student Senate entered the own it. phase of the campaign by ordering a free nrG Back to School Pack to engage the student body in its

efforts. The students indicated that decals provided in nrg Back to School Packs were the most useful component.

From there, Student Senate members, with the help of the nrg advisor, met with the school food service manager to assess the school environment for opportunities to improve healthy eating and physical activity. Through their meeting the students identified three primary concerns with the school food service program:

- Identified that 45 minute lunch periods were too long
- Needed increased access to fruits/vegetables
- Needed breakfast program

*share it.*

Once the Student Senate identified the key concerns they wanted to change about their school food service program, the Student Senate moved into the share it. phase of the campaign.

They increased promotion of nrg Powered by Choice by writing articles for the student newspaper and wearing nrg Powered by Choice t-shirts. They also begin creating a buzz about the changes they wanted to make to the school lunch program through morning announcements that promoted fruit/vegetable lunch promotions, and hosting a school wellness fair. The teens even contributed to the community through a canned-food dodgeball tournament.

*change it.*

After the Student Senate felt they had the student body's attention about the campaign and the changes they hoped to make, they moved into the change it. phase of the campaign. Not only did the teen leaders make changes to the school's food service program, but they also raised money to purchase new physical education equipment and even hosted a mentoring activity for a local elementary school.

To address their initial concerns about the school's food service program, the teen leaders worked with school administration to change the lunch period schedule to allow 25 minutes for lunch and 20 minutes for physical activity.

In addition, they wrote and were awarded a Highmark Healthy School Challenge Grant, which enabled them to partner with a local produce distributor to offer fresh fruits and vegetables twice a week at lunch. They also had incentivized taste-testings where members of the student body could enter a raffle to win various promotional items, including a Nintendo Wii.

As a result of the Student Senate's efforts, the school food service program also began offering a "grab and go" breakfast. On average, 60-

70 students per day participate (approximately 20% of the school population).

If all these changes weren't ambitious enough, members of the Student Senate wanted to encourage younger students to begin eating more fruits and vegetables as well. The teen leaders worked with Quarryville Elementary School (Lancaster County, Pa.) to host an Apple Crunch event during National Apple Month in October 2008.

In addition to improving the school's food service program, the Student Senate decided to also hold a fundraiser to purchase new physical education equipment. Through a "Be a Teacher for a Day" fundraiser, they raised \$600 to purchase Dance Dance Revolution (DDR).

With the purchased DDR system, the Student Senate then hosted a dance competition that was open to the entire student body, reaching 456 students (reaching almost 100% of the student population).

The purchased DDR system is being used as part of the school's physical education curriculum and students are able to rotate through the 2 TV, 20 pad system during PE class. The students can also utilize the system as part of the 20 minutes of activity available during lunch.

Looking ahead the teen leaders hope to host another mentoring event with a local elementary school, this time celebrating Go for the Greens in March and encouraging youth to eat more vegetables as well as Move it Outside in April that focuses on outdoor play.

Additionally, they hope to work with a local community center to set up a Frisbee golf course and encourage local community members' use of the course by hosting a community health fair that would feature Frisbee demonstrations.

### **Campaign Sustainability at Smith Middle School**

The hard work of Smith Middle Schools' Student Senate has received numerous accolades, including news coverage by the local newspaper and television station.

To sustain these changes moving forward, the Student Senate has requested that the school board continue to provide \$1,000 per month toward fresh fruit/vegetable offerings during school lunch periods.

As part of the initial group of Student Senate members move onto high school, they're hopeful the legacy of changes they've left behind will inspire a new group of teen leaders to continue leading the charge toward healthy changes.



### **Smith Middle School Recommendations for Campaign**

The teen leaders involved in the successful implementation of the nrg Powered by Choice campaign have provided several recommendations for enhancing campaign strategies. Following are a list of recommendations from teen leaders and the nrg advisor at Smith Middle School:

- Develop training opportunities for teens; nrg Summit has been key to our school's success
- Incorporate educational concepts about energy balance into science curriculum