

East Coast teens to write, publish own magazine

Teens Now Talk to be launched in December
By JOSH VISSER | 4:41 AM -08,09,07

Jessica Bowden was a guest speaker at Cole Harbour High School several years ago when she told a room of teens: "We know what the problems are; we need to find out what the solutions are."

"And then one teen yelled, 'Well, we should write a book,' " she recalled in a recent interview.

"And another yelled, 'Yeah, our words are da bomb.' "

While many guest speakers might have been a bit annoyed at the outburst of teenage exuberance, that wasn't the case for Ms. Bowden.

A light bulb went off for her that day, and the result is Teens Now Talk, a quarterly magazine that is made for teens, by teens. The first issue will be released in December.

"(The teens) jumped in and they are learning a lot about what it means to put a magazine (together)," said Ms. Bowden, the magazine's publisher.

"We can proudly say it's teen-tested, teen-written and teen-approved. They are learning they can make a difference through a healthy form of communication."

Teens have contributed short stories, poems and articles and have helped with its design. Judging by one test version, readers can expect a bit more than the beauty and dating tips that make up the bulk of teen magazines.

Articles range from advice about buying that first car, to articles on the environment and health care.

More importantly, Ms. Bowden said, they are written with the East Coast teenager in mind.

"There are teen magazines from Toronto, but there's nothing from here in Atlantic Canada," Ms. Bowden said.

Ms. Bowden spoke from the Halifax Shopping Centre last Saturday, where she and a group of teenage volunteers were getting the word out to potential readers and advertisers.

Photo by TNT



Youth ranging from Jr. High to University ages came out, to spin and win their TNT "T"

Melanie Arab, 16, has already found a niche with the magazine as a star-gazing reporter for the magazine's website. She has spotted and photographed celebrities around Halifax, such as Chris Murphy of Sloan and rapper Chingy.

She has also contributed poetry and ideas for the magazine.

"It feels good to be involved with the community, to be a good positive role model for younger teenagers," Melanie said of her work for the magazine.

The magazine's website, www.teensnowtalk.com, has already been online for seven months, featuring poems, music and stories from more than 1,000 Atlantic Canadian teenagers.

Ms. Bowden estimated that with the help of teachers at more than 50 Atlantic Canadian schools, about 3,000 teenagers have contributed to the magazine in some form.

It has been a long, busy road to becoming a magazine publisher for Ms. Bowden, who has been a professional model, a business owner, an athlete and a motivational speaker.

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