Coleg Iâl, Wrecsam
Yale College, Wrexham

Launch of the Health Zone

MARKETING INNOVATION AWARDS
APPLICATION 2012

Launch of the Health Zone

Submission for the Marketing Innovation Awards 2012

Background Information

Yale College in Wrexham is a medium sized further education college with two Learning Resource Centres (LRCs). The largest LRC is situated on the campus at Grove Park Road and as well as its library provision, it also is the main open access IT facility for the College. Both LRCs are very well used with a combined footfall of around 2,000 a day. The LRCs are proactive in engaging with users and have run a number of events in recent years centered around key curriculum areas and reader development.

Objectives for the launch of the Health Zone

Our main objectives for the launch of the Health Zone were :

- To raise the profile of the new health information area at the Grove Park campus
- Provide a point of contact for visiting health professionals.
- Develop a more strategic approach to health information to fit in with college objectives.
- Provide information as part of the curriculum but also serve those with genuine health concerns who may find it difficult to access information through other channels.

Concept

The LRC team identified the increasing need for health information during the early part of 2011 but it was the partial refurbishment of the LRC at Grove Park during July 2011 that gave the impetus to find a permanent home for health related information.

Once the area was established at the start of the academic year in September, displays of current health topics were mounted and a number of resources were housed in the area including the 'Books on Prescription' collection which the LRC had launched in January 2011.

However, it was felt that a formal launch of the area was required to inform the wider college community and so it was decided that this should take place during the first 'Personal Safety Week' which the LRC arranged for October 2011.

In some respects, running two events can be problematical but it was a solution for the LRC as October is an extremely busy month and both personal safety and health can be linked. It made better use of staff energy and creativity to run Personal Safety Week with a launch of the Health Zone at one particular point in the same week rather than trying to put on two events at separate times which would have probably resulted in one of the events getting much less attention and publicity.

Creative Thinking and Innovation

Personal Safety Week was another initiative by the LRC to raise awareness of issues surrounding personal health and safety. The LRC had already developed a wide range of material around the subject of internet safety and wanted to highlight this again as well as bringing to the attention of students information around being safe at home, whilst driving, socialising, using mobiles etc and the event was planned to coincide with National Personal Safety Day organized by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust.

We were very fortunate early on in the planning stages to secure a visit by Lesley Griffiths Minister for Health and Social Services who kindly agreed to officially open the Health Zone on the Thursday of Personal Safety Week which gave the event the gravitas it deserved.

During the week, students had access to lots of information about being safe and were encouraged to undertake quizzes and take part in internet safety sessions that were run in the LRC so there was a steady flow of activities that were to culminate in the launch of the Health Zone.

Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Health and Social Services and Yale Principal Mr Dhesi

Effective Partnership Working

The LRC has had the fortune of striking up many partnerships with local health professionals and has often been a venue for drugs/sexual health awareness sessions amongst other events. In addition, the College's nurse was instrumental in finding other partners to work with and as a result we had dental health nurses, smoking cessation project officers and drug awareness experts present in the Health Zone for the launch day. The College Nurse was also present and ran an Asthma Alert stand.

For the Personal Safety Week, the partnership was broadened quite significantly. The LRC had already helped to train some students as 'CyberMentors' which is part of the 'Beat Bullying' organisation and students were around in the LRC to offer peer support to students. It was planned that somebody from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust would speak to groups of students but with the onset of an illness, the representative was unfortunately unable to attend.

Students at a self defence session

We were able however, to secure the services of two trainers, one a former policeman, who specialised in self-defence moves and who were able to give talks to students as well as carrying out short sessions in self-defence. In addition, the LRC also hosted two other organisations who were Dangerpoint and National Museums Liverpool on the launch day.

The Dangerpoint team based in North Wales, educate young people about risks, injuries and how to stay safe. Personnel from the emergency services ran sessions all week on driver safety and although some of the detail was quite graphic, it gave students an insight into what happens when people are caught up in dangerous driving and the consequences. The scenarios were played out on a make-shift stage in the LRC but the added interest were the vehicles that were scattered around the courtyard outside. Real emergency vehicles and bashed up cars helped to add realism to a very serious subject and caused many more people to come into the LRC 'to find out what was going on'!

National Museums Liverpool provided a speaker on knife crime who kindly ran two sessions on the day of the Health Zone launch and provided lots of advice to students dropping by the stand on being safe around alcohol. The sessions were over-subscribed and a repeat visit is planned for later in 2012. The speaker was very engaging yet provided some fun at her stand where she encouraged students to try on 'beer goggles' and see how things look after too much alcohol. Many students came to have a go and despite some laughter, the messages about the dangers of alcohol were reinforced.

Attendance

The attendance throughout the week and for the launch was tremendous and the centre staff were kept busy restocking leaflets and re-arranging books and resources as they were borrowed. The launch event was great fun and with the different organisations present, ensured that the LRC had a real buzz.

Students at the personal defence skills session

'I didn't know the LRC did that'

This seemed to be the most frequent comment from staff and students and whilst the LRC has a very high footfall, it was the ability to showcase a different kind of information that made the event very positive. It is difficult at this point to assess whether there have been different students coming into the centre but interestingly, staff have frequently contacted the Health Zone to ask about information for their classes and to find out what events are coming up. As teaching staff are our best advocates, this is a very positive move forward for the service.

Promotional Activity

The LRC promoted most of the activities via the college intranet and directly with staff which help to ensure that all sessions were well attended. Posters were placed were also placed around the campus but LRC staff did most of the promotion by talking to staff and students at every opportunity. The week was also made an agenda item at a number of faculty meetings, and the meetings of the College Health and Safety and Safeguarding Committees.

It was important that for the week, we gave clear information about the likely disruptions to some of the areas and the advanced notification ensured students were prepared and very receptive. We had no complaints but some students looked very surprised at what lay before them as they entered through our doors - however, they were very quickly joining in.

Success of the Project

The launch and subsequent use of the Health Zone has been tremendous with well over 1,000 students attending the events during 'Personal Safety Week' and follow up audiences to the Health Zone has been excellent. Resources are being actively borrowed from the area by staff and students and the 'Books on Prescription' collection has been revitalised in its new home.

Press Coverage

The launch of the event was covered by the Daily Post and a copy of the press release is included with this submission. In addition, the College's Marketing Department ensured the event was covered on the College's website and also in the staff publication 'Y Talk'.

Left Photographer taking snaps

Below – our favourite snap!

Use of Resources

Many resources were already present before the launch of the Health Zone and have been greatly enhanced by free resources from various organisations. There have been an incredible amount of free balloons which are very helpful in creating an interest and certainly make the area more noticeable.

A member of the LRC team has taken the Health Zone within her remit and produces regular updates to the displays and makes contact with organisations to come along but in addition, other members of LRC staff play a supporting role particularly in terms of helping during events and suggesting new resources for the area that come to light. A digital clips library was recently established and a growing number of clips on health matters are now available online to staff and students.

A small budget of £500 has been allocated to that area for the 2011-2012 but as many posters and other information can be downloaded freely from the internet, it makes the production of displays very easy and quite economical in terms of cost.

The displays are stored so that they can be re-used and are available for tutors to borrow for use in classrooms along with other appropriate resources so the Health Zone has an influence outside of the Learning Resource Centre.

The Future

The successful launch of the Health Zone has raised the profile of the LRC further within College and is assisting the College to work towards the 'Corporate Health Standards' and 'Healthy College' status. The LRC has also had a formal request from the Safeguarding Committee to make Personal Safety Week an annual event.

The Health Zone area has grown in terms of resources and has recently acquired the 'Family Doctor' series and the 'Mood Boosting' book collection from the Reading Agency which compliments the Books on Prescription scheme. Further books that follow in the same bibliotherapy scheme will be purchased to keep the collection growing.

Since the launch the area has hosted events around cancer and hearing loss and many other events are planned for 2012. Health Professionals have been very generous with their time and advice and are pleased with the audiences they receive on their visits. The LRC has done some fund raising for local health organisations in the past and will continue with this as we have been so fortunate to receive so many excellent resources and support.

Unfortunately, health issues affect everyone at some point in their lives and can be extremely stressful and frightening. Whilst we cannot ignore our wider role of providing information for curriculum needs, this specialist collection which has now been marketed to the whole college domain may help somebody find the information they need when they need it most and for that reason alone, this has been a worthwhile project.

A student trying beer goggles and other snaps from the event.

Joanne Stewart
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