



Newsletter #2, April 2017

"Growing Every Day"

Inform Yourself!

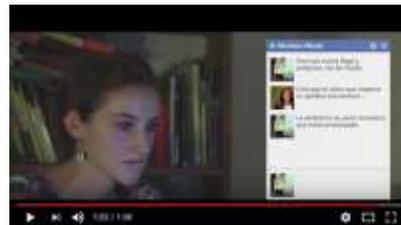
Are young people capable of making informed decisions rooted in critical problem solving skills and an integrated value system? We believe they are. This approach – sometimes defined as Positive Youth Development – has been TeenSmart's belief since the beginning and is reflected in our 5 e-learning courses from which more than 1000 youth graduate each year.

By using problem based learning approaches in our courses, we are able to **provoke thinking that meets youth where they are, empowering them to reflect critically on the unique challenges they face**. Real-life scenarios help youth reflect on strategies to solve the problem using their own values and experiences and the new life skills and attitudes they've acquired in the course.

Below is a great example of a TeenSmart problem based learning video with subsequent questions for reflection. The protagonist (Elizabeth) spends all day studying and finally crashes. Her friend chats her online to offer her some energy pills saying "the only thing that matters right now is to pass this test."

Questions for Reflection

What decision do you think Elizabeth will take?
What would you do in this situation?
How could a young person avoid getting into this situation?



Take Action!

TeenSmart's monthly donors are investors in the future. Aleen Smith has been a monthly donor since 2015 and we recently spent some time with her to learn more about why she chooses to invest in TeenSmart. Her reply?

“My donations can have no greater impact than ensuring that healthy youth grow into healthy adults.”

Aleen initially learned about TeenSmart playing bridge with friends after moving to Costa Rica for an early retirement (something she describes as a “dream come true”). However, it wasn't until she attended TeenSmart's 10th Anniversary event in 2015 that **she really grasped TeenSmart's capacity to transform lives**. As youth shared their personal testimonies of the ways TeenSmart had made an impact in their lives, she felt the tears roll down her face. It didn't take long for Aleen – a former administrator and advocate for non-profits in the US – to decide she wanted to become a sustaining monthly supporter. “It's so gratifying for me to know that I'm investing in an effective organization and in the country of Costa Rica which is a country that I admire so much for its dedication to public health. This is a tiny way for me to say congratulations to TeenSmart on a job well-done and also thank-you to Costa Rica.”

Aleen inspired us and if she inspired you, we invite you to join our monthly donor community by [clicking on this link](#). The process is fast and secure and ensures that your support for the future health of the region be invested wisely throughout the year. Thank you for taking action with TeenSmart today!



Celebrate with us!

TeenSmart believes in **building the capacities of local leaders to make meaningful changes in their communities**. In 2017 alone, our staff has already trained over 150 professional-level volunteers from all over Costa Rica and Nicaragua to implement TeenSmart services in their schools, colleges, community centers, and more. Many of the professional volunteers are young adults themselves whose honest feedback and optimism enrich our work. Check out some of the photos of these trainings below and then click on the links to view the photo albums on our Facebook page!



Project Lidera Emprende: Training for 29 youth leaders from Limon, Costa Rica together with the Fundación Omar Dengo and supported by the US Embassy's prestigious CARSI Grant.



Polytechnic University of Nicaragua (UPOLI): Student leaders volunteer their time to be trained and to train other college students on effectively using JovenSalud services.



Implementing Partners in [Costa Rica](#) and [Nicaragua](#): TeenSmart Leadership teams from all over the region come together to deepen their knowledge of JovenSalud online tools, as well as for continuing education workshops on vital topics such as cutting.

Be Inspired!

"There are two basic motivating forces: fear and love. When we are afraid, we pull back from life. When we are in love, we open to all that life has to offer with passion, excitement and acceptance. We need to learn to love ourselves first, in all our glory and our imperfections. If we cannot love ourselves, we cannot fully open to our ability to love others or our potential to create."
– John Lennon

