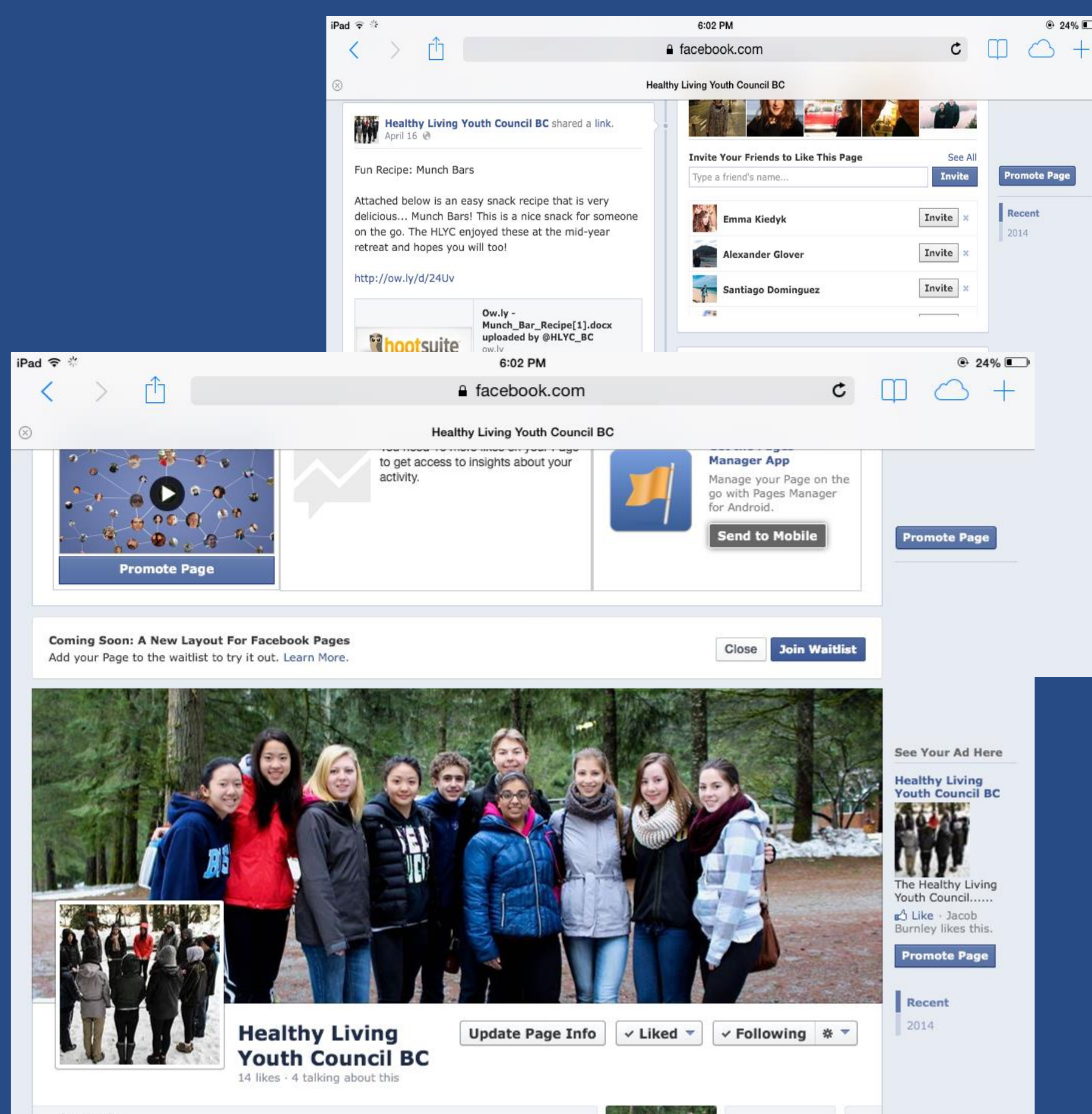


Social Media: A valuable tool to promote healthy living

At our past HLYC Retreats in Hope and on Gambier Island, the group and our facilitators expressed their desire for us as the student leaders to create social media sites to help promote the ideology of healthy living. Another HLYC member and I were extremely interested in exploring this possibility. We decided to use Facebook and Twitter, and after collaborating with our fellow group members and receiving some in-depth training on the programming site *Hootsuite* from Cordia at DASH, we were ready to go. Once the Facebook account was established, we initially invited all of the group members and all of our friends to “like” and explore the page. From there, we began to share posts on a wide variety of topics, including:

- Updates from HLYC members regarding their action projects
- Healthy and nutritious recipes
- Motivating, inspirational quotes
- Important updates from the staff at DASH
- Interesting news articles we found from different sources which had healthy living tips, stories, etc...



In addition to posting the information above, we continued to get additional assistance from our fellow members in the HLYC. We discussed what they would like to see from our social media sites. We also got support from our peers at our schools. With their input and support, we hope we will soon have a site that is extremely effective in spreading the word about healthy living.



How can the barriers to physical activity at school be addressed?

In addition to working as part of the HLYC's Social Media team, part of my action project this year involved looking at the issue of the lack of physical activity amongst some students at my high school. At Dover Bay Secondary in Nanaimo, the mandatory physical education program only runs until grade ten. From then on, there are only optional, advanced PE classes for a smaller numbers of students. However, many students wish to take electives related to their plans for post-secondary education. As such, the only other way to get involved in a fitness-related activity at school is by joining a sports team. This is can often be costly and is only an option for top-level athletes. For those looking for a non-competitive sporting opportunity, there are simply no alternatives. Dover Bay Secondary does not currently offer intramurals or after-school gym time as this gym time is reserved for athletic teams. For my project, I was curious whether students would be interested in recreational physical activity if open-gym time was available at lunch or after school. I prepared a survey and conducted it at the school.

Survey Questions

The Final results of the verbal survey of 130 students at Dover Bay Secondary School in Nanaimo, BC.

1. Outside of your regular school class, do you believe physical activity/fitness is important to you staying healthy?

Yes- 124 (95.4%)
No- 6

2. How much physical activity should the average student be getting on a daily basis?

30 min- 9
1 hour- 107 (82.3%)
2 hours- 10
3 hours or more- 4

3. Are you currently reaching the target goal set by health groups in Canada of about 60 minutes (1 hour) a day of physical activity?

Yes- 101 (77.7%)
No- 29

4. What is the main barrier for you not being able to participate further in physical activity?

Issue of Time- 33
Homework- 17
Job- 7
Other Commitments- 73 (56.2%)

5. If additional Physical Activities were provided at the school for little or no cost, would you participate in them?

Yes- 91 (70%)
No- 12
I would consider- 27

6. Would you prefer to compete in a friendly or competitive environment?

Competitive- 63
Friendly- 67 (51.5%)



In the following school year, I hope to collaborate further and present my findings to my school's Students Council and the Athletics department in order to hopefully create a variety of welcoming and fun activities for students of all grades at lunch and after school.

