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Teen on mission to educate AIDS-infected kids in India

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Shamin Mohamed Jr. says that when he was in high school, HIV/AIDS was not always talked about among his peers.

The 19-year-old president and founder of the Children's AIDS Health Program was among a group of five young Canadians on an outreach mission to India to help educate HIV/AIDS-infected youth who presented their findings at city hall yesterday.

"Growing up in the Jane-Dundas area and coming from such a high crime rate, nobody wanted to talk about HIV/AIDS," Mohamed recalled of his high school experience at Runnymede Collegiate Institute. "This year, we went to India because India has one of the highest under-reported incidents of HIV/AIDS."

The group spent 28 days, which began on June 15, in the Tamil Nadu state speaking with youth between the ages of three and 21 years old on the myths and realities of HIV/AIDS.

Young children in orphanages were asked to express their feelings on the issue through performance arts or by drawing pictures, while teens and university students were given demonstrations on how to use condoms properly.

Mohamed found that many of the young people he met knew more about the disease than any of his friends or peers back home.

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