



GETTING STARTED

A Case Study



Timberlane Regional High School's (TRHS) Athletic Director, Angelo Fantasia, attended a Life of an Athlete (LoA) training and was blown away by the messages and video presented because it provided information about the immediate impact of lifestyle choices and empowered youth to take ownership of a healthier lifestyle. Angelo immediately went back to the school and began sharing information from the training with his students and fellow educators. Health and physical educators and the Student Assistance Professional were excited to start sharing with their students the messages about the immediate impact of lifestyle choices on performance.

The TRHS team started educating student athletes about nutrition and sleep. They wanted to focus on celebrating all the positive things going on in the school rather than 'Mr. Fantasia catching the kids screwing up.' Once they had built some excitement, the TRHS team was able to start talking about some of the data related to the impact of substance misuse on athletic performance. By showing how alcohol and other drugs affects them right now, students began to take ownership of living a healthier lifestyle.

After the TRHS team had been implementing LoA for a couple years, the NHIAA received a grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation to bring LoA to the entire state. The TRHS team was able to receive technical assistance from the NHIAA to help with their locally-driven and locally-controlled LoA effort. That is when things really started to come together.

Angelo helped the NHIAA secure additional funding by participating in a presentation to the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. At that meeting there was a lot of discussion about the need to spread the program outside of athletics. Angelo left that meeting and started working with his team back at TRHS to roll out 'Life of an Owl' (named after the school mascot, the owl.) By linking LoA to their school mascot and school pride, the TRHS team was able to impact even more students and build a greater level of excitement.

With the additional funding Angelo helped to secure, TRHS was able to send coaches, youth leaders, and other administrators to annual statewide trainings. Additionally, the NHIAA worked with the TRHS team to set up a local training for youth leaders with a separate session for coaches. The NHIAA also reviewed TRHS' athletic codes of conduct and presented that to their policy group with recommendations for how the codes of conduct could be strengthened. The TRHS team was then able to work with the students to develop a video to show at the pre-season meetings about the codes of conduct and impact of lifestyle choices on performance.

Currently, Life of an Owl is really starting to take off, with athletes working collaboratively with other students involved with band, drama, and other clubs to improve the climate at TRHS. Additionally, the TRHS team is working with the NHIAA to conduct trainings for faculty during professional development day. Life of an Owl continues to grow and have a positive impact on school climate at TRHS.

The TRHS team started educating student athletes about nutrition and sleep. They then incorporated education around alcohol and other drugs once they had established excitement for LOA.