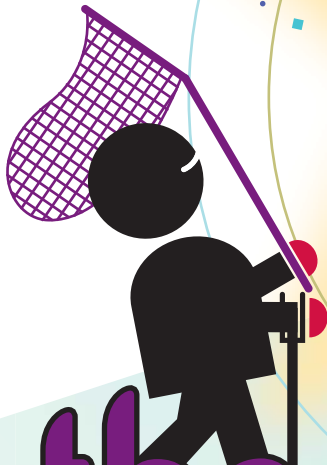




Speaker Advocacy Kit
Third Edition



Taking the PATH

Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope



Youth Ambassadors Across Canada

Active Living Alliance
for Canadians with
a Disability



The Youth Ambassador Advocacy Kit is designed to enable young Canadians to become more active—both physically and as advocates for change in their communities.

Book 1, *Accent on Active Living*, focuses on what we mean by *active living*. It tells you what this approach to life involves, and how you can benefit from learning more about it.

Book 2, *Advocacy in Action*, shows how you can contribute to your goal of an active lifestyle by learning how to change or remove the barriers to active living that might keep you from realizing your dreams.

Book 3, *Taking the Path: Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope*, helps you plan your life and reach your goals. Although this process is designed to help you become an advocate for active living, you can also use it to help you plan your career, your education, and the rest of your life's goals.

Book 4, *An Advocate's Agenda*, is your personal advocacy manual. It is designed to help you track the people you contact, the activities you pursue, and the results you achieve as you move through your active life.

Production of this document has been made possible by funding from Human Resources and Social Development Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program – Disability component. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official policy of the Government of Canada.

This Youth Ambassador Advocacy Kit has been developed as part of the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability's Youth Ambassador Program (www.youthambassadors.ca). The Active Living Alliance is a national network of organizations and individuals dedicated to promoting full community participation through active, healthy living. For more information, please visit www.ala.ca or call us toll free: 1-800-771-0663 (TTY 1-888-771-0663).

Youth Ambassador Advocacy Kit.
3rd Ed.

ISBN 1-895823-52-8 4

Printed: June 2006

the PATH

Introduction

Welcome to ***Taking the Path***, the third booklet of a four-booklet series, the *Youth Ambassador Advocacy Kit*. This kit has been developed to enable young people with disabilities to pursue “active living”.

PATH will help you set your goals, decide what you want to do in life, and build a plan to attain those goals. The PATH method shows you that goal-planning takes a little thought. You need to develop a vision of where you want to go, and how you can get there—one step at a time.

The principles in this book were developed by three experts: Jack Pearpoint, John O’Brien and the late Marsha Forest. Many people committed to inclusion, diversity, team work, community and change helped to develop PATH. The Active Living Alliance owes these advocates a deep debt of gratitude for allowing us to adapt PATH: A Workbook for Planning Positive Possible Futures (Inclusion Press, Toronto 1991) for our Ambassador Training Workshop and for this information kit.



PATH: Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope

When you're an advocate for yourself and for others, your job is to work toward goals, to make things happen. But what? What exactly would you fix, change or create?

If you're ready to ask that, you're ready for PATH.

What is PATH? Eight steps to a dream

PATH is an eight-step creative planning tool to help achieve a dream.

PATH will help you explore your dreams for active living and create an action plan to make those dreams come true. PATH takes a goal that seems out of reach, impractical or even impossible and makes it well within reach and probable!

How does PATH work?

Start with a goal, plan the journey

With PATH, you start by deciding on and then describing and visualizing your dream—the goal. We call this the North Star. Why? Well, the North Star has been guiding travellers to their destinations for millennia. Your goal, your North Star, is your guiding light on this PATH.

Once you have your destination in mind, you work back to the beginning, which is Now, and plan how to get from Now to your North Star. PATH will help you break it down into manageable steps.

What do I do?

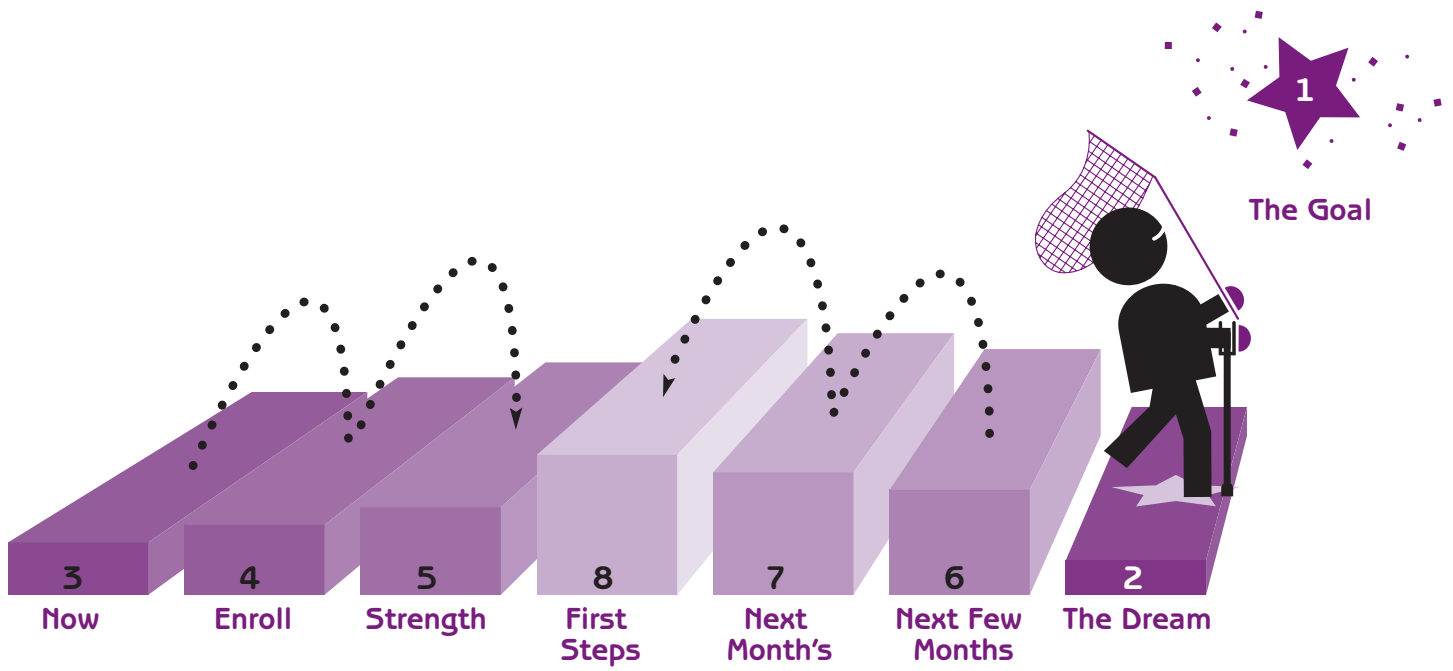
Participate—every person and their dream is important

This booklet shows you how to create a PATH and how powerful and fun it can be.

Later, you can create a PATH for yourself or for others.

The important thing is to get started.





The eight steps

1. Touch the **Dream**: (The North Star)
2. Visualize the **Goal**: Focus on the next year
3. Ground in the **Now**: Where are we?
4. Name people to **Enroll** on the journey
5. Build **Strength**
6. Chart actions for the **Next Few Months**
7. Plan for the **Next Month's** work
8. Commit to the **First Steps**

As you work on your PATH, here are some key words to keep in mind.

Dream: a vision of something wonderful

Visualize: to see a detailed vivid picture in your mind

Accomplice: a person who works with you and feels the same way you do

Enroll: to ask other people to join you on your PATH.



Step 1. The dream

A journey has to begin with a destination because, if you know where you want to go, you can figure out how to get there.

So, what's your active living dream? What's going to be your North Star? Remember, it's a dream, so anything is possible.

Now describe your dream. What would you do if you could do anything? If there was nothing to stop you? At the end of this journey, what do you see yourself doing? Don't think about being "realistic" or practical or sensible. Just think about what you want!

As you describe your dream, be very specific and detailed. Put your dream into words. Create images that represent your dream. Make that dream come alive.

This dream is now your North Star, your guiding light on your journey.



Step 2. The goal

As you plan your PATH, remember to work backwards and break your journey down into manageable steps.

In Step 2, don't look at the end of the journey, look close to it. So, choose a point in the future, not too far from now—maybe a year. What's the date? Now time-travel to that point.

- Where are you?
- What does the future look like?
- Describe in detail:
 - What you are doing?
 - Who is with you?
 - Where are you?
 - Are you using equipment or facilities?
- Imagine that you've just celebrated a milestone. What is it?

Be very specific. Use your imagination to visualize the future and bring it to life.



Step 3. Now

You've visualized the future, now it's time to make the connection between the Now and the Dream.

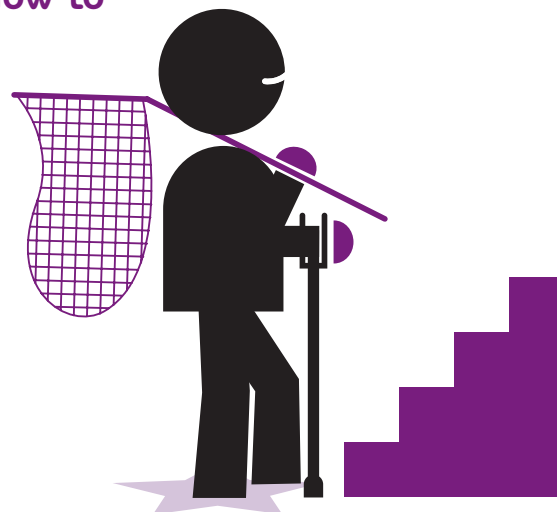
Just as knowing your destination is important, you also have to know your starting point to chart your PATH. So, come back from the future and see what Now looks like.

- Are you active?
- What activities do you do?
- What kinds of things do you like to do?
 - Do you do them with friends, family, or both?
- What's school like?
 - How about Phys. Ed. or intramurals?
 - What about outside school?
 - Do you feel that there are some things you just can't do, that are too hard for you to do, or that can't accommodate your needs?
 - Even so, is there someone who encourages you and makes it possible for you to participate?
- Imagine a stretched out rubber band that connects the "Now" and the "North Star." The elastic is taut and the two ends want to spring together. Your PATH will make that happen.

You're now ready to start planning how to get from Now to the Goal.

That may seem like too much right now, but don't worry. Remember, PATH will break the journey down into small, manageable steps.

And you're not expected to do it alone!



Step 4. Who do I enroll?

A journey is always a lot more fun—easier too—if you have company and help. Working as a team, depending on each other along the way, is a great way to accomplish a goal.

So the question here is:

Who do you need to help you reach your North Star? Think about it!
Who can you enroll to be your accomplices?

- Are they people you know: friends, parents, teachers, people at the community centre, your parents' friends?
- What about people you don't know personally?
- Is there a local Active Living Alliance office or similar organization that can help?
- What about your federal or provincial government representative?
- Is there someone else who plays a key role in your community? Perhaps a city councillor? Some of these people will be with you throughout the journey, others may help with only one part.

As you think about who can help, be specific about their identity and the way they can help.

- Write down their names, not just their titles.
- If it's an organization, write down who at the organization you think can help.

Then write down what you think they can do to help you get from Now to your North Star.



Step 5. Getting stronger

Now that you have your team and the list of people who can help you, this step is about increasing your strength.

Your team will need to work together.

Some of the people you have enrolled may be better at certain tasks than others. They will all have busy lives. Think about how your team can work together and how you will support each other. What should you do to make sure you and your team are strong enough in heart, mind, and body, to take the journey and reach your goal?

Write down some ideas on how you can be strong together.



Step 6. Looking six months ahead

Now that you have a better idea of how your team is going to work, take another look into the future, not to the end of your journey but to, say, six months from now. Picture yourself moving towards your goal. How is it going?

Looking at this point in the future, what has happened already? What have you accomplished? Is your team still enthusiastic and working hard? Are things getting done? What actions did you take to get here?

Write down the answers to these questions and keep the answers in mind as you move to Step 7.



Step 7. Three months

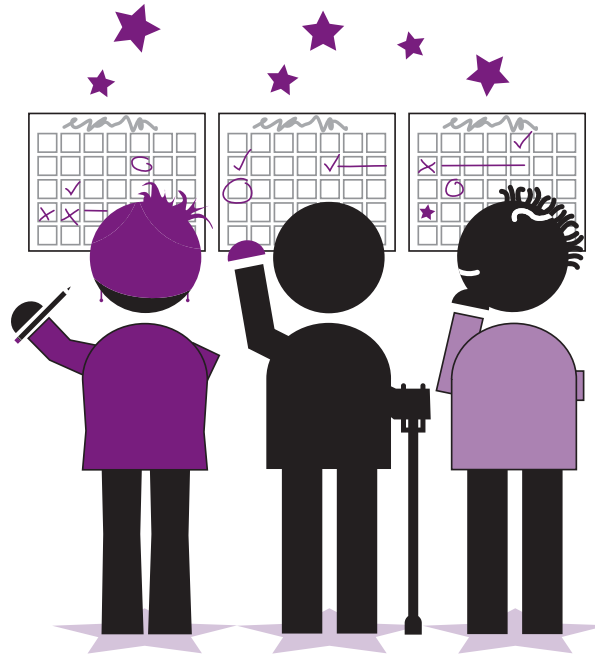
Step 7 is a lot like Step 6. You're still visiting the future, but it's a lot closer to Now—only about three months away.

You've visualized the journey, a year from now and six months from now. How did you get there? What specifically did you and your team do to reach those milestones?

Visualize yourself three months from now. Decide what steps you need to take to get there. Describe them in detail:

- What part of your plan is in progress?
- Who on the team is doing what?
- Where are they doing it, and what resources are they using?
- When will that part of the plan be completed?

Write down your answers to these questions. Be very specific.

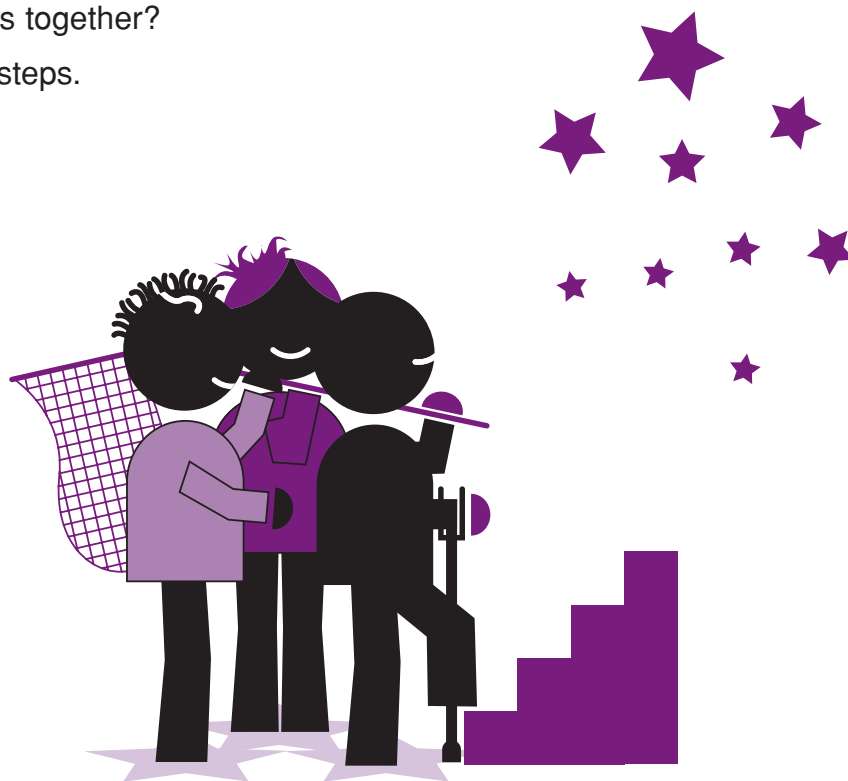


Step 8. First steps

You've reached the last step in PATH. You're back to today and it's time to get started on the journey to your North Star. Yes, right now!

- So, what do you need to do first? What can you do today to take the first steps? Think!
 - Can you talk to your peers about your ideas and get their feedback?
 - Is there someone else, a good resource, you should talk to?
 - Can you make phone calls?
 - Write letters?
 - Create a schedule?
 - Join a group?
 - Get some friends together?

Write down your first steps.



Set out on your PATH

If you look back over what you've written down as you went through the PATH process, you should be able to see your action plan—your PATH—taking shape.

When you looked at three months, six months, a year from now, all the way to the end of your journey, you and your team were working on specific parts of the PATH. As you pictured it, you saw them using resources, building on work they'd already done. This should give you a clear idea of what to set in motion now to reach your goal.

Whatever you decide to do first, start NOW!

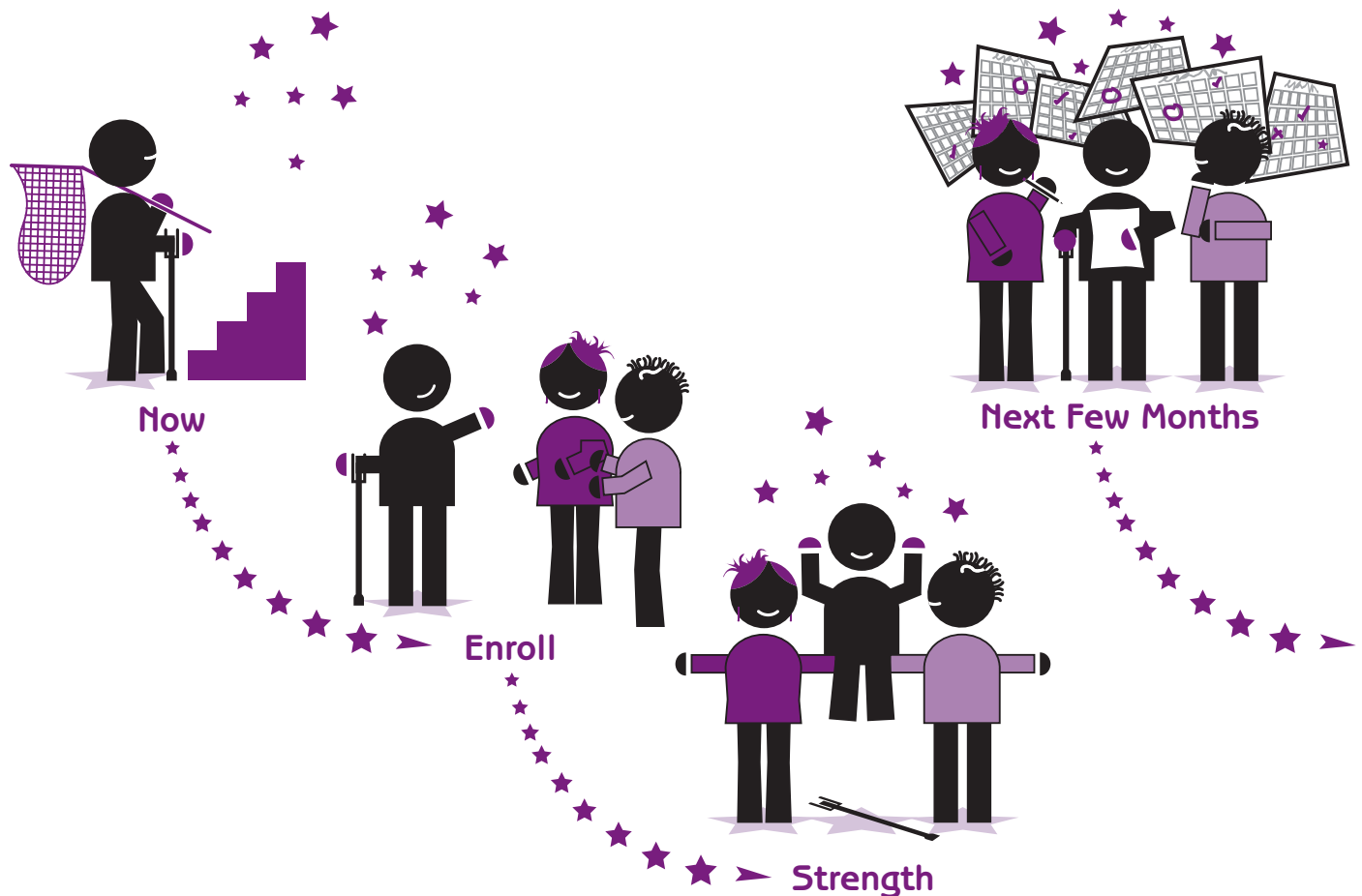


Tips for the road

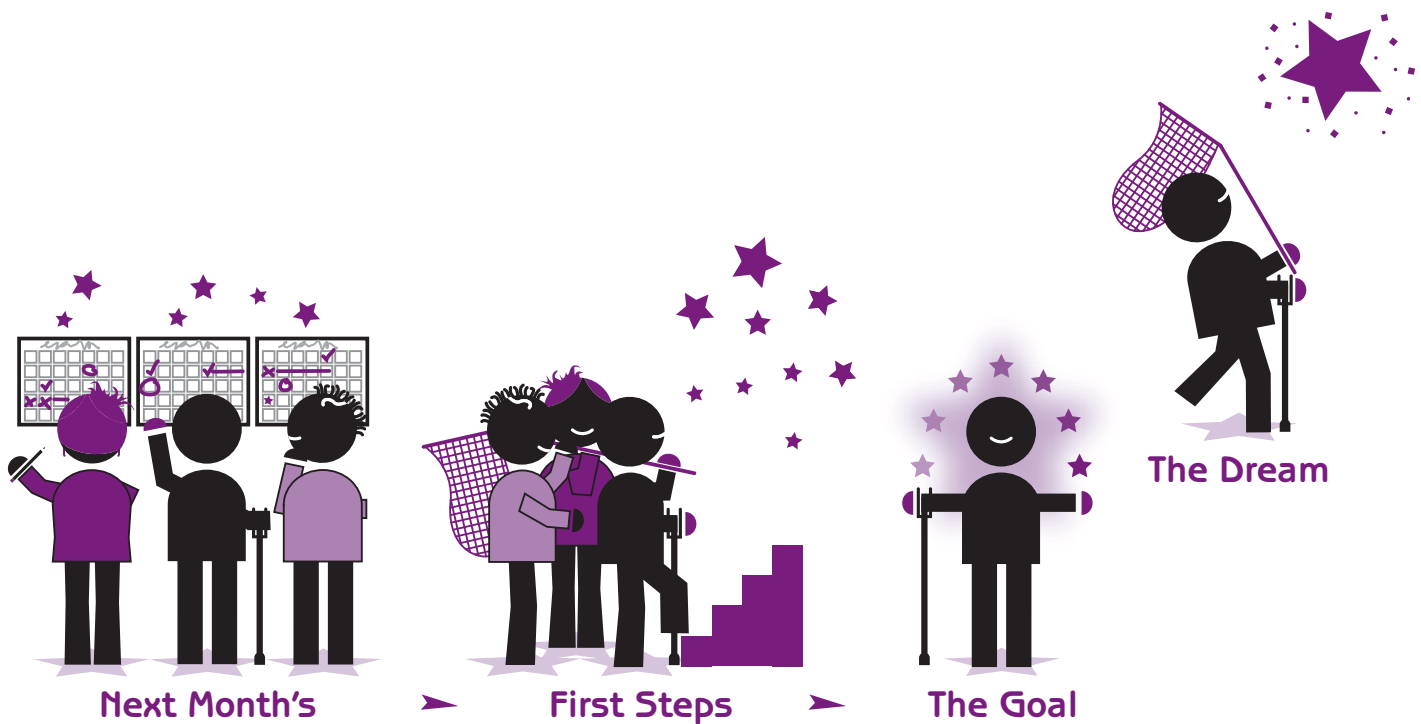
Here are some tips for keeping track of your progress. Just as you've done today, write it down! Keep a journal.

Your journal should have:

- Notes on all of the contacts you've made—face-to-face, by phone, letter or email—AND a note of their response and whether or not you need to follow up.
- Notes on your research.
- A “to do” list; one for yourself and one for the team.
 - Check off items as they get done.



- Notes on lessons you've learned.
 - You may want to take on an entirely different project later.
 - The experience you gain and what you learn here can apply to situations throughout your life.
 - You can also become a resource for those who are embarking on their own journey.
- Ideas! If something “comes to you” at an odd time, write it down! Don't assume you'll remember that great idea just when you need it.



Many young people have tried the PATH process and liked it. Some use it to become better advocates for active living and also to plan their own goals—even if those goals aren't related to active living.

Because the Active Living Alliance has found that many participants in the annual Youth Exchanges want to follow the PATH system, we've designed the next booklet in this kit so that you can keep track of your own advocacy and PATH activities.

So to start your own PATH, pull out Book Four, **An Advocate's Agenda**, and make it your own personal manual for keeping track of your advocacy and PATH achievements.

