



Operation Snowball History

Operation Snowball began in 1977 through the efforts of several Rockford area youth and adults who had attended the Illinois Teenage Institute on Substance Abuse (ITI) sponsored by the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association (IADDA). This group saw an opportunity to develop a prevention program focused on youth leadership and empowerment, using the ITI model, and saw that this would be adaptable to local community needs.

The Rockford group held a weekend training experience using the ITI agenda as its model. From the very beginning, Operation Snowball training was planned and implemented almost entirely by youth, with the adults serving in advisory roles. And just as they envisioned it, the program picked up speed, like a snowball rolling downhill.

Operation Snowball Chapters began to develop all over the state and IADDA supported the expansion of Operation Snowball. High school age students were the target group first, but Chapters began to ask high schoolers to serve as facilitators and presenters for middle/junior high and elementary level students. Snowflake and Snowflurry were born. In 1981, with the help of IADDA, the Operation Snowball name and logo were registered as service marks.

In 1987, the Steering Committee incorporated as a not-for-profit organization affiliated with IADDA, using the corporate name: Operation Snowball, Inc. and began a process of accrediting new groups, to ensure the integrity of the program.

Naperville's Chapter One of the approximately 150 chapters statewide, the Naperville Operation Snowball Chapter began in May of 1985 and has grown to be a successful community collaborative providing Snow Programs for high school students in School Districts' #203 and #204. The programs deliver information about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, friendship, problem solving skills, and provide a support system within a peer group setting.

Since the Spring of 1985 we estimate that well over 10,000 students have attended the Naperville Operation Snowball. We also know from keeping in touch with our graduates that, particularly among the students who have served on staff, a high percentage have entered fields like teaching, prevention, counseling, or community service. Almost half of the current adult staff for Snowball are people who attended the event many years ago as teenagers.

Snow Programs Are About...

- Communities of Caring
- Choosing to be Drug Free
- Youth Leadership
- Youth and Adult Partnerships

- Community Collaboration
- Powerful Youth to Youth Experiences
- Positive Peer and Adult Role-Modeling
- Finding a Voice and Being Heard
- Personal and Interpersonal Growth
- Healthy Decision-Making
- Positive Values
- Positive Attitudes
- Prevention
- Friendship and Fun

For Questions, Information & Program Dates, or Donations and Contributions, please contact Kate Keir, Snowball Manager for 360 Youth Services at kkeir@360youthservices.org.