



**2016 North Country Region
Champion for Children
Sean O'Brien**

Sean O'Brien is the executive director of Adapt, a non-profit organization whose goal is to coordinate and administer alcohol, tobacco, and other substance abuse prevention, intervention, and after care programs that address the needs of youth ages 5 to 21. Sean's efforts concentrate on youth leadership and healthy lifestyles as an alternative to using drugs and alcohol.

Sean was also instrumental in developing the North Country Prevention Youth Council, which has evolved into North Country Youth Leadership Through Adventure (YLTA). YLTA is made up of students from 10 North Country high schools who meet several times a month to discuss local and regional efforts for prevention of substance abuse among high school students. Many who have participated in YLTA will tell you it has changed their life. In the summer, Sean leads and coordinates Wilderness Youth Leadership Development (WYLD), an immersion adventure program for youth – generally at risk – to experience outdoor activities structured to foster team building and development of leadership styles.

In addition, Sean works closely with the Profile School administration to create, direct, and implement initiatives designed to enhance the climate and culture of the school and community. Such initiatives include service-learning opportunities like working at local farms or food pantries, elementary school mentorships, Best Buddies, and more.

Lori Langlois, executive director of North Country Education Services (NCES), sums it up nicely, "Not only does Sean have a terrific rapport with students, what impresses me the most is the way he empowers students to be leaders. He fosters a real sense of students helping themselves grow, as well as instilling how students can play a role in promoting positive decision making for their peers and the greater community. His commitment and efforts to instill life-long healthy lifestyle behaviors in youth make him a true Champion for Children."