

Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Kathi Hughes

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On February 1, 2006, the Ministry of Education sent a "submission for expression of interest" to all Districts regarding the implementation of a new Provincial Outreach Program for FASD. School District No. 57 applied, and at the end of March, we were informed we would be the host district and would have an official launch in September of 2006. However, thanks to a partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, we started developing our infrastructure in May of 2006.

And so the new Provincial Outreach Program for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (POPFASD) was born. Our team consists of two teachers (Kathi Hughes and Stacey Wakabayashi), one technical consultant (Corey Fehr), a .5 clerical assistant (Chris Rempel) and a supervising administrator (Carl Anserello). Hosted by the Prince George School District, and located in the Center for Learning Alternatives, we are funded by the Ministry of Education, and, at least for the first year, supported and directed by a multi-district Steering Committee.

Our mandate is to provide support and learning opportunities for teachers of students with FASD. Specifically, we provide training and in-service which increases the understanding of the educational implications of FASD, help School Districts build capacity for successfully meeting the needs of learners with FASD, synthesize and share research and practice, and liaise with other Ministries.

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From the Editor's Desk:

The 20th annual BCAEA conference was a resounding success for your PSA and a superb, professional development opportunity for the over 500 delegates that attended. Dr. Gary Phillips delivered an entertaining and informative keynote, which included the memorable comment, "If what you're doing ain't working, do something else." Dr. Phillips reminded us all that we have the power to influence every learner. You can access more of Dr. Phillip's insights at his web site: www.garyphillips.com/.

There were a total of 31 sessions offered, covering a wide variety of topics and interests. We were presented with great art ideas, encouraged to monitor and manage our stress levels, taught how to create "brain friendly" curriculum, given strategies on "how to address bullying" and introduced to geocaching, exposed to the harsh realities of life on the streets for those who fall victim to drug abuse, sexual exploitation and poverty, and saw other programs showcase what they do best.

For many, the highlight of the two-day conference is The Schmooze. With planning, preparation and direction from Joyce May, an array of volunteers and students from ACE in Abbotsford and South Delta Alternate Program served up an amazing array of appetizers and beverages.

Without question, the conference has something for everyone. If you were there, I expect that you went home inspired to provide for your students with even more knowledge and a boost of renewed enthusiasm. If you weren't, we sincerely hope to see you there next year.



President's Message

Mike Shaw



Another annual conference – our twentieth – has come and gone. The smooth running is a testament to the hard work and dedication of your association executive and a host of volunteers. Overseeing everything, just as she has done for the last twenty conferences, is DJ Pauls. Her attention to detail is what makes everything run so well. JD Duncan did another bang-up job with conference registration, while Dave Lafontaine put together a wonderful roster of speakers, ensuring there was something for every one. Rick Fitch, as always, took care of a myriad of little details, and Jim Lawson was seemingly everywhere, simultaneously schmoozing and taking photos for this issue. And who could forget Joyce May and the always incredible Schmooze! How she puts that feast together is nothing short of amazing! I am sure you enjoyed every minute if you were able to attend.

At the AGM on Friday, attended this year by a whopping two members other than the Executive (and both of them were former Presidents!), I was elected by acclimation to the two-year term position of President. Joyce May was elected by acclimation to the two-year term position of Vice-President, and Rick Fitch was elected by acclimation to the one-year term position of Secretary-Treasurer.

It is with regret that we accepted Dave Lafontaine's decision not to seek reappointment as Speaker Co-ordinator. His commitments to his young family and the BCTF didn't allow him to continue in the position. We thank him for a job well done, and wish him well.

Able replacing him is Mark Bradshaw, who was appointed to the position at the post-conference Executive meeting. Any who have taken the Exploring Vancouver's Neighbourhoods session in conferences past will recognize his name. We know that Mark will be another terrific addition to our roster; he has already started on booking speakers for next year.

And finally, we have adopted some changes for The Schmooze for next year. The days of an unlimited bar have come to an end. The potential liability for the executive, association, and Federation, should someone have an accident after attending our function, was just too great to ignore any longer. As a consequence, for next year when you enter the Schmooze, you will receive two drink tickets, which may be exchanged for your choice of beverage, either alcoholic or non-alcoholic.

I look forward to seeing you at next year's conference. ♦

POPFASD

(continued from page 1)

Through at least our first year of operation, a regionally representative multi-district Steering Committee will help direct our POPFASD team and maintain contact with School Districts within their region so that POPFASD has a “geo-cluster” method of service delivery. With the help of the Steering Committee, we are weaving a network of District Partners from each District. Two days of inservice took place for the District Partners on December 12 and 13, 2006.

Currently we are giving inservices (Prince George, Port McNeil, Coquitlam, Mission booked right now), attending inservices (Whitecrow, Train the Trainer, Malbin’s Intensive Training in Portland), liaising with other agencies (innumerable provincial meetings and CDBC training), supporting teachers through e-mail consulting, planning District Partner training, consulting with FASD gurus, and developing our web-site, complete with eLearning modules. For more information about our activities, visit the web site at www.fasdoutreach.ca and look under “About us: POPFASD News”

We officially launched our web site on November 3, 2006. For full access, you must register, and registering is easy! Start your browser, type in our address, www.fasdoutreach.ca, then click on “register” Next, fill in the simple form, create a user name for the site and enter a password. We’ll send an e-mail containing a confirmation link to the e-mail address you provide. Once that e-mail arrives, click on the blue link it contains to confirm your account and activate it. Now you have full access to our site. Remember your user name and password; in future visits, as you’ll need to login using that same user name and password.

Have a look around and, please, give us feedback. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and ideas. To contact any of us, look under “About Us: Outreach Staff” on the web site. ♦

Kathi Hughes has been involved with Alternate Education since Pontius Pilate was an Air Cadet, both as a teacher and as a long-serving member (now retired) of the BCAEA Executive.



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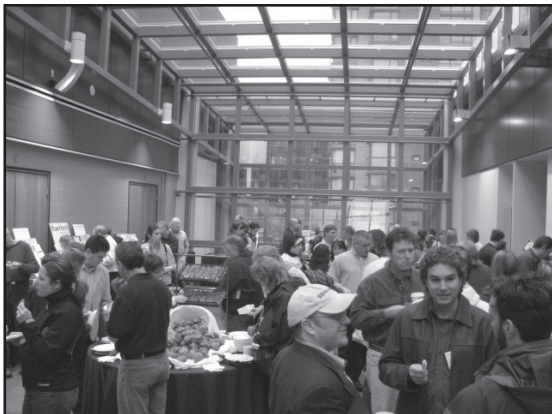
20th Annual Challenge and Change Conference



The calm before the storm in the Pavillion Ballroom.



Early birds arrive for breakfast before it is fully light out.



Shortly after 8:00 the breakfast area was busy.



Bruce, Renate, and Tim wait for the keynote to start.



Dr. Gordon Neufeld's sessions are always popular.



Just some of the student artwork on display.



The registration desk was busy Thursday morning.



The Help Desk was also put to good use.



The Pavillion Ballroom shortly before Dr. Gary Phillips spoke.



Anita Chapman's session was well-received.



Joyce's helpers arrived in style.



JD, Liz, and Clara did a bang-up job at the registration desk.

More Conference Photos



An incredible amount of work goes on behind the scenes.



Hours and hours of preparation by many volunteers.



More Happy Schmoozers.



A Happy Smoocher!



Tom McEvay poses with a star.



Gary Phillips offered three sessions as well as the keynote.



The table decorations looked good enough to steal. Unfortunately, people did.



Happy Schmoozers.



It doesn't get any better than this!



Rob Purgavie entertained (tortured?) us with the bagpipes!



The geocaching sessions were a hit.

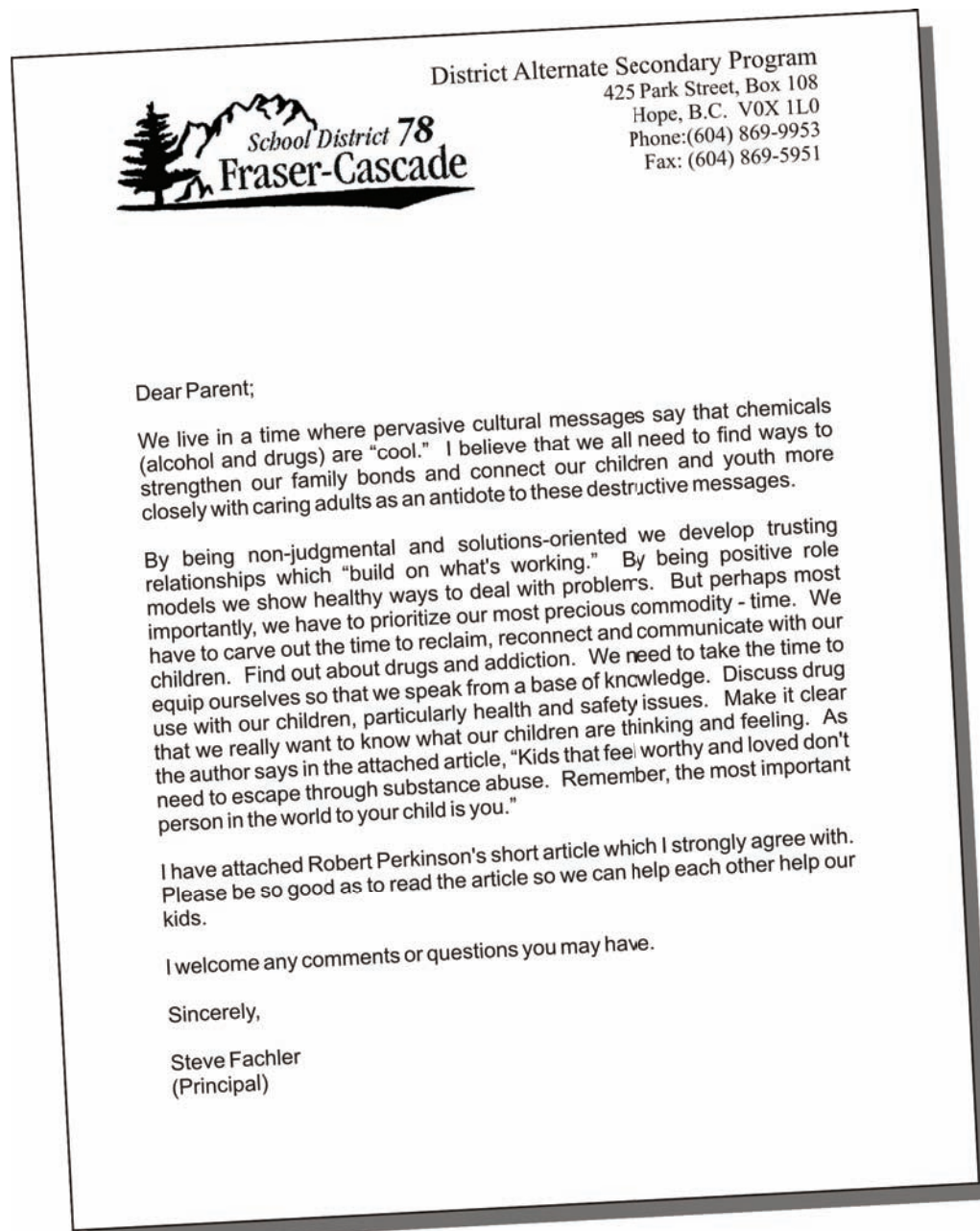


The Alberni crew pose before heading home.

A Message to Parents

Steve Fachler

Substance misuse is a growing challenge which we all face in our communities. I believe one of the keys to success in addressing this concern is to help parents "reconnect" with their kids. As we have heard at our conference from Dr. Gordon Neufeld, the quality of child-parent relationships is paramount. To this end, I offer a generic letter to parents with an attached essay by Robert Perkinson as one strategy to assist parents.



A Message to Parents, Robert R. Perkinson

It is time that we parents wake up to what is important to our children, what really matters to them, and what they really want. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, more important to your child than your time. Your child knows where you spend your time. Your children watch what you do. If you spend four to five hours in front of the television or if you are always working, your child knows what you love. You love television and work, not them. You choose those activities time after time over them, and they feel unimportant and worthless.

Let's reclaim our kids. Let's get them back from the tube, stereo, computer, and gangs. Let's show them how important they are. Let's come home from work, turn off the television, and talk to them. Let's never have an evening meal staring at the news. Let's look at our children. How are they doing? How are they really doing? As a psychologist who has treated thousands of children, I know your children are struggling to please you. They love you and want to make you proud of them. But they do not think they can do it. They think it is too late. They believe that they are not good enough, smart enough, or pretty enough, and many of them have given up. That is why they need dope. They need to go into the numb zone where they do not feel the pain anymore.

You can change all of that and you can do it all by yourself. All you have to do is consistently tell your children the truth. Eat every evening meal with the family and have each member participate in conversation. Nobody passes. Everybody has to share. It will be hard for a while because the communication has broken down,

but stick to it. You start by sharing what happened to you that day, the little things and the big things. Share your struggles, your hopes and dreams. Talk about when you failed to live up to the person that you really want to be. When you do this, something magical happens. You show your family that you trust them and need them. Your family begins to share the struggles of life together, and you begin to help each other. You will be amazed at how often your ten-year-old will come up with a solution that never came to your mind.

Make a date with each member of the family once a week, including with your spouse. Set aside an evening where one week you decide the activity and the next week the child decides what you will do together. This can be something as simple as going to McDonald's or shooting hoops. Make sure this is one-on-one time; time for each of you to talk and share your lives. National statistics show that the loneliest people in the world are high school students and the elderly.

Tell your child how wonderful he or she is and how much he/she gives to you. Share your fears about the temptations of alcohol and drug use. Tell them they are too important to risk their lives by drinking and using drugs. Get in a habit of listening not lecturing. Be an active listener: "Tell me more about that." "How did you feel?" "What happened then?" "What were you thinking?" Pull for details. Find out your child's hopes and dreams. Strive for intimacy, "into-me-see." Let the child see you from the inside out and share the world from your child's perspective. Read a section from a book each night around the dinner table. The kids might roll their eyes at first, but don't give up. Books like ...continued on page 23

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Successful Alternative Programs: Common Elements,

Stephen Inniss



For the past five years I have hosted the “Successful Alternative Programs” sessions at the BCAEA provincial conference. In those sessions, representatives of successful alternative programs from around the province describe the details of what they do and why it works. The programs and schools represented range from single classrooms located in a regular secondary school to entire schools full of multiple alternative programs. Each session is capped with a panel discussion. These sessions are informative and inspirational for the presenters and the participants alike.

There is always something new to learn, even for someone who has experience in a range of alternative education settings. Though they vary a great deal in their details, according to the circumstances of the program and the talents of the staff, I have observed some common themes; elements that show up again and again in what the presenters describe. Here are a few of them.

Choices and Responsibilities

Even on entry, students apply to the alternative program rather than being assigned to it. It might be the last option for a student, but even then it is still one the student has chosen. Once accepted, students usually have some choice in terms of what they work on and when they work on it. They also have a role in setting the local culture and expectations. This may be through a formal process such as a “General Meeting” in which staff and students meet to discuss and plan events or school rules, or it may be more informal, but in any case there is an element of responsibility in and ownership of the school’s culture. More experienced students are expected to coach less experienced students. Often students are responsi-

ble along with staff for creating and maintaining the spaces used by the school or program.

Small Group Size

There is a high staff to student ratio: typically a teacher and one other trained adult (youth care worker or educational assistant) for each dozen students at any one time. Where space permits, students are in the smallest possible groups for most of the day. For instance, there might be two adults with six students each in separate areas rather than those same two adults with a dozen students in the same space. Among this year’s presenters, one school managed to quadruple the rate at which students completed courses by cutting the size of the individual classes in half.

Rituals, Routines, and Customs

While the essence of an alternative school is flexibility, predictability is just as important. Every presenter has emphasized the importance of their program’s routine, rituals and unique customs. Students and staff in all of the programs that have presented at the conference know how the day will begin and end, what events will punctuate the week, month, and year, what will happen if certain kinds of emergencies arise, and what celebrations will occur if academic or behavioural goals are achieved.

High Standards and Regular Feedback

The programs of the presenters often have some form of tracking device. Students need to know how well they are doing, both in terms of academic progress and in terms of their behaviour. There is typically some system in place for this, and it is used as a focus for staff discussion and planning and as a way for the staff to communicate with the student.

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Common Themes

While these forms of feedback have many ways of resetting the clock, or providing a clean slate to give the student a new start, they also help set terms and “bottom line” expectations. Academic work has daily or weekly expectations and there is a way of measuring whether or not students had achieved them. There is also the option of exceeding these goals. This goes back to a common understanding that students are not so much receiving “remediation” as acceleration. Often the emphasis is explicitly on grade completion or graduation in the shortest possible time.

Likewise, regarding behaviour, students are made responsible for their actions though not in a punitive way. There is a strong emphasis on restitution. Even if someone is exited from the full time program, it is always with the sense that the relationship with the staff and school is not broken. There is a clear path for return and there is help along the way when the student is ready.

Food!

Details of this may vary according to a program's size and scope, but it is an element in nearly every successful program. It might be something as simple as a bread machine for a small program located in a classroom of a regular secondary school, or it might be an entire kitchen for a stand alone school. Food is typically prepared by both staff and students. Students are involved in shopping and menu planning, and in some cases receive course credits for their work. If there is a lunch or breakfast, staff and students sit down together to eat. Food consumed in this way not only provides physical nourishment, it also provides a sense of community.

Staff Relationships

It is important for the students to have a sense of community within the program, but it is equally important for the staff. The staff meets often to discuss student progress and the organization of the school. These meetings are businesslike, but collegial. While teachers, education assistants, youth care workers, principals and vice principals each have their special roles, all have a voice in decisions.

Strong Administrative Support

A principal or vice-principal who is well versed in and supportive of alternative programs is a key to long-term success. Larger alternative programs and schools have a principal or vice principal who is always, or at least frequently, present. Smaller programs located within a regular secondary school are in close and regular communication with the principal or one of the vice-principals for the building.

The supporting administrator is knowledgeable about alternative education and its context, and knows how and why alternative education differs from the “regular” system and is equally aware of the larger context that alternative education must serve in a student's life.

Good Communication

The most effective alternative programs may differ a great deal from the “regular” education system, but they are thoroughly connected and in constant communication with that system. Often they are well aware of potential students and

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CopTalk: Scared Straight – Touring Vancouver’s Downtown East Side

Cst. Shelley Arnfield, RCMP School Resource Officer, Port Alberni



When did you realize that you’re not invincible? Or have you? I can remember the exact second when it hit me. Driving home from the hospital with my new born daughter in her car seat, I came face to face with my own mortality. And it’s been somewhere in my mind every day since.

Now try to re-member back to being a teenager. Let’s say there are signs that you are heading down a slippery slope. You drive too fast. You don’t always buckle up. Partying is becoming a vocation rather than a past time. You smoke a little dope. Sometimes you even wait until after school.

In my experience, the average teenager goes along thinking “it will never happen to me”, whatever “it” is. Even when tragedy strikes close to home the impact can be short term. Before I joined the RCMP a close family friend was severely head injured in a cocaine fueled, high speed car crash. The guys all slowed down ... for a while. Then the talk turned to, “Terrible thing that happened to him. But it would never happen to me.”

As police and educators, we often turn to the “in your face,” high impact presentation or experience to attempt to generate the light bulb moment for our youth. If I’ve heard it once, I’ve heard it a million times, “If only I’d known the consequences.” Well, here you go, here are the consequences. Now make a different decision.

As an educational tool, walking the alleys of the downtown east side (DTES) of Vancouver is a high impact experience. Many of you reading this newsletter have likely taken part in the walking tour offered at your annual conference by Morris Bates. The sights and smells of the

DTES are a powerful testament to the horrors of drug use. I’ve done the tour myself four times with groups of students from our local alternate program. It’s powerful stuff. To paraphrase Forrest Gump and his box of chocolates, “You never know what you’re gonna get.”

Mandatory requirements for our tour: you must watch the video *Through A Blue Lens*. Produced in 1999 by The Odd Squad, a group of Vancouver police officers, *Through A Blue Lens* has won numerous awards and is still to this day the number one drug video in Canadian schools. Eight years later its relevance is, unfortunately, undiminished. Next in the mandatory: parents must attend an information session and sign the permission forms. They need to know what their kids are going to be exposed to. Final mandatory: bring two bucks for lunch.

When we arrive in Vancouver, the group is gregarious and enjoying the day out of school. We park near the police station and tour leader, Cst Ron, who’s done the tour a couple of dozen times, gives them a talk before we hit the streets. All valuables stay in the vehicle. No hats. Walk in the middle of the alley. If you’re too close to the dumpsters or doorways, you could surprise someone fixing or using. Watch where you walk. Be mindful of needles and feces. Let’s go.

Being directionally challenged, I am never the leader. I stay at the back of the pack, watching the student’s reactions, ensuring no one strays too far or lags behind. Minutes into the tour, there’s no real fear of that. Bravado ebbs as the group draws closer together. Half way through, I feel joined at the hip.

Occasionally our group stops to check out what

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owntown East Side

was noticed. Did you see the drug deals going down on the corner? I counted 12, brags Cst Ron. What's the nice dressed guy doing hanging out in the entrance to that alley? The mattress in that corner? It's not garbage. Could be someone's living space, or their place of employment. The young men in the group cringe at that thought. How desperate would you have to be?

Walking down the street lined with pawnshops we all start coughing and our eyes burn. Someone has been on the receiving end of a dose of pepper spray in the not too distant past. The next alley we enter rings with the cry, "Kids on the block." Everyone knows who we are and why we are there. The comments directed at us all basically contain the same message: drugs are not the way to go. One creative individual with a guitar quickly puts together a little ditty. Musical message: stay in school. I reflect on lives and talent wasted. Lunch is bought and consumed at the local soup

kitchen. Two bucks, all you can eat. And you will eat something, Cst Ron directs. Those who refuse are sent back to get something. They return with bowls of dry puffed rice cereal which they don't eat, but the point is made. Bet they'll appreciate whatever is put in front of them at dinner tonight.

Now we're winding our way back to the van. One last alley. A female approaches from the opposite direction and passes us by. Ten feet away she stops and turns and we receive an education that is priceless. For free. Don't end up here is her message. Appreciate that you have a home to go to and a bed to sleep in. That you can turn on a tap and get water. She points to a filthy puddle. That's my water, she says. Her stick thin legs are as filthy as the puddle, as are her clothes. She informs us that she only owns one pair of underwear. We all know how she earns her money to buy ...continued on page 21

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alley rings
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the block.”
Everyone
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we are
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Tattoos and Piercings: What to Know Beforehand

Mayo Clinic Staff

A tattoo or piercing may take only a few minutes or hours to acquire, but invest plenty of thought and research before getting one. If you take steps to protect yourself from possible risks, what seems like a cool idea now is less likely to turn into a source of regret later.

Tattoos: Permanent Body Art

A tattoo is a permanent mark or design made on your skin with pigments inserted through pricks into the skin's top layer.

How is it done?

During the procedure, a needle that's connected to a small machine with tubes containing dye pierces the skin repeatedly — an action that resembles that of a sewing machine. With every puncture, the needle inserts tiny ink droplets. The process, which may last up to several hours for a large tattoo, causes a small amount of bleeding and minor to potentially significant pain.

What are the risks?

Tattooed artwork involves breaching one of your body's main protective barriers — the skin. This means you can be more susceptible to skin infections and other skin reactions. Specific risks include:

- **Blood-borne diseases.** If the equipment used to create your tattoo is contaminated with the blood of an infected person, you can contract a number of serious blood-borne diseases. These include hepatitis C, hepatitis B, tetanus, tuberculosis and HIV — the virus that causes AIDS.
- **Skin disorders.** Your body may form bumps called granulomas around tattoo ink, especially if your tattoo includes red ink. Tattooing can

also cause areas of raised, excessive scarring (keloids), if you're prone to them.

- **Skin infections.** Tattoos can lead to local bacterial infections. Typical signs and symptoms of an infection include redness, warmth, swelling and a pus-like drainage. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has linked clusters of potentially serious antibiotic-resistant skin infections to unlicensed tattoo artists who don't follow proper infection-control procedures. Some antibiotic-resistant skin infections can lead to pneumonia, bloodstream infections and a painful, flesh-destroying condition called *necrotizing fasciitis*.
- **Allergic reactions.** Tattoo dyes, particularly red dye, can cause allergic skin reactions, resulting in an itchy rash at the tattoo site. This may occur even years after you get the tattoo.
- **MRI complications.** Rarely, tattoos or permanent makeup may cause swelling or burning in the affected areas during magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) exams. In some cases — such as when a person with permanent eyeliner has an MRI of the eye — tattoo pigments may interfere with the quality of the image.



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Tattoo care

How you care for your new artwork depends on the type and extent of work done. Your tattoo artist should provide you with detailed instructions about how to care for the tattoo — such as cleaning the tattoo with soap and water, applying moisturizer regularly and avoiding sun exposure for at least the first few weeks. Tattoos may take up to several days to heal. Don't pick at scabs, which increases the risk of infection and can damage the design and cause scarring.

Tattoo removal

A common problem with tattoos is dissatisfaction. Some tattoos fade. If the tattoo artist injects the color too deeply into your skin, the dye can drift, causing a blurred design. You may also decide that the tattoo no longer fits your current image or that the once-stylish design has become dated.

Tattoos are meant to be permanent, so their complete removal is difficult. Several removal techniques exist, but regardless of the method used, scarring and skin color variations are likely to remain. Methods include:

- **Laser surgery.** This is the most effective way to reduce the appearance of a tattoo. Pulses of laser light pass through the top layer of skin and the energy of the light is absorbed by the pigment in the tattoo. This process creates a very low grade of inflammation and allows your body to process the small areas of altered pigment. You may require as many as 12 treatments over a year to lighten the tattoo, and the treatment might not completely erase it.
- **Dermabrasion.** The tattoo area is chilled until numb, and the skin that contains the tattoo is sanded down to deeper levels. This generally isn't painful, but it may leave a scar.



- **Surgical removal.** A doctor can surgically cut out the tattoo and stitch the edges back together, but this can leave a scar.

Body Piercing: Jewelry for Body Adornment

Body piercing is the insertion of jewelry into an opening made in the ear, nose, eyebrow, lip, tongue or other area of the body.

How is it done?

Body piercing is traditionally done without anesthesia to dull the pain. The practitioner pushes a hollow needle through a body part, then inserts a piece of jewelry into the hole. Some practitioners may use piercing guns, but these are difficult to sterilize and can more easily damage the skin.

What are the risks?

Anytime the skin is punctured, there is a risk of infection. Specific risks include:

- **Blood-borne diseases.** If the equipment used to do your piercing is contaminated with the blood of an infected person, you can contract a number of serious blood-borne diseases. These include hepatitis C, hepatitis B, tetanus, tuberculosis and HIV — the virus that causes AIDS.

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“Any time the skin is punctured, there is a risk of infection”

Parksville Mini Conference

Phyllis Kenney

What do you get when you combine 60 Alternate Ed staff from several different school districts, an enthusiastic keynote speaker with a great sense of humour, stacks of tasty food, and five hours? A mini Alt. Ed. conference in Parksville.

Two years ago, Stephen Inniss and his staff in Nanaimo, invited alternate schools from several local districts to meet at his school for a day. It was an outstanding PD day. At that time, we suggested that our school could host a similar day in the fall of 2005. Well, we did lots of work and organized almost everything, but were not able to have our day: It was a day of political protest. So, we put our focus on one year later.

October 20, 2006 was that day. We extended an invitation to many districts on our island and had 60 Alternate Ed staff attend. There was an eclectic blend of support staff, teachers and administrators. Our morning began with our keynote speaker, Ani-

ta Chapman, and her presentation on Assessment for Learning. We learned more about the distinction between summative and formative feedback and she raised many interesting questions. How do we give meaningful feedback to students? How can we ensure that our assessment strategies help the students in their learning? One observer commented that she “loved the real-life stories” Anita offered. Others mentioned that her examples, her sense of humour, and her anecdotal stories were valuable to them. One participant reflected that he was interested in the future possibilities that could come out of formative assessment. Another mentioned that they enjoyed learning about the “different ways to honour students’ learning (prior and current) and encourage them to continue with their schooling/learning.”

The afternoon was organized by participants and they moved into break out groups according to their interest. For example, one group was hosted by Port Alberni’s staff. They shared the work they have been doing on Portfolios, Planning 10, blend-

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ing CAPP credits and a variety of other information on Graduation changes with a focus on how to get the most credits for their students. They also looked at computer programs that support the learning in these areas. One teacher reported that she was delighted with the organization this group showed and said, “We came away with the sample booklet and loads of ideas on how to adapt curriculum to meet the needs of our students.”

Another group included Youth Care Workers and support staff that discussed the issues they have in their jobs. Each of them found that spending time with colleagues from other schools gave them new insights and ideas about how best to work with their students. There were other, smaller groups with special topics as well. At the end of the break out sessions, the groups reported back to everyone on their discussions and insights.

There was no doubt that the food was awesome. As one member put it, “Lunch: What an expe-

rience!” On the final evaluations, even the salad dressing was mentioned as remarkable. Joe Panichelli, our school principal, and his crew of hard working staff and students had outdone themselves.

At the end of the day, there were many positive comments. Participants found it invaluable to spend time with this “group of like minded people.” They felt that making connections, having discussions, hearing from comrades, networking and the collective energy of “who we are together,” were highlights of the day. As one colleague put it, “Networking is invaluable!” The consensus seemed to be “Let’s do this again soon.”

Note: A special thank you to the BCTF and Mount Arrowsmith Teachers’ Association for their financial contributions. ♦

Phyllis Kenney is a teacher with PASS/Woodwinds in Parkville.

The Littlest Saviour

Ashley Carter

As she stared at the white dust that took over the surface of her glass table, she sat wishing and praying that it didn't control her every move. All she wanted was to be free of the monster inside her telling more, more, more. She no longer felt the feeling of happiness. The sound of laughter had left her completely. Her heart no longer jumped for him but only for the sight of the powder.

He walked into the room and all she could do, was stay where she laid. He looked at her with love in his eyes but deep down inside he knew he had to let go. If he did not he would lose sight of the joys of living. As he said his good-byes he could feel his heart break. She on the other hand had nothing but the dust on her mind and that broke her heart more. She didn't speak as he left. No tears fell down her face. All she could find the strength to do was put that straw to her nose one more time and drift into the white haze. As she felt reality slip farther and farther away she felt better. But she knew that it would soon slip back into darkness.

She woke some ten hours later. She went straight for that tiny wooden box that held everything important to her. It was small but everything she needed fit inside. She reached for the baggy full of the substance that lived life for her.

She looked down at the table once again but this time caught a glimpse of herself. She dropped the straw in horror. Her once beautiful face, now frail, looked as if death itself created it. Her once curvaceous body, now shapeless. She had a strange knot forming in her stomach. It wasn't the craving. She knew that feeling all too well. No this was new. It scared her more than the mon-

ster control. It was her realization of what she had become. No wonder he didn't love her anymore. She now knew why her friends and family didn't call. Who would want to talk to what she had become? For the first time in years she felt alone. She felt unloved and unwanted. She didn't want to have to drift back into the haze of the white dust. She wanted reality but she knew her reality was no longer there. Everything that she knew had changed. Everyone that she loved and cared for had left without even a goodbye and she had no one else to blame all of this on but herself.

She opened her little box, put the baggy back and grabbed the second most important thing that this little box contained. Her hand shaking more than it ever had as she removed the only friend she felt she had left.

She grabbed a pen and paper. She wrote to anyone who cared. She laid the note on the table and sat on the couch. She grabbed her only friend left.

It was her sharp, tiny, silver saviour. She lifted her sleeve and pressed it to her frail arm. Not much pressure was needed. As she watched the red river flow from her wound she was not scared. She felt the grip of the monster loosen slowly. She began to feel relief. For once, in as long as she could remember, she felt free. Her eyes closed and she spoke her last words, "Thank you my little saviour." And she now entered into true bliss. ♦

Ashley Carter, age 15, attends VAST in Port Alberni.

Death?

Larissa Miller

*My aunt was on the phone
Tears started
We were heading to the airport, going home from vacation*

*Our conversation for an hour:
"Doug OD'd"
Doug is my father*

*Switched my flight to Calgary and
Got to the hospital 4 hours later
All my family was looking at me, they didn't know what to say*

*I took one look then dropped
He was all puffy, head bobbin a little
100% life support, limp as can be
I waited day and night, holding his hand
Back and forth Calgary, Surrey, Calgary...
...I noticed syringe scabs on his legs and toes*

*He did wake up
Showed up at my doorstep one year later
He had hitchhiked from Calgary to see me
He wanted to clean up
I was doing his laundry, found a crack pipe*

*A few days later he left me, once again
What kills me the most is he once was a good guy
I'm just waiting for that phone call
I once got,
Again--*

Larissa Miller, age 18, attends the District Alternate Secondary Program in Hope.

Environmentally Friendly Electronic Publications

Mike Shaw

The results of the survey JD Duncan administered during the online registration process for the 2007 conference are clear; many of you would prefer to receive this newsletter, as well as your conference registration package, electronically.

But you have to take one final step. We have set up a list serve through the BCTF that we will use solely to send you notification of new editions of the newsletter and conference registration materials. By doing this, you have to make a conscious decision to join, and have to keep the e-mail address at which you wish to receive notification current. To join, click on the ePubs menu on our website: www.bctf.ca/bcaea.

If you decide to stop receiving notices of new downloads, you simply unsubscribe from the list serve. It won't affect your membership in the general list serve we have, and will automatically result in restarting your delivery of paper copies.

For those who don't wish to receive electronic versions, you can rest easy knowing that we have switched to a different paper, made from post-consumer waste, for this and subsequent editions. One year of publications by us using this paper means 1135 kg of post-consumer waste used instead of virgin fibre, and results in the following additional savings:

- 1171 L of water
- 1122 kg of greenhouse gases
- 616 kg solid waste
- 402 kWh of electricity
- 3 trees (250 mm diameter)

If you have comments or concerns, my contact information is on the last page. ♦

Mike Shaw is the Publications Manager for the BCAEA, as well as the current President. He works with the talented staff at Central Programs in Kelowna.

Bursaries and Awards

Rick Fitch

Once again, it is time to remind you of the March 31 deadline for applying for any of the money your association makes available each year in various categories. For students, there are four \$500 Bursaries, four \$250 Student Achievement awards, and ten \$100 Student Development awards. In addition, we have \$500 for the Kathi Hughes Innovative

Programming Award. Not subject to the March deadline are four Student Activity Grants totaling \$2000. Application forms for all these bursaries and awards are available on our web site: www.bctf.ca/bcaea ♦

Rick Fitch is currently the Secretary-Treasurer of the BCAEA, and an administrator at Hatzic Secondary in Mission.

Scared Straight

(continued from page 13)

drugs, making this statement all the more repulsive. She walks away. We watch her go, spellbound by the simplicity of her words, knocked out by the powerful images they painted. I wish I could have paid her for talking to us.

So how long will the sights and smells stay with our students? One call was received the following day by the police detachment commander. The son of a friend had been on the tour. "I don't know what you people are doing," she said, "but keep it up." Her friend had happily reported to her that her son had come home and couldn't stop talking about it. It had been a long time since they'd had any kind of conversation.

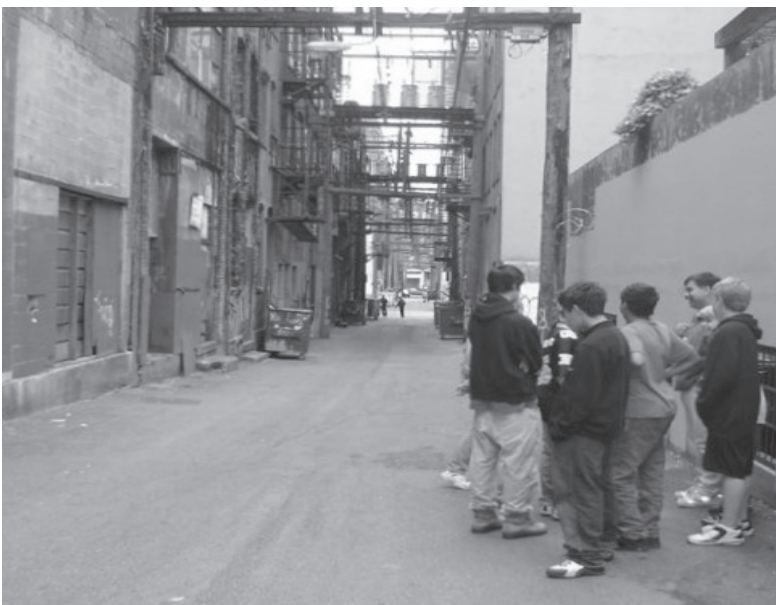


A couple of years after the first tour group, I've been in the fortunate position to continue to see some of these students. They still talk about the tour. "Everyone should have to go on that walk," one student declared to me. I'm cognizant that

some/most/all of them are smoking marijuana. Some are dabbling in other drugs. Were they Scared Straight? Who's to say? They're teenagers. They're invincible.

So is the tour worth it? You better believe it. Because the alternative is doing nothing. And I refuse to do that. ♦

Cst. Shelley Arnfield is a school resource officer with the RCMP Port Alberni Detachment.



Tattoos and Piercings

(continued from page 15)

- **Allergic reactions.** Some piercing jewelry is made of nickel or brass, which can cause allergic reactions.
- **Oral complications.** Jewelry worn in tongue piercings can chip and crack your teeth and damage your gums.
- **Skin infections.** Typical signs and symptoms of an infection include redness, swelling, pain and a pus-like discharge. Infections from piercings in the upper ear cartilage are especially serious. Antibiotics are often ineffective. Because cartilage doesn't have its own blood supply, the drug can't reach the infection site. Such infection can lead to cartilage damage and serious, permanent ear deformity.
- **Scars and keloids.** Body piercing can cause scars and keloids, ridged areas caused by an overgrowth of scar tissue.

Piercing care

Follow-up care for your piercing depends on the body part pierced. If you have an oral piercing (tongue or lip), use an antibacterial, alcohol-free mouth rinse for 30 to 60 seconds after meals while your piercing heals. Use a new soft-bristled toothbrush after the piercing to avoid introducing bacteria into your mouth.

If you have a skin piercing (nose, ears, eyebrow, navel), rinse the site in warm water and use a cotton swab to gently remove any crusting. Then apply a dab of a liquid medicated cleanser to the area. Gently turn the jewelry back and forth to work the cleanser around the opening. Avoid alcohol and peroxide, which can dry the skin. Also avoid ointments, which keep oxygen from reaching the piercing and can leave a sticky residue.

Piercing removal

Piercings often heal over — sometimes quickly — once you remove the jewelry that keeps the hole open.

Precautions to protect yourself

You can decrease the possibility of complications if you go to a reputable piercing or tattoo studio that employs only properly trained and licensed employees. Choose an establishment that's clean and tidy. Also look for and ask about the following:

- **An autoclave.** An autoclave is a heat sterilization machine that should be used to sterilize all non-disposable equipment after each customer. Instruments and supplies that can't be sterilized with an autoclave should be disinfected with a commercial disinfectant or bleach solution after each use. These include drawer handles, tables and sinks.
- **Fresh equipment.** An unused, sterile needle should be used for all piercings. If you're getting a tattoo, watch the tattoo artist and make sure he or she removes a needle and tubes from a sealed package before your procedure begins. Any pigments, trays and containers should be unused as well.
- **Gloves.** The piercer or tattoo artist must wash his or her hands and put on a fresh pair of latex gloves for each procedure. The piercer or tattoo artist should change those gloves if he or she needs to touch anything else, such as the telephone, during the procedure.
- **No piercing gun.** Don't receive a piercing from a piercing gun. These devices typically can't be autoclaved, which may increase your risk of infection. And such guns may crush your skin during the piercing, causing more injury.
- **Appropriate hypoallergenic jewelry.** Brass and nickel jewelry can cause allergic reactions. Look for surgical-grade steel, titanium, 14- or 18-karat gold, or a metal called niobium.

If you're considering a tattoo or piercing, understand the risks and research the process beforehand. Get your body art done correctly and use proper care afterward to reduce the risks. ♦

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Message to Parents

(continued from page 9)

this talk to them where they live. If you want to watch television together, that is great. Watch the program and, when you turn off the television, discuss what you saw. It is an opportunity to learn more about your family and for all of you to share your beliefs.

Touch your children. Hug them. Put your arm around them. Tell them that you love them. Touch is a powerful way of saying, "I love you." Typically, when children get older, we touch them less and less. Kids tell me they miss being touched. They wonder if they did something to displease the adult. Don't worry about their getting the wrong idea. These are your children and you love them.

Go into your child's room every night and talk. Read to them or tell them a bedtime story, even

if they are teenagers. Stories usually have moral questions and struggles. Ask your children what they would do in a similar situation and tell them what you would do - talk about it.

Kids that feel worthy and loved don't need to escape through substance abuse. Remember, the most important person in the world to your child is you. ♦

Robert R. Perkinson, PhD, is the clinical director of Keystone Treatment Center in Canton, SD. He has been treating alcoholics, addicts, and pathological gamblers for over 2-8 years. Article reprinted with permission of the Journal Reclaiming Children and Youth. For more information, visit www.reclaiming.com

Steve Fachler is the District Principal for Alternate Programs in School District #78.

Successful Programs

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have begun to develop a relationship even before those students arrive. Likewise, staff members retain contact with students who have graduated or who have moved to another program.

Community

The most consistent factor, one mentioned by all of the presenters, is that their school or programs encourage connection and community, not only within themselves but in connection with the outside community as well. They emphasize autonomy and responsibility within that community. This safety,

belonging, and familiarity are the missing elements in the lives of at-risk students.

More

The details of how they achieve the common elements I've mentioned above can vary greatly from program to program. If you are interested in knowing more about these details, or in contacting some of this or previous year's presenters, please contact me. ♦

Stephen Inniss is an administrator, previously in Nanaimo, who now works in New Westminster. He can be reached via e-mail at sinniss@sd40.bc.ca or sinniss@shaw.ca

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The following dedicated individuals volunteer their time to ensure the smooth running of your association. Information on the roles and responsibilities of each position may be found on our web site: www.bctf.ca/bcaea/executive.html

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