



# ACE NOTES



The front field of Queen Mary Community Elementary School was transformed into a pumpkin patch for the students thanks to a donation by a local community member. Photo submitted by Maria Morisseau, Community Development Project Coordinator [mmorisseau@nsnh.bc.ca](mailto:mmorisseau@nsnh.bc.ca).

## FALL 2014



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## GIRLS IN ACTION

Girls in Action is a Surrey Community Schools Partnership program focused on three main components to engage girls in their school and community; physical recreation, environmental science and leadership.

The program provides an outlet to support female students who are disengaged from school and learning, who are often facing challenges at home/community, who have few positive relationships and who are either bullying or being bullied at school/community. Through the leadership workshops the girls in the program have the opportunity to build positive self-image, self-confidence, self-esteem, (continued on page 8)...

*"When I am with a group of human beings committed to hanging in there through both the agony and the joy of community, I have a dim sense that I am participating in a phenomenon for which there is only one word... "glory."*

~M. Scott Peck



## A Message from the ACEbc Board

This summer I had a chance to read Chris Hadfield's book, *An Astronaut's Guide to Living on Earth*.

Chris' perception about any new situation gave me new insights. Whether it involves operating a rocket ship, developing a new program or anything else that is new, Chris believes that others will view you in one of three ways:

*As a minus one: someone who creates problems*

*As a zero: your impact is neutral and doesn't tip the balance one-way or the other*

*Or As a plus one: someone who actively adds value*

We all want to be a plus one, of course, "but proclaiming your plus-oneness at the outset of any coming together almost guarantees you'll be perceived as a minus one, regardless of the skills you bring to the table or how you actually perform."

This lesson was top of mind this week when co-facilitating a conversation regarding seniors' needs on the Sunshine Coast.

Teams of retired folks had been recruited to initiate these conversations. We all came together for training a month ago with Betty Baxter, a consultant and mediator, former Olympic athlete and current chair of the Sunshine Coast School district, Board of Education. It was a room full of interesting people (think plus ones) from all walks of life. By coming to the group as 'zeros' we were all able to be open to learning from the richness in the room, instead of being focused on a need to prove ourselves a plus one. These people had a myriad of skills but none of us yet understood the environment. There was no way any of us could be a plus one. The best we could be was a zero. Being a zero is not a bad thing. Each person had the competence not to create problems or cause additional work. To become a plus one each of us needed to put the needs of the group first. We conducted ourselves knowing that there was no task that was too small; from washing dishes, setting up tables and chairs and greeting everyone by name. As Chris Hadfield says, "sweat the small stuff." The meetings have been a great success with 250 seniors engaged. I know by our wrap



## A Message from the ACEbc Board

up meeting this week all the facilitators will be considered by each other as a plus one because everyone was willing to begin as a zero!

Take a look at Chris's book and see what you think!

Here are a few things that our Board is up to:

- ♦ planning our conference, "**Community Schools, the Heart of the Matter**", for *Coordinators* April 8 and 9, and *ALL those involved in Community Schools*, April 9 and 10th, 2015 on the Sunshine Coast, sponsored by the **Sunshine School District Community Schools**, in conjunction with **ACEbc** (details elsewhere in the newsletter)
- ♦ revisions to our 'Placemat', a tool that has been updated and is useful for illustrating conversations about the focus of your community school
- ♦ hosting the contract with **Dan Marriott**, for coordination with the **Lower Mainland Out of School Time Alliance** and the **United Way**
- ♦ learning about the results of the **Attendance Matters** research in Surrey school district, presented by **Maggie Karpiloviski**
- ♦ collecting growing evidence about community schools with the 'In Kind' calculator developed by **Mischa Greenwood** and **Jennifer Scott**.
- ♦ creating our stunning new website [acebc.org](http://acebc.org) and introducing a mobile version for use on the go, thanks **Taryn**!

I'm greatly appreciative of the large number of people meeting regularly at ACEbc meetings. Thanks for your commitment and contributions. I look forward to another purposeful year and sharing the role with Lawrence Ryan.

Cheers,

*Janey*



# MIND THE GAP PROJECT UPDATE

## Roberts Creek Community School

**"Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it - for boldness has genius, power and magic in it..."**

*~ Goethe*

The chaos in our world since mid-May, while not actually derailing project activities, did create considerable uncertainty about the schedule and put some activities weeks, and in some cases, months behind.

Although the activities were on hold the team has been busy beating the bushes to secure train the trainer instruction for our **Mindfulness for Teachers** (*MBSR* for educators) and mindfulness enhanced **Strengthening Families Programs** (*me SFP*). Also our master mindfulness trainer, Ron Skene, was a guest instructor at an 'iBme' week long Mindfulness for Teens Retreat in Washington State - he picked up very valuable tips for our planned teen retreat.

Success in the *me SFP* training came late in the summer. We are negotiating an MOU with the Iowa State University (ISU), they hold the license for *me SFP*. ISU will be sending two trainers for a four day facilitator intensive and introduction to the extensive course material. Dates for this training will be early to mid-January. This will enable us to then offer the seven week program to families in Roberts Creek in 2014 and elsewhere in the district in 2015.

The *MBSR* for educators train the trainer course has also taken us from the east to the west - from UBC Okanagan, to Stanford in CA, to the University of Wisconsin Centre for Investigating Healthy Minds! We did not give up. Meanwhile as Goethe says: "*Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it - for boldness has genius, power and magic in it...the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too.*"

In late spring providence moved. We were introduced to Rahul Guptha. Rahul lives on the Sunshine Coast and has been using mindfulness and coaching practices in his professional life as a physician, he has been facilitating *MBSR* programs since 2013 and is a certified *MBSR* teacher. We have been working with Rahul and Ron Skene on creating a program for educators and are now ready to offer the eight week course starting in late October (flyer and program information sheet attached). The course is limited to 15 participants and we are almost full after only four days registration!

The Roberts Creek grade 7 classes are about to start their Mind Up curriculum, Kim Schonert-Reich's grad student, Jenna Whitehead, will be leading the grade 7 students resiliency assessment process. Another exciting development is our application to the UBC ethics board. Kim encouraged us to apply - it will open many doors for future conferences and journal articles.

Our website development is underway and we hope to launch in the New Year.

*For more information, contact Stacia Leech, Project Manager, Mind the Gap - Building Bridges for Youth in Transition at [rccs@dssnet.com](mailto:rccs@dssnet.com).*



# ATTENDANCE MATTERS in SURREY

**Framework:** School absenteeism in primary grades is a strong predictor of dropping out. Chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% (~18 days) of a year, is linked to academic and social disadvantages particularly among vulnerable students creating long lasting impact on the child and their peers. Chronic absenteeism is a complex problem impacted by a multitude of factors which include the child, parent and family circumstances.



**Goals:** working with at-risk and vulnerable students in grades K-3, the goal of Attendance Matters is to identify, monitor instances of chronic absenteeism, and to support students and families in attaining prompt and consistent attendance.

**Program Description:** At C-SP we believe that to be ready, able and motivated to learn students need their basic needs met through nutrition, nurturing environment, safe space, caring adults, and cognitive stimulation

**Attendance Matters includes 3 core components:**

- Breakfast club which provides students with a consistent, and nutritious breakfast each day in a safe and supported environment, satisfying one of children's most basic needs.
- Intentional targeted outreach interventions to support students and families in sustainably overcoming barriers to prompt and consistent attendance. Outreach staff employ a variety of strategies including: parent engagement, transportation solutions, school in reach with students and teachers, resources and referrals .
- Engagement and enrichment through literacy, recreation and social/emotional activities allowing students to develop academic, and social competencies to enhance confidence and connection to school, setting the core foundation for school success.

**Program Outcomes:** By providing students with a nutritious breakfast, enriching activities, and a connection to caring adults we hope that:

- ⇒ Students and their families will feel cared for, safe, supported and connected to their school.
- ⇒ Students will be mentally and physically prepared for their day and able to academically, socially and emotionally benefit from being in school.
- ⇒ Students and their families will recognize the importance of consistent attendance and form sustainable positive attendance habits.



# ATTENDANCE MATTERS in SURREY

**Attendance Matters** began as a pilot program in September 2010/2011 at 1 inner-city elementary school and has since grown to include 18 elementary schools in 2014/2015. Attendance Matters was developed to address three significant challenges that are common among an identified group of at risk, low income children as follows:

- 1) Low attendance and regular late arrival at school;
- 2) Hunger among children makes it difficult for them to concentrate throughout the day and to maximize their learning opportunities; and
- 3) Low literacy skills that place children one or more grade levels behind their peers in reading, writing and comprehension abilities.

Attendance Matters is principally aimed at reducing absenteeism in the kindergarten to Grade 3 years.

Research shows that regularly missing school two days a month can be sharply reduce a child's prospects of graduating. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing more than 18 school days a year — two days a month — and many parents fail to recognize the dangers of allowing their children to drift into this zone.

The program supports students identified with high rates of absence to attend school on a more regular basis. This is done by wrapping outreach services around students and families as well as encouraging students to attend the breakfast program at their

school each morning. Here, students are provided with a warm and healthy morning meal and are engaged in literacy-focused games and activities before beginning their school day. At some sites students are also involved in physical recreation activities in the school gym after they finish eating breakfast. With primary students (K-3) at the focus of

Attendance Matters, Outreach Workers develop and maintain relationships with school staff, students and families. Each Outreach Worker will liaise with school staff to support students and families in having good attendance habits. Outreach Workers provide a multi-pronged approach to supporting students including (but not limited to):

- ◇ Wake-up calls
- ◇ Door knocks
- ◇ Pick-ups
- ◇ Follow-up calls, and
- ◇ Accompaniment to school.

Outreach has supported the most disengaged and chronically absent students, has

developed school awareness on the issue of chronic absenteeism, and has facilitated parent education on the importance of consistent and timely attendance to improve attendance habits. Attendance Matters saw chronic absenteeism rates drop for K-3 students who were absent 10% or more in every participating school.

Attendance Matters involves providing breakfast for children who would otherwise be hungry and uses outreach workers such as Brenden Graham to keep in touch with parents whose children routinely miss school.

This morning at Lena Shaw Elementary in Surrey's



*Brenden Graham spends time with one of the kids in the breakfast program at Lena Shaw Elementary School.*



# ATTENDANCE MATTERS in SURREY

(continued from page 5) north end, Graham is watching his regulars trooping in — little kids, many of them sporting backpacks almost as big as themselves.

They began arriving in dribs and drabs, the first at about 7:45 a.m. It doesn't look today as if he needs to go out and round any up.

"I guess I go out three or four times a week," said Graham.

Last year, he was constantly ferrying one particular child to school. It's a state of affairs he is keen to avoid as that kind of dependency is the last thing the program wants to foster.

Graham spent time with the family trying to convince them about the need for the girl to get to school and this year he hasn't needed to go out once.

"Last year, she just didn't make it unless I picked her up. They've changed and it's amazing. She's here every day and is catching up," said Graham. "For us,

that's a big success."

School district statistics show that in the schools that were part of last year's trial program, absenteeism was cut in half. That success led to the program's expansion to other schools.

The program is also providing important research into the causes of absenteeism as there is little academic information on the problem in Canada. The research is being conducted by the Surrey school district and Simon Fraser University. It has already caught the eye of the American Educational Research Association. Last year, Surrey and SFU presented at the American Educational Research conference in San Francisco and this year they've been invited to present their findings at the World Educational Research conference in Edinburgh Scotland.

For more information about the Attendance Matters program please contact **Maggie Karpilovski** at [karpilovski\\_m@surreyschools.ca](mailto:karpilovski_m@surreyschools.ca).

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WE want to know!



We would love to share your stories in our next newsletter. If you have an article you would like to submit, please contact:

[Taryn.Briscoe@sd41.bc.ca](mailto:Taryn.Briscoe@sd41.bc.ca)  
604-664-8849

The next ACEbc newsletter  
will be published in early 2015.



Don't forget to visit our ACEbc website at [www.acebc.org](http://www.acebc.org) for information and updates.



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## **GIRLS IN ACTION** *(continued from cover)*

leadership skills and community engagement. Physical recreation and science components provide girls with an enrichment opportunity and expanded learning environment outside the classroom which many girls would not otherwise have access to.

The program encourages these students to get engaged in some positive activities, and to keep them active in the community outside of school hours. The goal of this program is to provide an enrichment opportunity for girls in grades 4-6 to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding that are transferrable back into the classroom to support their development academically and to encourage them to become good community-based citizens in the process.

The girls were given the chance to work with a variety of partners throughout the program, including Arts Umbrella, A Rocha Environmental Stewardship, BC Hydro, Fortis BC, Bricks for Kidz, SFU Science Alive, Canadian Planetarium, UBC Chemistry Outreach and the YMCA of Greater Vancouver.

Over Spring break the groups were asked to create a project where they would imagine a way to improve their school or community. At Riverdale Elementary, the group instead decided to act. They decided to raise money for Atira Women's Resource Society. To raise money, the girls made flower pens and sold them to friends and family. They also planned a "Minute to Win It" Challenge Day in the gym. Challenges included attempting to get a cookie from your forehead to your mouth, with no hands! The event was by donation, either in dollar amounts or with food donations. On top of raising money, the girls brought bags of children's clothing donations.



In the end, \$390 was raised. Atira will use that money to buy transit passes for women to be able to get to work, for gardening tools and alarm clocks and other necessities we sometimes take for granted.

**For more information please contact:**  
**Silas Godard at**  
**[godard\\_s@surreyschools.ca](mailto:godard_s@surreyschools.ca)**



♥ **Mark your CALENDAR:** ♥  
**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>**

**604-989-5552**