



# ACE NOTES

## Safe, Free & Accessible: KidSafe's Break Programs Reach Vancouver's Vulnerable Children Thanks to New Attendance Strategy



*"It's really hard for me right now. No one really knows. At KidSafe, there are people to talk to."* Jeremy, 11

While school break is typically thought of as a carefree time for family fun and travel, vulnerable children living in Vancouver's poorest neighbourhoods can have very different experiences. Vulnerable children often rely on their schools to provide the safety, support and meals they need, but when school closes these essential services disappear. Consequently, school break can be a time of loneliness, instability and hunger, with socio-economic barriers drastically limiting the childcare options available to parents and caregivers. This leaves many children wondering what they will do, where they will go, and if they will have enough to eat.

Since 1993 local charity, The KidSafe Project Society, has been keeping schools open during break time for vulnerable students most at risk when school is closed, and now serves over 450 children from six Vancouver elementary schools.

Each day at KidSafe, referred children receive their full day's nutrition, supervision in a familiar and accessible place of safety, emotional support from child care specialists, and developmental programming that is often prohibitively expensive and inaccessible to them.

Despite a clear need for KidSafe's programs for vulnerable *(continued on next page)*



SPRING 2016

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### KIDSAFE (continued from cover)

children, in 2013 KidSafe noticed that daily attendance was not as high as anticipated. After several focus groups with the community they learned that vulnerable children were increasingly experiencing barriers to attending KidSafe's break programs safely and regularly. Whether it be due to a parent's heavy workload or competing family demands, to an inability to pay for transit fares, KidSafe recognized that its community was experiencing a consistent need that had to be addressed.

As a solution to these challenges KidSafe piloted Engaged Outreach attendance strategy in the summer of 2013, at first using rented minivans to pick up and drop off children. Now three-years later, Engaged Outreach consists of three school buses, four 'Walking School Buses' (i.e. staff walking door-to-door!) and has since allowed 591 children to access KidSafe's Break Programs at 5 program sites.

Engaged Outreach has also seen some unexpected benefits; the time spent walking and driving to KidSafe has been an opportune time for children to voice any anxieties about the day ahead and, with the support of caring adult staff, transition into a successful, positive day at KidSafe. .

One of KidSafe's Activity Leaders noted: "As we would get closer to kid's homes they would say 'I want to be dropped off last -- I'm having fun on the bus!' You could tell the kids really loved being dropped off and really benefited from the extra time with staff in a smaller group setting.

The strategy has also allowed KidSafe to better connect with parents and caregivers, as well as encouraged children to develop and maintain a routine in the morning that makes them better prepared when school resumes.

As one parent stated: "[My three children] have started getting up on their own and get themselves ready [for the bus]. Since the bus comes at the same time every day, there's a consistency — the kids realized the routine by themselves."

To learn more about how you can support The KidSafe Project Society, visit [www.kidsafe.ca](http://www.kidsafe.ca), or phone 604-713-4467. You can also follow KidSafe on Twitter at @kidsafeproject.



*Submitted by David Palmer, Development and Communications Coordinator for The KidSafe Project Society.*



#### What is happening in your community?

We would love to hear about it! To submit an article for our ACEbc newsletter, please contact:

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The next ACEbc newsletter will be our summer edition. We look forward to your contributions!

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Congratulations to **Drea Owen** (far left in photo) who has recently accepted a position as "Manager of Community Connections and Healthy Living" for the Maple Ridge School District. Drea has worked in the New Westminster School District as a Community School Coordinator for many years. She has also been an invaluable member of the ACEbc Board and currently serves as a Director at Large. All of us at ACEbc wish you all the best in your new position and look forward to hearing about your new journey!

## A Message from the ACEbc Board

### *Purposeful Leadership*

*“Why do I lead? Why do I want to lead?”*

*For your leadership to be successful, you must ask yourself these two questions daily.”*

These are the first questions asked by Buruti K. Kafele in his book, The Principal 50: Critical Leadership Questions for Inspiring School-Wide Excellence. Kafele is a former principal and now a current educational consultant in the United States.

Kafele goes on to state that the answers to these questions represent your purpose for leading, which then drives your approach to inspiring excellence in your school or organization. He states, “A person without a purpose is like a word without a definition – meaningless. You can’t achieve maximum results without defining why you do this work in the first place.”

So what is your purpose? I’m not asking what your organization’s purpose is. Rather, what is your personal purpose as it relates to your work? I encourage you to take time to think about it, write it down, and clearly define it. Can you whittle it down to 20 words or less?

Like Kafele, I believe that once we define our purpose it helps us operate in our strengths zone. It prevents us from getting sidetracked with all the many things that can pull us in a thousand directions. Focusing on my purpose allows me to use my talents and passions to achieve the results I want and provides me more opportunities to find that “flow” where the work no longer seems like work.

After you have defined your purpose for leading, Kafele says that you must answer the following questions:

- ⇒ *Will I walk in my purpose?*
- ⇒ *Will I lead in my purpose?*
- ⇒ *Will my purpose be evident to the entire school community?*

Kafele encourages us that if you can answer these questions with a whole-hearted “Yes!”, “then you will be on your way to inspiring profound excellence in your school.” He calls this intentionality. What would change in your work life if you lead with purpose and intentionality? What would be the outcome for the community that you serve?

Many of you are already leading with purpose. I believe that the stories in this month’s newsletter reflect the many ways you are inspiring communities to pursue excellence. Thank you for the great work that you do.

In community,

*Lawrence*



## Honour for Britannia's Mike Evans: Never A Critic, Always A Coach

### *Britannia Secondary Names Gym after Senior Girls Basketball Coach*



*Britannia Bruins senior girls basketball coach Mike Evans takes in the scene at the high school gymnasium after it was named in his honour Jan. 14, 2016. Photo Dan Toulgoet*

*Written by Megan Stewart for the Vancouver Courier, January 19, 2016*

The hallways at Britannia Secondary were buzzing last week before tipoff in the 42nd annual invitational basketball tournament, one of the first in B.C. to host senior boys and girls at the same time, same place.

The excitement was about that place, specifically the Bruins basketball court and its flanking bleachers, and about one person, a coach who since 1980 has made that gym a second home not only for himself but also a welcoming and safe space for hundreds of teenage athletes.

On Jan. 14 before the senior girls won their own tournament

for a ninth time in 11 years, the school paid special tribute to Bruins coach Mike Evans. They named the place after him.

More than 120 former student-athletes and numerous retired teachers dressed in red and walked out on the floor. The stands were already packed. As Evans led the Bruins in a pre-game pep talk under blue banners for city and regional championships and their cherished 2012 B.C. AA title, the players made sure to hold his attention and keep his back to the larger crowd. Tina Turner's "Simply the Best" blared on the PA. The reveal was a surprise.

Evans, whose first day as a counsellor at Britannia was in 1980, turned around to see a few (cont'd on next page...)

## Honour for Britannia's Mike Evans (continued from page 4)

words newly printed on the wall: **Mike Evans Gymnasium**.

"I wonder if it's legal, but anyway..." Evans said a few days later, characteristically humble and funny. "It was overwhelming and as it turns out, it was a well-kept secret."

Mitra Tshan, the bantam and junior girls coach as well as a community educator at Britannia, organized the ceremony with Trevor Stokes, who coaches with Evans and teaches in the Streetfront alternative school, and Bob Fitzpatrick, an I.B. teacher and student council sponsor. The name reveal was public knowledge and widely shared on social media, but Evans said he was none the wiser.

"It was a complete surprise and a shock at first. You could probably list quite a few people, some of whom have retired long ago, who have put in a lot of time and who are legendary in the history of this school. The gym was built in the '50s even though the school itself is 100 or so years old. I feel very humbled that there are some pretty famous people who did not have a gym named after them. There are other worthy people, too," said Evans.



"I'm aware of other schools where gyms have been named after people, who I knew as well. Maybe it's a little unusual that I'm not a PE teacher. Others tended to be PE teachers who lived in the gym, though I lived there too."

Evans, a NCAA Div. 1 middle-distance sprinter, came to Britannia in 1980 as a counsellor and began to build a broad network for students,

including the many immigrants and refugees who arrived in Canada in the '70s and '80s from Southeast Asia and China. According to a biography prepared by Stokes, 30 years ago Evans "set the standard for how a school was to go to best address the specific needs and desires for these vulnerable students. His work with the ESL Project is still commented on and used as an example."

He coached the senior boys basketball team — as well as many others since he identified sports as an effective and meaningful way to engage students — and in 1987 he was approached by a few young women. "That one nervous request started his legacy," wrote Stokes.

"I have been teaching here for 42 years and we will never see the likes of Mike Evans again at Britannia Secondary," said Fitzpatrick in an interview Tuesday.

He added that Evans has high expectations for his players. (cont'd on page 6)



**Photo left:** Britannia Bruins senior girls basketball coach Mike Evans gets a hug from former player and 2008 graduate Jennifer Ju after the gym was named in his honour Jan. 14, 2016. Photo Dan Toulgoet

## Honour for Britannia's Mike Evans (continued from page 5)

"He treats them as equal. He's a no-nonsense basketball coach. He does not allow them to play any cards, if you know what I mean. And it's no surprise that many of these basketball players are also excellent students."

Fitzpatrick described a coach who works 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help kids succeed.

"This has carried over to the men's team because success breeds success and it's also carried over to keeping kids in school. It helps keep marginalized kids

in school because they are experiencing success," he said. "Mike is a coach, not a critic."

Evans was a counsellor until 2002 and then became a community school education coordinator for the high school and its associated elementary schools. He retired in

August and for nearly 40 years has lived in Ladner with his wife, Pat. Their daughter is an elementary school teacher in Vancouver.

Now in his 70s, Evans will continue coaching the Bruins and is taking the year to work out an adjusted schedule. "If there's a practice at 3:30 p.m., I leave for the school at 2 p.m. If there's a practice at 5 p.m., I leave at 2 p.m.," he said. "Because of the traffic."

He is part of the Britannia Support Society, which raises money to enrich the lives of students. And he is also on the board of CLICK (Contributing to the Lives of Inner City Kids).

"Plus I'm coaching," he said. "I don't really see an end in sight."



**Photo above:**

*Britannia Bruins senior girls basketball coach Mike Evans huddles with players moments before the gym was named in his honour Jan. 14, 2016. Photos Dan Toulgoet*

## Breakfast Program at Surrey Schools Changing Lives in Vulnerable Areas



by Amy Reid - Surrey Now Feb 11, 2016

Students buzz about a Bear Creek Elementary classroom as the aroma of French toast fills the air.

It's 7:45 a.m., and school doesn't start for another 45 minutes, but a couple dozen kids are starting their day a bit earlier than the rest.

A few young boys shoot basketballs at a hoop hooked on a cabinet door, other youngsters sit at desks and play, and laughter abounds.

These children are taking part in a breakfast program the Surrey school district offers at more than 20 schools in neighbourhoods that show high levels of vulnerability.

Outreach worker Jethro Kambere's day starts even earlier than the children's.

He often begins his mornings with a "walking school bus," knocking on the front doors of some of these children to get them out of bed. Together, they make the jaunt to school and have breakfast.

It's all in an effort to get kids who are chronically absent, or tardy, to school.

"It starts in Kindergarten. We want to break the trend right away before it becomes a pattern," said Kambere.

Attending school is step one, he said: "You don't want kids to develop trends they're going to carry with them their whole life. I want them to understand what's important to them. It's important to have a healthy meal, it's important to be physically active, it's important to learn."

The program is part of the Community-Schools Partnership, established in 2007 to provide support to children and their families who may be vulnerable.

And in Surrey, the numbers are high. According to the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition, Surrey has the most poverty-stricken neighbourhoods in the region.

It's a stark reality, but one not specific to Surrey. Last year's 2015 BC Child Poverty Report Card revealed one in five children in the province lives in poverty.

At the Newton elementary school, Kambere typically handles about 15 cases. On his radar, currently, are brother and sister Chelsea, 11, and Adam, 10, (names changed for privacy reasons).

"Adam was coming late every day before," said Kambere.

The youngster would act up in class, wouldn't listen, or he was outright unresponsive.

Today he's eager to learn. (continued on next page...)

**BREAKFAST PROGRAMS (continued from page 7)**

“He asked his mom to buy him a dictionary,” Kambere said. “He’s asked me to make him a multiplication chart. He’s started to understand that school is important.”

It’s been refreshing to see Adam’s attitude change, he said.

“One day, it was so bizarre, he got his hair cut, side parted, shirt buttoned up, tucked in, he looked like he was ready for work,” Kambere said proudly. “It was almost symbolic of the change that he’s made.”

Mom Dolores (name also changed) agreed.

“Adam’s been having trouble getting up and getting going. He’s struggling, emotionally, without any kind of a male figure around,” said Dolores.

But Kambere’s influence has changed Adam. Usually hard to get going for the day, Adam jumps out of bed when Kambere comes knocking.

“It’s kind of beyond school. It’s a connection,” Dolores said of the program. “I just think it offers that extra element that some parents just don’t have available to them.”

Being a single mom to three kids, that support is appreciated.

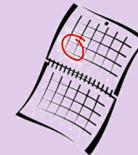
“It’s really helped them bring up their confidence,” she said. “Whether I’m working morning shifts or after-school shifts, I know they’re able to get up and get to school on time and get breakfast.”

The Surrey mother is particularly thankful to have after-school support through another district program, which offers help with homework and even outings to places such as Science World and Extreme Air.

“Before, it was my oldest (a 16-year-old) kind of watching them from kind of right after school until about 9 sometimes,” said Dolores. “Knowing they’re getting help with homework, maybe getting a snack, maybe going places... They have opportunities outside of what I would ever be able to give them.

“The system itself is not perfect. I believe that there are so many gaps, and I think this helps fill a bit of that gap.”

*For more information about this program please contact Sukh Shergill Manager Community-Schools Partnership Surrey School District [Shergill\\_s@surreyschools.ca](mailto:Shergill_s@surreyschools.ca).*



# Save the Date

## ACEbc AGM - June 3rd, 2016

### New Westminster, BC

**If you are interested in participating on the ACEbc Board of Directors as an Executive Member, District Representative, or as a Member at Large, please consider putting your name forward. We value your input!**

## SOMETIMES THE ANSWER IS SO SIMPLE

When I would approach people about coming to the Council Meetings (as well as be genuinely curious and ask them why they do not attend), I found that some of them did not know what a “Community Council Meeting” was! Even though I felt I had defined and described these meetings on our posters, emails and invitations, only the same few people would attend and we just couldn’t seem to attract more people to these gatherings. I was stymied as to why certain folks would not show up, as some of the most interested and involved parents were not attending. Through conversations I found out that many parents and community members felt these meetings sounded very formal (due to the title “Community Council Meeting” and what they understood a “Council” to be). I also heard them say that it sounded like a *closed group* which already had a specific group of members.



Despite my “descriptive flyers” I found myself frequently explaining what these meetings were. As I approached parents and community members to attend I would explain that we ran them in an informal way (always starting with getting to know each other, having space for real conversations and questions), that they were opportunities for residents and parents to get involved with the school, that they could be part of decision making and, that there would be time to speak to me, the Principal, as well as other community members and leaders. In these seemingly constant conversations I was having with non-attending parents, I would also always share the most important piece (as Simon Sinek says, “People don’t follow you for WHAT you do, they follow you for WHY you do it) with parents and that is that the research shows that their involvement and even just genuine *interest* in their child’s school experience, will help their child be more successful at school.



When I was in one of these deep conversations with a group of several very keen, active and involved (except in Council Meetings!) moms who were relatively new to our school (they had arrived during the past year from China), I was explaining all of these things about our Council Meetings and I finished by exclaiming, “These are very important meetings for all parents and community members, and I just can’t figure out why more people don’t attend them!” One of the moms turned to me and said very simply, “Well, why don’t you just call them “Very Important Parent and Neighbour Meetings” then?”

The simplicity of that comment took me aback. We all laughed at this obvious solution, and from that day forth, our flyers, emails and personal invitations always start by saying: “Everyone is welcome! Come to our Monthly Parent and Neighbour Meeting! Get involved and help your child be more successful at school!”

And yes... happily, attendance at the meetings has greatly increased.

*Submitted by Gayle Beavil, Community School Coordinator at Maywood Community School in Burnaby. For more information, please contact Gayle at [Gayle.Beavil@sd41.bc.ca](mailto:Gayle.Beavil@sd41.bc.ca).*



## Surrey Student Wins New York Trip for Poetry Slam Nationals



Grade 5 Cedar Hills Elementary student Riya Arora's performance was the judges' and audience favourite at the inaugural regional Canada SCORES Poetry Slam held in Burnaby.

She beat out the field of contestants in the event organized by the Canada SCORES Vancouver charity. The society is an extension of America SCORES, which combines soccer, poetry and community service in after-school programs for vulnerable youth aimed at helping children reach their full potential.

Riya will now compete in the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual National Poetry SLAM! at the School of Visual Arts Theatre in New York City, April 9 to 12. All her expenses are covered by the Canada SCORES and America SCORES.

While in New York, Riya will also participate in writing and performance workshops with renowned poets and spoken word artists. She will also get a tour of the city.

Cedar Hills teacher Sukhjinder Sidhu encouraged and coached Riya, who's poetry slam topic was "Soccer's role in my life".

The Canada SCORES Program was introduced in the district last year through Surrey School District's Business Development and Community-Schools Partnership departments. C-SP outreach worker Stefan Leslie—a former Vancouver Whitecaps soccer team player—provides student mentorship and helps coordinate the Canada SCORES after-school program among five elementary schools and one secondary school.

For a poetry slam, students create and perform their own poems without any music, costumes or props. The work is judged as much on the manner and enthusiasm of its performance, as its content or style.

*For more information about this program please contact Sukh Shergill Manager Community-Schools Partnership Surrey School District: [Shergill\\_s@surreyschools.ca](mailto:Shergill_s@surreyschools.ca)*



### Soccer



*By Riya Arora (Cedar Hills Elementary)*

Soccer is an awesome sport, you should be wearing shorts.

I would wear my jersey, but I would never give my opponent mercy!

It's very important to work as a team, when our team wins I shout out with gleam!

Sometimes I would fall, while kicking the soccer ball.

I still have fun, in the sun, while I run.

Whenever I jump, I would land with a big fat thump!

Whenever our team scores, we would hear other people roar!

We all have to work, but sometimes I would give a little smirk.

I will always have the cool soccer skills, to pay the cool soccer bills!

Save the Date!

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# HEART-MIND 2016

## CULTIVATING RESILIENCE

**October 21-22** | Bell Performing Arts Centre, Surrey, BC

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Explore, learn and inquire through two days of presentations, workshops and networking.

Hosted by acclaimed journalist and Heart-Mind expert, **Maria LeRose**, this year's Heart-Mind conference will be focused on the theme of **resilience**.

Learn from leading experts about the science behind this positive human quality, and how you can cultivate resilience in the children you teach and care for at home, in school and in the community.

Early-bird tickets on sale in May 2016 at:

**[dalailamacenter.org](http://dalailamacenter.org)**

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