



ACE NOTES

Health and Wellness at Blueberry Creek Community School Hub



FALL 2013

Inside this issue:



Health and Wellness at Blueberry Creek Community School Hub has become a major component of our programming, especially in the last couple of years. What enables us to make this movement for happy healthy young people and community members is the fantastic nine acres that we have access to on the school grounds. The biggest change to our

outside space happened in 2010 when we applied for, and received, funding from Columbia Basin Trust to create our “Berries and Butterflies” Community Gardens. We also received support from the Katimavik participants that were in the area at the time, community members, and Telus Day of Service employees to install the 14 raised garden beds. Since then, our programs (preschool, daycare, StrongStart, afters chool care, summer reading program, science camp students) maintain the gardens and use the fruit for our “Seed to Plate” programming.



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A Message from the ACEbc Board

For over 40 years community schools have worked with students at the *centre* of the community education philosophy. Parents and community have been wrapped into the learning that happens in community schools.

Have you read the BC Education Plan (www.bcedplan.ca)? I just spent time on the website and encourage you as a supporter of community schools in BC to:

- read the BC EdPlan
- watch some of the videos on the site
- make the links between personalized learning and community schools
- respond to the invitation to comment and share your thoughts and stories

In a one minute video, John Abbott speaks about the need to revitalize community, particularly in urban areas (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdUZOTpP8Bs>). Abbott uses the metaphor that education is a 'three legged stool' with home, school and community collaboration being critical. He is concerned that without the Out of School experience, the child is dependent on the formalized school system only.

It is important for us to demonstrate how the opportunities for students, parents, and communities through community schools are a vital part of the new BC Education plan and personalized learning. Take the time to go online and share your comments based on your experience.

ACEbc's new videos are also an effective tool to share with others. They provide an opportunity to describe and discuss community schools. I encourage all of you to show the videos to multiple groups with whom you work: parents, community, staff, non-profits, Boards of Education. There are currently two videos on the website (<http://www.acebc.org>) and watch for more to come in the new year! We also welcome your feedback on these videos.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, February 27th & 28th, 2014 for the AGM and the Coordinators Retreat on Granville Island hosted by the Vancouver Coordinators.

Janey

“Every child needs to feel they are an expert in something.”

~ John Abbott

Health and Wellness at Blueberry Creek *(continued from cover)*



After we installed the raised berry gardens, we decided to build on this by teaching the children about environmental sustainability. The next phase was creating our rubber boot fence gardens (which are watered with our rain barrel collection system), creating our community compost bins, and planting more Douglas Fir trees on the grounds that will eventually be our “living Christmas tree” forest. In the centre of them will be our “Yoga” serenity circle.



Health and Wellness at Blueberry Creek *(continued from page 3)*



The next phase of our Health and Wellness programming was Straw Bale gardens to grow our vegetables. This enabled us to continue our “Seed to Plate” programming on a bigger scale and invite our groups and organizations into our community school to harvest the vegetables and then cook a meal in our new community kitchen. As well as our own programs, we have had the “Take a Hike” program participants into the centre to harvest the vegetables and make soup!



Making Borscht with veggies from the garden in the Summer Day Camp Program—Summer 2013.



The children in the Blueberry Buds Daycare using the tomatoes and basil from the gardens to make their own pizzas—Fall 2013.



Participants from the School District #20 “Take a Hike” program came to Blueberry Creek Community School Hub to volunteer in the gardens, pick some veggies and make soup for their lunch—Fall 2013.



For more information, contact Alana Medeiros, Blueberry Creek Community School Hub Coordinator: amedeiros@sd20.bc.ca or 250-365-7201.

Grade 9 Health and Wellness Day in SD40 – New Westminster



Worries about the future, feeling overwhelmed by relationships, teachers report that they have never spent more time supporting kids with anxiety-related issues in the classroom in their careers...These were some of the many concerns we were hearing from inside the walls of our schools in New Westminster. The New Westminster Secondary School Counselling Department found themselves dealing repeatedly with basic coping strategies for students entering their offices feeling overwhelmed by the pressures of school and daily life, and it was clear that something needed to change.

A school-wide needs assessment was undertaken, collaboration with the counselling staff ensued, and then an idea was born: Gr.9 Health and Wellness Day - a foundational day just for articulating students to bond, feel connection amongst each other and "rival schools", be introduced to important resources within the school, and gain basic coping strategies for challenges that may lie ahead. With our job demands and schedules, we knew we could not do this alone. To do this, we would need to call upon the wisdom and support of our community experts.

"Relationships and partnerships are critical. If we were working alone, the incredible time, energy, and financial support that is required would have been impossible for Community Schools to take on alone."

The day would involve all Grade 9 students being excused from regular classes to attend a morning keynote address by an inspirational speaker, education/experiential wellness stations, a free lunch/bbq, and a team-challenge spirit rally. In taking the idea for a community-supported Health and Wellness Day outside of our school district doors and into those of the local community, we did not have to look too deep to find that we all have complimentary interests within our mandates. It is difficult to find a strategic plan that does not include expansion of community involvement, increased youth engagement, or prevention. In fact, many of our partners were more than eager to participate, as it is an efficient way for them to achieve far-reaching mandates that are required by funders in times where resources are slim and caseloads are over-flowing. Representatives from more than 15 local businesses and social service providers came out to deliver workshops, donate food, prizes, and their time to make a day

dedicated to establishing a foundation of wellness for youth in the New Westminster community. Dieticians from local hospitals and grocery stores delivered workshops on how food impacts our mood, Clinical Counsellors from local social service agencies delivered workshops on mindfulness, meditation and relaxation techniques, while yoga, zumba, martial arts and improv. comedy instructors got the kids up and moving physically. The local movie theatre donated movie passes, the Vancouver Canucks and BC Lions contributed prizes, while the local farmer's market and Thrifty's Foods donated cash and in-kind services to support a healthy lunch. Youth DJs from the city's Youth Services DJ Program spun songs that kept kids energized and dancing during the lunch break, and teachers donned extravagant costumes as MC's of our "Hunger Games" Spirit Rally.

(continued from page 5) Relationships and partnerships are critical. If we were working alone, the incredible time, energy, and financial support that is required would have been impossible for Community Schools to take on alone. Simple lunch room conversations and taking time to chat with front-line staff about trends and challenges within our district transformed a situation where we were all feeling like we were riding on a runaway train of teen stress and anxiety, to laying new tracks on a foundation of prevention and wellness.

We know that one day is not an antidote for stress, anxiety, and unhealthy coping. However, we do know that every 14 year old in our city now has a foundation on which to call upon when times get tough, and knows the faces of people in their school and community who can support them. We are all partners in the wellness of our youth, and together, New Westminster Secondary's Gr.9 Health and Wellness Day is our day to show it!

For more information, contact Ashley Currie, Community School Coordinator, SD40 (New Westminster): acurrie@sd40.bc.ca, 778-874-2761 or connect by twitter @sd40commschools.

Feelin' Good in Bamfield and Anacla

The Bamfield Community School Association (BCSA) is dedicated to offering a wide range of literacy, health and wellness and community development programs, and activities in the communities of Bamfield and Anacla.



We have a variety of programs that contribute to the health and wellness of our community but there are three BCSA programs that stand out in my mind.

One of our most popular programs is the themed cooking classes that we offer to help fill the long winter months. The cooking classes offer community members a chance to socialize and enjoy a fun activity with others, while learning about nutrition and healthy eating. The classes also expose community members to new types of foods and cultures. 'East Indian Cuisine', 'Italian

Night' and 'Veggie Options' are just a few of the themed cooking classes that we have offered in Bamfield and Anacla. All of the classes have been well attended and in some cases we have had waiting lists. After we are done preparing the meal together everyone sits down and enjoys our creation with old and new friends.

Another great program that was started this year is the Life Skills series, a series of workshops teaching community members some of the skills that many of us have stopped practicing. Seniors and Elders lead the workshops attended by community members and teach the tricks and tips that they have learned over the years. Everyone takes part in the

lesson and each participant goes home with a jar of jam, pickles or whatever we did that day. Workshops have included sewing, filleting fish, canning, jam making and pickling, and there are more to come.

The final program worth mentioning are the monthly Community Lunches. Every day students at the Bamfield Community School take part in the School Meals Program, which is made possible through funding from School District 70 and Community Link. All of our students enjoy a healthy lunch that keeps them focused and learning throughout the day. Once a month we invite community members to join the students and share in a healthy and nutritious lunch together. These lunches usually include family members, school staff and a variety of individuals who have the opportunity to talk and interact with the children at the Bamfield Community School. All of these programs, activities and services help contribute to a healthy and cohesive community, and since every picture is worth a thousand words, I will let the pictures do the rest of the talking!



*For more information, contact Catherine Thompson,
BCSA Coordinator at bcsa.ct@gmail.com or by phone at
250-728-1220.*

We asked some people what they thought of the new ACEbc videos...



Here are some answers from our discussion group...

Thank you, Wendy Lambert for submitting this photo! You can reach Wendy (Coordinator, Chemainus Crofton Community Schools' Association) @ ccsa@sd79.bc.ca or 250-246-3588.



WE ARE ON THE WEB

Don't forget to visit our ACEbc website at www.acebc.org for information and updates.



FOLLOW US ON TWITTER
@acebctweets



Comments, suggestions, feedback?

Or, if you would like to submit an article for our ACEbc newsletter, please contact:

Taryn Briscoe
Newsletter Coordinator
Taryn.Briscoe@sd41.bc.ca
604-664-8849

The next ACEbc newsletter will be published in early 2014.
THANK YOU to everybody who submitted an article for our Fall edition!

Stride Community Garden, A Community Story

Contributed by Jana Buhlmann, Parent & Garden Coordinator

In the late spring of 2012, a neighbour informed me of a meeting regarding new plots in a community garden that was near our townhouse complex. I was already exploring the possibility of membership in such a garden, so I was incredibly surprised to find this one on the edge of the area my young daughter calls "The Forest" near her school. From door to garden, I walk for less than five minutes to get to this place of sanctuary.

I was one of ten new gardeners who joined the existing six beds at Stride last summer. I quickly learned about programs and organizations such as *Can You Dig It*, *posAbilities*, *Growing Food in the City*, *MOSAIC*, and *Don't Sweat It Services*, as well as the key role of the Stride School Community Coordinator. My daughter and I met and became part of this new diverse community while we tended our crops over the summer. *Can You Dig It* was at our side in the planning and creation of this beautiful garden, but in the last few months has very trustingly let us find our legs. I was pleased to step forward as garden coordinator in 2012 and enjoyed supporting the Stride School Community Coordinator by ensuring the logistics of the garden flowed as seamlessly as possible.

In 2013, our garden was the recipient of a generous School Community Connection grant for the beautification of our already nice garden. We had great fun deciding upon improvements, which in the end included colourful benches, a pergola, a sign board, planter boxes for flowers and fruit shrubs, barrels for herbs, a new water line, and four new garden beds. We have also turned two of our four new beds into common beds, one for donation and one that welcomed the larger surrounding community to help themselves to one particular crop in our garden. We purchased some amazing tomato starter plants and despite the August onset of powdery mildew, we are overflowing with amazing tomatoes that benefited from a community approach to watering and maintenance. I will never forget how the eyes of one young bike-riding boy lit up when I told him that he was welcome to enjoy the small, sweet yellow tomatoes.

Next month we will invite the larger community to join us in celebrating the improvements to our physical space, and another year of growth in our garden. We continue to communicate via GoogleGroups - a great way to coordinate decisions, actions, and ideas - and already have three names on our wait list for the summer of 2014. We are somewhat disheartened by the degree of disappearing veggies from our plots this year, but understand it has been a general issue in the Lower Mainland. We have all made an effort to offset this negative experience by engaging with those who enter our garden and creating multilingual signs that explain the community garden context, as well as our donation and help yourself beds.



I live in a great neighbourhood and my daughter benefits greatly as a student at Stride Community School. Our membership in the Stride Community Garden has strengthened both of those beliefs and experiences. As fall approaches, I find myself looking forward to the lake that grows in the forest as the rains deepen, a chance to journey outside in our rubber boots and see what our garden looks like in wintertime!

For more information, contact Dale Owen, Community School Coordinator – Stride Avenue Community School at Dale.Owen@sd41.bc.ca or 604-664-8853.

Community Schools as Centres of Community Wellness - Part 1

Guest submission by Dr. Ansel Nash Updegrave & Dr. Bob Rowe, Doctors of Chiropractic in Nanaimo and Qualicum Beach, respectively.

The Possibility What if every school had an organic garden, a whole food organic food program, professionals from the local community working in the school to provide services and seminars, after-school daycare, mentoring programs for students, tutorials, community projects, and a boxed food program that feeds families and the community? What if the experience of learning was linked with the experience of living? And what if our schools were economically secure?

All of this and more is possible when community schools also thrive as community wellness centres.

The Financial Factor Currently our educational and health care systems are in a reductionist mode. School districts are facing massive budget cuts. This has shifted the focus of education to economics. Health care has also adopted a similar cost-driven approach. Patient care has been reduced to one complaint per visit. Both systems' shortfalls are linked to the same cause – a shift in population demographics. The shift from a 2:1 child to adult ratio to a 1:2 ratio has eroded the tax base and class sizes of our school districts and is putting an unbearable strain on our health care system. The impact of this shift on children is devastating.

Trends, Timing and Tipping Point All the trends in health care show that humans are the sickest species on the planet, but what's most shocking is which part of the human population is sickest and who we spend the most money on. The fastest growing demographic diagnosed with chronic disease is children, but 85% of our health care budget is spent on end-stage chronic disease in seniors. And only 5% of our health care budget (\$46 billion for B.C.) is spent on PREVENTION.

For the first time in the history of our species we are seeing a decrease in longevity. This generation of children is NOT going to live as long as their parents. We have reached a tipping point and are now considered the sickest species on the planet.

Strength in Numbers There is a considerable amount of incentive in forming strategic alliances, especially in BC,

when it comes to education and health. B.C.'s annual budget spends 29% on Education and 36% on Health Care. Combined they represent 65% of the budget.

But here's the problem.....85% of Health Care is spent on seniors, and in the next 15 years that spending is going to skyrocket due to Baby Boomers becoming seniors and the education budget decreasing as the population shifts to an increasing ratio of seniors to children. Partnerships between Health and Education are a crucial step to improving our children's lives.

Global Awareness and Initiative The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes the need for education and health to work together to develop a healthy school community:

“a comprehensive school health approach encompasses the whole school environment by tapping into the knowledge, skills and energy of the school, home and community. The richness of this work is realized when all three are integrated and harmonized leading to improved learning, enhanced well-being and positive relationships. Sustainable change can be achieved by forging partnerships between home, school and community to support the development of a healthy school community.” [Source: Developing Healthy School Communities Handbook: Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund Centre for Health Promotion Studies, University of Alberta, 2011].

The Wellness Solution When we put forward a motion to form a Wellness Council for the BC Chiropractic Association little did we know we would spend a year analyzing the subject of wellness, chronic disease, its causes and solutions. What we discovered was that wellness initiatives in BC and Canada had very poor success rates.

After further analysis we determined that the definition of wellness was lacking one essential concept. Historically wellness is determined by nutrition, exercise and emotional state. We still believed there was one additional and far greater factor – **socialization**. Then we looked for supporting evidence from the studies done on Romanian Orphans, Prisons, Hospitals, Assisted Living Facilities, Loneliness, and even Corporate Strategies. When individuals are removed from social connections they exist in a state of fear and isolation and the effects are devastating to their health and well-being.

The current focus in our health systems emphasizes treatment of chronic disease, leaving little funding to address causes of illness and sustainable solutions. A **wellness model**, however, would provide more natural and sustainable solutions uniting locally grown organic food, farmers, and a network of holistic professionals and community social organizations.

The **BC Atlas of Wellness** (Second Edition, 2011, University of Victoria) shows that each community is different, has different problems, needs, resources and therefore solutions. ***It only makes sense that the solution also lies at the community level.***

Several years ago Bill Preston, director of ACEbc, introduced Dr. Bob Rowe to the concept of community schools. Our studies confirm that a key answer to the dilemma of chronic disease and the delivery of wellness can be ***affordably and effectively delivered through a community school model.*** Rather than building more extremely expensive, probably non-sustainable, “health centres” based on current models, a community-based approach using existing facilities makes a great deal of sense from both economic and health perspectives.

Lifelong Learning Benefits What will this community school wellness centre model look like in the future? In addition to the types of historical services, programs and coordination that Community Schools provide, a wellness model has the potential to touch all demographic groups in the community in several capacities:

Experiential educational opportunities give students, seniors, and families the opportunity to connect socially in lifelong learning.

Students can learn natural and sustainable organic growing techniques in gardens and greenhouses.

Natural and sustainable living concepts are introduced in the school program and also to the community.

Local farmers share their expertise in developing the garden plots and business models.

Summer programs, child care, employment opportunities, mentoring programs, tutorials, and citizenship role modeling are other invaluable benefits.

Well-Suited Partners The Chiropractic profession has always understood and used wellness principles since its inception in 1895. The philosophy of Chiropractic is “Healing

occurs from Above Down from the Inside Out.” It is a profession whose principles—like those of Community Education—are founded in a **holistic approach**.

A partnership between our associations would exponentially increase our ability to affect change in our communities to thrive, not just survive. Our future is dependent on our commonUNITY.

Check out these related resources available from the **BC Healthy Communities Society**. Community Schools are a natural fit for these new initiatives

BC Healthy Communities Society (Victoria)
<http://bchealthycommunities.ca/>

Plan H <http://planh.ca/>

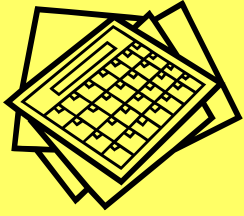
Local Governments and Healthy Communities
(Video 2:35) <http://vimeo.com/71276232>

The Picture of Health in BC
(Video 2:37) <http://vimeo.com/74319707>

**Plan H Announcement Oct. 15, 2013,
from BC Healthy Communities Society**

We know there is a strong connection between people, place, and health, and there is a growing understanding that health is everyone’s business. That’s why local governments in B.C. are collaborating across sectors to build local conditions that support health and well-being, not only in their own communities, but for all British Columbians. **[BC Healthy Communities Society](#)** and **[Healthy Families BC](#)** have partnered to develop the **[new PlanH program](#)** to support local governments to build healthier communities.

Submitted by Don Reimer



Save the Dates

February 27 & 28, 2014
ACEbc Coordinators' Retreat & AGM

Granville Island, Vancouver.
Further information to come.

We do know that keeping an organization vital requires change and we sense that this year there will be some change of positions on the board. Please consider whether it is time for you to participate on the ACEbc board, as a member at large or an executive position.

At our last meeting folks were asked, "What keeps you coming to the board table?" Here are some of the responses. If any of these reasons resonate with you, remember the date and *put your name forward*.

"The Board is motivated by a desire to effect change."

"There is great synergy."

"We are responsible to carry the torch."

"We like the idea of building/promoting awareness of community schools/education and their value."



"We learn from each other."

"ACEbc is resilient."

"We like the engagement (discussion and action) and visioning in important community education initiatives."

"We like to find ways to continue to support our colleagues throughout the province."

If you have questions about the positions, please feel free to contact us by email at acebc2010@gmail.com.



Community Schools are "Smart Schools"

Conventional school models, like outdated rotary phones, serve basically two functions - teachers teach and students learn. **Community Schools**, like smart phones, have a strategically-aligned network of programs, partnerships, and strategies that connect students, their families, and the community to needed supports. Students receive real-world instruction to help them develop the problem-solving skills needed for the 21st Century.

Within the "Smart Schools" phone graphic are icons of the 'apps' found in community schools - whether that's an early childhood education strategy, inter-agency collaboration, lifelong learning opportunities for all members of the community, or the strategic leadership provided by school and community partners.



Conventional School Model



Community Schools

 <p><u>Engaging Instruction</u></p>	 <p><u>Expanded Learning Opportunities</u></p>	 <p><u>Health and Social Support</u></p>
 <p><u>Community Engagement</u></p>	 <p><u>College and Career Ready</u></p>	 <p><u>Early Childhood Development</u></p>
 <p><u>Family Engagement</u></p>	 <p><u>Youth Development Activities</u></p>	 <p><u>Strategic Alignment</u></p>



An Invitation: Welcoming SFU Student Teachers into Burnaby's Community Schools

When faced with the task of preparing student teachers for what awaits them in the diverse, complex and vibrant places we call schools, where does one start? With IRPs, new curriculum, classroom management, Aboriginal Education, differentiation, just to name a few of the topics to be thoughtfully woven into a year long program, the task is daunting. When you start to think in terms of the big picture and the 'enduring understandings' we want our new teachers to walk into the profession emulating, it then seems pretty simple. Relationships. Genuine, caring and authentic relationships are where we start. We wanted our student teachers to understand the awesome responsibility that comes with becoming a teacher and that it begins with who they are as people...in relation to other people. We wanted them to know that it's about caring for our students *and* their families. We wanted them to know that working collaboratively and in partnership with others is a pathway to a stronger community and a better world. All of these values are modelled in our community schools. As Margaret Wheatley says, it all started with a conversation...or a few conversations...

Sue Montabello, Principal at Cariboo Hill Secondary School in Burnaby, and advocate of community schools, mentioned that her passion for community education was sparked many years ago as a student teacher when she was given the opportunity to shadow a community school coordinator. She has since influenced so many educators through her work as an administrator and graduate studies instructor at SFU. Having recognized the impact that Sue has had on strengthening communities in Burnaby, we were inspired to introduce our student teachers to the concept of community education. Our thinking was that if 'sparking' that passion in student teachers, or at least extending the invitation, would help produce more leaders like Sue, imagine the possibilities for the children and families in our communities.

The Burnaby Community Module is based out of University Highlands Elementary School and all of our student teachers are placed in Burnaby schools. This year, through a conversation, we asked for more School Associates specifically from our community schools so that student teachers would be able to see the work in action. Another conversation with Burnaby's Community School Coordinators, who are all certified teachers, led to the opportunity for our student teachers to volunteer at, and attend, the ACEbc Conference last fall.

During their "community experience", a time where SFU's Professional Development Program has allotted two weeks for student teachers to experience a variety of educational communities and roles before starting their practicum, student teachers from our module each shadowed Community School Coordinators to learn more about the roles and the many partnerships working together in each area. This year we continued the conversation and that is where the idea of "Community Schools Day" was conceived. The coordinators planned a morning session at Byrne Creek Secondary School, where they shared about their roles





in providing for the families in their schools and strengthening their communities. The team prepared and delivered a dynamic and interactive morning working with the student teachers and then allowed them to shadow them at their community schools. It had such an impact on how our student teachers began to view their own role as educators. Our hope is that they take this mindset into their current and future classrooms and schools.

Here are some of the comments from the student teachers:

“From our discussion with Community Coordinators, and after visiting a few community schools, I became increasingly excited about the role of teacher in the community. I am beginning to see how important it is for teachers to have relationships and connections with as many members of the community as possible, such as parents, local business people, Indigenous people, artists, firemen, whomever. Everyone is important because everyone plays a unique role in the community.”- Patrick Montgomery

“I’m really coming to understand that each Community School responds to the unique needs of their direct community and one isn’t identical to another. I really see the value and the positive impact that Community Schools have on their community.” –Monica Laity

“I had also wondered if it would be possible to make all schools a community school in some way so I really enjoyed learning about ways that we can have our schools connect with the surrounding community members and businesses even if we are not a designated community school with a community school coordinator.”-Elizabeth Cheung

“A golden nugget that I will take away from the Community Experiences this week that I might find myself remembering ten or fifteen years into my teaching career is from my experience at Gilmore Elementary school with Lawrence Ryan, the Community School Coordinator. He went into further detail with us about Community Schools and how much assistance they provide to students and their families. The particular emphasis on the family and how helping them is at the core was something that I knew already but did not resonate with me as much until that day. If we cannot reach out to the students’ families and provide them with their very basic needs, then we cannot properly educate our students. The best results from students occur when their needs both at home and at school are met, and this is something that I will always carry with me, whether or not I work at a Community School. Being able to instill this mentality into the schools we work in will benefit all students, and it is our duty as teachers to provide assistance for our students, whether it is us directly providing it or us referring the students and their families to someone else who can provide the necessary resources for them. Creating healthier environments for students will better the lives of not only them and their families, but the school community as a whole, and that should be our goal as teachers.”–Bojana Vukadinovic

Well-said, Bojana! That definitely should be our goal as teachers. That may call for another conversation...

Submitted by Sheila Rawnsley & John Nanson, SFU Faculty Associates. For more information on SFU’s Faculty of Education Burnaby Community Module, contact Sheila at sfr@sfu.ca.

Welcome to the Neighbourhood of Learning Centre at Alberni District Secondary School (ADSS)

In September 2012 our high school, ADSS, started at a new location in a brand new building. Included in the design is an area called the Neighbourhood of Learning Centre (NLC). Alberni Valley Community School was moved into a new office in the Centre and the NLC opened on February 1, 2013.

The NLC is a purpose built area attached to the high school that contains offices, a meeting space and our new theatre. Office space and kitchenette spaces are booked through the Community School. The Community School and the Youth Health Clinic have permanent offices in the space while the remaining two offices are shared spaces.

Currently the NLC houses:



Alberni Community and Women's Services (ACAWS) outreach worker Marla Kjernisted waiting for a client in her office in the Neighbourhood of Learning Centre at ADSS.

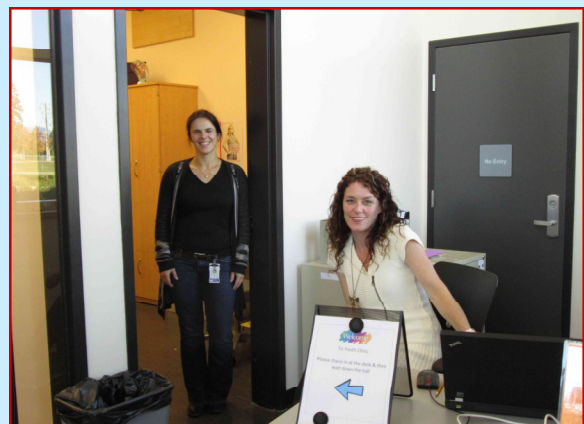
Alberni Community and Women's Services (ACAWS) – An outreach worker is in the office Mondays and Tuesdays. She sees clients and holds group sessions during the year for students. Students can book appointments through ACWAS's main office. The outreach worker is also a volunteer in the breakfast program.

Child and Youth Mental Health – Counsellors have office space available to them on Wednesdays and Thursdays to enable them to see clients who attend the high school. Students can book appointments through the Child and Youth Mental Health office.

Family Guidance - Counsellors are in the office Tuesdays, Wednesday mornings and Thursdays. Students can book appointments through the counselling office at the school.

Youth Health Clinic – Drop-in Clinic for youth up to age 25, male and female. Clinic hours are Monday/Wednesday 11:35 – 12:25, Tuesday/Thursday 2:30 – 5:00. A RN is available during the clinic times.

The Youth Health Clinic has an office and an examination room in the NLC. Services include: non-judgemental open honest conversation, contraceptive counselling – birth control, condoms, abstinence, etc.; STI Counselling – testing including blood work, providing results, providing treatment, helping to have those `tough` conversations; Pap testing – screens for cervical cancer, swabs for STI testing; Pregnancy tests – referrals for pregnancy counselling; Immunization catch up. There is a RN available for other health related questions.



RN Denise Geib (left) and receptionist Kendra Cyr prepare for another day at the Youth Health Clinic in the Neighbourhood of Learning Centre.

(continued from page 10) **ADSS Breakfast Club/Parent Action Supporting Students (PASS)** – This is a group of community volunteers who provide services for students from a room in the NLC. The “mother” of this program is an amazing woman who cobbles together funding from the school district and community organizations and then gets volunteers from throughout the community, including Safeway managerial staff, First Nation education workers, drug and alcohol counsellor, Community School coordinator, Crown Council, retired teachers, and College staff. Volunteers provide a free breakfast/food program for students that feeds over 100 students breakfast daily before the bell and puts food in 13 classrooms around the school that is available throughout the day. During exam week the regular breakfast program is supplemented with coffee and tea and lunch of chilli and soup.

PASS has a grocery cupboard that provides emergency food for students in need. They also provide hygiene products, clothing, and school supplies. PASS operates a mini “Cinderella” program with dresses, suits, and accessories available for grads that need help. Food and clothing are made available to youth clients of the local drug and alcohol counselling services, as well as youth at the school district’s alternative program.



Parent Action Supporting Students (PASS) volunteer and creator Melody Burton stocks the grocery cupboard in preparation for another year of student success.

Creating this amazing collection of centralized services for our students has taken conversations on many different levels. Now that the services are in place the Neighbourhood of Learning Centre has become another bridge between the school and the community. This connection embodies the National Coalition for Community Schools mantra “For Community Schools to work the partners have to have the word ‘yes’ written in their hearts” and we are working hard to ensure the ‘yes’ is written big and bold.

At the ACEbc Board meeting of Sept. 20, 2013, we asked Coordinators:

In what ways does your community school incorporate health and wellness programs and services?

- ✓ Breakfast programs to encourage attendance
- ✓ cooking programs, ✓ yoga classes, ✓ young chefs,
- ✓ physical literacy, ✓ fruit and vegetable programs,
- ✓ nursing students doing practicums with grade 7 students, ✓ child and youth workers at recess, lunch and after school, ✓ addiction prevention programs,
- ✓ nutrition programs, ✓ growing food, ✓ where does

- food come from, ✓ gardens, ✓ food buying club for low income families, ✓ homework clubs, ✓ high school girls mentoring elementary students (body image/lifestyle)
- ✓ feed kids and families, ✓ intergenerational music,
- ✓ community kitchens and food skills for families programs, ✓ reading labels program, ✓ good food box,
- ✓ social/emotional learning, ✓ transition circles at K, gr.7 and entering high school, ✓ salad bar at lunch,
- ✓ bee shed produces honey, ✓ learning about public transit, ✓ “Jumpstart” Academy for students with disabilities and Special Olympics.