

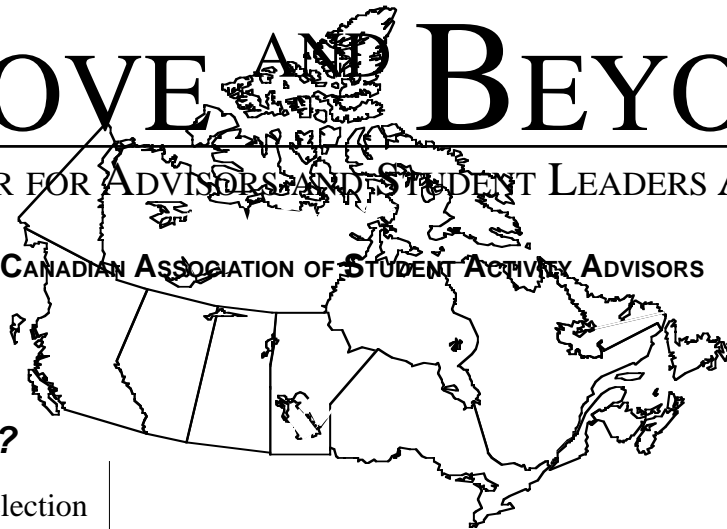
ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ADVISORS AND STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS CANADA

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CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

Fall 2001



Popular – Now What?

It is often a criticism of the election process in high schools that only the popular people get elected, and that these are not necessarily the people who have the best skills or ideas for the job. Voting is a personal matter and most people will vote for the person who seems connected to them in some way. Individuals are popular in a school because they have made these social and personal connections with many people. A popular person's mandate is to maintain and improve those connections throughout the term of their office.

However, popularity still means that people are looking up to you for leadership. The mistake that many popularly elected individuals make is that the vote confirmed their popularity, and that's all there is. The greatest part of leadership is doing something about it. This may involve listening to those people who elected you and now want something done at your school.

Humour is often a part of a successful campaign, and if you were elected because of a joke, be a good joke. Use your sense of humour, your creativity, your uniqueness to add some spice to the leadership mix at your school.

Actions speak louder than words

We all must decide in life why we do what we do. This is the time of the year with planning and strategies that students and teachers decide on their commitments for the upcoming year. Interestingly, when it comes to student leadership, the decisions are quite similar for both groups and should be viewed as such.

Your Yearly Plan

Education is not unlike the financial sector in that it has a yearly plan. What makes education unique is that once that yearly plan is created, it must be adhered to. How does this apply to your position as an advisor? It means that you personally must commit to a full year of involvement. Students must see advisors as committed for the full year program of activities if you wish to expect them to do the same. The successful activity programs have longer plans, and teachers that have committed themselves to their school's leadership programs reap the rewards of continuity.

What's the underlying message here? We are always asking students, who choose to get involved, to be aware that it is a year-long commitment. Perhaps the best way to convince them of this is to show them that we too are making that same commitment.

The only way to be able to make such commitment is believing it is the right thing to do, and knowing it will make a difference in the lives of others. Don't just say that you are committed for the year — show them. Your actions will convey the desired message.

Good Luck

John Thompson
President of CASAA

CASAA

Cakes for Cash

A fundraiser that has worked well for us is a cake auction. Each homeroom collects money all week to bid on a cake made by one of the teachers. At the end of the week, one student per homeroom brings down the money they collected during the week. We then work out a ratio based on the number of students in the homeroom (i.e. 30 students bring in \$60.00 is a ratio of \$2.00 per student.)

The class with the highest ratio 'bids' first. They have first choice of cakes. The selection continues with the second highest ratio etc.

This works very well if all the homerooms are informed - in-person - before the auction begins. You also need enough cakes so that all homerooms can bid on a cake.

This has worked well for us — the first year we did this activity we raised over \$1000.00.

*Paul McGuire
Ottawa*

Watching Listening

Get a tape recorder and tape 10 to 15 common sounds from around the house or around your school. Play the tape and have the people identify the sounds.

Video the people listening and point out good listening habits and postures exhibited by the group. You can see an individual's body language change when he or she is really listening.

Calling all Tin Soldiers

In our present state of affluence and comfort, it is unfortunate that food drives have become a standard calendar event in our school communities. This familiarity often creates an apathy amongst our students because they have "done this before and it hasn't made a difference." These campaigns can be made more palatable to our students if they have a creative approach, or contributions that are made without the hype of another home room competition for food. It's somehow awkward to award a pizza party for the winners of the community food drive; yet the question remains, how do we contribute to this worthy cause and educate our students about the importance of giving?

A different approach to the traditional food drive is *Canalot*. Cans are collected through traditional competitions and the visible result of the campaign is to create castles with the materials that have been brought in. It is very important to put these constructions on display before sending the food off to the food bank because students want to see what they have done. This will also provide a good opportunity for media coverage because it's so much more interesting than a picture of students carting boxes of food to the food bank. It's not enough to tell them by a PA announcement that your school collected x lbs of food. Make the giving experience tangible and visible.

Dances provide a recurring opportunity for students to contribute throughout the year without the competition aspect. Charge full price at the door and allow \$1 off this price if students bring along a canned food item. This provides an inventory of food that can be made available for food drives at appropriate times of the year. It also is a good measure of what students don't want mom to serve them.

With administrative approval, students can pay off their detentions or buy back their accumulated lates with the appropriate canned food donation. Some staff have a problem with this type of approach, but it's the same as paying a fine for a speeding ticket only the food bank benefits from tardiness rather than speed.

You think you know your teacher's butt . . .

Baby pictures are great as a way of having people guess who the cutie is in the window. Simply ask teachers to bring in pictures of themselves when they were in elementary or pre-school. Post the unlabelled pictures in a locked display case and have students identify them as part of a homeroom trivia contest.

A more cheeky version is to have staff pose in their jeans and photograph them from behind taking in only the posterior area. Post these pulchritudinous pictures and see if people can spot your staff from behind!

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a voluntary, non-competitive programme of practical, cultural and adventurous activities, designed to support the personal and social development of young people aged 14-25, regardless of gender, background or ability. It offers an individual challenge and encourages young people to undertake exciting, constructive, challenging and enjoyable activities in their free time. All Awards must be completed by the participant's 25th birthday. The scheme started in 1956 and its Founder and Patron is HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

The delivery of the Award is entrusted to organizations ('Operating Authorities') licensed to run the Programme. They include local authorities and national voluntary organizations and they authorize Awards once applicable conditions have been met.

Award groups are based in schools, colleges, universities, youth clubs, voluntary organizations (Scouts, Guides, etc.), open centres, young offenders' institutes and many businesses. Award Groups are run by adults, many of whom are volunteers, including youth workers, teachers, employers, trainers, Instructors, Assessors and individuals from the community, all of whom are keen to share their skills, enthusiasm and organizing abilities to help young people reach their potential.

What does the Programme consist of?

It is a four Section Programme with three progressive levels:

- Bronze (for those aged 14 and over)
- Silver (for those aged 15 and over) and
- Gold (for those aged 16 and over).

The Sections involve: Service (helping other people in the local community); Skills (covering almost any hobby, skill or interest); Physical Recreation (sport, dance and fitness); Expeditions (training for, planning and completing a journey on foot or horseback, by boat or cycle); Residential Project (Gold Award only) (a purposeful enterprise with people not previously known to the participant).

The Award is widely recognized by employers and people involved in education. Some of the benefits to young people include developing or discovering a sense of achievement; new skills and interests; self-confidence and self-reliance; leadership skills and abilities; exciting opportunities; friendship; experience of teamwork, problem-solving and decision-making; increased motivation; enhanced self-esteem; development of communication skills; a network of local, national and international connections; enjoyment.

International website: www.theaward.org

Canadian website: www.dukeofed.org

Liars Can't Lead

A leader steps up onto a very visible pedestal. The currency paid to stand there is credibility.

The landmark research from Kouzes and Posner — who have surveyed some 100,000 of the led — shows unequivocally that "honesty" is the number one characteristic that people expect from those they would willingly follow.

When a leader lies, he surrenders the mantle of leadership and the right to stand upon the pedestal.

A leader who unfairly trades on his presumption of integrity violates the sacred trust between himself and those whom he would presume to lead. He cheats himself, his colleagues, and his office, and invalidates the very principle of leadership whereby people freely and willingly follow another.

- We do not evaluate a leader simply by job performance alone, even when it's stellar. Methods count as much as results. And nothing is more central to effective leadership than preserving the foundation of personal integrity upon which it rests.
- We can't help but lead by example. Our followers look to us to model the way. And we don't choose when we can set an example — we're *always* on.
- When we can't set the example others rightfully expect, we should willingly step-down from the pedestal.

A liar may rule, but he can't lead.

Don Blohowiak

Better than Ann Landers

The CASAA Electronic Mailing List is an excellent opportunity for advisors and students to share ideas, resources, opinions and activities with other people across Canada and across the world. The next article on school spirit was compiled from answers to the question, "What is school spirit in your school?"

The way the mailing list works is that you send your email to: leadership@casaa-resources.net and it will be automatically sent to all of the present members of the list. You get the combined years of experience and grey matter (including hairs) of all of the participants. Your email can be a request for help or an idea that you would like to share. Most requests are responded to on the list within 24 hours, or you can receive personal replies to your mailbox rather than general replies to the list.

The topic is student leadership and activities. Some join to "lurk" on the sidelines and sample the great ideas and good discussion that occurs. You will find that at certain times of the year —elections, Valentines —specific questions are asked. At other times of the year there are very few postings only because people are so busy doing things that they don't have time to ask questions.

To join the electronic mailing list, simply send email to: leadership-request@casaa-resources.net with the command **SUBSCRIBE LEADERSHIP** in the body of the message.

What is School Spirit?

School spirit is the vital animating essence of a school community. It is not championship trophies resting in a display case, nor is it a state-of-the-art building with lots of technology gleaming from every classroom. School spirit can't be bought in a package, won in a provincial championship or implemented with a new set of rules.

True spirit resides in the eyes, mouths and the hands of the people who learn in the classrooms and walk the hallways of your building. Spirit exists and flourishes as the friendly nods and pleasant greetings you receive as you walk down a school hallway. Spirit is demonstrated as your school pitches in to help a charity or claps its approval for the accomplishments of individuals or groups within the school community. It is truly a product of people in your school community feeling connected to the activities and the people within this place called school. When people feel connected, they will feel the vitality and true essence of school spirit.

Dave Conlon

Another way to look at it is to think of it as the emotional intelligence and health of the school community.

Students arrive in the school community as individuals who in most cases, not all, belong to some kind of social group. These individuals and groups will not usually find ways to create healthy connections with others in the school community without leadership. Ideally leadership comes from the students certainly, but not without the serious support of one or more teachers. Creating a series of assorted events that bring students together as members of their school community is part of the process of creating a school identity where the students have had to take ownership.

This past weekend I attended our school graduation exercises. I was so impressed with the general tone of the grads; they were so supportive of each other. There were over 450 of them graduating as a class. I can compare this to the same event 2 years ago and the general tone was...well, less positive. The only difference in this school over these two years has been the steady growth of a vibrant student activities program clearly aimed at every single member of the school community.

Excellent school spirit lives in schools where there is a strong emphasis on learning (program of studies) and where a student activities program effectively draws participation from all corners of the student body in a systematic and regular fashion.

Dave Garvie

How do you have better spirit activities?

You can have better spirit activities the moment that you decide to have better spirit activities. Then you must work from that moment on to have better spirit activities. The difficulty is *not* in the deciding to change, but in the *maintaining* of that change.

People talk about how l—o—n—g it takes to achieve change at a school. Nonsense. The decision to change happens instantly and change has happened. It takes forever to *maintain* that change, whether that be better eating habits, quitting smoking or increasing school spirit.

Many student councils worry endlessly about promoting spirit at their school. The main problem is that the council is often unaware of the different aspects of getting people involved. Here are some important pointers about getting the students at your school involved:

- You have to decide whether you want students there as an audience or as participants. This is important because the event must be chosen that will suit your chosen audience and participants. Not everyone will wear boxer shorts on their head in the cafeteria, but many people will turn up to watch the principal do it.
- Be aware of the reach of the advertising you are using. The best morning announcements just announce. Excellent posters will only notify. Stopping someone in the hallway and inviting them to come to the dance is the most powerful advertising that you can use — it is also the most labour intensive but it will generate the best results.
- Be aware of the power of NOBODY and EVERYBODY. You won't find someone who wants to go to an event that NOBODY is going to. In your one-on-one promotions, state that EVERYBODY is going to be there.
- Announce your successes. After a great event, tell people about it. Keep the buzz alive and use it to kick start the promotion of your next event. You don't have to say that 36 people had a great time at your casino night last night — just say that lots of people participated and everyone had an awesome time.
- There is no magic dust that guarantees that your event will be fantastic. It is the people who organize it and the individuals who participate who make any event successful.

This is the season where your council has returned from a conference, retreat or brainstorming session with great ideas to build a better universe. The true test of change is whether the change can be maintained.

Pay attention to the needs of your student audience and you will have great spirit activities and the change will be maintained.

Spirit Rally Games

Mattress Race — (relay) Lay people on the floor, with heads to feet. Pass a mattress with a person on top over the people (About 20 people on the ground side-by-side, 1 person on mattress).

Apple Juice Marathon — 4 People surround a table, with one-gallon of apple juice in the center. Place 4 straws in the juice and the first team to drink all of the juice wins!

Gum Stack — 4 people at a table with bubble gum. Establish a time limit. Participants chew the gum and then try to stack the gum. Team with the tallest stack wins.

Chariot Race — (relay) 2 people pull a bed sheet with 1 person inside. Have 2 teams go against one another and race from one side of the gym to the other and then back. Trade positions half way through the competition.

Bobbing for Barbie — Fill a kiddie pool full of Jell-O or oatmeal. Break the Barbie dolls and place appendages into the Jell-O. First one to complete gathering and putting together a full Barbie wins.

Dizzy Bowling — Participants become dizzy by spinning around a baseball bat. Then give them the bowling ball and have pins setup at the other end of the gym. Most pins knocked down wins!

Watermelon Pass — Line up participants. Pass the watermelon from the start to the end of the line, over the head of one person, and between the legs of the person behind them, and repeat. Make things interesting by greasing the watermelon prior to competition.

It's a What?

This activity can be used to demonstrate communication issues and build teamwork at the same time.

The activity will take no more than 15 minutes and you require any variety of small objects that are easy to handle and pass from one person to another.

The group stands in a circle with the facilitator handing an object to the person on the right. In handing the object over, the facilitator always misnames it. If a ball is handed over, the facilitator may say, "Steve, here's a banana." Steve will ask: "It's a what?" and the facilitator will follow with: "It's a banana!" Steve then hands the object to the person on his right saying: "Sue, here's a banana." Sue asks of Steve: "It's a what?" Steve turns to the facilitator and asks, "It's a what?" and the facilitator answers Steve again, "It's a banana!" Steve answers Sue: "It's a banana!" Sue passes the object to her right and begins the process again. After this object has made it part way around the circle, the facilitator begins the same procedure by passing another object to his left and saying, "Here's a salamander!" The activity continues until both objects make their way back to the facilitator.

The debriefing can focus on the communication confusion that occurs as the object gets further away from the original sender and what happens when the two objects cross paths. It also helps to discuss how communication is affected by using different words to describe the common objects.

What is Peer Pressure?

First, let's clear something up . . . Very rarely does a pressure to conform come from your peers. Instead, there is a personal perception that we must conform to the values of our peers. In other words, *Peer Pressure comes from within ourselves!* This perception is often misguided and not necessary. Your friends begin to like you because of who you are, not who they want you to be.

How to Challenge Peer Pressure

You are a unique individual, it is your uniqueness that people admire, not your similarities to them. As a leader, people often admire the things that you can do, and that they fear to do. People feel more comfortable around others that are just as afraid as themselves; as a group, they can come up with all sorts of reasons why something is stupid, silly, uncool, etc. As a leader it is your challenge to keep your values in check, and encourage others to be unique themselves.

A leader recognizes the uniqueness of people and things, not the similarities. Opportunity lies in being different, not being the same. A perfect example would be Burger King and Pepsi. They both were #2 in their respective markets – behind McDonald's and Coke. Burger King approached Pepsi by suggesting that they work together as #2's and fight their rivals together. We all know the end of this story. Their wonderful marriage failed. Pepsi did not get the exposure it needed. It needed its uniqueness to become successful and pulled its relationship with Burger King. It didn't want to be associated with #2 anymore. A change in attitude, allowed Pepsi to gain significant market share while starting Taco Bell and becoming #1 in the Taco business, not #2 in the established burger business. Burger King hasn't really learned this lesson yet, and still struggles.

When we change to be how we think others want us to be, we give up our uniqueness and everything that makes us who we are. We lose our own identity. The army and gangs are perfect examples of organizations that try to break your uniqueness. You all have to be the same and think the same. The reason for this is survival, but that is where it must end. Star Trek's Borg is another perfect example. "You will be assimilated, resistance is futile." Assimilation is the Borg's way of surviving, but not yours! The Star Trek Voyager stands for uniqueness in all of its crew members.

Bob Parker

Bob is a motivational speaker and the Canadian President of the Hugh O'Brian Youth Foundation (HOBY). This article is taken from his website at www.walkonwetpaint.on.ca

Group Development

Most groups will go through four recognizable stages as they form. When you understand that these stages naturally occur in all group formation, you can help move your group forward. Groups can fail to achieve their goals when they stall on one of the stages, so it is the group leader's responsibility to keep the group moving from one stage to the next.

Forming

This stage occurs when members first come together as individuals unfamiliar with other group members. Everyone is looking for his or her place in the group at this stage. This stage doesn't allow for risk, and some members will just sit and watch. The more quickly you can get the group acquainted and interacting, the more quickly they will move to the next stage. As the leader, you can assist by choosing appropriate ice-breakers or energizers. The mistake that many group leaders make is that everyone knows each other. Many will nod in agreement when the question is asked even if they don't know members of the group.

Storming

Once members become acquainted, conflicts arise over such issues as power, goals, leadership and attention. Tension can build and frustration becomes evident. Members begin to respond to the messages they think they have received. These potential problems can be minimized by setting standards and modeling the desired behaviour. The leader can post the goals, timelines and job responsibilities in a visible spot which will aid in communication and power struggles.

Norming

Conflicts are resolved, roles are established and the group begins to function smoothly at this point. The leader's task is to lead the group towards common goals and distribute tasks. Members begin to feel comfortable and valuable to the goals of the group. Organization begins to develop. The group leader is now a facilitator and should not be dominating the work of the group.

Performing

The group has developed a sense of working together toward a common goal. Togetherness, respect and trust are fostered within the group. The members feel good about the group's accomplishments and are not concerned with individual recognition. The group leader cannot attempt to make any major changes to the group's goals now as this will disturb the team spirit that has been accomplished.

The above four stages represent a natural pattern of growth for any group. As the leader, your task is to facilitate the movement from the first stage to the last as quickly as possible.

Flamingo Fundraiser

Purchase several of those tacky plastic pink flamingos that people put in their yards. Send an announcement (on pink paper) with the following information about your Pink Flamingo fundraiser:

A pink flamingo may be coming to your house! The student leadership class of First Secondary will conduct the Pink Flamingo Fundraiser. We have several lovely pink flamingos, one of which may end up in your front yard. We have divided the community into Flamingo Areas. Inside each pink flamingo is a list of the names and addresses of community members living in one of the Flamingo Areas.

On the appointed day, the class will plant each of the flamingos in the front yard of one family from the Flamingo List. If the flamingo ends up in your front yard, you then—

- Pledge a donation to the school.
- Cross your name off the Flamingo List.
- Replant the flamingo in the yard of someone whose name has not yet been crossed off your list.

The flamingo may not remain in the same yard for more than twenty-four hours. You need not pass the flamingo in the order of the listed names. Your donations may be placed in the pink flamingo in the main office of the school.

This is an opportunity to create some connections in your community with the families that work with special groups in your school. However, some front yards may be improved by the appearance of these tacky tourists, so pick your victims wisely.

Quotes

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.

Confucius

The price of greatness is responsibility.

Winston Churchill

If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.

Chinese Proverb

It is not the strongest of species that survive, nor the most intelligent; it is the one that is most adaptable to change.

Charles Darwin

When patterns are broken, new worlds emerge.

Tuli Kupferberg

You want to know what gets in the way of doing something that you don't want to do? It's anything.

Mike Smith

The wealth of a community is in its relationships, not its possessions.

Wade Davis

Life is a team sport.

Timothy Leary

Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.

Will Rogers

Imagination is more important than knowledge.

Albert Einstein

Making a Difference

Rob is a custodian at our school who quietly goes about his job without much attention or even a profile in the school. I'm sure that there are many staff who don't know his name, because Rob is one of those invisible people in our building even though you see him almost every day. I rarely get a "hello" from him, but I always get a friendly nod and smile. I have students like that in a class who seem to be able to disappear from your radar screen through their lack of contributions and almost a lack of movement on their part even though their attendance is almost perfect.

It has been a difficult year and our student council was caught in the middle of many of the battles that occurred as coaches and advisors sorted out what they had time to contribute to within our activity program. Things never got back to normal; it was just a different kind of "normal." When it came to the end of the year, the council wanted to do something for the staff to recognize their efforts in a difficult year.

I had picked up a lapel pin at a CASAA directors' meeting that had the starfish story attached. The story is about an old man who is pitching starfish back into the sea from the beach, and his efforts at really making a difference are questioned by a young man. The old man replies that he "makes a difference to that one starfish" and that is reason enough to continue. I had heard the story a few times and perhaps because of its familiarity, I felt that the power of the message was cheapened. Nonetheless, I presented this pin to our council group and asked whether they thought it was an appropriate yearend thank you for staff. The pin itself is a starfish, and it has "I make a difference" inscribed on it. The students liked the idea, and staff received one in their boxes on the second last day of school.

Personally, I was thinking that most staff, after the year that we had, would think that the gift was nice but they would be a little cynical about the sentiment expressed by the story. I arrived early the last day of school to get things started up in my office. There was Rob coming down the hallway towards me. He simply smiled and waved the starfish pin affixed to his custodial t-shirt at me. He knew that he makes a difference. That's what makes a difference.

Dave Conlon

The pins are available to order from www.imakeadifference.com

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