

ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ADVISORS AND STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS CANADA

Vol. 7 No. 1

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

Fall 2003



ISRC 2004

The International Student Representative and Advisor Conference is being hosted in the first week of August of 2004 by Harry Ainley High School of Edmonton, Alberta. This is only the second international student leadership conference, and it will bring together student and adult participants from Australia, the US, Canada and many other countries. The conference theme is "One World, One Dream — Think Globally, Act Locally."

CASAA is working with the students and the teachers from the Edmonton group to organize this excellent opportunity for students to share and learn about diversity, health issues, acting as a global citizen, and community service. Participants can also learn about the local area in the Edmonton Heritage Days Festival that precedes the conference or take their own pre-conference trips into Jasper and Banff.

For further information and registration materials contact:
Gane Olsen
Harry Ainley High School
4350 - 111 Street
Edmonton AB T6J 1E8
Fax: 780 438 1465

CASAA — Home of the Leadership Man

During my university days I had many interesting jobs, but one that taught me a lot was working the midnight shift, packing boxes at the main Home Hardware warehouse in St. Jacob's, Ontario. I learned that a university education was a good plan, and I also learned that country music is really grating at 4:30 am.

The main thing that I learned from Home Hardware was how the company was built. The founder, Walter Hachborn, realized that almost every small town and city in Canada had an independent hardware store that serviced its community, but they were not efficient or resourceful as independents. It was by working together that they grew from a starting group of 120 in 1963 to the present 1000 dealers across the country.

What does this have to do with CASAA? My goal is for CASAA to become the Home Hardware of student leadership. Every school in Canada has a student leadership program of some sort, but many are struggling from year to year through lack of resources and direction. A permanent head office for CASAA would co-ordinate the efforts of advisors and students across the country and give them a strong base of resource materials, support and information.

A CASAA membership is the way that you can join and support this growing network. We began with 130 members two years ago and now we are over 380 members strong. The beauty of this network is that as we grow bigger, the network benefits from the combined knowledge and experience of the group.

Please consider buying a CASAA membership. I promise that it will be a valuable investment for your school, and I also promise not to play country music at 4:30 in the morning.

Dave Conlon

CASAA

Workshop Themes

Leadership camps and seminars should have an overall theme. This helps to focus the efforts of the group and allows them to work in a direction that produces results.

A good theme can be expressed with a single example. This can be printed on t-shirts that will be worn by the participants when they return back to school. This helps to identify the group as participants in something special.

One theme that works for many issues and topics is a puzzle. All of the participants can be given a store-bought puzzle piece, or you can cut puzzle pieces out of a sheet of 4x8 masonite. The school mascot or crest can be painted on one side of the masonite and participants can decorate the other side of their puzzle piece. These pieces must be fit together to form the whole picture — teamwork. They must fit together in the correct way — communication, and people must direct the procedure — leadership. You also realize when they decorate the other side of the piece that even when they are working towards the same goal (mascot = school spirit) there are many different ideas and personalities involved.

Themes then allow the leadership group to keep their mission in mind throughout the year. It is valuable to have a tangible reminder in the middle of the year of what you set out to do at the beginning of the year.

Dave Conlon

Manners – they matter

As parents, we constantly ask ourselves about our values, our parenting styles and our children’s behaviour beyond our home. What are our children saying and doing?

I know, as a teacher, there are fundamental things that we want to teach and some of these are consistent with life skills that parents should teach and we must reinforce. Respect is one of those difficult issues facing today’s education system. Self-respect, respect for others and respect for elders, may be real issues facing our school system. My thoughts have been that we must start with some simple principles and work towards the bigger issues.

To me, manners might be the start and the indicator of a respectful individual. “Please”, “thank you” and “you’re welcome” are powerful and important words as is the expression, “I’m sorry”.

Introducing manners in school might be too late, but reinforcing their value and frequency of use might be extremely important.

On a personal note I remember my Grade 7 art class. I knew my mark would be awful. Anyone who has seen my writing and drawings of stick people would know art was a challenge to me. When reports went home I dreaded it. To my surprise my parents were very proud of my “C” in art. “Why?” you might ask, because the comment said, “marvelous boy”. My parents had instilled in me the values of cooperation and appreciation. The teacher was praising me for always helping out and saying *please* and *thank you*. What might have been a little lesson has stayed with me as a parent and a teacher.

As teachers, we mentally note those students who say “thank you” when handing out work sheets. We mentally note those who say “please” when they need something. Perhaps we as teachers need to publicly note good manners more.

All I know is that I remind students constantly to say “thank you” and for those who do it naturally, I always say marvelous things.

These are values that matter and will help people for life. I know I want to say thanks right now for reading this far. Thanks to those teachers that note manners publicly. Thanks to those teachers who continue to choose to do good things in our schools. Please keep it up.

John Thompson
CASAA President

What's in a Name?

Outline:

The purpose of this leadership lesson is to increase the student's self-concept through an understanding of his or her own name.

Introduction:

Ask the following questions:

1. What functions do names serve? (They help us identify and talk about specific individuals.)
2. Who decides what name a person gets? (Parents)
3. Where do parents get these names? (From their own names, from relatives, from books, from movies and television, etc.)

Background Information:

Names are passed down through history from one generation to another. At one time in history names actually had meanings. For example, first names like Philip meant "Lover of horses," Peter meant "rock or stone," Henry meant "home ruler," Edward meant "prosperous guardian," Margaret meant "a pearl," Ann meant "full of mercy, grace and prayer," and Shirley meant "from a white meadow."

Last names also had meaning. A "cooper" was a man who made barrels. A "smith" was a blacksmith, or one who worked with metal. A "miller" was one who ground grain, and a "potter" was a man who fashioned clay pottery.

Originally names were descriptive phrases to help identify people such as Philip, the cooper, or Peter, the smith. Eventually, the descriptive nouns came to stand for the people themselves—Philip Cooper and Peter Smith.

Exercise:

- Have the students look up the meaning of their names and write them on a paper to display to the class.
- Allow them to add artwork that describes their name.
- Have them ask their parents why their names were chosen or created.
- Some families changed their last names when they came to Canada. Have the students trace the history of their family name.
- Make a coat of arms that proudly displays the student's name and the student's personal traits, interests and qualities.
- Different cultures use names in different ways. Explore the ways that students in your class have come to their names in different cultures.

Discovering the names they have been given will give students a sense of pride in their name and who they are.

Good Corn

James Bender relates the story of a farmer who grew award-winning corn. Each year he entered his corn in the county fair where it won a blue ribbon. One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it.

The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbors. "How can you afford to share your best seed corn with neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?" the reporter asked.

"Why sir," said the farmer, "didn't you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn."

He is very much aware of the connectedness of life. His corn cannot improve unless his neighbor's corn also improves.

So it is in other dimensions. Those who choose to be at peace must help their neighbors to be at peace. Those who choose to live well must help others to live well, for the value of a life is measured by the lives it touches. And those who choose to be happy must help others to find happiness, for the welfare of each is bound up with the welfare of all.

The lesson for each of us is this: if we are to grow good corn, we must help our neighbors grow good corn.

Kids These Days

by Alexa Gilker, a Grade 10 Leadership student

Lazy, unmotivated, and completely self-absorbed. These are a few of the common stereotypes hung around the necks of teenagers. Many people view us as a generation that has chosen to be oblivious to what is going on in the world outside our own social lives. However, the Leadership students at Lord Beaverbrook High School are desperate to prove these stereotypes wrong!

As the only student-driven, service-based leadership program of its sort in Calgary, LBHS' program has earned a reputation as the 'breeding grounds' for potential future leaders with its unique approach to teaching responsibility and accountability. There are many key components that make this program so successful, and without each key the whole door of success cannot be opened. First of all, the program is almost completely student initiated. Yes, you heard me right: it's run by students! This may seem risky, which brings me to my first key: trust. There is an enormous amount of trust that goes into this program; trust that can take all of high school to build, and yet a minute to break. Trust that deadlines will be met, trust that students are upholding their commitments, and trust that everyone involved in a project is giving one hundred percent. It's a huge burden to put on a teenager's shoulders, and one that many adults are too fearful to place. The leadership students realize this, and yet because our school had agreed to take that risk, it makes the students so much more determined to develop new projects that are the best they can be. So, instead of taking control of everything, the teachers learn to serve more as facilitators who use Socratic questioning and allow for experiential learning. They place very limited restrictions, so no idea is off limits. In fact, the only rule guiding us is, "Say what you mean, mean what you say, and do what you say you'll do". With these words in mind, students set off to take on projects such as Health In Perspective (HIP): a weekly, two and a half month program teaching and addressing self esteem issues, active living, dealing with stress, and ways of handling peer pressure to grade six students. Other student-driven projects include Pack In Those Addictions (PITA): a peer mediation program, Shave Your Head For Cancer, 30 Hour Famine, and organizing volunteer groups to work as teacher aids in elementary school classrooms. These programs exceed the traditional leadership theme of pep rallies, Spirit Week, and Talent Shows, which we haven't forgotten either and which give us a chance to serve within the school as well as outside of it.

This brings me to our second component: a desire to serve. Every student is given the opportunity to volunteer a minimum of two hours a week outside of school and class time. This encourages students to take their own initiative in seeking out areas in their community where they can help. Students are always surprised to find so many places where their help is appreciated, and it definitely builds self-confidence. The desire to serve does not settle on one aspect of society, but reaches from elementary and junior high students, to students at our own school, to the elderly at the senior citizen home next door. There are programs that give us the opportunity to develop a relationship with whichever group we are interested in, and often we find we develop a passion for a particular group that we continue to work with on our own time over the years.

However, part of what defines our leadership program is that we never settle for what we already have. Instead, we are encouraged to bring to each class new ideas, whether they are for our school, the community, or some place our program has not yet reached. (Sometimes we wonder if such a place exists!) Many adults don't consider teens to be opinionated and passionate people, but they're wrong! The people in our leadership classes are there BECAUSE they have ideas and dreams that they want to see become a reality. In the leadership course we are given a chance to talk about our goals, and the more we talk about them the more important they become to us, and the more determined we are to see they happen. Recently we were given the chance to see a few of our

dreams begin to happen by Social Ventures Programs, from whom our program received a grant for our newly-implemented boys Health In Perspective book, and the book we are writing for teens called "I'm A Teen, Too". It is people and programs like Social Ventures that help us reach our goals.

Our program at LBHS has become quite well recognized in Calgary and as a result, we often have requests to attend conferences such as 'Youth Youth Youth', 'Youth Portal', and 'Council for Canadian Unity'. We have also established partnerships with Developmental Disabilities Resource Center, Calgary Family Services, and Calgary Health Region. These relationships give us an opportunity where, along with sharing our opinions from a teenager's view, we can improve our own leadership qualities and learn to teach future generations of leadership kids how to develop theirs. This brings me to the component of our program that ensures the leadership program will continue to be successful for many years to come. Mentorship: everyone is learning and everyone is teaching someone else. The timid grade ten students starting the program are always unsure what to expect, or what to do. If it weren't for the fact that a leadership class consists of all three grades, the grade tens would be completely lost. But, every year the grade twelve's come alongside the younger students and take a vital role in showing the 'newbies' the ropes. In turn, it teaches the older students the art of being a true leader, which is to be able to transfer to other people the trust that they are given. Many times students direct projects that they are passionate about, and they become their 'babies'. Often, it can be hard for these youth to let go and delegate various tasks to different people, especially to the younger students who are still 'babies' at this themselves. But, often, all it takes is a reminder of our motto T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieves More) to remind them that their fellow students are just there to support them. Support, being one of the most important aspects of our program, also becomes one of the best benefits. The leadership course provides an intimate support system consisting of students with similar interests and aims. We all relate to each other in that we're all working toward a common goal, and we are all facing the same kinds of stress. The friendships that are built in this program relate to this as well, and many of these friendships develop because there is an understanding between the leadership students of what, in the long run, we are all trying to accomplish.

"Do not think that a small group of people cannot change the world, because, in fact, they are the only thing that ever has".

Margaret Mead

That's us, just a small group of dedicated people trying to change the world. We aren't lazy, we're far from unmotivated, and we definitely aren't oblivious to what's going on in the world around us. In fact, we're rapidly raising up a generation of young people who are trying to change what's going on in the world around us, and believe it or not, we actually do care! So invest some trust in us, you WILL be surprised. We are more determined than ever to succeed.

For more information on this course which was approved by the Calgary Board Of Trustees on May 20, 2003, or to purchase 'T.E.A.M Leadership', a resource manual available for \$45.00 plus shipping, contact Mary Appleton, apple4@telusplanet.net or DeeAnn Vonde trvonde@telusplanet.net. Proceeds from the book support the Leadership program.

Making Committees Work

Although some people find it hard to believe, committees are the best way to delegate work and make BIG jobs manageable. They take big jobs and break them down into smaller segments and assign people to be responsible for those segments. Committees allow people to be competent at small things rather than overwhelmed by big projects.

Committees are absolutely crucial to the function of most organizations. Learning how to effectively chair or work on a committee is a skill that can be learned when working on high school projects such as yearbook, program/assembly, or prom committees, and then taken to university and/or the workplace. Wherever and whenever there is a task to be done that can't be handled by one or two individuals in a short period of time, a committee should be formed.

Clearly, a committee will not work unless all the members know what they are supposed to do and are committed to getting it done. Good committees, no matter what their specific purposes, have some traits in common:

- Clearly defined purpose and specific goals
- Enthusiastic and committed chairperson and members
- Good attendance at meetings
- Comfortable atmosphere where everyone's ideas are valued
- Ability to evaluate ideas apart from personalities
- Appropriate size-5-7 members is ideal, but sizes vary depending on purpose.

Broken Windows Syndrome

In a 1982 Atlantic Monthly article titled "Broken Windows," James Q. Wilson and George Kelling argued that disorder in a community, if left uncorrected, undercuts residents' own efforts to maintain their homes and neighborhoods and control unruly behavior. "If a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired," they wrote, "all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. . . . One unrepaired window is a signal that no one cares, so breaking more windows costs nothing. . . . Untended property becomes fair game for people out for fun or plunder."

If disorder goes unchecked, a vicious cycle begins. First, it kindles a fear of crime among residents, who respond by staying behind locked doors. Their involvement in the neighborhood declines; people begin to ignore rowdy and threatening behavior in public. They cease to exercise social regulation over little things like litter on the street, loitering strangers, or truant schoolchildren. When law-abiding eyes stop watching the streets, the social order breaks down and criminals move in.

"Stable neighborhoods can change in a few months to jungles," declare Wilson and Kelling. Disorder also can have dire economic consequences. Shoppers will shun an area they perceive as being "out of control." One study analyzing crime in 30 different areas found that the level of disorder of a neighborhood — more than such factors as income level, resident turnover, or racial makeup — was the best indicator of an area's lack of safety.

Mayor Rudi Guiliani implemented a 'Broken Windows Syndrome' solution in New York City to fight the persistent crime problem. He allocated major resources to stop the petty crime and vandalism that was occurring at the street level. This policy, along with an improving economic climate, created a safer New York that was cleaner and more livable than before.

Questions to consider for your school:

- Why does a neglected bulletin board seem to invite graffiti?
- How do we stop vending machines from being vandalized?
- What types of behaviours, although innocent in themselves, seem to foster a feeling of unease amongst regular students?
- Why do dirty hallways accumulate more litter?
- How do we keep our washrooms clean?

Students can control and contribute to the atmosphere of a building. What is your student leadership group doing to contribute to the maintenance of a safe and positive atmosphere?

Group Garbage

Purpose: Problem solving, group building.

Materials:

full sheet of paper and writing instrument for each participant
clean, empty garbage can or trash bin

Instructions:

Ask each participant to write a problem, concern or barrier they face on the top of their sheet. They need to leave 80% or more of the sheet blank. Tell them to crumple up the paper. They may stomp on it too, just for fun, but it is important that they do not tear it.

Have each of them throw their problem or barrier in the garbage, with as much style or emotion as they please.

Explain how hard it is to have perspective on your own problem, but that one person's garbage, MAY be someone else's treasure. Divide the participants into small groups of 4 or more. Now mix up the papers as if it were a lottery draw, and ask each person to draw out a single piece of paper and return with it to their group. Each group then brainstorms solutions and suggestions for each of the papers brought back for their attention. Record the solutions on the original piece of paper. (Allow 15 minutes)

A spokesperson for each group then summarizes the problems and the solutions that they found, unfolds the papers and posts them on a wall or display table.

Individuals then have the option to reclaim the original problem, with solutions, or to leave it where it lies. (Facilitator needs to remove any unclaimed problems at the end of the session.)

Discussion Points:

1. Are there new ideas or suggestions from the group as a whole for particularly difficult problems?
2. Were there common theme or solutions that could be applied to other issues being faced by the group?
3. What supports would be needed to implement some of the suggestions?

Alternatives:

If the group is small, pairs can be used instead of groups of 4 or more. Try to have at least 2 people giving input so that it is not just transferring the problem from one individual to another.

Goal Reality in Numbers

It is always important to be aware of *all* the elements of goal setting. The SMART acronym reminds us that goals must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and have a Time line.

The Realistic element is one that often needs to be measured by the numbers. If you consider all the student athletes who hope to be making the million dollar contracts in the professional sport careers a real look at the numbers is a sobering exercise.

Consider in the U.S. alone:

- There are nearly one million high school football players and 550,000 basketball players.
- Of that, about 250 will make it to the NFL and about 50 will make it to the NBA.
- Less than 3% of college seniors will play one year in professional basketball.
- The odds of a high school football player making it to the pros at all—let alone having a career—are about 6,000 to 1.
- The odds of a high school basketball player making it to the pros are about 10,000 to 1.

(from the 2003 NCAA Guide for College-Bound Student Athletes)

This means that a sports minded goal setter must keep many options open if they want to make a sports career a reality. Good goal getters must also be realistic goal setters.

Quotes

Never bear more than one trouble at a time. Some people bear three kinds — all they have had, all they have now, and all they expect to have.

Edward Everett Hale

Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools, because they have to say something.

Plato

We allow our ignorance to prevail upon us and make us think we can survive alone, alone in patches, alone in groups, alone in races, even alone in genders.

Maya Angelou

If fifty million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing.

Anatole France

Standing in the middle of the road is very dangerous; you get knocked down by the traffic from both sides.

Margaret Thatcher

Greatness is not in where we stand, but in what direction we are moving. We must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it — But sail we must, and not drift, nor lie at anchor.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

Abraham Lincoln

Live as though it were your last day on earth. Some day you will be right.

Robert Anthony

A Public Leadership Lesson

The new student council had planned and organized their first opening assembly. It was their attempt to welcome their classmates back to school and let students know what activities were planned in the upcoming year. As a group they were very nervous about how it was going to turn out. The assembly went off without a hitch; there was lots of positive energy generated, the show flowed smoothly from one act to the next and students left the gym feeling good about the new year ahead of them.

As the spirit president was standing at the back of the gym with her advisor, staff and students were filing out telling them what a great assembly it was and how much they liked the video and the skits. Then right after a vice-principal gave her a thumbs up, a couple of students went by saying loud enough to be heard that “it wasn't as good as last year's” and “the video sucked!”

The advisor turned to her and said, “You know what? You're going to get many great comments today . . . But that's the one that you are going to remember.”

You will find those words to ring true time after time. Regardless of how many good things a person hears in a day, usually it will be the one bad thing that they hear or the one bad experience that they remember.

Student leaders must learn to focus on the positives of what they manage to accomplish. They are *student* leaders and their learning is happening in public through the activities they organize. Also, organizers can't focus on making *everyone* happy. It's an almost impossible goal, and some people prefer to rain on your parade no matter how much fun it was for everyone else.

Dave Conlon

Newsletter Published by:

Dave Conlon
Publication Director for CASAA
268 West Acres Drive
Guelph, ON N1H 7P1
fax: 519.821.0035
email: info@casaa-resources.net

This newsletter has been printed with the generous support of **Premier School Agendas**. Contact Premier Agendas on the internet at www.premieragendas.ca for the office near you.