

ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ADVISORS AND STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS CANADA

Vol. 9 No. 2

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

Winter 2005 — 2006

CSLC 2006

New Brunswick is proud to host CSLC 2006! Fredericton High School will play host to student and teacher leaders from across Canada to celebrate *Ordinary Youth Doing Extraordinary Things*.

Join us for the pre-conference in Moncton (Sept 17–19). Experience some of the true treasures of New Brunswick. You will go lobster fishing, haul in your trap and learn how to “properly cook, crack and eat” a lobster! Walk on the ocean floor at the Hopewell Rocks and walk among the flowerpot rocks, carved out from glacier action and erosion caused by the world’s highest tides. You will also make your own unique piece of beach glass jewellery. All this and much much more!

Conference runs from Sept. 19–23. Speakers include Phil Boyte, Craig Keilberger, Stephen Lewis, Andy Thibodeau and Mark Black. Students and teachers will participate in skill-building workshops and discussion sessions. We will be visiting the historical village of King’s Landing, voted one of the top attractions in Canada. Students will also participate in an act of service in the community.

Registration will open on April 15. Visit our website for updates:
www.cslc2006.ca

Contact us at:
info@cslc2006.ca

Defining Leadership

Welcome to this edition of “Above and Beyond”, our national newsletter for student activity advisors. I have seen this newsletter name as a slogan on a vintage World War II recruiting poster for the Canadian Air Force. I see a clear message for us in terms of our own recruitment and commitment to Canadian students in promoting leadership above and beyond what has traditionally been seen as a role for student leaders in Canadian schools.

Defining leadership continues to be rather illusive – a Google Search of Amazon Books this past July generated over 18,000 titles devoted to leadership, and there appears no end in sight as to forming a consensus of what leadership is, so I figure one more explanation couldn’t hurt.

For many of us, leadership is seen as a regular and daily occurrence. We see people pick up garbage, come forward to volunteer, serve on committees, councils, clubs, work groups and represent those less ably capable. These people come forward not because they were told to, but they have arrived at a decision point where they commit to the right thing to do. These self-directed individuals tap an inner voice that empowers and liberates them to pursue personal and group goals that enliven and enrich school communities and school life in general.

It is the behaviour, the action . . . the act that defines leadership in its purest form. One cannot lead if one does not act (this is a behaviour). In my view, this conception of leadership allows us to see that leaders, both formal and informal, are all over and in abundance. We can move away from “the leader” mentality – individual will fix the problem, to “we are all leaders” – together we can fix the problem. This view fits well with creating a culture of responsibility where individuals are accountable for their behaviour. Certainly we can talk about leaders of leaders, but by conceptualizing leadership as an act, we will free ourselves of constraints and move to being responsible and self-directed. So, for a definition that I embrace, Leadership is an Act. What do you think?

Eric Dowsett
CASAA President

CASAA

Quarter Pounding

For four weeks straight, collect a quarter from each student in your home room. At the end of this period, you will have collected a dollar from each student. With that money, purchase a nice plant for your library or office or foyer. Try to spread the green mission to other classrooms in the school with this beautifying project. Place a small sign that indicates that this lovely plant was brought to you by the students from Home Room 1A.

Thank You Thursdays

Have a schedule that organizes a different school team or club to host a “Thank You Thursday” snack table in the main office or teacher’s lounge. The school group can bring in cookies or healthy snacks to give back and thank those staff members who make a difference in all of the great activities that happen in the school.. (Students may argue that others who don’t make a difference will eat as well, but this is a great opportunity to make friends with those teachers who don’t participate.)

Junior Prom

Sponsor a party for local elementary students. Recruit leadership students to chaperone and lead games, group dances and other activities for the younger kids. This will give your leaders a chance to model good social behaviour and manners while helping them have a good time.

Top Leadership Resources

CASAA has an extensive library of leadership resources available for teachers, and often we are asked which book or resource is the best. The present resources have been chosen to represent a wide spectrum of backgrounds and experience, so it is not just one book that is the “best” for any teacher. Some books have been chosen because they involve active or outdoor leadership experiences while other books are more classroom or theory based.

It is also observed that if a particular book is mentioned at a conference in an advisor session by a presenter as being excellent, there is an immediate rush on that resource at the CASAA sales table after the session is over. All of the resources in our catalogue have been chosen and tested by teachers, so there is not a weak one in the selection. However, there are specific books and resources that are more suitable for your experience or situation. It is good to ask other teachers in what areas the book has been useful for them.

Teachers buy with their eyes and fingers, and so CASAA tries to provide as wide a selection of resources as possible at conferences. The best way to pick a resource is to skim through it and see if there are at least three things that you can immediately see as being useful to you. If you can find three lessons or three ideas that will work for you, that resource is worth buying for your program. Just think of each idea being worth \$20 to your advisor toolbox of lessons and judge the price of the resource accordingly.

Top selling CASAA Resources as selected by teachers from the last year:

1. Leadership in the Movies (DVD)
2. Spirit Works and 99 Nuggets
3. Leadership Lessons
4. CASAA Leadership Handbook
5. 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens
6. CASAA Activity Sourcebook
7. Activities that Teach
8. Lead Now or Step Aside
9. Leadership 101
10. More Activities that Teach

Top 5 leadership sellers of all time from CASAA:

1. CASAA Activity Sourcebook
2. CASAA Leadership Handbook
3. Spirit Works and 99 Nuggets
4. 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens
5. Activities that Teach

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 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.

Because there are many different purposes for committees, there are different kinds of committees:

1. Executive committees are made up of officers, committee chairpersons, or an elected board. They plan large group meetings, initiate, and organize activities. Often this group recommends the formation of standing or special committees to carry out the plans it makes. In a school, this might be a committee made up of administrators, teachers, parents, and students that coordinates all student-related activity.
2. Standing committees are appointed or elected for an entire year and their work is not necessarily limited to one project. A committee appointed or elected for the school year to plan all student assemblies would be one example. A standing committee might use several special committees throughout the year to do the actual work on each assembly.
3. Special committees are appointed for a specific purpose and once they have accomplished their goal, they disband. A Hallowe'en Dance committee would be a special committee that would plan and do the work for one event—the dance.

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 committee size—five to seven members is ideal, but sizes vary depending on purpose.

Jan Umphrey NASSP's Principal Leadership magazine

Coat Drive

Have the people in your school check their closets for coats that haven't made it out to the light of a winter's day in the past few years. There are probably people in your area that could use these coats that are just clogging the closet. Run a "Coats for Kids" drive and see how many coats you can collect and put in a pile. At the end of the coat campaign, donate the coats to a local shelter or social agency.

Coin Drive Fundraisers

Rolled Coin for Free Time

Give the class free time for the amount of minutes it takes that teacher to roll the coin that was collected. Provide the teacher with flat paper rollers.

Weight in Pennies

Set goals about how many pounds of pennies you will collect. Advertise according to collecting the weight of a person, the mascot, or a large object in the school.

Penny Challenge

Fill large pickle jars with water and place a baby food jar in the bottom. Students drop coins into the water. Coins that land in the baby food jar get a prize.

Penny Mile

Set goals about how many miles of coin to collect. Have students figure out how pennies side-by-side it would take to reach 1 mile. Advertise according to distance, racing to a destination, or racing on a track.

EWB

Engineers Without Borders Canada (EWB) is a leading charitable organization dedicated to meeting the challenge of halving world poverty by 2015. In the past four years they have sent over 70 young Canadian engineers to work on 35 projects in 20 countries. Closer to home, their 6000 members across the country strive to make Canada the most development-friendly and sustainable country in the world.

Engineers Without Borders promotes human development through access to technology. Members of EWB are passionate about helping people gain access to the technology they need to improve their lives. EWB does so by contributing knowledge, financial resources, volunteer time, skills, and collective voice to help communities around the world. Their goal is to make the great minds of tomorrow aware of the issues today by encouraging them to be passionate about the need for change, and equipping them with the tools to take the right actions.

We sometimes forget that change is often generational and that it is exactly this type of grassroots approach that has proven so successful in the past. For example, blue box recycling programs are a success today because they were started decades ago in the schools of today's community leaders. EWB can plant a seed today that will continue to grow with the generations that follow.

For more information on EWB visit: <http://www.ewb.ca/content/en/education/highschooloutreach.shtml>

Hands Activity for Cooperation

Concept:

Many times we try to accomplish tasks by ourselves instead of working together. Most jobs would be completed faster, easier and with less effort if we cooperated with each other. There are times when we need to compete and times when we need to work together. Knowing when to compete and when to cooperate, will help each of us succeed in today's society. Some people believe that asking for help is a sign of weakness. The truth is that asking for help when you need it and working together on a project is an example of working smarter, rather than harder.

Time Estimate: 15 minutes plus discussion time

Materials Needed:

jar of peanut butter,
jar of jelly,
a table knife for each person and
two pieces of bread per person

Activity:

Begin by giving each person one piece of bread and a table knife. Explain that their job is to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. There are two rules. First, they are to use only one slice of bread, so the sandwich is really only half a sandwich. The bread may not just be folded over to make the sandwich. The piece of bread must be cut in half to form the two sides of the sandwich. Second, they can use only one hand. The other hand must be kept behind their back at all times. Now have them make the sandwich.

When the sandwiches are completed you are ready for round two. Have everyone get a partner. The partners will now cooperate to make a sandwich. If you have uneven numbers one person can repeat the activity with a second partner. Give each pair a new piece of bread. The challenge is the same: create a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Once again, the piece of bread must be cut in half to form the sandwich and each person may only use one hand. Give the teams one minute to plan their strategy before starting. During the strategy planning session, they may not touch the sandwich making materials.

At the completion of the activity, sit back and enjoy a snack of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

This is just a fun activity with a food reward if you don't discuss what happened. It is in the discussion that the real learning occurs.

The pattern with which the processing questions are asked is extremely important for the learning to become fixed in the participants' experience of the activity. If you pose the "now what" questions first, you will have skipped the understanding of the feelings and actions that happened during the activity.

Discussion Ideas:

1. "What" Questions

Which took longer: when you were working singly or with a partner?

What problems did you have when working by yourself? With a partner?

What strategies did you use in the second round to overcome the problem of working by yourself?

How did you feel during the first round? The second round?

Which sandwich looked better: the first one or the second one?

2. "So What" Questions

How did working together affect your efforts?

What are some tasks where two or more people make the job go easier?

Are there certain jobs that have to be done by someone working alone?

Give examples.

How does competition affect cooperation?

Can we be both cooperative and competitive? Explain.

What happens when people aren't willing to cooperate with each other?

Why would cooperation be important to students at school?

Why would cooperation be important to people at work?

Why would cooperation be important to a family?

3. "Now What" Questions

How can cooperation help us in our daily lives?

In what ways can we show cooperation in our family?

This activity appears in the book, "Activities that teach Family Values" written by Tom Jackson and is available from CASAA.

For more information on how to run effective discussion sessions, you can purchase from CASAA, Tom Jackson's new book, "Conducting Group Discussions with Kids".

Tire-less Raider Award

We are the Raiders and our council bought a bike tire and painted it gold. We wrote "Tire-less Raider" on it and each month we have students and staff nominate teachers, students or support staff. This award is for that person in the building who keeps working tirelessly. Student council receives the nominations and posts the winners in a display case.

Breakfast of Champions

Send nomination forms to all of the teachers and staff in your school and have them nominate a student whom they feel does something great. This does not have to be the best academic student in the class. You can nominate students for things like coming to class more consistently. At the small morning breakfast, each staff member talks a little bit about the student they have nominated. Great feelings are generated from this repeat event.

New Student Breakfast

Most schools attempt to recognize new students at the beginning of the school year, but with semesters there is a second entry point to school. At the beginning of second semester, invite new students and parents to a welcome breakfast. They can meet administration, student council students, and other new families. This helps to ease their transition into a new school during the middle of the year.

Don't Drop my Name _____

Point out to your leadership students that even the lousiest of spellers is able to spell his or her name correctly. Names are VERY important to the people they are attached to. Therefore: always spell names correctly when you are posting lists or items recognizing people in your school. The office in any school has an alpha list that should be kept in the activity area for helping with spelling.

When reading announcements, ensure that you are pronouncing names correctly. Most students don't listen to school PA announcements, but the student whose name was butchered on the PA will certainly know the mistake or hear about it from someone else. Ask secretaries or administration people such as your vice-principals if you are unsure how to pronounce a name.

iSpot

A good way to make a campaign or contest stronger is to use an existing ad campaign and give it your own twist. Students are aware of the popular iPod ads with a black silhouette of person wearing an iPod on a coloured background. Use the same concept without the iPod for a unique contest. Make black silhouettes of staff and individuals in your school. Place each of these silhouettes against a different coloured background and you have a unique wall mural and a great contest. iSpot involves identifying all of the poster silhouettes by name. The winner could receive a gift certificate for an Apple product.

Challenge for Leaders _____

I saw a big guy cry the other day.

He approached me after I had finished speaking at his school in Nova Scotia. He was a tough looking grade 11 student, about six feet tall and must have weighed 190 pounds. Given his appearance, anyone would've been surprised by what happened when I asked him his name.

He had barely said: "Martin"* before – Boom! – the flood gates opened and he started crying like a baby to the point that he couldn't speak. When I asked what was going on, he couldn't answer. He tried a few times, but ended up doing that sobby-squeak-talk thing, and finally he gave up. I lead him to the side of the gym, where after two or three minutes, he regained his composure and explained his problem in just a few words, saying, "I sat outside by myself on a rock to eat my lunch today. I don't have any friends. And I didn't know what else to do."

Although I challenged Martin to reach out to others around him that might be in a similar situation, the real hero of the story was Matt, his student council president, with whom I shared Martin's story.

Matt did something simple but effective to help out. He responded to a challenge and found out a few things about Martin from students who knew him. He learned Martin liked drama. And so he found a few of the students in charge of the Improv club and challenged them to personally invite Martin to their club. It took maybe a couple of lunch periods altogether. Now rather than sitting by himself on a rock at lunch, Martin sits amongst those in the Improv club who are becoming his friends.

Martin's story is a simple, but common one. Sadly, as concerned individuals, we often fail to use effective strategies to help those in Martin's situation. Instead, too often we resort to brief and cheap catch-phrase consolations, like "hey man, don't sweat it, things will get better." or "It doesn't matter what other people think" etc. People in Martin's situation don't need pep talks, they need friends. The good news is that there are simple things that school leaders can do about it.

What will you do?

Challenge for School Leaders:

1. Get two lists: one of the clubs and those in charge of them in your school. The other from teachers and guidance teachers of some students who could use people reaching out to them.
2. Have a meeting to challenge club leaders to welcome new-comers.
3. Personally challenge specific leaders of specific clubs to make specific invitations to individuals.

Mike Bonnici is a motivational speaker whose presentations aim at the heart, mind and funny bone. For more info, visit: www.dynamike.ca

*pseudonym

Be a Chore-leader, Not Just a Cheerleader

Someone once told me the most important leadership quality is enthusiasm. I see this point reinforced at many of the leadership conferences I speak at for teenagers. During the opening session, students are led in songs and cheers. The MC will do a “roll call,” asking each school to shout out if they’re in the house. They play the “Let’s Get Ready to Rumble” song and the whole crowd explodes to its feet. Before too long, the meeting room is shaking with cheers. It’s an awesome experience — for those in the room.

Back at school no one cares. Whatever problems the leaders left behind are still there. And when they return, all their cheers and enthusiasm won’t change a thing.

Enthusiasm is important to open minds and create energy. But ultimately, someone’s gotta do something. If you really want to make a difference for others, you’ve got to be more than a cheerleader; you have to be a “chore-leader,” someone who does the chores - the work necessary to make things better.

This in no way is a criticism of cheerleaders. Their spirit makes the game more fun, and creates an environment for players to succeed. But their enthusiasm would be pointless without something to cheer for.

We need people willing to take the knocks and do something of substance. I recently read an article about a group of volunteer medical students from UCLA who donate what little free time they have to running a free mobile health clinic for the homeless in Los Angeles. These are extremely busy people who still make time to do something good (the “chores”) for the community. These spirited med students don’t just wear UCLA sweatshirts. They actively represent the school in a way that makes the world better. I’ve always been proud to be a graduate of UCLA, but when I read that article, I felt honored to share the same alma mater. Because of their leadership, I now wear my college sweatshirt with a little more pride.

Nothing creates enthusiasm like someone actually doing something big and important. Those are the ones we call heroes. And when you think of a “hero’s welcome,” you probably imagine an incredibly loud, festive gathering. Schools with the most spirit usually have the most successful sports teams. While the spirit helps the team, usually the spirit is a result of the team already doing well. The more effort put out, the more support others give.

So do your chores, and you’ll earn the cheers.

Scott Greenberg gives live presentations and workshops all over North America. Visit www.scottgreenberg.com for more information

Free Car Wash

A car wash is a great way to make money, but why would you run a free car wash?

Have your group go around and ask people to give pledges for each car washed during your “free car wash.” While getting pledges, give out free car wash coupons to your pledgers. You may also want to give coupons to those people who decide to not pledge as they may change their minds later. If they come to your car wash, they will more than likely donate to your group anyway.

In wash-a-thon car washes you will ask people for five to ten cents per car washed. The car wash teams will normally work for just over an hour, but let your pledgers know how long they will be working and establish a maximum pledge. It is important to make your participants understand that a couple of full pledge sheets mean that the car wash is a fundraiser for your group and not just a chance to get wet in the sun!

Find a visible high-traffic location to hold your free car wash. You should have advertised your event well in advance because volume is what makes your money in this fundraiser. On the day, make sure that you have good signage, enough sponges and hoses, and lots of help scheduled for the day. You should also have refreshments to sell, or give out free coupons from local businesses. It is important to have a donation box for people who are getting a car wash and would like to make a donation to your fundraising.

Quotes

You can out-distance that which is running after you, but not what is running inside you.

Rwandan Proverb

In a pond koi can reach lengths of eighteen inches. Amazingly, when placed in a lake, koi can grow to three feet long. The metaphor is obvious. You are limited by how you see the world.

Vince Poscente

Leaders are visionaries with a poorly developed sense of fear and no concept of the odds against them.

Dr. Robert Jarvik

I don't want to get to the end of my life and find that I have just lived the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well.

Diane Ackema

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success.

Albert Schweitzer

Computers are useless. They can only give you answers.

Pablo Picasso

Every man is a damned fool for at least five minutes every day.

Wisdom consists in not exceeding the limit.

Elbert Hubbard

Great men talk about ideas;
Mediocre men talk about things;
Small men talk about people.

Admiral Hyman Rickover

Good Advisors and "The Art of Possibility"

Benjamin Zander begins the book, "The Art of Possibility" with the story of two marketing scouts sent by a shoe factory to a region of Africa to study the prospects for expanding business.

One sends back a telegram saying,

SITUATION HOPELESS NO ONE WEARS SHOES

The other writes back triumphantly,

GLORIOUS BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY THEY HAVE NO SHOES

Zander is the conductor of the Boston Philharmonic, and in the first chapter of "The Art of Possibility" he explores how we create a world that then becomes our reality or map for existence. I was struck by this while flying back to Chicago from Singapore. The in-plane video was showing a map of our travel and at one point it gave a perspective of the plane entering over Alaska looking South into the Yukon and beyond. It was an unsettling experience to view the entry into North America in this way. We have created our map of the world in our minds with Alaska and the Yukon on the top and even though we know that it can be viewed from any direction, to look at it in this new way is a mental adjustment that you must consciously make.

Zander goes on in this book to discuss how good leaders take the time to look at their position and discover whether there are possibilities for looking at what is happening in a different way. His experience as a conductor meant that he was in a role that was dictatorial by nature. This was the map that he was given by tradition, yet in a symphony, the conductor is the only one who doesn't make a sound. Zander says that "his true power derives from his ability to make other people powerful." The performance of the music depends on not only the skills of the person playing first violin, but also the conductor must convince the person sitting in the 11th chair of the cello section that they have something to contribute. If the whole symphony contributes, it goes beyond just playing music to the realm of creating art.

An activity advisor is much like a conductor. When you are with a group of student leaders who have good skills and a good relationship, the advisor is in charge of a jazz ensemble. The skilled or experienced leaders stay within the leadership score but they improvise and create new possibilities for themselves and the whole group. When you are advising a group that resembles the Junior Band, you need to be more dictatorial by nature, yet still convince the least skilled participant that they have something to contribute. When you think of your role as an advisor in this different light, you open up your activity program to new possibilities.

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@casaaleadership.ca

This newsletter has been printed with the generous support of **Friesen Yearbooks**

Visit them at:

www.friesens.com/Yearbook

CASAA
www.casaaleadership.ca