

healthy schools ALBERTA

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Supporting Healthy School Communities!

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**FEATURE STORY:
Projects-based Learning in
First Nations School Communities**

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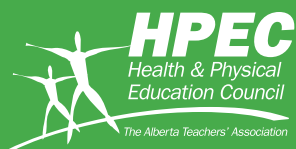
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ADVERTISING

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IN THIS ISSUE

Thank you for picking up our new magazine, *Healthy Schools Alberta!*

We're excited to have a great new way to share information about positive social environments, physical activity and healthy eating with Alberta school communities. We hope you love the magazine's fun, welcoming new look.

~ The Ever Active Schools Team



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WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK!

Share your thoughts on the magazine with this quick survey.
Complete the survey by March 1, leave your name and
email address, and **be entered to win \$200 of resources**
to support your healthy school community.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/C5CCR2M



MEET OUR STAFF

The Ever Active Schools Team

We asked: What is one thing Alberta teachers can do to support a positive healthy environment at their schools?

Adopt a growth mindset. Focus on what you CAN do, within the walls of your classroom, the walls of your school and beyond.

KERRI MURRAY, Healthy School Communities
Provincial Projects Coordinator



Embed health and wellness into all subject areas. Students will recognize that wellness is an all-encompassing aspect of life, both inside and outside the classroom.

MICHELLE MANN, Administrative
and Project Support



Ensure snacks provided at school tournaments, events and celebrations are healthy.

KATELYNN THEAL, After School
Hours Coordinator



Communicate with other school communities to share and learn successful practices.

RHONDA SCHILBERG,
Administrative Assistant



Create a positive, caring environment where students feel safe and cared for.

HAYLEY DEGAUST, Assistant
Provincial Projects Coordinator



Work and connect with your staff, your broader school community and your family in a student-centred approach.

BRIAN TORRANCE, Director

Lead by example! Make your own wellness a priority.

MEGAN MCKINLAY,
Physical Literacy Coordinator



Be a lifelong learner! Increase your capacity and knowledge by seeking out quality professional learning opportunities.

TRACY LOCKWOOD,
Education Coordinator



Walk the talk! We never truly realize how much our actions influence our students. And never forget the importance of building relationships with students, staff, parents and the community!

KIM HLEWKA, Comprehensive
School Health Coordinator



Laugh with your students.

TANJA STALTER,
Financial Administrator



Start small! Sometimes it's the smallest things that create the biggest impact.

MEGAN HUNKA,
Communications Coordinator





WHAT'S HAPPENING

Ever Active Schools Projects Updates

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 29–31, 2015

Shaping the Future Conference

MARCH 5–6, 2015

Physical Literacy Summit

APRIL 23–25, 2015

Alberta Sport Leadership Conference

APRIL 30–MAY 2, 2015

HPEC 2015 National Conference

***Above photo:** Students from McKernan School at the Alberta Medical Association Youth Run Club launch on October 1, 2014.*

OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE, SHAPING THE FUTURE, will take place January 29–31, 2015, in beautiful Kananaskis, Alberta. The conference brings together leaders from the health, education and active living sectors who have a vested interest in supporting healthy school communities. This year's theme is 'inspiring, connecting and celebrating healthy school communities.' Registration is still open! www.everactive.org/shaping-the-future.

THE ALBERTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (AMA) YOUTH CLUB RUN is a free, school-based program designed to get students running. Last year, the program engaged 11,000 students and 233 schools. The AMA Youth Run Club is a vehicle for increasing physical activity and school connections. In its initial year, the AMA Youth Run Club showed an additional 40–50% more Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity in youth than compared to provincial averages. Find out more or register your school: www.everactive.org/alberta-medical-association-youth-run-club.

With one more **HEALTHY ACTIVE SCHOOL SYMPOSIA (HASS)** event to take place in the new year, HASS will reach over 275 Alberta schools, 57 school jurisdictions and 2,200 participants. Partnering with Alberta Health Services, the Alberta Healthy School Communities Wellness Fund, Be Fit for Life, APPLE Schools and local committees, the event empowers school communities across the province. The HASS events set the foundation for many schools to continue their comprehensive school health journeys. **Register for the Camrose HASS**, scheduled for February 27, 2015, at www.everactive.org/register-for-hass.

Bringing **Active Alberta** to life, the **PLAY (PHYSICAL LITERACY AND YOU) PARKLAND PROJECT** is a community active living prototype that will result in Albertans that are more active, more often. Working within Parkland School Division, a key component of PLAY Parkland is providing teachers with quality physical literacy and physical education mentoring and teaching resources. As a part of PLAY Parkland, lead teachers and their classes are participating in a Physical Literacy Educator in Residence Project that includes in-school physical literacy-based lessons taught by a mentor teacher, out-of-school alternative environments activities at the TransAlta Tri-Leisure Centre, and will experience physical literacy in an outdoor setting at YWCA YoWoChAs Outdoor Education Centre. Ultimately, this project will embed physical literacy into teaching and learning, impact the entire school culture and will impact the broader community in a positive way. Lessons from this work will be shared at the Physical Literacy Summit, held in Calgary in early March. www.everactive.org/play-parkland #playparkland. ■



IN THE COMMUNITY

Community Partnerships: The Brentwood Run Club Story

SUBMITTED BY DR. BEN SADER

Brentwood Elementary School in Strathmore, Alberta established its Alberta Medical Association (AMA) Youth Run Club in 2011. Dr. Ben Sader, a family physician in Strathmore, and Lori Clarke, a teacher at the school, founded the run club. “Our club has grown in size and we continue to pursue new ideas,” says Dr. Sader.

The program is offered to Grade 3-6 students at lunchtime twice a week in the fall and spring. Over seventy students currently participate in the initiative.

New this year is a Grade 6 Junior Coach program, where Grade 6 students help with warm-up and cool down. “Run club is awesome because it’s great source of exercise, especially since it’s in the electronic age of more sedentary behaviour activities. The coaches teach you how to stretch after a run, plus being physically active helps you sleep well at night,” says Tristan, a Grade 6 student. “Another reason I think it’s great is it keeps you fit and healthy for other sports you like,” she adds.

Brentwood Elementary School reached out to the community for its annual Fun Run in June, where over 200 students participated in a 2 and 4 km run. Runners received medals, healthy post race snacks and support from the whole school community.

“Ever Active Schools and the Alberta Medical Association have been very supportive. They provided coaching, apparel and online resources for our program,” says Dr. Sader.

Congratulations to the Brentwood Run Club on how far it has come in three short years! ■



THE AMA YOUTH RUN CLUB

is a unique partnership between Ever Active Schools and the Alberta Medical Association. This initiative is a free, school-based program that provides resources and support to schools. There are currently 197 schools participating across Alberta. Our partnership encourages doctors to become active in their school communities. Find out more on our website: www.everactive.org/alberta-medical-association-youth-run-club.

Above photo: A student participating in the Brentwood Fun Run.

The Alberta Snowmobile Association (ASA) is pleased to offer free of charge to Alberta schools, our Safe Riders safety program.



Our instructors will bring messages and materials on safe snowmobile and off-highway vehicle riding practices, safety, legal requirements and environmental respect. Our presentations can be tailored to individual classes or full assembly presentations. Contact the ASA today to book for this year or next. Presentations are booked on a first come, first served basis! www.altasnowmobile.ab.ca



The Importance of a Positive Social Environment

SUBMITTED BY ELIZABETH COLDBECK, ALBERTA HEALTHY SCHOOL COMMUNITY WELLNESS FUND

The social environment of a school reflects the quality and character of school life (National School Climate Center, 2014). It consists of norms, goals, values, teaching and learning practices, health and wellness and organizational structures.

The social environment is shaped by the relationships between and among students, staff, parents and the community. A positive school environment exists when all stakeholders feel happy, connected, valued, safe and accepted.

Teachers contribute to the classroom social environment by encouraging partnerships among and between students. Similarly, school administrators encourage inclusive practices to establish a positive social environment throughout the whole school. Many parents and community members collaborate to extend the boundaries of a positive social environment beyond the school limits.

A positive social environment contributes to students' success in many ways. Positive teacher-student relationships increase student motivation and engagement, improve the quality of instruction and

absenteeism, suspensions, substance abuse and bullying. Social interactions among students can also be associated positively with students' personality development. A positive social environment also supports

Teachers contribute to the classroom social environment by encouraging partnerships among and between students.

positively impact students' academic achievement. Positive relationships between teachers and students and among students increase the psychological well-being of students and decrease

healthy relationships, helping students make healthy choices and build healthy relationships while addressing responsible sexual behaviour. Establishing a positive social environment therefore can benefit students, teachers, administrators, parents and the community as a whole and is key to achieving a better future for our school communities. ■

Above photos: An Ever Active Schools photo booth at the Werklund School of Education student orientation fair on September 9, 2014.



GET ACTIVE

Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)

SUBMITTED BY MEGAN MCKINLAY AND TRACY LOCKWOOD, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

A LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACH TO TEACHING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) approach was developed by researchers at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom to tap into children's inherent desire to play. Bunker and Thorpe (1982) developed TGfU around the concept of **teaching kids games by playing games**.

Butler et al. (2008) identified six basic TGfU concepts:

1. Teach games through games.
2. Break games into their simplest format - then increase complexity.
3. Participants are intelligent performers in games.
4. Every learner is important and is involved.
5. Participants need to know the subject matter.
6. Teachers and coaches need to match participants' skill and challenge.

Recent approaches to TGfU have advocated for a thematic approach to teaching games. Rather than teaching sport-specific units (e.g., volleyball, basketball, soccer), children and youth gain skills and knowledge to apply to different sports by playing a variety of games associated with four game categories, each one with similar intentions, concepts and skills:

1. Target Games
2. Striking/Fielding Games
3. Net/Wall Games
4. Territorial/Invasion Games

Games and activities are represented through these game categories, which are all similar in structure. TGfU fosters the development of physical literacy through exposure to primary rules, fundamental skills and tactical challenges. For instance, if a participant understands the basic concepts of defence (e.g., staying between the offensive player and the goal, and using hands, feet, stick or body to prevent a pass or scoring attempt) this will help them to play a variety of territory games whose tactics can be applied to related sports (e.g., basketball, soccer, handball, lacrosse, wheelchair basketball, goalball, etc.).

Research on TGfU shows positive learning outcomes for students and better student engagement versus a typical games lesson. Once students have a better appreciation for the game, have developed some tactical awareness and are better equipped to make better decisions, only then does the focus switch to working on the skills necessary for the game!

For more information on TGfU and to download free activities visit: www.playsport.net. >

TGfU fosters the development of physical literacy through exposure to primary rules, fundamental skills and tactical challenges.



Photo: Participants learning an activity at Ever Active Schools' Physical Literacy Summer Institute in August 2014.



Note: Adapted from <http://ow.ly/FrEXC>.

TGfU ACTIVITY

Try implementing this Teaching Games for Understanding activity in your next fielding games unit.

TGfU Category: Striking/Fielding Games

Activity: In a group of four students, one student is at bat, and the other three are outfield. The batter has three to five attempts at hitting the ball and then everyone rotates positions. Spend five to 10 minutes on each progression, rotating positions, so each student gets maximum time on-task. Give students the choice of implements they would like to use for striking and let them determine the size of their playing area. A critical part of the TGfU approach is asking guiding questions to spur critical thinking and tactical awareness through the lesson. See the list of possible questions to get students thinking in this activity.

Guiding Questions:

Skill execution	"How do you most effectively get the ball back to the in-field?"
	"What's the best throw to use?"
	"How do you strike the ball most effectively?"
Tactical awareness	"Where did you hit the ball to score the most runs?"
	"In the outfield, where did you position yourself when the batter was hitting?"
	"What did you do as soon as the ball was hit?"
Time	"When did you use an underhand versus an overhand pass?"
	"When did you choose the direction of your movement in the outfield?"
Runner	"When did you start to run?"
Space	"Where is the best place to stand when at bat?"
	"Where is the best place to hit the ball to?"
	"Where is the best place to throw the ball to?"
Risk	"How do you choose which teammate to throw it to?"
Motivation	"Why are you standing there?"
	"Why did you hit the ball there?"
	"Why were you so successful?"
Spatial awareness	"Where do you want to throw the ball to?"
	"Where do you want to hit it to?"
	"Where are you looking when you are running?"
Completion	"What do you need to do to get as many runs as you can in this game?"

Progressions:

- The batter hits a ball off a tee. Outfielders return the ball.
- The batter tosses a ball in the air and hits it. Outfielders return the ball.
- A pitcher tosses the ball to the batter. Outfielders return the ball. ➤



Note: Adapted from thephysicaleducator.com

TGfU REFERENCES AND RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Scholarly Article: "The Role of Nonlinear Pedagogy in Physical Education," by Jia Yi Chow et al.

Books: Teaching Games for Understanding by Linda L. Griffin and Joy I. Butler

Resources:

- High School Recipe Card Lesson Plans by Ever Active Schools
- My Skills Poster developed by Be Fit for Life and Ever Active Schools

App: TGfU Games PE App

Web Links/PDFs:

- "What is Teaching Games for Understanding? A Canadian Perspective" by James Mandigo. <http://ow.ly/EVTkq>

- "A Practitioner's Guide to Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)" by James Mandigo and Nick Holt. <http://ow.ly/EVTCq>
- "Helping Ontario Kids Get in the Game - How Teaching Games for Understanding is Rearranging the Rules in H&PE Classes." OPHEA. <http://ow.ly/EVTH6>
- PHE Canada: <http://ow.ly/EVTTV>

Websites:

- PlaySport: www.playsport.net/
- The Physical Educator: <http://ow.ly/EVUo3>

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EAT
SMART

Sugar Consumption in Children and Youth

SUBMITTED BY THE SCHOOL NUTRITION INTEGRATED WORKING GROUP, ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

Healthy eating is important for children and youth's growth and development, and helps prevent chronic disease. It can also help improve school performance and behaviours like attentiveness and social skills.

Statistics show that Canadians consume an average of 26 tsp (110 g) of naturally occurring and added sugar a day. Beverages are among the top sources of sugar.

Over consumption of food and drinks with added sugar may:

- result in foods with little nutritional value replacing healthier food options
- affect overall nutrient intake and, in turn, overall energy, wellness and performance
- increase the risk of developing health conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer
- result in excess calories contributing to overweight and obesity.

Did you know that one can (355 mL) of sugar sweetened pop contains about 10 tsp (40 g) of added sugar.

Tips about added sugar in food and drinks to share with parents and students:

- Know the many words for sugar found on the ingredient list. These words include glucose, fructose, honey, sucrose, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, dextrose and concentrated fruit juice or fruit puree.

- Read the label and look for sugar in processed food. Ingredients are listed by weight. So, if one of the words for sugar is listed in the first three ingredients, the food most likely contains a lot of it.

Tips to help reduce added sugar intake to share with parents and students:

- Choose cereals that are lower in sugar. For a 30 g serving of cereal, aim for less than 8 g of sugar. If the cereal contains dried fruit, the total amount of total sugar may be up to 12 g per 30 g serving. You can find this information on the Nutrition Facts table.
- Drink water or milk instead of sugar sweetened drinks like pop, slushes and iced tea.
- Eat whole fruit instead of drinking juice. Fruit and fruit juice both contain natural sugars, vitamins and minerals, but whole fruit contains fibre. A 591 mL bottle of orange juice has the juice and sugar from four or five oranges. Choose fruit or vegetables instead and limit juice intake to one serving ½ cup (125 mL) of 100% pure juice per day.

For more information on healthy drinks, please visit: www.albertahealthservices.ca/SchoolsTeachers/if-sch-nfs-healthy-drinks-kids.pdf.

For more information on Healthy Eating, visit: www.albertahealthservices.ca/2914.asp.

Given the choice, children and youth often choose pop, fruit flavoured drinks and slush beverages instead of healthy drinks. Convenience stores, vending machines, food kiosks and cafeterias provide easy access to unhealthy options. By limiting that access where children and youth gather and providing them with information to help make healthier choices, we can better promote more positive health behaviours.

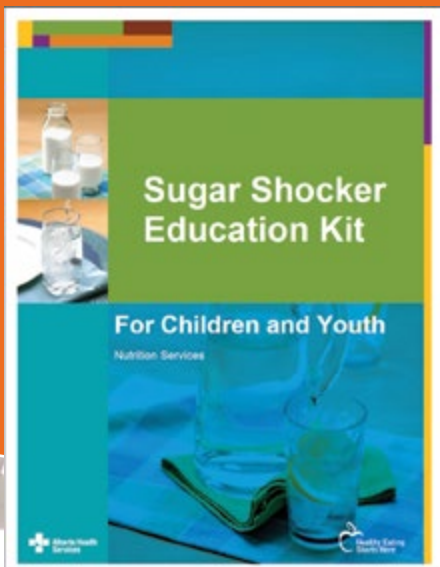
Canadians consume an average of 26 tsp (110 g) of naturally occurring and added sugar a day.

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CHECK OUT THE SUGAR SHOCKER EDUCATION KIT! FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Visit <http://ow.ly/EVSzD> for more information and activities that you can use in your classroom to promote healthy beverages.

THE KIT:

- Includes ready to use lesson plans and activities that are applicable and adaptable for children and youth from K-12. Activities support both literacy and numeracy skills.
- Raises awareness about the amount of added sugar in common drinks and information on the labeling and legislation on energy drinks.
- Teaches children and youth how to make better drink choices.
- Supports the Alberta Education Health and Life Skills curriculum.

Photo: Participants getting a snack at the Edmonton and Area Healthy Active School Symposium.





Being Courageous When Creating Healthy School Communities

SUBMITTED BY DR. JON MCGAVOCK

Jonah is a 14 year old Anishinaabe boy originally from a northern First Nation who is attending Grade 8 in the north end of a large city. Poverty, social and familial instability, food insecurity and stress are constants in his life. His middle school provides shelter but not security. Jonah is visibly heavier and darker than his peers at school.

Despite his young age, he is often the primary care giver for his younger siblings. Chronic disease has become the only reason for him and his young siblings to leave the house. He visits aunts, uncles and grandparents in the hospital for things he knows but doesn't understand, including dialysis, stroke and diabetic ketoacidosis.

To give Jonah the same opportunity as his classmates to survive, thrive and fulfill his potential as a teen, school communities need to consider his needs when designing programs to support healthy living. Considering the overwhelming adversity that Jonah faces on a daily basis, the theoretical basis for components of healthy school communities should not be grounded in concepts that are foreign to Jonah, like physical activity, nutrient rich foods and mental wellness. Rather they should be grounded in his most basic fundamental needs as a teen facing adversity: belonging, independence, mastery and generosity.

These four universal features are the basis for a strengths-based model of resilience developed by Dr. Martin Brokenleg and his colleagues, called the Circle of Courage (Figure 1). The primary tenet of this model is that children need to achieve these four universal needs before they can begin to tackle larger more complex challenges that allow a child to thrive. This concept of creating an environment that supports youth to be resilient in the face of adversity has largely been neglected in the design and delivery of school-based healthy living

These four universal features are the basis for a strengths-based model of resilience

programs in youth. Our research group at the Manitoba Institute of Child Health has adopted this model to develop an after school peer mentoring program that promotes healthy living for Indigenous youth while simultaneously creating an environment that fosters these universal needs. The program led to enhanced self-efficacy, improved knowledge of healthy living and reduced risk factors for obesity and type 2 diabetes in children exposed to the intervention.

Using resilience theory to foster healthy living requires teachers and administrators to think outside the box and shift their focus away from the conventional wisdom of healthy living. First and foremost, we need to create environments that support belonging and inclusiveness that are safe for the most marginalized students in the school. Second, we need to engage youth in designing the program components to support their independence. For example, we should to include the voices of youth

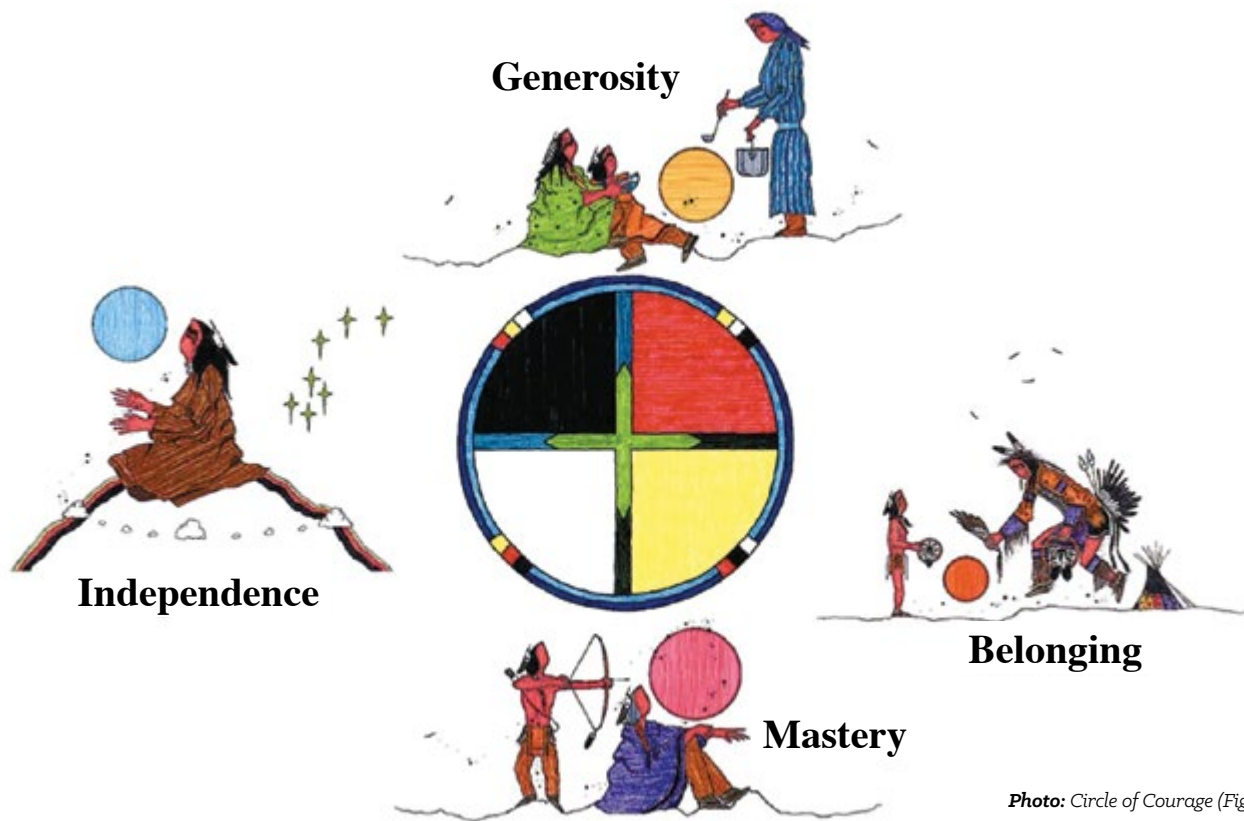


Photo: Circle of Courage (Figure 1)

in the development of curriculum and program delivery. Our group and others have observed significant success for health promoting activities when older youth are engaged as peer mentors in the design and the delivery of healthy living programs. Third, we need to showcase the strengths of youth and foster activities and events that highlight their skills and talents. Finally, we need to provide opportunities for youth to give back to the community and support others to foster their need to be generous. If these activities can be combined with healthy living lessons and activities, they will go much further in creating the environments that we all hope to create to support the untapped potential of students like Jonah, so that he can thrive despite the profound adversity that surrounds him.

“We need to create environments that support belonging and inclusiveness that are safe for the most marginalized students in the school.”

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TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

Building Positive Social Environments Through Literature

These three books support a comprehensive school health approach and would make a good addition to your lesson planning. Just find your grade level and see which book we recommend!



THE OK BOOK by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld

Grade Level: Divisions 1-3

This book illustrates the importance of allowing children to discover their own individual strengths and personalities through life experiences.

21st Century Competencies: innovate, create, imagine, play and to gain knowledge and understanding through experiences.

Subject areas: Language Arts, Health, Physical Education (physical literacy), Art.



VIRGINIA WOLF by Kyo Maclear

Grade Level: Divisions 2-3

An uplifting story about creating safe physical environments.

21st Century Competencies: to gain knowledge and understanding, communication and personal growth and well-being.

Subject Areas: Language Arts, Physical Education, Art, Health.



THIRTEEN REASONS WHY by Jay Asher

Grade Level: Divisions 3-4

"No matter how many people say it, it will never stop being true...this book changes you. In the best way. It makes you aware, not only of how you're treating the people around you, but also of how appreciative you should be of your own life." – reader comment.

21st Century Competencies: communication, identify and solve problems, personal growth and well-being.

Subject Areas: Language Arts, Fine Arts, CALM. ■

Puzzle Piece Activity

Objective: To build school connectedness

Description: Show the video created by Michael Strembitsky School students (<http://ow.ly/EW1CW>). Provide each group of three to four participants with a puzzle piece sheet and invite them to write down one thing on each piece that they feel is related to school connectedness — building relationships, having a safe and caring environment, fun, engaging, hearing student voice, healthy, happy, clean. Have each group share several ideas and for a bit of fun, have students decorate their puzzle pieces, cut them out and then tape them up on a wall. www.everactive.org/content.php?secondary_id=379&id=791 (link to downloadable puzzle piece sheets). ■



High School Educational Gymnastics Lesson Plan

One of the dimensions in the Alberta Physical Education Curriculum is Types of Gymnastics. Gymnastic-type movements can be found in many different activities and sports such as street dancing, skateboarding, snowboarding, skiing, trampolining and diving. Demonstrations such as jump rope teams and Cirque du Soleil entertain audiences with creative gymnastic skills and Parkour movements are gymnastic in nature.

Ever Active Schools has developed an Educational Gymnastics unit that will develop your students' physical literacy and build their confidence and competence in

gymnastic-type movements. In this unit, students explore individual and partner balances, locomotion, jumping and landing and rolls and rotations. See below for a peak at one of the lessons in this unit.

As an addition to the PE 10, 20, 30 Recipe Card Lesson Plans, we have created a supplemental resource to provide more in-depth background information, further descriptions of movements or activities and hot links for all related resources. To view the PE 10, 20, 30 RCLP supplemental resource click here: www.everactive.org/k-12-physical-education. ■



Photos: Screen shot from the video (top left), a photo of the puzzle piece activity from Parkland HASS (bottom left), participants at the Edmonton and Area HASS (right).



FEATURE STORY

Projects-based Learning in First Nations Communities: Learning from the ground-up

SUBMITTED BY MEGAN HUNKA, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS



You might recall *Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution*, a reality television program that aired several years ago. In the program, chef Jamie Oliver visited schools in West Virginia and tried to remedy unhealthy lunch programs, and, most importantly, the attitudes that staff, students and lunch program staff held toward healthy food. I distinctly remember an episode where Grade 1 students were asked and were unable to identify some common fresh fruits and vegetables.

The show brought attention to the fact that there are children who don't recognize everyday fruits and vegetables, much less eat them. But at the other end of the spectrum there are students who are actually growing and harvesting the fruit and vegetables that they eat.

In South Bronx, teacher Stephen Ritz's fruit and vegetable gardening program caused a leap in his students' attendance rates from 40 to 93 per cent. His students have the option of reaching for a healthy snack that they personally help nurture and grow. The fruits of their labour (pun



Photo: the interior of the Kainai greenhouse.

Students saw this structure as an opportunity, and [they] helped turn it from something of neglect to something that flourished.

intended) are used in the school cafeteria and their project now far exceeds its initial scope. And similar efforts are taking place right here in Alberta.

The Blood Tribe located in southwest Alberta outside of Fort MacLeod is one of the largest First Nations reserves in Canada. Sitting next to the Kainai High School was a forgotten, rundown greenhouse structure. Students saw this structure as an opportunity, and through a project with the Kainai Board of Education, Ever Active Schools and many additional partners, helped turn it from something of neglect to something that flourished.

Teacher Sarah Tricker leads this cross-curricular greenhouse project and has big plans for it. Its obvious role is to teach students gardening, floral arranging, landscaping and sustainability, but Sarah also sees it as an opportunity to engage the community. She hopes that it will one day be the location for a farmers' market and a source of income for the school.

The project began in the summer of 2013, with the greenhouse revitalization. The leaky roof was fixed, polycarbonate panels were installed on the east-facing walls, and new doors were put in on either end of the structure. The Kainai Board of Education and Ever Active Schools, with generous support and funding from the EcoTrust Foundation, Parent Councils, Communities Choosewell, the Alberta Healthy Schools Community Wellness Fund, community members and Elders, have worked together to prep the structure for success.

In October, while the greenhouse construction was underway, students put their green thumbs to work, planting tomatoes, carrots, radishes and lettuce seeds in EarthBoxes, an indoor minimal-maintenance container system. They stored the EarthBoxes under hydroponic lights in a specially painted area by the gym, watered them every two weeks and watched the seeds grow over the winter. The high school breakfast club made BLTs with the lettuce

and tomatoes, and the students got their first taste of success.

Maintaining the plants over the Christmas and Easter breaks proved to be a challenge, however, and many of the plants died. "We don't give up when it goes wrong,"

In October, while the greenhouse construction was underway, students put their green thumbs to work

says Sarah. "Everything starts small." In the future, she hopes this is one area where the community will pitch in, helping water and weed over the holidays. >



At the end of June, construction complete, Sarah and her students finally got inside the greenhouse and began cleaning out the interior. "The work was overwhelming," says Sarah. It was overgrown with weeds and functioning as a school storage shed. Her gardening club students – currently five girls and three boys in Grades 9-12 – regularly meet on flex Fridays to work in the greenhouse, and pulled together to complete the hard job.

The construction class at Kainai High School also played a key role in the project by building raised planters. Weeping tile in the bottom of the planters ensures the plants only need water once every two weeks, reducing some of the maintenance work. The construction class also created some benches to form a seating area, which Sarah hopes will create a sense of community in the greenhouse and even an alternative environment for some classes to take place. It might be an inspirational location for an art class, for example.

On September 19, 2014, Sarah and her students hosted a BBQ and fun run to celebrate the official launch of the greenhouse. The high school opened the

YOU DON'T NEED A GREENHOUSE TO GROW FRESH PRODUCE.

Connections for Learning in Parkland School Division has been growing tomatoes, lettuce, spinach, chard, herbs and even strawberries in their aeroponic Tower Garden. The Tower Garden doesn't require any soil; instead a pump delivers a nutrient solution through the air and water. Research shows that plants grow faster in an aeroponic environment than in soil. <http://ow.ly/EVY1l>

greenhouse to the community, planted some seeds and showed off all of their hard work.

In November, with winter on its way, community partner ATCO assisted the school in closing out the final renovations for the greenhouse, focusing on winterizing the structure. Students in the Agriculture and Entrepreneurship classes at Kainai High School have been growing herbs that will be for sale over the holidays.

The project is an example of collaboration, innovation and spirit. The learning and hands on experiences have improved the quality of student engagement and learning. Congratulations to Sarah, the Green Team and the school and community for finalizing this project! We can't wait to see what you grow!

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Photos: Interior of the Kainai Greenhouse taken at the launch in September 2014 (above), from left to right: Michelle Mann from Ever Active Schools, Sarah Tricker and three members of the high school's green team (bottom left), the Kainai High School sign (bottom right).



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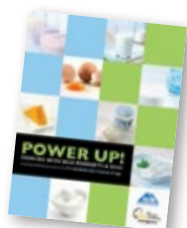
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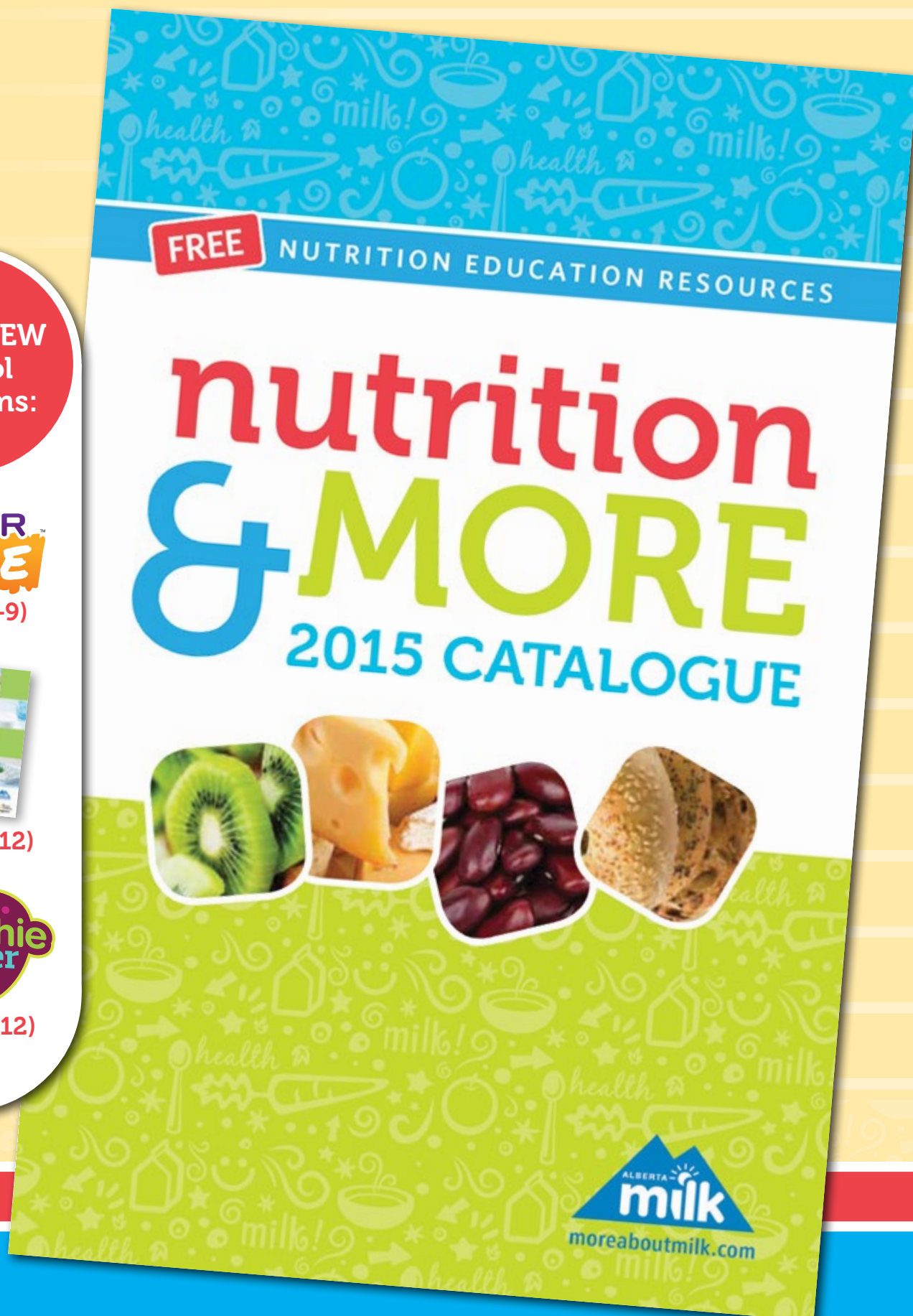
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