

# healthy schools ALBERTA

JANUARY 2017 ■ ISSUE #7



Supporting Healthy School Communities!



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# IN THIS ISSUE

We believe that student well-being is foundational to student learning. Through this edition of Healthy Schools Alberta, we are inspired by the amazing stories and people that make wellness a priority within their school communities. Enjoy the January edition, thank you for reading and happy new year!

~ The Ever Active Schools Team



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## 2016-17 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Ever Active Schools offers a wide range of professional learning in a variety of topic areas that support healthy school communities. We are excited to announce a new line-up of unique mentorship opportunities in physical literacy, and social and emotional wellbeing. Contact us today at [info@everactive.org](mailto:info@everactive.org) or visit [www.everactive.org/plos](http://www.everactive.org/plos) for more information and to request a visit.



# MEET OUR STAFF

Here's what  
we love about  
being  
**ACTIVE  
IN THE  
OUTDOORS**



**BRIAN TORRANCE**  
DIRECTOR

Getting outdoors is important for feeling calm, rejuvenated and inspired. This year, I did the West Coast Trail on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The power of the outdoors, the land, the never ending sky and overall environment brought health and happiness that allowed me to pause and enjoy.



**KERRI MURRAY**  
DIRECTOR OF PROJECTS

Ice skating is something our family looks forward to every winter. Crisp air, cold toes and pink cheeks! We especially love finding outdoor rinks as a way to explore new communities. I also secretly like that my girls still want to hold my hand when we skate.



**KIM HORDAL-HLEWKA**  
PROVINCIAL COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL  
HEALTH COORDINATOR

I grew up in the hockey rink... I started skating before walking so naturally my favorite outdoor activity in the winter is playing hockey on the outdoor rink! Now as a mom to a 1 year old, I cannot wait to get her on skates this year. Some good old fashioned pond hockey brings a smile to my face and it keeps me active in the good old outdoors!



**CHRIS FENLON-MACDONALD**  
PROVINCIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR

I feel most grounded in the stillness of winter. Spending time in the outdoors - particularly the backcountry - offers me a chance to recharge and energize, offering balance during life's busy moments.



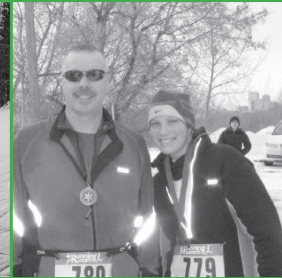
**HAYLEY DEGAUST**  
PROVINCIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR

My favourite outdoor activity is biking, it is a great way to explore the beautiful trails we have access to in Alberta. It started as a way to be physically active, but through the community of friends we have made it has become so much more.



**MEGAN MCKINALY**  
BE FIT FOR LIFE COMMUNICATIONS LEAD

One of my favourite outdoor activities is cross-country skiing. It's challenging, serene, family time, and explores some pretty amazing terrain.



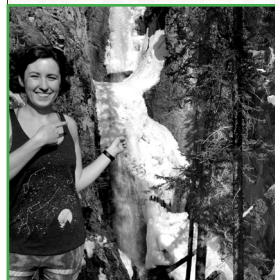
**KATELYNN THEAL**  
PROVINCIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR

I enjoy many activities outside, but my top is probably running. I love running outdoors year round, especially with my dad. He always pushes me to get out, even on the coldest of days.



**RHONDA SCHILBERG**  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Getting outside is good for the soul! Breathing in the fresh air and feeling your head clear while enjoying Mother Nature's beauty is good for the body and mind.



**MELISSA TIERNEY**  
RESILIENCY COORDINATOR

Being active is my main source of emotional regulation - it keeps me going no matter what life throws at me! I love hiking all year, and snowshoeing when the ground gets too snowy to hike. Sometimes I am lucky and we get a chinook so I can hike in a t-shirt even when the waterfalls I'm hiking to are frozen!



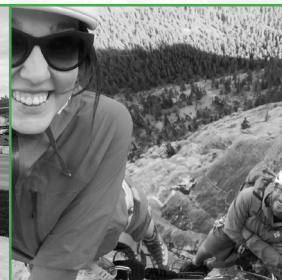
**TAM ROSNAU**  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

As a mom, I can honestly say both myself and my kids are happier when we play outside. It feels fresh, it's free and it's FUN! Walking our dog, playing football, tobogganing, having an epic snow ball fight and just being outside in general gives us a chance to use our "outdoor voices" and connect with the beauty of nature that is all around us.



**RYAN FAHEY**  
SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR

It is important for all of us to get active outdoors because of the positive health benefits associated with being active in the natural world. Sometimes when we remove ourselves from the busyness of life with some great unstructured or structured physical activity time outside, we not only feel better physically, we also feel better emotionally and mentally as well. It is the cheapest and most rewarding form of medication.



**CHESA CORSIATTO**  
SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR

I love the immersive element of being active outdoors, the way that all 5 senses are engaged but not overwhelmed. I think it facilitates that shift into the "flow state" where all distractions fade away and you become completely present in the moment. Plus, I met my partner while being active outdoors, so that's a bonus!



**MARGAUX MCWATT**  
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

I think it's imperative to realize and nurture our inherent connection with nature and to understand that we are the caretakers of our planet. Being active outdoors is beneficial for our health - mind, body & spirit.





# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## Ever Active Schools Updates

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**JANUARY 25, 2017**

Resiliency Workshop, Kananaskis, AB

**JANUARY 26-28, 2017**

Shaping the Future Conference, Kananaskis, AB

**APRIL 6-8, 2017**

Live Active Summit, Edmonton, AB

**MAY 12, 2017**

Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC) Conference, Jasper, AB



Ever Active Schools is hosting the 8th annual **SHAPING THE FUTURE** Conference in Kananaskis, AB on January 26-28, 2017. We are thrilled to have over 500 delegates from the education, active living, recreation, health and research sectors to join us in discussing and learning about Comprehensive School Health. With exciting keynote speakers such as comedian, writer, media maker and community activator, Ryan McMahon. To learn more visit: [www.everactive.org/stf](http://www.everactive.org/stf)

**RESILIENCE AS A PATH TO HEALTHY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES:** This workshop leads up to Shaping the Future on Wednesday January 25, 2017 and aims to empower school teams with teachings shared from Indigenous communities in Alberta. Topics include storytelling, land-based learning, youth leadership, and traditional games, featuring success stories from young First Nations role models and a keynote presentation by Sean Lessard. Further details at [www.everactive.org/rw](http://www.everactive.org/rw)

Join Ever Active Schools in partnership with the Edmonton Sports Council, Be Fit For Life and the City of Edmonton for the **LIVE ACTIVE SUMMIT** on April 6, 7 and 8, 2017 at the Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre in Edmonton. The summit will be a catalyst to educate, engage and bring to life active living, active recreation and sport in school and community settings. It will involve collaborative work around physical literacy and share successful practices from across the province. The goal of this summit is to highlight and experience best practices that have clear tangible outcomes. The event is in its 5th year and is targeted to teachers, community leaders, health professionals, active recreation leaders, sport and others invested in active living. To learn more visit: [www.everactive.org/liveactive](http://www.everactive.org/liveactive)

Looking for a way to keep your students moving throughout the cold winter months? The **THE ALBERTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION YOUTH RUN CLUB** is a free, flexible and fun program that will provide you with all of the tools to get your school up and running! Register for the AMA Youth Run Club and you will be entered to win 1 of 10 \$500 cash prizes to promote active living within your school community. All 2016/2017 participating schools are eligible to win. Become a champion and register today: [www.amayouthrunclub.com/jointheclub](http://www.amayouthrunclub.com/jointheclub)

Some of the best **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING** happens during **TEACHERS' CONVENTIONS**. Ever Active Schools will once again be across the province this February and March sharing professional learning on topics such as physical literacy, staff wellness, daily physical activity and most importantly, how these topics can support social & emotional wellbeing, student health and academic success. These evidence-based learning opportunities are guaranteed to be active and provide you with the knowledge, skills and understanding to implement new and innovative ideas when you return to school. ■

Visit [www.everactive.org](http://www.everactive.org) to discover other Ever Active Schools events and projects.





**Photo:** Panelists set the context for what is happening in Alberta around Comprehensive School Health during a community consultation on the upcoming course at the Werklund School of Education.

## IN THE COMMUNITY

# Teachers of Tomorrow – The Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary

WRITTEN BY KERRI MURRAY, DIRECTOR OF PROJECTS AT EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**The Werklund School of Education (WSE) is committed to preparing the teachers of tomorrow for their roles as wellness educators and health champions. Recognizing that this preparedness directly impacts student and teacher success, and has a buoyant and cumulative effect on the system as a whole, we applaud their recently announced contribution to school health in Alberta.**

Beginning in the winter semester of 2018, a course in Comprehensive School Health (CSH) will become the first in Canada to be required as part of a Bachelor's of Education degree at WSE.

In their foresight to consider the context of K-12 environments and acknowledge the broad expertise that currently exists for CSH in Alberta, an expert working group was brought together to consult on the development of the course. Superintendents, teachers, recent graduates, members from provincial school health organizations, representatives from Alberta Health and Alberta Education, and other post-secondary representatives were engaged. WSE is walking the CSH talk by enlisting input from a

variety of partnerships and services.

It is an exciting time in Alberta, as health and wellness curriculum is being developed for K-12 education, so too is it being developed in this post-secondary education faculty.

*"A healthy school community supports the wellness of all its members and healthy students make better learners. Within the broader evidence-based Comprehensive School Health framework, this course provides the theoretical foundations, research base, community resources, and experiential learning to create the capacity for future teachers to be health champions."*

~Draft Course Outline Description ■





# Active Goal Setting: Transforming the Invisible to the Visible

WRITTEN BY CHESA CORSIATTO, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR AT EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**It's that time again! January is an excellent time to get re-focused and make new commitments to support your well-being. But do you ever wonder why resolutions don't tend to stick?**

Many people begin the year with good intentions to "exercise more" or "eat healthier" or "reduce stress," yet it's rare to hear of these resolutions resulting in lasting change. That's because making lasting change requires more than just good intentions.

Here are five quick tips for effective goal setting:

## **Write it down**

- 1) Writing down goals helps to clarify what you want and how you will work towards it.

## **Set SMART Goals**

- 1) **Specific:** Clearly outline what you want to accomplish.
- 2) **Measurable:** How will you know when you have accomplished your goal?
- 3) **Achievable:** This doesn't mean you shouldn't set your goals high! It means taking time to consider any obstacles that you may face and how you will overcome despite challenges.
- 4) **Relevant:** Ensure your goal is relevant and meaningful to you.
- 5) **Time-stamped:** When do you want to accomplish your goal by? Put a date on it!

## **Work backwards from big goals**

- 1) Big goals can seem daunting at first. Break them down into smaller goals that move you towards your big goal. Start by finding something you can do today!

## **Develop a support network**

- 1) It helps to have support. Tell your family, friends, or colleagues about your goal and ask that they keep you accountable. Better yet, find someone who wants to take it on with you.

## **Keep it in sight**

- 1) A vision board, a sticky note on your computer monitor, a training log hanging on the fridge, the background of your phone can all serve as great visual reminders of what you are working to accomplish. Put it somewhere you will see often.

Goal setting is not only vital for your personal wellness goals but also for creating a culture of wellness within your classroom or school community. Remember that when determining goals as a group, it is important to make sure that everyone's voice is heard. This fosters a sense of ownership and a high level of commitment from all who are involved, resulting in a higher likelihood of the goal being achieved. Check out this awesome goal setting worksheet created by ASEBP to get started: <http://bit.ly/2fSVCjz>.

Ever Active Schools offers many resources and professional learning opportunities to further support your school community wellness goals. More information can be found at [www.everactive.org](http://www.everactive.org) or by contacting the office: **780-454-4745**

Here's to a year of growth and well-being for you, your students & the whole school community! ■



# Be Well in the Hustle & Bustle

WRITTEN BY KIM HORDAL-HLEWKA, PROVINCIAL COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH COORDINATOR AT EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**The excitement and the hustle and bustle of the holiday season is now behind us, but let's be honest, who feels rested and ready for the rest of the 2016-2017 school year?**

There is always so much hype and energy as we head into the holidays. From family outings and parties, to cooking, baking, cleaning, and so much more. Once you return back to your classroom is it a time of new found energy, or a feeling of, "Here we go again?" As you begin to embark on the rest of the school year, we asked teachers to share a few tips and tricks to hopefully help us all remember the important things in life, starting with ourselves. As my mom always told me, "Kimberly, if you do not take care of yourself first and foremost, you are going to have a very difficult time being at your best for your students and your family." So with that being said, and with a little help from colleagues and friends, here are some tips and tricks to share on Staying Well and Taking care of YOU in the 2017 Season!

1. Ensure your identity is founded in more than just your teaching .
2. Plan at least two activities for yourself and/or your family. Make time for the ones you love.
3. Strive for balance and ensure you are spending time to nourish your relationships.
4. Don't be afraid to ask for help - that includes hiring a house cleaner if you need a break from those day to day chores.
5. Prioritize "your time," even if its only a 10 min walk or a 5 min cup of coffee to yourself. You can't look after anyone else unless you look after yourself first.
6. Rethink your "Fringe" minutes with the day, (how can you be more efficient with some of your tasks to free up 5 minutes).
7. Prioritize and find the top 1-3 things that you want/ need to spend your time doing.
8. Be easy on yourself; We are human and we cannot do everything.
9. Take the time to recognize the growth in your students, your children and even yourself.
10. Learn to delegate and be okay with making mistakes.
11. Be REAL.
12. Take time to laugh and cry.
13. Watch Disney movies.
14. Don't forget to make a date with yourself and don't cancel.
15. Spend time sitting and enjoying life! Take it all in.
16. Walk slower, hear the crunch of the snow under your feet, get outside, PLAY!
17. Get up half an hour earlier to drink your coffee/ tea and make a plan for the day. It will help you stay organized, feel a bit calmer, and focus your day.
18. January is a beautiful month... it's a month full of promise and growth.
19. Be Active.
20. Lastly... BREATHE. ■







GET  
ACTIVE



**Main Photo:** Chess stations ready to go; sports equipment waiting in the background!  
**Secondary Photo:** Chris White instructing  
**Credit:** Chris White

## Chess with a Twist

WRITTEN BY CHRIS WHITE, K-3 PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER AT SANDHILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Chess Club? Why is there an article about a chess club in an Ever Active Schools publication? Okay, let me explain. I'm in my 14th teaching year, with nine of those in PE and every year my chess club has been my main extra curricular effort - and probably my most important. What I found early on is that some of the students who are not interested in after school soccer or cross country running club are very interested in chess club. They seem more comfortable there. During break time at the chess club, I will get out hockey sticks, basketballs or set up a floor gymnastics circuit. I make sure that I have a physical component to my chess club as much as possible.**

This has resulted in several benefits: 1) the chess kids are getting more active, 2) they have a stronger connection with their PE teacher, which leads to better participation in PE class, 3) they are gaining confidence in an active environment. Even though I have had many athletic and non-athletic kids join chess over the years, the focus is not athletics so the non-athlete is in a more comfortable atmosphere. Year after year thinking about these benefits has led me to philosophical questions about education and society.

We have great schools in Canada which give students excellent

opportunities to be lifelong learners. Likewise, in our schools, many students have the opportunity to develop a love for living an active life. This is usually from exposure to individual and team sports or other activities that involve physical activity. There are opportunities to try out for sports teams which can be great character-building experiences. All of these things are great and working well. But I think we can probably do a bit better. To borrow a concept from Dr. Mike Evans, we need more "nudges" for the students reluctant of physical activity. ➤



“When more resources become available, we should be putting effort into non-athletic activities where students can have a physical activity break. This is a great way to give students reluctant of physical activity another chance to be active.”

-Chris White

I heard him speak about “nudges” at the Shaping the Future conference in January 2016. It’s very hard to make abrupt, sweeping changes. So for some issues, “nudges” over time may be the way to make positive change. We need to find more ways to get our least physically active students involved in some sort of physical activity, which they will enjoy. When more resources become available, we should be putting effort into non-athletic activities where students can have a physical activity break. This is a great way to give students reluctant of physical activity another chance to be active. A two-hour video game club that has 30 minutes of treadmill time in the middle would be great for a junior high school in the middle of the winter. If there’s no treadmill available, why not 30 minutes of indoor rugby? My reason for choosing chess is motivated by my love for the beauty of the game, but if chess is not something you are comfortable with, there are plenty of other great games that could be a focus for a club. Risk, Magic and Scrabble are all games that could motivate kids to join a club and hopefully get them active during the breaks - it’s worth a try!

Having a PE teacher run these activities is an added bonus because of the connection made with some of those students who shy away from physical activity. Maybe a small shift in society at large could be helpful - more resources to motivate the least motivated. With a little “nudge” here and there during my lifetime, I feel society has made great gains in acknowledging the importance of the mind and body connection, especially at high levels of competition. In 2013, the Seattle Seahawks used meditation and yoga to help them win the Super Bowl. Former world chess champion Viswanathan Anand made biking, swimming and running a part of his training for his rematch against current world champion Magnus Carlson, showing the chess world his respect for the mind and body connection. It is also well

known in the chess world that Magnus Carlson leads a very active lifestyle. If you are reading this from the chess community, why not try to schedule a chess club walk on the Thursday evenings before a weekend Swiss? Similar things could happen with darts and bridge clubs. The more that physical and mental activities come together the better it will be for those less motivated to participate in physical activities.

I don’t want this to be the first article ever written about chess in the schools that does not mention the educational benefits of chess, but I’ll keep it short. Playing and learning chess provides exercise for your crystallized and fluid intelligence. This means that you develop pattern recognition with the general principles of the game (crystallized) and you think on your feet by calculating and manipulating the pieces (fluid). If your students become motivated to do their best you can also have rigorous activities in concentration. Teaching chess notation and getting the students to visualize moves ahead, helps to develop spatial intelligence.

So how do we get the least motivated to become motivated to participate in physical activities? Very often it is a challenge that does not get met because of the amount of other overwhelming responsibilities that schools have. Maybe it’s just a matter of more subtle “nudges” from different directions. In that way, it can be like a game of chess. Your move!

Note: If you would like some recommendations for resources to start a chess club or if you would like some help with an idea for your physical component please, contact me: [chrisw@fvds.ab.ca](mailto:chrisw@fvds.ab.ca)

Last year, one of my chess clubs was for K-1 students and had a gymnastics component; the combinations are endless! ■



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EAT  
SMART

## Eat Well: Tools to Support Healthy School Food Policy

WRITTEN BY: ASHLEY HUGHES, REGISTERED DIETITIAN, PROJECT ASSISTANT, ALBERTA POLICY COALITION FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION

**Recreation facilities are important community hubs that promote health by providing affordable access to physical activity. Yet, the irony is that many of these settings also offer unhealthy foods and beverages, which make healthy choices difficult. A new project in Edmonton called FARE (Food Action in Recreation Environments) is helping communities use policy to increase access to healthy foods in recreation facilities.**

Schools are closely linked to recreation facilities, and in some cases, they are built side-by-side. Busy families rush children from school to soccer practice, hockey games, swimming lessons and more. Healthy policies can increase children's access to nutritious food, ensure they receive consistent healthy eating messages in these settings, and help sustain community efforts over time.

Many of the policy lessons learned in the school setting are applicable to recreational facilities and the other way around.

Interested in how policy could encourage healthy eating in your recreation facility or school?

Visit [www.apccprecproject.com](http://www.apccprecproject.com) and check out our top 3 policy tool picks on the next page. >



# Healthy School Policy is a key component of Comprehensive School Health (CSH)

#1. Explore FARE's Menu of Policy tools and get started on the path to policy change

[www.apccprecproject.com/menu-of-policy-tools](http://www.apccprecproject.com/menu-of-policy-tools)

- Assess your school's readiness for policy change! Take the policy readiness tool's online questionnaire and pocket targeted strategies to encourage policy change. Although this tool is a bit more targeted to municipalities, a new version has been launched for school communities called the idea readiness tool: <http://ideareadinesstool.com/>
- Policy change may seem somewhat nebulous, don't worry. The Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance Toolkit to Healthier Communities: Influencing healthy Public Policies guides you through the change process step-by-step!
- Thinking about making healthy changes to your school vending machines? Alberta Health Services Healthy Vending Toolkit provides customer surveys, sample planograms, a request for proposal template, examples of healthy eating policies and more!

#2. Discover evidence-based strategies to promote healthy food

[www.apccprecproject.com/research-summaries](http://www.apccprecproject.com/research-summaries)

- Did you know that traffic light labelling is a simple type of menu labeling that may help students select healthier products? Review our two-page research summaries and learn more evidence-based tips and tricks to increase the demand for healthier foods offered at your school canteen or cafeterias.

#3. Get inspired by successful stories of healthy food and beverage policy change across Canada

[www.apccprecproject.com/policy-stories](http://www.apccprecproject.com/policy-stories)

- Discover key lessons realized through the policy change process. High-level champions and a diverse team are key to drive policy change ahead, along with education, promotion, and positive messaging.
- Get motivated knowing others experienced challenges and succeeded. Remember change takes time. It's important to celebrate the small wins.
- Don't miss it! Read how Alberta Schools' Athletic Association and Ever Active Schools developed a nutrition policy to promote healthy food at provincial high school sporting events.

## About FARE

FARE was initiated by the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention (APCCP), a coalition of 18 organizations across Alberta who have come together to coordinate efforts, generate evidence and advocate for policy change to reduce chronic disease risk in the province. To learn more visit:

[www.apccprecproject.com/about-us](http://www.apccprecproject.com/about-us) ■

### Free School Programs:



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2017 CATALOGUE





# Fun Fridays at St. Theresa Catholic Middle School

WRITTEN BY TAM ROSNAU AND MARGAUX MCWATT, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**Who thought Fridays could get any more fun? Parents, coaches and especially students look forward to the end of the week for a special afterschool athletic program that takes place every Friday throughout the school year.**

"Fun Fridays," previously referred to as "Franklin Fridays" was named after Robbie Franklin, who invented this afterschool program, explained his predecessor, Mike Miskiw. Mike teaches with Elk Island Catholic Schools and has taken over coaching since Robbie has taken on an assistant principal position at the high school level.

Each Friday is a great opportunity for students to experience every school sport in a welcoming and cooperative environment, Mike explained. "Teamwork and sportsmanship are the two main factors why students have so much fun on Fridays. The students keep having fun and the parents are happy that their child gets to experience every school sport," Mike said.

Throughout the year from 3:30pm to 5:00pm every Friday, grade five and six students are given the chance to play volleyball, basketball, curling and badminton because those activities mimic the senior middle school sports and presents an opportunity for the senior athletes to help out with the younger students, explained Mike.

Another reason behind choosing these four activities is to teach the basic skills needed for these sports, so when the younger grades reach grade seven, they will be a small step ahead when trying out for school sports teams, explained Kelly Randa, teacher at St. Theresa Catholic Middle School.

Afterschool programs have tremendous benefits for students of all ages: Quality afterschool programs help young people develop cognitive thinking, emotional well-being, social skills and physical health (1). Kelly has noticed positive changes in the 70 students involved in Fun Fridays. Along with the benefits of physical activity, teamwork and gaining new skills, the students' social skills are becoming more adept: "I have noticed students make new friendships as well as have more confidence in themselves when it comes to making friends. I believe that this has been an excellent opportunity for the new students at our school to meet friends from other classes and to strengthen existing friendships," said Kelly.

Fun Fridays is a little afterschool program making a deep impact not only on the students, but on the coach as well. "I have never experienced a program like this. The Fun Friday program has provided a life-lasting experience," said Mike.

For more information on afterschool programs, please visit:  
**[www.activeafterschool.ca](http://www.activeafterschool.ca)**

## References

1. Program Benefits. <http://activeafterschool.ca/about-after-school/benefits>
2. Miskiw, M. 2016, Oct., Email interview.
3. Randa, K. 2016, Oct., Email interview.



# Strengthening School Community Wellness

WRITTEN BY JOYCE WAMAMBO, PRACTICUM STUDENT AT THE ALBERTA RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION (ARPA)

**Many school communities have taken the initiative to promote and improve healthy eating and active living habits within their communities. With support from Communities ChooseWell, a free program of the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, school communities have strengthened community wellness by making the healthy choice the easier choice for all students.**

Since the program began in 2005, many communities across Alberta have received awards and grants for their efforts to improve the health and well-being of their community members. Clandonald School is a great example of that.

In October 2016, Clandonald School, a grade 1-6 Elementary School east of Edmonton, AB, received a Communities ChooseWell Healthy Community Award for Developing Healthy Policies. They achieved this by creating a Healthy Active School Action Plan that listed measurable goals, focusing on improving eating habits and physical activity within the school, explained Anita Datchuk, Clandonald School's Health Champion Coordinator.

These action plan goals were used by the Health Champions group (students, staff, parents, and community members) to create and improve on school initiatives that were meant to promote healthy eating habits and physical activity within the school. Clandonald implemented many programs to support healthy school communities:

- A healthy breakfast program was implemented whereby any student could enjoy breakfast in a social environment. This initiative was valuable since many students had a long commute to school. With the help of a local catering company, Clandonald School was able to serve weekly hot lunches to all students, and with the assistance and dedication from various partnerships and volunteers; these programs ran all year around, Anita described.
- Vegetable smoothies were made for students during special occasions. This added to Clandonald's healthy school culture. Program leaders were able to further the knowledge of students during lunch breaks; they coached students about healthy eating habits through healthy eating programs and informative bulletin boards that were displayed in the lunchroom.

- A variety of infused water choices were also introduced with the program. School-grown herbs, vegetables, and fruit were added to the students' water bottles and they were encouraged to get creative as they could combine a variety of things. More importantly, it improved their health by encouraging them to drink water instead of other drinks.
- Additionally, the students grew the fruits and vegetables used in the programs. "We introduced garden beds and apple trees... we are currently eating carrots that were brought in from garden beds planted over the summer by our school families," Anita said.

The Healthy Champions group was in charge of implementing and following-through with every health initiative. Anita explained that it was very helpful for Clandonald to have an action plan to keep them on track. This tool was and continues to be valuable as it helps reflect and validate the health champions group's efforts in building a healthy school community. Anita also identified how developing partnerships with other organizations is a big key to success. As a small school of only 29 students, these partnerships have provided them with resources and opportunities that have improved the healthy school environment.

More success stories can be found on the Communities ChooseWell website: [www.arpaonline.ca/choosewell](http://www.arpaonline.ca/choosewell).

Communities ChooseWell promotes and supports the development of policies, programs and partnerships in Alberta's communities to promote wellness through healthy eating and physical activity. ■

## References

1. Datchuk, A.. 2016, November. Personal Interview.

**GET INVOLVED TODAY!**

**Join the Movement to make Alberta communities healthy communities! For more information, please visit:**

**[www.arpaonline.ca/program/choosewell/](http://www.arpaonline.ca/program/choosewell/)**







# TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

## Wellness Policy Creation Process

WRITTEN BY MELISSA TIERNEY, RESILIENCY COORDINATOR AT EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**There are many different ways to create a Wellness Policy. Below are the steps Ever Active Schools uses, and on the next page is the Kainai Board of Education's Wellness Policy - take them as a guide, as a starting point or simply as inspiration. Ever Active Schools facilitators are also available to support communities in this process – if interested, contact Melissa Tierney: [melissa@everactive.org](mailto:melissa@everactive.org)**

### 1) Set the Stage

- Gather a committee representative of the diverse voices and perspectives of your school community, particularly those responsible for implementing the policy
- e.g. Elders, Students, Parent Advisory members, Principals, Teachers, Guidance Counsellors, Cafeteria Supervisor, Dietician, Wellness or Recreation Coordinator, Athletics Director, Indigenous Language Coordinator, HR Director, other Senior Administration
- Begin with the Big Picture/Vision for your Policy – the overarching goal this Policy will achieve. Why are we here? Why is this worth doing? Place the Policy in the larger context of your school/community goals and current challenges, knowing that the content of the Policy will come later in the process
- Discuss what to expect – approximate timelines, how meetings will look, who needs to officially approve the Policy and eventual Implementation Guide (e.g. Superintendent? Policy Review Committee? When are those meetings, and when does content need to be approved by?)

### 2) Generate Ideas Grounded in Your Community

There are no bad ideas. In this stage, value quantity of ideas over quality. Allow divergent thinking. Ensure all voices are heard, and keep good notes of the conversations that take place – you never know what you may want to circle back to afterwards.

Ask:

- What needs to be included in our Policy to ensure it is reflective of our community, not transplanted from somewhere else?
- What does local culture teach us about Wellness?
- When you think of “Wellness”, what comes to mind?
- When we think of “Wellness Policy” what are the first things we think to include?
- Getting Started: People may be interested in seeing other Wellness Policies, not to replicate them, but to help generate ideas about how the policy they are helping create could be similar or different. Consider providing examples of a few different policies for people to read ahead of your meeting, and allow time at your meeting to review, debate and discuss the examples

### 3) Determine Key Priorities

Here we move from many ideas to a few key priorities. What aspects of wellbeing for staff and students should be the most central in our Policy?

- Look through the ideas generated in Step 2. What common themes arise? What is most important to us? These become your key priorities, and form an outline of your Policy. Consider breaking into groups to debate, or using facilitation techniques like “sticky wall technique” or “dot method”

### 4) Begin Drafting Policy

Remember: Keep it simple! Clear language and examples help people understand how to implement.

1) Clarify the current policy environment (likely Superintendents or HR Director share this)

- Policies that already exist related to wellness (e.g. Drug and Alcohol Policy)
- Note framework of other policies – do they all follow a similar format? Should this one be the same format?

2) Begin with the Big Picture/Vision for your Policy – go back to the very first conversation you had about WHY the policy. This should be clear to your Policy audience from the start.

3) Using your Key Priorities as a guide, draft your Policy. Many groups will choose to draft a basic outline as a group, identifying key priority areas, tone and sample language. Then one or two people will sit to draft a Policy that the larger group will later review and revise.

### 5) Edit the First Draft, Considering Implementation Strategy

The First Draft is now reviewed by the group – ensure everyone has time to read through it, either by emailing it, allowing time to read it at the meeting, or reading aloud at the meeting.

- Open or small group discussion: What are people's first impressions of the draft? What do you like and dislike about it? What is missing, or what is included that shouldn't be?
- Second brainstorm: Who will be responsible for implementing this Policy? Is everything we've written possible to implement? What do we think the biggest challenges will be to implementing? How will we overcome these?
- Common challenges include: engaging parents to be a key partner in their children's success; changing food menus without “taste testing” food with students first

### 6) Revise Policy Draft

Recognize that the Policy may change significantly after careful consideration of the Implementation Strategy.

### 6) Further Resources

Ever Active Schools staff, are available to support your school in creating your Wellness Policy. This could include idea generation, meeting facilitation, writing, and implementation strategies. If you'd like to explore more hands-on, active support, contact us to talk about next steps! [melissa@everactive.org](mailto:melissa@everactive.org)

AHS Wellness Policy resources: [www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page7123.aspx](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page7123.aspx)

Facilitation techniques: [www.k-state.edu/employee\\_resources/programming/pdc/table\\_of\\_contents/PDC8BasicFacilitation.pdf](http://www.k-state.edu/employee_resources/programming/pdc/table_of_contents/PDC8BasicFacilitation.pdf) ➔



## OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE

The Kainai Board of Education (KBE) aims to give students and staff tools they need to be lifelong learners, promote wellness in their own families, and live healthy, disease-free lives. This policy is rooted in Kainayssini and our belief in promoting the rights, powers and welfare of our Nation, while acknowledging the ethical space where such beliefs meet Western worldview. We create this policy knowing that our community lives with the effects of intergenerational trauma, but also that our culture, traditions and land give us the strength and knowledge needed to thrive. The board directs that wellness be embedded in the culture, curriculum and extracurricular programming of all schools. The four aspects of the Traditional Wheel guide our approach to wellness.

### SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

*“To maintain ourselves under the guidance of our Creator.” – Kainayssini*

- **Resilience** – KBE commits to fostering resilient young people by helping them to experience mastery, independence, belonging and generosity through sports, arts and cultural activities.
- **Language and Culture** – Blackfoot language is taught in all grade levels, spoken as often as possible in class and during the regular ceremonies held at the school, and a Kainai Studies Director supports language development at all schools.
- **Learning from Place** – KBE offers meaningful education experiences on the land through curriculum, traditional teachings, physical activity and sport, and extracurricular programming.

### MENTAL WELL-BEING

*“To initiate a sense of responsibility to our people and nation.” – Kainayssini*

- **Mental Health** – KBE ensures that teachers and staff have access to education and professional development related to self-care, mental health awareness, intervention and stigma, and stress management. KBE also maintains partnerships with Elders and traditional healers as well as Western service providers, to assist staff, students and families to access help they need.
- **Addiction Prevention** – Age-appropriate drug and alcohol education and awareness training is mandatory in all schools and diverse support networks are available for students and staff affected by addiction.

### EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

*“To allow for freedom of expression and diversity.” – Kainayssini*

- **Sense of Belonging** – KBE provides a welcoming, respectful, safe and caring environment for all students, parents, and staff, and upholds learning and working environments that are free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence.
- **Healthy Balanced Relationships** – Healthy social interactions are modelled and practiced at all KBE schools, opportunities are provided for parents and community members to be engaged in schools, and mentorship opportunities are available to promote leadership in our youth.

### PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

*“To continue to seek better means of survival.” - Kainayssini*

- **Nutrition** - KBE will provide healthy foods and beverages in all nutrition programs, events, and canteens, and will support both teacher and student learning about Blackfoot traditional foods and healthy Western foods.
- **Physical Activity** – KBE will offer daily physical activity programming and education that includes Blackfoot traditional games, and foster environments that promote Physical Literacy.

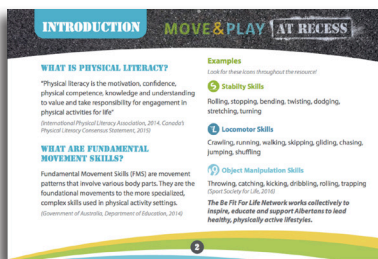
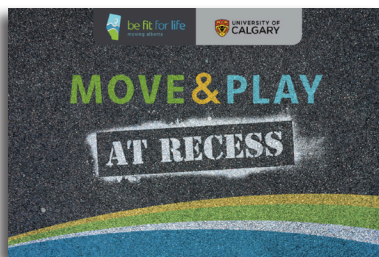
The Kainai Board of Education Wellness Handbook (Appendix A) shall guide implementation of this policy, and implementation will be monitored through administrator reports monthly, at the administrator's meetings.





# TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

## Free Resources



### MOVE & PLAY AT RECESS

Over the past few years, there has been emerging research indicating that the use of painted lines on playground tarmac surfaces can be an effective and low cost means to help increase moderate to vigorous physical activity levels in children. This resource can be used to supplement activities in the classroom, quality physical education, and in conjunction with games enjoyed during free play. Playground stencils can be replicated with sidewalk chalk or tape.

FREE Download: [www.befitforlife.ca/resources/move-play-recess/](http://www.befitforlife.ca/resources/move-play-recess/)



### LET'S WARM UP!

In collaboration with Be Fit For Life and the Alberta Medical Association Youth Run Club, we've created this fun, simple and effective guide to safely stretch and warm up before any physical activity. Available in English and French, this great little resource can be used with music to get your students pumped up for their next physical activity!

FREE Download: <http://www.everactive.org/uploads/files/Documents/Resources/LetsWarmUp-FrenchandEnglishSmaller.pdf>



## Healthy Communities GRANT PROGRAM

Four organizations from across Alberta have been selected to each receive \$50,000 grants through the Alberta Blue Cross Healthy Communities Grant Program.

Through this program, Alberta Blue Cross is investing \$1 million, over a five-year period, to support and promote active living in communities across Alberta.

Funding for the program comes from the ABC Benefits Corporation Foundation, which was established by Alberta Blue Cross in 1998 in conjunction with its 50th anniversary.



The following projects were selected in 2016 to receive grants:

- **Edmonton:** L.Y. Cairns junior and senior high school—outdoor gardening area and fitness circuit.
- **Calgary:** Auburn Bay elementary school—new playground.
- **Secondary cities:** Fort Saskatchewan Win Ferguson elementary and middle school—replacement of two playground structures.
- **Rural communities:** St. Paul—new community skateboard and BMX park.

The application form for the 2017 grants will be available on our web site starting June 1, 2017.

Learn more at [www.ab.bluecross.ca](http://www.ab.bluecross.ca)



ABC 83100 2016/12







## FEATURE STORY

**Photo:** Students at École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School playing on the Don't Walk in the Hallway decals

**Credit:** Margaux McWatt

# Supporting Student Wellness through Built Environments

WRITTEN BY MARGAUX MCWATT, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR AT EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**In the same way that physical activity shapes up the muscles, heart, lungs, and bones, it also strengthens the basal ganglia, cerebellum, and corpus callosum—all key areas of the brain (4). Student well-being and academic success are fostered by movement and by extension, the physical environments that support and promote movement for greater comprehensive learning outcomes.**

“There are many different ways in which the physical environment of a school community can influence student wellbeing,” said Candace Nykiforuk, Associate Professor and Applied Public Health Chair at the University of Alberta. Candace conducts research at the Policy, Location and Access in Community Environments (PLACE) Research Lab, which develops, evaluates and mobilizes evidence about population health interventions and other strategies that promote lifelong health and chronic disease prevention, she explained.

Along with students having access to the natural environment surrounding their school area, which can foster resilient, independent and well-balanced learners, Candice mentioned that built environments and classroom structure are major influences as well: “standing desks and moveable/modular/dynamic furniture can provide a variety of opportunities that allow for children to excel [in physical environments], regardless of learning style.” That aspect is imperative; every learner that passes through school doors is different. We are all unique individuals and having options provides the opportunity for every type of learner to flourish, grow and succeed.

Reimagine Interiors, an interior design division of Manasc Isaac,

carries a vision that is conducive to offering choices, supporting healthy learning environments, as well as healthy communities as a whole. Through sustainable architecture, safe and eco-friendly materials and by “celebrating the unique nature of each design project,” Reimagine aims to create sustainable building designs that meet the needs of each individual client and community. (6)

For schools, whether it’s a ground-up build or a redesign, Reimagine strives to integrate elements and ideas to support movement, explained Lindsay Gurevitch, Intern Interior Designer at Manasc Isaac. From incorporating math into the design of stairs - which makes it a more enticing and healthy choice rather than taking an elevator or escalator - to brightening up the hallways with games such as hop scotch, don’t step on the cracks, or don’t fall in the lava, “you create meaningful spaces that are layered on top of the learning and layered on top of the fact that these spaces are healthier choices,” Lindsay said.

Reimagine Interiors has an online portfolio of school designs and builds that are open, bright and fun, lending to healthy movement in these spaces. “We’ve actually got two new schools that we’re finishing, and both incorporate the Don’t Walk in the Hallway ideas,” Lindsay





**Photo:** Students at École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School solving math equations on the Don't Walk in the Hallway decals  
**Credit:** Margaux McWatt

“I think they are great for kids to have fun with. It helps keep us healthy because you need your exercise!” –Zac, Grade 3 student



**Photo:** Student at École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School jumping on the Don't Walk in the Hallway decals  
**Credit:** Margaux McWatt



“I like the idea of the ‘Don’t walk in the Hallway’ spots because you get to have physical activities when you’re walking in the hallways!”  
-Keira, Grade 3 student

said. Don’t Walk in the Hallway (DWITH) is an initiative from Ever Active Schools that encourages active transport in hallways facilitated by colourful floor decals, enabling students to hop, skip and jump from class to class.

“It has increased activity in the school by allowing students to move more naturally through the halls. Hopping, skipping and jumping is how kids naturally move from one place to another; when I look out my office window in the morning as kids walk to school, they are never walking quietly in a line. DWITH gives them the freedom and opportunity to move in a more natural way around the school,” said Chris Good, Principal at École Barrie Wilson in Calgary, AB.

Chris first installed DWITH in 2013 after hearing about pilot projects of the resource, and being intrigued by the concept of turning passive environments into active ones, giving students the opportunity to get active in unexpected areas of the school and at different times during the day, he explained. “Most of all, DWITH just looked like too much FUN and we had to try it,” he said.

Alana Desfosses, a teacher at École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School in Sherwood Park, AB, agrees that DWITH has increased movement, having installed the decals after seeing demos at the Shaping the Future Conference. Along with augmented movement, Alana has noticed that the decals prompt physical challenge and mental engagement in her students while they are in the hallways. “It has been one of the easiest investments for our students’ wellness. Such a simple idea has enhanced the physical environment and has helped to make school fun and engaging!” she said.

Although the decals are semi-permanent, both schools had concerns about placing them: worrying the hallways would turn into chaos; there would be pushing and rough play; it would be a novelty that wears off soon after they’re placed; the decals wouldn’t stand up to everyday wear and tear; or they would interfere with regular cleaning.

Taking a chance however, can lead to wonderfully unexpected results. “Some of the greatest growth and progress can happen when we allow ourselves to get uncomfortable and push past the status quo,” Alana explained. Soon after installing the decals, both schools noticed positive outcomes:

- The students play cooperatively without pushing or shoving; naturally taking turns and encouraging each other!
- They’ve learned that if they are traveling in the hallways during class time, they are to use the decals quietly!
- The spots have held up fantastically to daily buffing, cleaning, foot traffic and sweeping!
- Even after all of these months, the students still enthusiastically use the spots on a daily basis!

- Alana

- For students who are struggling with behaviour or remaining on task, DWITH can often provide them with that extra bit of movement they need during the day to get back on track and be successful.
- We talk to the students about how we need to use the patterns safely, there is still no running or screaming in our halls but

there is hopping, skipping and jumping

- What we have found is that our hallways are actually more orderly than before. This is because as students move down the hallway they want to follow the patterns and go through them
- The patterns help direct traffic in a more proactive way than having school staff constantly reminding students to walk quietly in the halls

-Chris

A large part of the decals’ success may be attributed to student involvement, paving the way for creativity, independence and leadership. “Student autonomy and control is imperative in developing physical, social, emotional and mental health,” said Candace Nykiforuk. Different environments that allow students to move freely support the idea of autonomy, and the opportunity for students to challenge themselves in ways that appeal to them, Candace explained.

At École Barrie Wilson, the Physical Education Specialist works with the Ever Active Student team to plan, design and install the decals, switching them around a few times a year for a refreshing change, Chris explained. “The students take real ownership of the hallway patterns and have a lot of fun planning them and deciding what the next set will look like,” he said, adding that students think of pattern ideas that are more creative and more engaging to kids than adults might.

Alana had a similar situation at her school: “When we told our Health Champions student team that they would get to design a hallway using the decals, they were ecstatic! To this day the pathway designed by our Health Champions is still a favourite of the students and staff alike,” she said. After some discussion among the student team, they decided to design a randomized pattern, allowing for multiple pathways and a variety of difficulty levels, encouraging students to use their imagination to create and follow a pathway of their choosing, she explained.

The environments we operate in provide cues, nudges and incentives that influence our behaviour. Healthy built environments, and tools to expand these environments, supporting movement, creativity, freedom and self-actualization need to be planned and created with health and wellness in mind.

For some excellent research surrounding built environments, movement and health, please visit: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/104013/chapters/Movement-and-Learning.aspx>

To learn more about the Don’t Walk in the Hallway resource and to purchase a set for your school, daycare, library and more, please visit:

[www.everactive.org/dwith?id=680](http://www.everactive.org/dwith?id=680)

For more information about Masasc Isaac and Reimagine Interiors, please visit: [www.reimagineinteriors.ca/projects](http://www.reimagineinteriors.ca/projects) to see school redesigns and how they are bringing school spaces into the 21st century.

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# LIVE ACTIVE SUMMIT

Keynote Speakers • Active Sessions • Knowledge Exchange

## SAVE THE DATE

April 6-8, 2017

Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre  
Edmonton AB

This summit is a catalyst to educate, engage and bring to life active living, active recreation and sport in a school and community setting. It will involve collaborative work around physical literacy and share successful practices from across the province. The goal of this summit is to highlight and experience best practices that have clear tangible outcomes.

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