

healthy schools

WINTER 2019 • ISSUE #11

ALBERTA



Supporting Healthy School Communities!



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IN THIS ISSUE

Another Alberta winter is here to keep us all hardy and resilient! In this edition of Healthy Schools Alberta, we've rounded up some practical tips for maintaining your mental health and well-being, and we're excited to introduce a brand new Ever Active Schools resource. We hope that the stories we've found to share from around the province help your community to be healthy and inspired. We'd love to hear your stories, too! Reach us at info@everactive.org or on social media [@everactiveab](https://twitter.com/everactiveab).

~ The Ever Active Schools Team



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THIS ISSUE, WE ASKED OUR TEAM WHAT THEIR SUPERHERO NAMES AND POWERS WOULD BE. WE ALL CAME TOGETHER TO VOTE BASED ON OUR STRENGTHS AND THIS IS WHAT WE CAME UP WITH... MEET THE EVER ACTIVE FORCE!
CREATE YOUR OWN AT [HTTP://SUPERHEROTAR.FRMIQ.COM](http://superherotar.framiq.com)

MEET OUR TEAM



MR. EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS (AKA BRIAN)

Embodies health and wellness daily!



FEMME FACILITATOR (AKA KATELYNN)

Master of knowledge transference!



THE HARMONY HERO (AKA HAYLEY)

Brings harmony to people, events and activities!



KAPTAIN KEEN (AKA KERRI)

Super strategist with a flourish of positivity!



GAMES MASTER (AKA CHRIS)

Brings fun everywhere he goes!



POSITRON (AKA MELISSA)

Transforms any situation into something positive!



CAPTAIN M. POWER (AKA JAMIE)

Empowering youth through leadership skills!



ISKOTEWEW WOMAN (AKA ANDREA)

Fire woman: fosters change and new growth!



CAPTAIN CALM ROCK (AKA KRISTA)

Brings peace and positivity to all the lands!



CAPTAIN COMMUNITY BUILDER (AKA TRACEY)

Unites communities through active travel and fun!



BRAIN BUILDER (AKA MEGAN)

Increasing mental wellness one person at a time!



GO TO GIRL (AKA LOUISE)

Leading with competence and effortless efficiency!



FLEXIGIRL (AKA KATIE)

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WELLNESS WOMAN (AKA CHESA)

Bringing wellness to the world!



YES MAN (AKA SCOTT)

Always ready to lend a helping hand!



X-CAVATOR (AKA ADRIAN)

Transforms anything into a loose part for risk-taking play!



THE JUBILANT JUGGERNAUGHT (AKA MATT)

Adds an energetic spark to the darkest days!



DR. D (AKA DILSAD)

Soaks in knowledge wherever he goes!



THE INFORMANT (AKA REBECCA)

Gathering information and using it with style!



FIRST LADY OF FINANCE (AKA TERRI)

Fiddle and tweak, tweak and fiddle!



THE CLOSER (AKA KAYLI)

Follows through with flair!



MOM (AKA RHONDA)

Keeps this team of crazy kids in check!



THE SHAPESHIFTER (AKA TITUN)

Always transforming to support the team in new ways!



PLAN YOUR YEAR

2019 Healthy School Community Events

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SHAPING THE FUTURE

Join us at the Chateau Lake Louise from Jan. 30 - Feb. 2, 2019 as we celebrate 10 years of Shaping the Future through connecting, sharing and learning. This year's theme: Honouring the Past, Treasuring the Present, Shaping the Future. #EASSTF.

www.everactive.org/stf

WINTER WALK DAY 2019

On Feb. 6, 2019, join more than 100,000 of your fellow Albertans as we celebrate Winter Walk Day: a day that encourages us to be active outdoors in the winter!

www.shapeab.com/winter-walk-day

RESILIENCY SUMMIT 2019

Join us in November 2019 as we honour youth voice through the two-day Resiliency Summit in Calgary. Stay tuned for details and check out some 2018 highlights.

www.everactive.org/rw

THE ALBERTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION YOUTH RUN CLUB

Start a free, fun and flexible Alberta Medical Association Youth Run Club in your school community this year. Find out more, get free resources and register here:

www.amayouthrunclub.com

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & MENTORSHIP

Our half or full day programs bring together Ever Active Schools and our partners in comprehensive school health to provide professional learning for teachers of all backgrounds. Check out upcoming presentations at Teachers' Conventions around Alberta this February and March!

www.everactive.org/eas-at-teachers-conventions/



Visit www.everactive.org to discover other Ever Active Schools events and projects.



IN THE COMMUNITY

Photos: Nellie Carlson School, Edmonton, left; Painted playway in Brentwood, Calgary, right.

Finding Our Way: Encouraging Active Travel Through Wayfinding

WRITTEN BY TRACEY COUTTS, SCHOOL ACTIVE TRAVEL COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

While roaming my neighbourhood on Halloween night with my favourite furry companion, Sam, I fell deep into thought about the age-old tradition of trick or treating: the roaming from house to house in search of goodies! As children, we learned quickly which houses were open for visits. Glowing jack o’lantern = candy. Simple, straightforward and effective community navigational guides. I wondered if those who started this tradition understood that they would be paving the way for a current trend in information systems called wayfinding.

Wayfinding in Spruce Grove, Alta.



Wayfinding seems to be the word on the lips of many city planners and developers, but what is it? “Wayfinding can be defined as spatial problem solving. It is knowing where you are in a building or an environment, knowing where your desired location is, and knowing how to get there from your present location.” (www.umich.edu/~wayfind/supplements/moreinfomain.htm)

Municipalities like Edmonton use wayfinding as a tool to encourage active transportation by providing visual prompts to popular destinations. They are fun and informative, and they promote walking and wheeling through our built environments. In Spruce Grove, Alta., Beaverbrook Communities is building wayfinding into its new developments to encourage families to travel actively. Opportunely, schools are jumping on the bandwagon.

Wayfinding initiatives can be easily executed to promote walking and wheeling in school neighbourhoods. Simple, fun messages written in sidewalk chalk on popular routes do wonders to engage young active travellers! A project such as this is a great way to get students outside, active and learning in their neighbourhoods. If a more permanent wayfinding measure is desired, a little more planning is involved. A playway of footsteps lives on the sidewalk of Northmount Drive in Calgary through the collaborative efforts of Ever Active Schools, SHAPE AB, the Brentwood Community Association, St. Luke and Captain John Palliser Schools, the City of Calgary, and the Alberta Traffic Safety Fund. This footpath connects the two schools to each other as well as to the community library and recreation centre. Students and community members can find their way to popular destinations by simply following the footsteps!

Wayfinding has a special place in the active school travel toolkit. In its simplest form, it is chalk drawings on a sidewalk. In its best form, it is community members of all ages marking a path for others to find their way to fun, healthy, active choices. ■



Collaborative Communities: Reducing Barriers to Children and Families' Active Recreation

WRITTEN BY KATIE MAHON, PROVINCIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR; AND CHESA CORSIATTO, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

In January 2018, a collaborative initiative launched to create access for children and youth from local school communities to the recreation centre in their neighborhood. Ever Active Schools, Healthy Hearts and Leduc Recreation Centre teamed up to create a strategy to enhance supportive environments for students to engage in physical activity across school and community settings. The initiative proposed to purchase recreation membership passes and house them in school libraries, making these opportunities more accessible to children and families.

Ever Active Schools, Healthy Hearts and Leduc Recreation Centre piloted the initiative with 4 nearby schools from January to December 2018. Partial funding was provided by JumpStart to support access to recreation facilities for low income families. One family recreation pass (2 adults, 3 youth, 2 children) was purchased and housed in each school library for the duration of the pilot. Each family pass could be checked out of the school library for one week at a time. The response from the schools, children and their families was overwhelming: schools reported the passes being checked out every week, sometimes with waitlists stretching months in advance.

"AMAZING!!!!!! OUR CORINTHIA FAMILIES ARE ABSOLUTELY LOVING THE PASSES. WE HAVE A GREAT SIGN-OUT SYSTEM SETUP (CARDS IN A POUCH WITH A LITTLE SCRIBBLER TO RECORD YOUR FUN EVENTS,) AND OUR LIST OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE IT EXTENDS ALL THE WAY INTO NEXT DECEMBER!"

- Shelly McCubbing, Principal, Ecole Corinthia Park School

Similar initiatives are now popping up across the province, with new pilot sites in Lac La Biche, Cochrane and Red Deer. The benefits of this initiative extend to students, families and school communities by reducing barriers to participation in active recreation in a cost effective way, with repeated and shared use of a single pass. By increasing active participation

in a community setting, students and their families are given the opportunity to move together, try new activities and engage in positive physical activity experiences in a variety of settings. With increased exposure to the recreation facility and the programs available, many families have been keen to explore additional opportunities within their community recreation spaces.

At Ever Active Schools, we are inspired by the way that communities come together in support of children and their families, and the efforts made to reduce barriers to participation and community engagement for all peoples. If you're keen on setting up something similar in your community, these are our top 3 tips:

- 1) Reach out to your community recreation centre and share these stories of success.
- 2) Access local community recreation funding to support purchasing recreation centre passes for your local school communities.
- 3) Set up a library check in/out system that works for you!

And of course, don't hesitate to reach out with any questions you might have. Most importantly: have fun! ■



The Great Outdoors and Mental Health

SUBMITTED BY DR. LEE SCHAEFER

We are living in a fast-paced world today that is hard to keep up with. Gone are the days when we used to hear people complain about the number of emails that needed response. The complaints now revolve around keeping up with Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and whatever tomorrow's next best social networking application will be.

This being 'plugged in' is perhaps part of what has created a generation of youth that is highly stressed, anxious and predisposed to what we might call mental health issues. Youth of today are spending more time behind screens and being asked to negotiate their digital identity alongside their offline identity. It's no longer just school work that is stressful, but the production of content online: a clever Snapchat message, a trending hashtag, or a viral video.

Screen time causes a number of documented issues, including attention problems, loss of confidence, and loneliness and depression. While there is a strong backing of research that shows physical activity and outdoor time can help reduce anxiety, depression and other mental health concerns, kids of today are less active and spend less time outside than generations before them.

Since you may need to convince your superintendent, administrator, or colleagues, let's first look at physical activity outdoors as a means to an end. Why go outside? Simply put, it increases physical activity. Being outdoors has also been shown to increase social, emotional and even spiritual outcomes in youth.

If you need more convincing, the outdoors has been associated with cognitive and behavioural development. It also engages all of our senses, enhances interdisciplinary learning opportunities and increases appreciation for the environment. Given the aforementioned issues with depression, anxiety and screen time, this should be enough justification; however, what if we also valued the awe, the unstructured creative play, the learning and the joy that comes from engaging in the outdoors? If you're convinced, but are uncomfortable with knowing how to start enhancing curriculum through the outdoors, start with simple acclimatization activities.

Acclimatizing is getting comfortable with being outdoors and appreciating it. The outdoors can be anywhere outside, but natural settings are best. To start acclimatizing, unplug! Leave devices in classrooms. Be prepared for discovery: not every moment needs to be strategically planned. The outdoors forces students to engage all of their senses and see the interconnectedness of our world, which is often separated into silos in schools and in curriculum.

Some tips for making it easier to get outside:

- Explore your school area to find suitable locations;
- Make it a habit to go outside. Start with short periods and progress;
- Ask questions that create curiosity, i.e. why do leaves fall off trees in the fall?;
- Allow and encourage time to let your students make their own discoveries;
- Provide opportunities for using their 5 senses through imagination and curiosity;
- Work with your students' parents on different school projects that include the outdoors; and
- Reflect on what can be done outdoors that is usually done indoors. Go outside and try it! ■

Meet a Health Champion!



DEL LOMSNES, HEALTH CHAMPION & PHYS. ED TEACHER, RED DEER PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD

"Being a health champion is a big responsibility, but I feel that it's a great job. If you ask parents and teachers what they want most from students, it's for them to be healthy! It's not just physical health - it's mental and nutritional health, too.

"The number one thing as a health champion is that you have to walk the walk. You need to model it. The kids have to see your passion and understand that you truly believe it. They start to choose to be active when they see that you're active.

"I understood at a very early age how important health and activity was to me. I wanted to pass that on to the kids. I enjoy seeing kids being active, developing new nutritional habits. It makes me feel good.

"Each little step you take towards health becomes part of their habits. Activity and healthy eating become just like brushing their teeth: they do it every day. It goes a long way to developing those good habits that last a lifetime." ■

Mental Health in Montréal

WRITTEN BY MEGAN MCCORMICK, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) celebrated their 100 year anniversary this past October with their Mental Health for All National Conference in Montréal, Que. The event boasted an overwhelmingly high number of session submissions, with Ever Active Schools showcasing a poster presentation about our Social and Emotional Learning resource. As a first-time attendee to both Montreal and a national mental health conference, I had some key takeaways from the three day event.

Prevention vs. Treatment

During the opening remarks I met my tablemates, some of whom belonged to an Ontario-based victim services branch and one who was doing research in the field of trauma. It was clear this conference brought together a vast spectrum of stakeholders in the field of mental health. Mental health permeates every single one of our professions, whether it is with whom we work or ourselves.

Opening remarks were given from the CEO of CMHA National and Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Federal Minister of Health. Both touched on the necessity for equitable mental health services throughout Canada, but emphasized that the future is upstream in promoting mental health and reducing mental illness: mental health promotion should begin in primary school and accompany children throughout their school years just as much as literacy and numeracy do. There is no health without mental health.

Engaging Youth in their Mental Health

There was a clear presence of youth engagement within mental health promotion, especially in later adolescents. The Calgary chapter of CMHA showcased their youth-focused event that brings together students from across the city to promote mental health through a dynamic and interactive day. Students from McGill University displayed the many resources and supports they have on their campus, such as a 24-hour peer support line. Student peers are given training to answer these phone calls and provide support and direction to professional services in the school community.

Among these student mental health sessions was a vocalization that we need to provide support prior to high school and university. One student from McGill University emphasized that literacy within mental health should be started in elementary, as it gives youth the power to vocalize the struggles

they will come across later in life.

Meditation is for Everyone

One of my favourite sessions of the entire conference was titled The Promise of Meditation as a Population Health Intervention for Mental Wellbeing, hosted by a PhD and two physicians. Dr. Kiran Saluja shared a personal story of how meditation helped her in recovering from a car accident that had her bedridden for months. Coming from a culture and home that did not recognize mental health or understand its effects on the body, Saluja sought meditation as an outlet for the depression that she felt to be more crippling than the physical effects of the car accident.

Physician Dr. Abhimanyu Sud gained appreciation from the room when he admitted to writing prescriptions for meditation for his patients – not that meditation is to replace medicine; but it is a tool that can support everyone’s mental health, whether or not they experience mental illness. Meditation should be a marker of health as similar as getting your blood pressure checked annually. Perhaps in our lifetime we will soon see physicians asking us how our meditation practice is going during our next yearly physical!

Promotion Can Help Prevention

After three days in historic Montréal surrounded by champions of mental health, I am more encouraged than ever that mental health promotion can lead to prevention of mental illness, increased help-seeking behaviour, and improved quality of life. Encouraging our youth to have a voice in their schools, supporting mental health literacy and providing as many tools as possible will help us become a community and a country that acknowledges and values the mental health of its people.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have experienced this conference, and I’m grateful for the opportunity to implement this work in Alberta and within Ever Active Schools. ■



Safe Winter Cycling

SUBMITTED BY KARLY COLEMAN, BICYCLE TRAFFIC REPORTER, 88.5FM CJSR

Winter cycling is fun, easy, and convenient. All you need is a bit of preparation, a bicycle, and a desire to ride. What does it take to winter ride? A bicycle is necessary, but you don't need an expensive fat bike – just don't put your bike away in the fall! Be sure to check the bike over occasionally to make sure your tires have enough air and your chain and cables are working.

Lights are important as it gets darker earlier and stays darker later into the morning. They are important for two reasons: 1) You need to see where you are going! 2) You need to be seen by pedestrians, vehicle traffic, and other cyclists.

Depending on your location, your comfort level, and the road conditions, you may need to change your tires from smooth "slick" tires to bumpy "knobby" tires. Metal studded tires are useful because they have spikes in them to help you travel over ice. You can choose to only have one on the front or put studded tires on both wheels. Fenders act as a guard to keep snow, mud, and slush from splashing your feet and making them cold.

Winter cycling clothing is often less of an obstacle than you think: if you skate, ski, snowshoe, snowboard, walk, shovel snow, or play outside in winter, it's likely you already have the clothes you need. The critical thing with winter riding is to stay warm and dry. Wear clothes that wick moisture away from your body, such as polyester or merino wool. Dress in layers. Ride slowly but steadily to avoid sweating. Keep your face, hands, and feet warm as they are more exposed to wind and snow. Ski-goggles and a balaclava keep your face warm. Lobster claw mittens are useful because they let you use your brakes and gears but also keep your hands warm and wool socks will do the trick for your feet.

Travelling by bike in winter is very similar to travelling by bike in summer; however, try to stay more upright, keep pedaling, and take corners more slowly. If you do fall, the snow will often help to cushion your fall better than hot, dry pavement; but take some

time to make sure both you and your bike are ok.

Stay hydrated and eat well! Drinking and eating enough is important because you are using a lot of energy winter riding. You'll sweat a lot and be terrifically hungry (bonus!)

Lastly, keep everyone on board with your winter riding. It's important to talk to someone else about your ride: decide on a temperature below which you won't ride; ride only a few days a week; make sure someone else knows your route;

and agree to ride with a friend. Be sure to check the temperature for the entire day so you have enough clothes (remember those layers!). Check in with someone else when you arrive. Remember to talk about how to deal with flat tires or other problems with your bike. More than anything, just enjoy your ride! ■



KARLY COLEMAN DURING A WINTER RIDE

A Youth Run Club Marathon

WRITTEN BY SCOTT BAILEY, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Health Champion Fred Helfmann has been running an Alberta Medical Association (AMA) Youth Run Club program at Chief Old Sun School in Siksika Nation for the past four years. In that time, Fred has seen a lot of different students come through the program, and he has also piloted a number of different ways to get his students moving.

“We started with the whole school running or walking around our track as soon as they arrived off the busses in the morning,” he said.

At that time, the school didn’t have an official daily physical activity (DPA) policy. After approaching his principal and proposing the whole school run and walk, Fred stated that all of the teachers quickly observed that “this was a great way to ensure that every student in each class received a bit of activity and movement in their day.”

Thanks to the morning run and walk program, the school moved on to introducing DPA blocks, first all at the same time and now scheduled within each classroom when the teachers feel they best meet the needs of their students. Over the past few years, Fred has also taken responsibility for leading a boys leadership option each week.

“Basically, I get to work with the most active and sometimes disruptive boys in the school. They need to move, and when they come to visit me in Phys Ed or leadership, it can really bring out the best in them.”

The current Youth Run Club program at Chief Old Sun School is dedicated to this leadership group.

“We have used the warm-ups, games and training plans available on the coaches website,” said Fred while detailing the evolution of his leadership running club.

“For most of the winter, we only have the gym to use, so we’ve had to be creative with how to keep things fun and active

while indoors.”

Last winter, while looking for new ideas and challenges to keep his group motivated, Fred checked the distance from his school to the other elementary school in Siksika Nation. It turns out that you travel exactly 21 kilometres from school to school: the length of a half marathon.

“The students were really interested in the half marathon distance,” Fred said.

With his students hooked, he measured out how many laps of the gym would equal one kilometre and created a tracking tool up on the gym wall. Creating avatars of each leadership student along with replicas of the two school buildings, the leadership group was quickly participating in an ongoing “race” along the half marathon route from school to school.

Keeping the run club program and his leadership group going has been an easy sell to his fellow teachers and administrators.

“Attendance and behaviour both improve on days when the students are running.

“A little headshot on top of a funny running avatar doesn’t seem like a big deal, but it means a lot to the kids as they see their progress over the weeks.”

The school-to-school challenge has been continued again this year in Fred’s leadership classes, and some students are now rounding the corner at their partner school, heading back to Chief Old Sun to complete the full marathon distance. ■

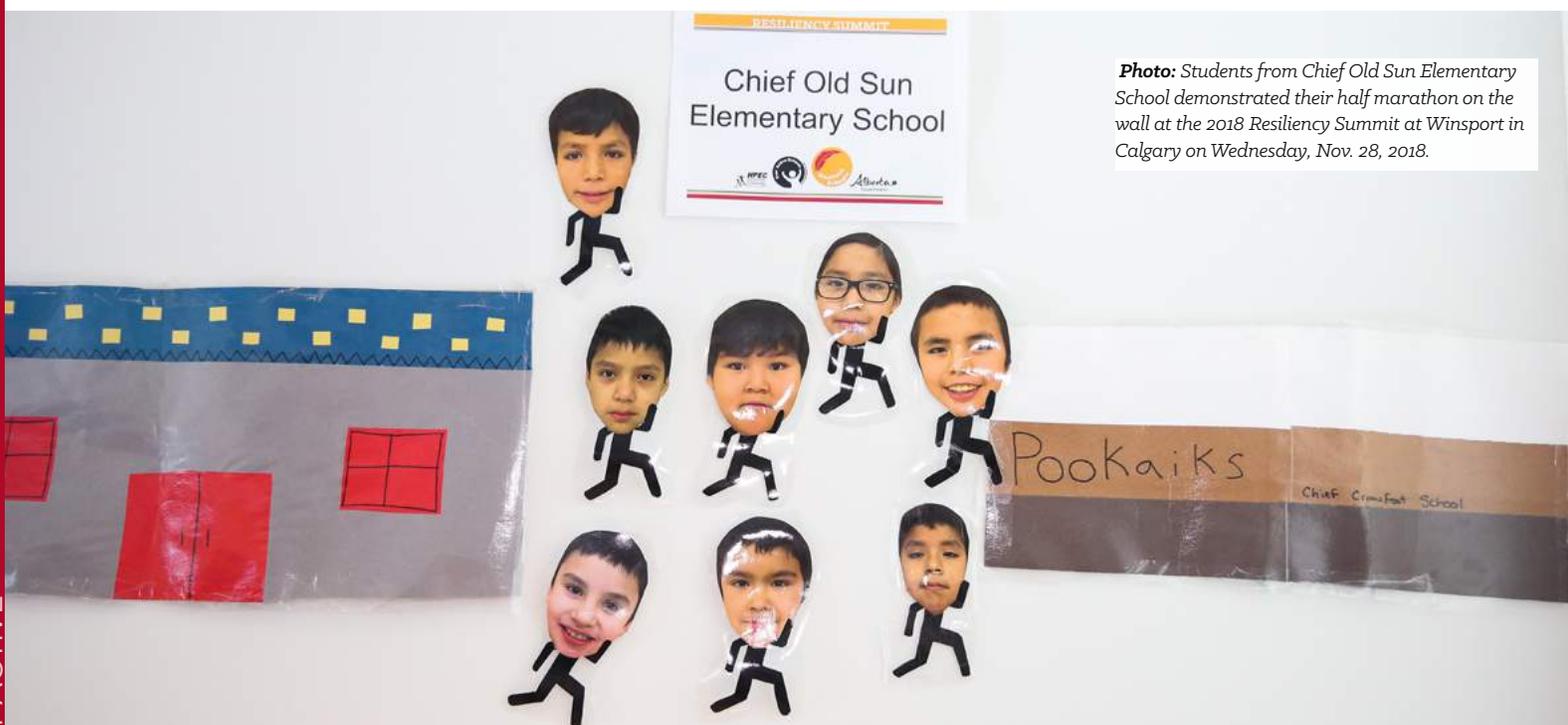


Photo: Students from Chief Old Sun Elementary School demonstrated their half marathon on the wall at the 2018 Resiliency Summit at Winsport in Calgary on Wednesday, Nov. 28, 2018.

Up Your 'After School Activity' Game

WRITTEN BY LOUISE MCCLELLAND, PROVINCIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

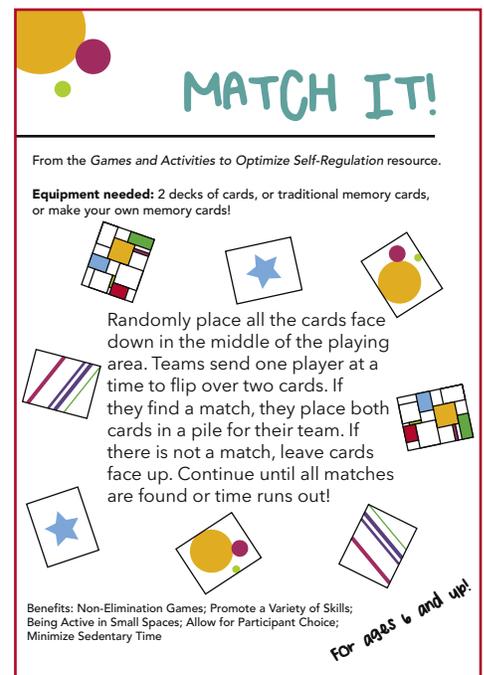
Did you know that Alberta has a new set of Provincial Activity Guidelines for After-School Programs?

According to the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines, children and youth in Canada should be participating in an accumulation of at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity. After-school programs can play an important role in reaching these guidelines, and the new provincial activity guidelines aim to support this.

The daily physical activity policy in Alberta mandates that children in grades 1 through 9 participate in at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity while at school. To reach the national physical activity guidelines, this means that Canadian children should be participating in an additional 30 minutes of activity outside of the school day. The new Provincial Activity Guidelines for After-School Programs recommends that all programs across Alberta, regardless of their focus, allow children to accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Be sure to check out Ever Active Schools or the Be Fit For Life Network on YouTube for a variety of activity videos, like this easy, active matching game! ----->

Alberta Active After School is a province-wide community of practice that is dedicated to supporting physical activity in after-school programs across Alberta. If your school runs an after-school program, or someone in your community does, connect them to this community of practice by reaching out to Louise McClelland at Ever Active Schools (louise@everactive.org). ■



Let's Warm Up! New Poster with New Evidence for Warming Up

SUBMITTED BY BE FIT FOR LIFE NETWORK

Warming up is important: not only does it prepare us physically and mentally for activity, but a proper warm-up can also prevent injuries!

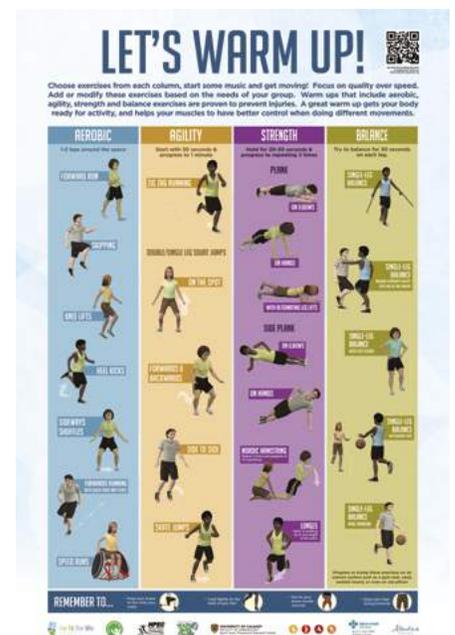
Approximately two-thirds of youth in Alberta report injuries from sports or recreational activities. Injury prevention is key to ensure that we can keep participating in the activities we love and stay healthy!

Randomized control trial studies from a variety of youth sports across different countries have shown that neuromuscular training warm-ups are effective at reducing lower extremity injuries by 36%. More recent studies with Calgary junior high students demonstrate that these warm-ups significantly reduce injuries by over 50% when implemented in their physical education classes.

Neuromuscular training warm-ups include aerobic, agility, strength, and balance exercises. The key is to focus on proper neuromuscular control throughout all exercises in the warm-up, meaning that we need to pay attention to our technique. For example, we want to keep our knee aligned over our ankle when we jump, lunge and change direction.

These 10-minute warm-ups will help develop joint stability, which in turn will translate to proper movement patterns in sport and activities.

The *Let's Warm Up!* poster has been updated to include these evidence-informed warm-up exercises. The poster's development was a collaboration between researchers, physical activity leaders, and school health facilitators from the Be Fit For Life Network, Ever Active Schools, and the Sport Injury Prevention Research Centre at the University of Calgary. The poster provides a menu of options of aerobic, agility, strength and balance exercises and encourages teachers and students to build on the list and get creative! This poster can be downloaded for free at www.everactive.org/warm-up, and hard copies will be available at workshops and teachers' conventions throughout the province. ■





Healthier Lunches With Less Litter

SUBMITTED BY REGISTERED DIETITIANS, ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

On average, students taking a lunch to school will throw away packaging that can create 30 kilograms/67 pounds of litter in a school year.

Lunches with less packaging will help reduce this litter, but they are also a chance to pack healthier foods! Some pre-packaged foods can have more sugar, salt, and fat than foods you choose and package yourself. These ready-to-go options also may not have a high content of fibre, vitamins, minerals, or other nutrients.

As teachers, you can help share this message with students and families within school-wide or classroom-based efforts. Start the conversation when cooking in the classroom, discussing healthy meals and snacks, talking about what your classroom and school recycles (food and non-food items), or learning about what your community or municipality recycles such as paper, plastic, metal and organics.

Remember that as an educator, you have the ability to model this behaviour for your students! They may not see you eating your lunch if you eat in a staff room, but if you walk the talk your students will understand that you believe in what you are discussing. Be mindful to not stigmatize students or families for their food and beverage choices: some students may come from households with constrained financial and material resources, such as poor access to reusable containers and limited influence on household food purchases.

Here are some additional tips to make healthy lunches with less packaging: 1) Have a variety of reusable containers for food and water or milk, cutlery and napkins and a reusable, insulated lunch bag and ice pack on hand to pack lunches and snacks easily and safely. 2) Instead of buying a small pre-packaged lunch with meat and cheese, a fruit drink or pop, and a candy bar, try packing items like whole grain crackers, lean meat, lower milk fat cheese, water, and fruit or cut vegetables into reusable containers.

Try these healthy, made-at-home lunches instead of buying pre-packaged, single-serving items from the store:

- Hummus with a whole grain pita, carrot sticks, celery sticks or apple slices for dipping
- Build your own wrap with a whole grain tortilla, sliced ham, tofu or leftover chicken, low fat cheese, and lettuce, tomatoes, peppers or cucumbers
- Stuff a whole grain pita with leftover beef, chicken, turkey or beans and lettuce, carrots, peppers and other vegetables.
- Repackage yogurt, cheese and milk into reusable containers.
- Include cut up fruit in reusable containers to add to the meals.

These changes may provide more fibre from choosing whole grain crackers, bread or wraps and fruit or vegetables; less unhealthy fat from choosing lean meats and lower milk fat cheese; less sugar from choosing water or milk instead of sugar sweetened drinks.

For more information on lunch ideas go to <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-whats-for-lunch.pdf>, and visit <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page6457.aspx> for 'Nutrition Bites' that can be shared with students and families or in school newsletters. ■

Nutrition Through a Comprehensive School Health Approach

WRITTEN BY KATELYNN THEAL, COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS; WITH SUPPORT FROM ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

Children and youth have different nutritional needs than adults – their growing bodies need a well-balanced diet to support healthy development and to encourage healthy habits as they grow and mature. Parents obviously play a significant role in the food choices available, but childcare facilities and schools can help to provide a positive approach to healthy food environments.

Taking a Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach to making-over the food environment in your school will support student health and learning, and it will incorporate healthy eating into all aspects of the school. When a CSH approach is taken, actions build upon each other to address the whole child and build in opportunities to evaluate, celebrate, and integrate sustainability.

CSH is an internationally recognized approach for building healthy school communities. It encourages actions in four unique but inter-related components: policy (guidelines and practices that promote and support student well-being and achievement); teaching and learning (formal and informal curriculum, resources and associated activities); partnerships and services (supportive working relationships with other community organizations; health, education and other sectors working together to advance health); and social and physical environment (the quality of relationship among and between staff and students; and the buildings, grounds, play space and equipment in and surrounding the school).

So, where to start? Try some of the below actions organized using the four components. Keep in mind that in a real life situation, it is unrealistic to divide actions into a single component: the best actions connect to multiple components.

The Social & Physical Environment

- Offer non-food rewards when recognizing student achievements;
- Provide healthy foods at school and classroom celebrations, events and meetings;
- Create a clean and inviting space where students can eat; and
- Ensure that students have at least 20 minutes to sit and eat lunch on regular and special lunch days or celebrations.

Partnerships and Services:

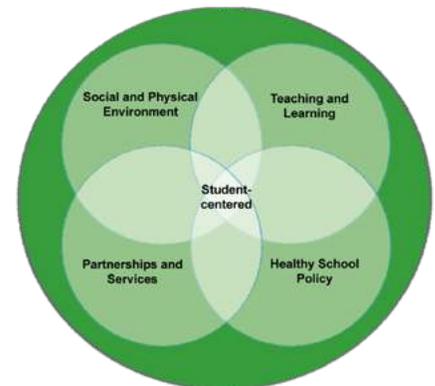
- Source healthy vending options and improve school vending machines - involve students in this process when possible;
- Model healthy eating practices at parent events (e.g. parent-teacher interviews, open houses, concerts, celebrations);
- For a fundraiser, create and sell a healthy cookbook using recipes submitted by students and families; and
- Connect with the community health centre to learn more about nutrition resources and services available to your school.

Teaching and Learning

- Provide Professional Development opportunities for staff related to health and well-being;
- Provide time for teachers to identify linkages between healthy eating and various subject areas (cross-curricular connections);
- Ensure teachers are aware of all the resources available to support them in teaching healthy eating; and
- Facilitate training for teachers and other staff on relevant topics (e.g. cross-curricular connections for healthy eating, resources that support classroom instruction, Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth and related policies).

Policy

- Connect with other schools and review their policies to learn about school nutrition policies that have been successfully implemented;
- Ensure school nutrition policies are consistent with jurisdiction nutrition policies, as applicable; and
- Involve a range of stakeholders in developing your policy (e.g. students, teachers, food service staff and vendors, parents, jurisdiction staff, school administration, health professionals). ■



Some helpful links:

- <http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/index.php/about/comprehensive-school-health>
- www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca
- <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-angcy-overview.pdf>
- Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth: <https://bit.ly/2h2sHL8>



Blackfoot Culture and Black Holes

WRITTEN BY KAYLI MCCLELLAND, CREATIVE MEDIA SPECIALIST, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Photos: Supplied by Corey Gray

In 2017, the founders of the team at the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for their discovery of gravitational waves, which were calculated by Albert Einstein more than 100 years ago in 1916. Gravitational waves, in short, are wiggles or warps in space time – so far they have been detected from black holes and neutron stars.

Corey Gray, a member of the Siksika (Blackfoot) Nation of Alberta, was part of the team of more than 1,000 researchers responsible for the gravitational wave observation. They have made six detections so far.

His mother, Sharon Yellowfly, grew up in Siksika and was a residential school survivor. Gray was able to enlist his mother's help when LIGO prepared to announce their first detection, and she translated the press release into the Blackfoot language. She has translated all detection press releases thus far. Gray does not believe scientific documents such as this have been translated to a First Nations language before.

Gray grew up in Rialto, CA but remembers taking family trips out to Siksika every summer.

"Those were some of my favourite trips, when we would go and stay at our grandparents' house and play outside until the sun went down at 10 or 11 p.m.," he recalls.

"During my high school years there was a show called MacGyver – a show about a guy who knew physics and solved all of his problems with his brain and without a gun. Heck, he even wore a Calgary Flames hat!

"I was hooked," Gray said.

"I wanted to be a native MacGyver!"

In his youth, First Nations scientists were few and far between. Still, Gray attended Humboldt State University (HSU)

in Northern California, graduating in 1997 with a degree in Physics and Applied Mathematics. He spoke to the challenges of studying such a difficult subject and how he coped.

"I think what helped me the most was to not get burnt out," he recalls.

"One of the things that kept me going and saved my sanity was making sure to have 'me time'.

"Whether it was taking a drive out to the beach, going to a powwow, or playing basketball with my friends, I made sure to make time for fun activities. My brain needed this time away from equations and problem sets, and I think this was good for keeping my mind fresh.



"In general, I think being a well-rounded person overall is a good thing, and it is something I look for when hiring people."

Gray found comfort and community during his education in the Indians in Natural Resources, Science and Engineering Program (INRSEP) at HSU.

"When I was homesick my first year away from home, INRSEP saved me; and it introduced me to other native students and clubs."

Since completing his studies and joining the LIGO team as a lead operator, Gray has started doing outreach work with Indigenous youth to inspire them to pursue a career in the sciences like he has.

"I'M INDIGENOUS EVERY DAY."

"I'm Indigenous every day, so my culture is always with me; but as for how it interacts with my scientist identity, I think it has interacted in different ways over the years. Earlier in my career, work was work and I focused on specific tasks as most people do. I might have boomed some powwow music from my car as I pulled into work, but other than that, there was not too much interconnectedness.

"I kept my worlds separate—my culture was more personal and kept outside of work.

"But when I was asked to do outreach work, I began to think more about my identity with regards to my work and career. When I was first asked to speak to the public, it was so hard, and I was definitely reluctant. I'm shy and quiet by nature, but I was pushed to work on my shyness.

"There were not a ton of Indigenous science role models for me growing up, so even though I was a reluctant and shy person

with regards to outreach work, I began to realize the importance of visibility.

"With practice, I became less shy and more comfortable with public speaking. I also took it a step further and started to get to a point where I liked outreach work—especially to Indigenous audiences.

"I think it is huge when youth see people like them doing cool stuff. I want to show Indigenous youth that science can be interesting and cool! I want them to know that if I can pursue a career in science, they totally can.

"If I can reach just one student, that is a success. We need more Indigenous scientists, and so I try to use outreach work as one small way of making this happen. And this isn't just related to science: I think we all can be role models and have something to share with youth."

Gray is a proponent of living a healthy, active lifestyle, even with running a 24-hour physics lab.

"This can be tough," he admits.

"When we are working shifts around the clock and collecting data, the biggest thing for me is sleep.

"Other than sleep, I try to live a healthy lifestyle physically and mentally. I go to the gym regularly. I love to salsa dance; salsa dancing offers a physical workout for your body, but it's also social—which enriches your mind! I also love to hike and backpack. There's nothing like being on a trail, surrounded by a beautiful landscape, and feeling your muscles take you and your gear to amazing places."

Gray attended the Resiliency Summit at Winsport in Calgary on Nov. 29 as a keynote speaker. He told his story to the students, educators and community members in attendance and worked to inspire a new generation of Indigenous scientists. He'll also be speaking at the ten year anniversary of Shaping the Future at the end of January this year in Lake Louise! ■



DON'T WALK IN THE HALLWAY

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\$120

Decals package:

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- Resource handbook

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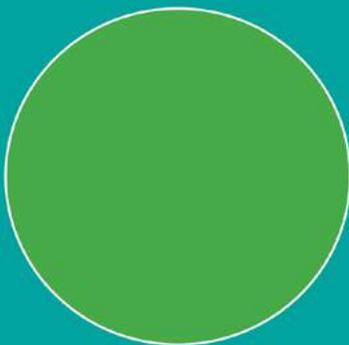
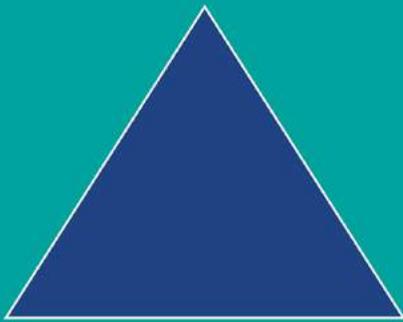
Supplemental cards:

- 24 double-sided cards with active lesson plans using the decals

\$10

Don't Sit Still in Class Electronic Resource:

- Research and rationale for developing standing and multi-level classrooms
- Conversation starters
- Design ideas and implementation techniques



Now with hand and foot decals!

Playing Fair: Equity at Ever Active Schools

WRITTEN BY KATIE MAHON, PROVINCIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Ever Active Schools recognizes the vast and dynamic diversity of children and peoples across Alberta. We value and celebrate difference as being what makes communities vibrant, flourishing and resilient. We honour different ways of understanding, teaching and knowing; our organization and our work is more robust and far reaching for all of the engaging children, youth and adults who have and continue to act as our teachers and support our provincial efforts around healthy children and youth.

While we have long believed this, we are working toward advancing best equity practices by developing policy, actions and efforts within our organization so that we might actually walk the walk of the talk that we talk. Recently, we have written an equity statement as a formal commitment to this work:

"EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS RECOGNIZES AND VALUES DIVERSE ABILITIES, IDENTITIES, CULTURES AND WAYS OF KNOWING. WE PRACTICE A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH, HUMBLY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT WE DO NOT KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS; WE ARE CONTINUALLY LEARNING HOW TO BETTER PARTNER WITH, SUPPORT AND INSPIRE PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE COMMUNITIES."

Ever in flux, as we are always learning and growing, we know that this statement will continue to evolve as we do, and we will remain nimble and amenable to change.

Recently, two of our team members had the opportunity to be in Vancouver, BC to take a training called, Play It Fair, with one of our partner organizations called, Equitas. Equitas' mandate as an international charity is advancing equality, social justice and respect for human dignity in Canada and around the world through education. Equitas has created an innovative program called Play It Fair, which is a play-based tool. Play It Fair supports children to learn about their human rights, and builds participation of children aged 6-12 to be able to address issues such as bullying and discrimination as they learn about inclusion, respect, fairness, acceptance and cooperation. Children learn about their own human rights, how to advocate for these rights and ally to adults who can advocate on their behalf, all through active play and discussions.

Learning opportunities such as these continue to propel our work in equity at Ever Active Schools and in school communities across the province. We are very excited to have Equitas at Shaping the Future in January to share the Play It Fair toolkit and to offer supports and resources for children's human rights education, advancing equity in school communities across Alberta. ■



Photos: Students engage in activities at Healthy Active Schools Symposium (HASS) at Cross Roads Church in Red Deer, Alta. on Oct. 24, 2018





New Resource: Social and Emotional Shuffle!

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

We are always on the lookout for ways to support school communities! Through resources, mentorship, professional learning, online content and more, Ever Active Schools contributes to the healthy development of children and youth by fostering social and physical environments that support improving the health and learning outcomes of students. Therefore, it is always exciting when we have a brand new resource to share!

The Social & Emotional Shuffle is now available on the Ever Active Schools Online Store!

This resource has been designed to help educators bring social and emotional learning (SEL) to the classroom and beyond. The card deck includes 52 emotion cards organized by suit that also have active games, prompting questions, cross-curricular suggestions and conversation sparkers that can be incorporated throughout the year.

The goal of the cards is to help students develop their social and emotional competencies in active and engaging ways. As students develop the ability to name, describe and express emotions, as well as recognize these emotions in others, they strengthen all five of their SEL competencies: self awareness, self management, social awareness, responsible decision making and relationship skills.

Similar in design to the Lucky 7's resource, these cards are adaptable to any grade level and can be used in a variety of spaces and in many creative ways. We look forward to seeing these out in your schools! ■

THE SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL SHUFFLE

A BRAND NEW RESOURCE
FROM EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Adaptable for all ages!

Ever Active Schools
www.everactive.org

HTTP://BIT.LY/2QWA5AO



Education is Our Buffalo

WRITTEN BY ANDREA DION, RESILIENCY COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Tansi, miyo kisipayaw - Hello, it's a good day!

My spirit name is Ohmiyowapikwaniy Iskewew, which translates to Beautiful Flowering Woman. I am a strong Cree woman empowering youth to be the best they can be. I am a proud member of the Samson Cree Nation, located in the lovely lands of Maskwacis. I am a single mother to two beautiful teenagers, ages sixteen and fourteen. My children are my world and my purpose in making the world a happier and more compassionate place. Early in life, I was raised by a hard-working single mother, Nohkum (my grandmother) and numerous extended family members. The man who loved us as his own, a groovy teacher working predominantly in First Nations schools, came into our lives when I was around four years old. With their loving and supportive partnership, my mom convocated as a mature student with her Bachelors of Education when I was 13. I distinctly remember the pride I felt when I was cheering for my mom as she walked across the stage at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium to accept her degree parchment.

Being raised by teachers, my priorities were ingrained in my psyche from a young age: family, school, sports and then the extras, like friends, after school activities and jobs. My ongoing challenge as a student and as a mother has been promoting education and academic success while remaining grounded by traditional Cree values. I would like to share my thoughts on some of the unique challenges First Nations students face in the areas of family and education.

Family structure for our First Nations students is very unique and often involves multi-generational households. I have had students that live with uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins in the same household as their immediate family. At times, this situation may be ideal for co-parenting and developing strong connections to family members; there are also times when situations like this can cause tension for the student. Overcrowding, lack of privacy or access to a quiet study space are some barriers that our First Nations students may be facing. Taking the time to gain an understanding of the student's living situation is beneficial. It is also a great opportunity to

connect with your student to become a champion in their lives. For example, my son resides with my parents and my brothers in a different city from my daughter and I. This multi-generational approach suits our family as he is surrounded by his grandparents and uncles; they are helping me parent, and my son is learning life lessons. I am grateful for the support and unconditional love that exists in our lives.

In respect to learning environments within our First Nations school communities, I have heard the statement that 'education is our buffalo'. This made so much sense to me; this also framed the search for increased education as a necessity for survival in our modern era, as the buffalo were our mainstay of survival generations ago. There are so many institutional hurdles that our First Nations students face, aside from the educational system. I strongly believe that the predictability, measures of achievement and routine that are part of the student experience foster a supportive environment. The pursuit of education becomes a beacon for our First Nations students to achieve a healthier and more positive lifestyle. Education does not always occur in the traditional school house setting. For many of our First Nations students, our traditional ways of learning were based on oral traditions, commonly shared during the winter season; as well as land based, hands-on kinesthetic learning. This experiential learning atmosphere can be very engaging. Some of my best memories are when we did experiments or where I was learning on the land with Elders. Both of my children have been raised with the understanding that they will be attending a post-secondary institution when they graduate high school. I firmly believe that as a mom, my most important role is raising my children to become healthy, happy, people who positively contribute to society as a whole, while remaining true to our traditional Cree values.

Thank you for taking the time to reflect with me, it's been a pleasure to share my humble thoughts and experiences with you. Ekosi, ay hay! ■

Alberta Medical Association Youth Run Club: Free Resource!

WRITTEN BY HAYLEY DEGAUST, PROVINCIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

The Alberta Medical Association Youth Run Club has developed a new resource to help support run clubs across the province: the Practice Plan Builder!

This resource is a compilation of warm-up activities, main skill building activities, stretches and talking tips. Using these four components, you can build your own practice plan on the blank template. The resource also has eight pre-built practice plans broken down specifically by division so that your students can get the most out of their practice time.

The Practice Plan Builder helps students to build their strength, speed and endurance without running laps. Use these activities and ideas inside and out all year round. With pages and pages of warm-ups, activities, stretches and talking tips, you'll have a wide variety of practices for students to participate in.

Special thank you to the Alberta Medical Association, Alberta Blue Cross, MD Financial and Fast Trax Ski and Run Shop for their financial support of the AMA Youth Run Club!



Scan the QR code on your smartphone, or go to: <http://bit.ly/2PJQHpH> to check out the full resource! ■



AMA YRC PRACTICE PLAN
10-12

WARM UP
4 Leaf Clover
Place 4 pylons in a large square and give them a number between 1 & 4. Each pylon is given a different warm up activity (high knees, squat, lunge, bum kicks). Split the group so there are equal numbers of runners at each pylon. Transitioning from the pylons will be clockwise and will require a different locomotor skill (sprint, gallop, jog, walk, backwards run). Coach is placed in the middle and once back to pylon 1, players sprint to the coach, give them a high-five and run backwards back.

MAIN ACTIVITY
Tempo Run
A tempo run helps the runner prepare their body to maintain their "race-pace." Start with a 10-minute easy jog warm-up followed by the tempo run. The pace will be only slightly faster than the runner normally does in their group runs. The length of the tempo run will depend on the distance the runner is preparing to race. For a 4.2K race, a tempo run of 10 minutes is sufficient. For a 5K distance, a 10-15 minute tempo run will do. It's best to have an adult supervise this kind of training to ensure the youth do not overdo it.

COOL DOWN
Stretches:
Above head stretch, hip flexor, lower back, standing groin stretch, inner thigh stretch, hamstring.

TALKING TIP
Getting Rid of a Side-Stitch
Slow down a bit, but keep running. Breathe in through your nose and blow out hard through your mouth for 30 seconds or until the stitch goes away.

23



Photo: Students from Balwin School learn to skate at the Downtown Community Arena in Edmonton, Alta on Oct. 18, 2018.

Loving Winter: Sharing Snow Sports Inside and Outside of the Classroom

WRITTEN BY SCOTT BAILEY, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

If your administrator visited your classroom at the end of the day to let you know you were now in charge of the school skiing and snowboarding program and trip, would you feel confident or terrified?

While there is no requirement in the physical education program of studies for students to learn to ski, snowboard or cross-country ski, all three of these sports are great examples of “do it daily for life” activities that are quite accessible across Alberta.

Including snowsports in a physical education program is appropriate to nearly every age grouping, meets curricular outcomes and is supported in the Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools. Besides, we might as well make use of the snow that’s on the ground for six or seven months a year!

Knowing that teacher confidence with a topic or activity is a prime factor in whether activities are successful or not in the school setting, Ever Active Schools and others have set out to provide tools and resources to help build that base.

Ski, Skate and Slide! from Ever Active Schools offers two different resources to teachers looking for support with physical education and physical activity in the snow and ice environment. A free download highlights relevant curriculum connections and safety guidelines for both aquatic and winter activities, while our newly launched activity cards, available on our online store, set-out simple environments that teachers and facilities can set-up for students to practice in and stay engaged following formal lessons.

“You don’t have to be an expert,” said Ever Active Schools’ Scott Bailey, the creator of the resources.

“With some creativity and good planning on the ski hill, cross-country ski trails or in your local school yard or skating rink, teachers can use cones, bean bags, tennis balls and other

inexpensive materials to create safe and engaging environments that students can practice in once they’ve learned the basics from a qualified instructor or coach. Even better, you as the teacher can practice alongside your students, modelling how important it is to try new activities and that you can develop new skills at any age.”

Finally, an exciting new development is taking shape this winter to support school programs in the snow and ice: two-time paralympian John Leslie has worked alongside Ever Active Schools through the development of *Ski, Skate and Slide!*, and is now working away at starting his own charity, *Loving Winter*, that will connect professional athletes and role models with school kids at a grass-roots level.

“Most athletes end up never winning a medal; it’s actually only one person every four years that does,” said John.

Loving Winter will offer a nine-day program that schools can use in advance of a ski, snowboard or cross-country skiing excursion, delivered in phys. ed and the arts, to better prepare students and teachers while connecting professionals in the industry and competitive circuits to schools to build excitement and basic skills.

“Access to education and access to resources is where I plan to start,” said John, who will strive to offer his program free of charge to as many schools as possible thanks to support from sponsors and industry partners. You can follow the progress of this cool initiative at www.lovingwinter.org. ■



FEATURE STORY

Teachers of Tomorrow

WRITTEN BY EMILY WILLIAMS, UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY; KERRI MURRAY, PROJECTS TEAM LEAD, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS; AND DR. SHELLY RUSSELL-MAYHEW, UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

The Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary recently introduced a mandatory Comprehensive School Health (CSH) course as part of the core curriculum in the Bachelor of Education (BE) Program. The CSH framework is used in the course to highlight the need for a whole-school approach to wellness, and to prepare teachers for their roles as both health educators and wellness champions.

One assignment titled *Letter to Your Future Teacher Self* asked students to reflect on a) the impact of the course on their emerging identity as a teacher, b) how the course impacted them personally in terms of their health attitudes and behaviors, and c) how the course impacted their plans as a teacher.

As incoming members of your staff teams, the expectations, concerns, and aspirations of pre-service teachers are important to the wellness fabric of the school community. Among numerous themes extracted from the letter assignment, two were particularly noteworthy in this respect: the perceptions of teacher wellness and self-care, and the demanding nature of teaching.

“I have realized that if I’m going to reach my full potential as a teacher, I will have to make a commitment to making conscious decisions to support my overall wellbeing.”

“Students need a stable teacher to support their own stresses. I will need to also ensure I have the same connections to support my own mental well-being.”

Self-care and living a balanced lifestyle were repeatedly mentioned by pre-service teachers in their letter

“ I think that teachers are our most important resource for having students reach their full potential. We know that students that are healthy are really good learners, and we know that teachers who are healthy make better teachers. I think if we can influence our future teachers to have a holistic view of their role in terms of a child reaching their potential - not just academically, but in all the ways of wellness - then we actually can potentially create a society where there's less suffering, and where students are well, and active, and kind and contributing, valued citizens to the world.”

– Dr. Shelly Russell-Mayhew, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary

assignments. Pre-service teachers continually noted that healthy teachers are better at their jobs, and in order to take care of their students, they needed to take care of themselves. Knowing that wellness is important to this group, seasoned teachers acting as partner teachers or practicum supervisors may notice BEd students or recently hired teachers trying to find ways to incorporate this into their teaching practice.

“I HAVE REALIZED THAT IF I’M GOING TO REACH MY FULL POTENTIAL AS A TEACHER, I WILL HAVE TO MAKE A COMMITMENT TO MAKING CONSCIOUS DECISIONS TO SUPPORT MY OVERALL WELLBEING.”

“Teacher burnout is a reality, and from how hard we worked during our practicums, I have a real fear that you will neglect your health as you struggle through the first few years.”

“If you’ve learned anything from your research into staff wellness it’s that an incredibly high number of teachers also feel stressed out just like you.”

The idea that burnout in teaching is inevitable was mentioned multiple times in the letters. In the course of pre-service teachers’ learning experiences, the message is prevalent that the teaching profession is exhausting and draining. This undertone is concerning, given that the expectations teachers bring to their classrooms often find a way of fulfilling themselves and can impact the social environment and culture of the school community.

“TEACHER BURNOUT IS A REALITY, AND FROM HOW HARD WE WORKED DURING OUR PRACTICUMS, I HAVE A REAL FEAR THAT YOU WILL NEGLECT YOUR HEALTH AS YOU STRUGGLE THROUGH THE FIRST FEW YEARS.”

These perceptions parallel emerging conversations around in-service teacher and staff wellbeing and serve to reinforce the importance of considering it across multiple levels of the education system. Whether pre-service teachers completing practicums, early career teachers, or seasoned

professionals, wellness can be fostered by school communities collectively, and mutually supported by staff therein.

Practicing teachers can:

- normalize fears regarding the taxing nature of teaching, yet also have conversations that remind colleagues of their passion for education and why they made the decision to enter the profession (i.e., the joy of teaching);
- find and implement strategies that lessen the daily stressors inherent in being a teacher so that these stressors do not accumulate and become overwhelming (e.g., share lesson plans, classroom management strategies and resources);
- acknowledge and work to reduce the stigma associated with colleagues seeking support (i.e. reserve judgement around ability to cope when help is sought); and
- facilitate conversations that focus on strengths, rather than deficits (e.g., successes, positive experiences, and available support tools).

Administrators can:

- foster mentorship relationships where connections are built to encourage both peer support and access to educational resources (e.g., orienting new teachers to the physical layout of the building, supporting emotional wellness, normalizing anxieties, etc.);
- support staff to connect to the moments that sustain them in their teaching practice (i.e., relationships with peers, light bulb moments with students, feelings of validation);
- encourage a balanced approach to extra-curricular commitments, where activities are aligned with the staff member’s interests and teaching motivations (e.g., coaching, music club, etc.), without inducing overwhelm; promote autonomy by including staff in ongoing school-based decisions; and
- let staff know that asking for help is welcomed.

Parents and community members can:

- take active volunteer roles in the school community to lessen the load on teachers and gain empathy for their experiences; and
- extend social-emotional learning occurring in classrooms to the home setting (i.e., learn about and practice strategies utilized to express and regulate emotions in school).

The responsibility for supporting teacher and staff wellbeing does not lie solely within the K-12 education system, but also with the institutions that surround it. Bachelor of Education programmes have a clear role in setting up their students for success when they enter the profession, and being aware that their students hold these expectations of their roles is crucial. In response to these expectations, the Werklund School of Education has embedded teacher wellbeing throughout the programme, framing it in the discovery of “the joy of teaching” through a video blog case study. Consideration is also given to the structure of the course to optimize balanced workloads and the faculty is working to address the culture and discourse of burnout throughout the degree. ■



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