

healthy schools ALBERTA

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Supporting Healthy School Communities!

ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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ADVERTISING

Please contact
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ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Ever Active Schools is celebrating 15 years this year! We hope you'll enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together. Have a great fall semester with your students and we hope you find some useful information within *Healthy Schools Alberta*.

~ The Ever Active Schools Team



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2015-16 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Ever Active Schools is offering 11 new professional learning opportunities. Check them out at: www.everactive.org/professional-learning-opportunities.





I was on a healthy, active journey backpacking through Europe.

BRIAN TORRANCE, Director



I was completing high school in Ontario while enjoying both competing in and coaching gymnastics.

KATELYNN THEAL, After School Hours Coordinator



As a young teen, I was tearing up the soccer fields in Ottawa.

MEGAN MCKINLAY, Physical Literacy Coordinator



Going right into those awkward teen years! But I was just thrilled to be making money babysitting and getting some freedom from the 'rents!

CHESA CORSIATTO, Educational Assistant



I was in Grade 6, running, playing soccer and dancing.

HAYLEY DEGAUST, Assistant Provincial Projects Coordinator



I was in my third year at the University of Calgary, living with my three best friends and well-adjusted to campus life before the reality of graduation hit.

KERRI MURRAY, Healthy School Communities Provincial Projects Coordinator



I had finished my first year at Lakehead University and was getting ready to spend the summer working in Bagotville, QC.

CHRIS FENLON-MACDONALD, Healthy School Communities Education Coordinator



15
YEARS SUPPORTING HEALTHY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES!



I had just graduated from university and started my first job teaching kindergarten and junior high PhysEd in Two Hills, Alberta.

KIM HLEWKA, Comprehensive School Health Coordinator



I was a stay-at-home Mom raising our two active children.

RHONDA SCHILBERG, Administrative Assistant

MEET OUR STAFF

In honour of our 15 year anniversary, we've pulled photos of our staff from 15 years ago and asked what they were doing at the time. Below, Lois and Brian give us a snapshot of Ever Active Schools, then and now.

"In 1999, Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation provided the Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC) with a grant to develop the criteria of an active living school and to establish a recognition program for schools working towards an active living model in their community. At the annual fall HPEC meeting, in a tumble of brainstorming, the idea of using A (Activity) + B (Benefits Health) + C (Cooperation) and D (Do it Daily) = E led to the naming of Ever Active Schools, an initiative to support Alberta students in living healthy and active lifestyles."

LOIS VANDERLEE, past Ever Active Schools Liason

"Today, with nine staff members—and growing—and offices in Calgary and Edmonton, Ever Active Schools, alongside provincial partners, provides support to 920 school communities in all 61 school jurisdictions in Alberta. Ever Active Schools fits within the mandate of three government ministries—Alberta Culture and Tourism, Health and Education—and collectively impacts student health and learning outcomes."

BRIAN TORRANCE, Director



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Ever Active Schools Projects Updates

Ever Active Schools is excited to announce the **21ST CENTURY SPACES FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS** project. Partnering with organizations to leverage the health promoting work of many, this project aims to influence current and future school design. This project involves two initiatives: Don't Walk in the Hallway, which promotes the benefits of active between-class transport, and Don't Sit Still in Class, which increases opportunities for spontaneous student movement through flexible classroom design. For more information, to take part in our stakeholder survey, or to get involved, visit www.everactive.org/twenty-first-century-spaces-for-21st-century-learners.

Ever Active Schools' 2015-16 **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES** are available to book on our website at www.everactive.org/professional-learning-opportunities or by email at info@everactive.org. We are offering 11 new sessions, which can be accessed for conferences, conventions, professional development days, staff or parent council meetings or be tailored to meet your individual needs. Find out more at www.everactive.org/professional-learning-opportunities.

Make meaningful and lasting connections with professionals in education, health, recreation and active living at our annual conference, **SHAPING THE FUTURE**. The conference takes place from January 28-30th, 2016, in Kananaskis, Alberta. Hear from experts in the field on everything related to comprehensive school health and be engaged by our keynote speakers, who bring something unique each year. Learn alongside others with the shared goal of supporting student well-being. Read more about the conference at www.everactive.org/shaping-the-future-2016.

The **HEALTHY SCHOOLS HUB** project is well underway. The hub will be an online environment where school teams can interact and access customized support to develop healthy school communities. Log in with your school team for free and discover the benefits of this new tool! Visit <https://portal.everactive.org/> to give it a try and provide any feedback to kerri@everactive.org.

Visit www.everactive.org/projects to discover other Ever Active Schools projects. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 5-9, 2015

International Walk To School Week

OCTOBER 22-24, 2015

2015 Alberta Recreation and Parks Association Conference

OCTOBER 2015 - JANUARY 2016

Healthy Active School Symposia

JANUARY 28-30, 2016

Shaping the Future Conference

MAY 12, 2016

Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC) Conference



IN THE COMMUNITY

Gardening and Growing at Piikani Secondary School

SUBMITTED BY KATELYNN THEAL AND MEGAN HUNKA, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

The Piikani Secondary School is located in rural Brocket, Alberta, on the Peigan Nation reserve and supports students from kindergarten to Grade 12. The school's staff wellness team, with the support of Ever Active Schools, hosted a wellness forum on May 14, 2015, to help advance the community's wellness goals.

Members of the community voiced concerns about the nutritional value of foods served at the school cafeteria. An Elder at the forum said, "The food we ate back then was pure. Today, it's totally different."

Given the rural nature of the reserve's location, fresh fruit and vegetables are not locally available. Residents of the reserve have to drive half an hour to the nearest grocery store, which isn't an option for a large portion of the population.

At the forum, the staff wellness team highlighted the school's greenhouse as an excellent opportunity to grow local produce, which could be used in the school cafeteria and sold at local farmers markets. In the past, the greenhouse functioned as a classroom space to teach horticultural classes, but it has the potential to help fulfill

At the forum, the staff wellness team highlighted the school's greenhouse as an excellent opportunity to grow local produce, which could be used in the school cafeteria and sold at local farmers markets.

the need for fresh produce. Ever Active Schools and the Piikani Nation Secondary School staff have committed to a number of

greenhouse upgrades, including winterizing the structure and creating community garden plots adjacent to the greenhouse.

Community gardens create a sense of ownership, foster the development of community relationships and can be a focal point for community gatherings and social engagement. A year-round greenhouse would educate Piikani youth on where their food comes from, as well as teach them about healthy diet and lifestyle options.

Ever Active Schools is excited to embark on this journey with the Piikani school community! ■



BE WELL



Healthy Schools Start on the Inside: How healthy school employees can create healthy school communities

SUBMITTED BY ALBERTA SCHOOL EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLAN (ASEBP)

In the quest for healthier students, it's important to look at how an entire school community can influence health, wellness and education outcomes for children and youth. For the Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan, this means exploring how employee health impacts a school community.

"It is so important to address the health of school employees," says Krista Sheehan, a registered nurse and Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan Health Advisor. "Healthy school employees are more effective in both their work and personal lives, and they can encourage those healthy behaviours in those around them."

This perspective aligns with the comprehensive school health approach, an internationally-recognized method for building healthy school communities. School staff and administrators play a key role in the approach by creating supportive environments and role modelling for peers and students. This model embraces a culture of wellness, where everyone in the community feels supported in their health and wellness.

At Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan, supporting comprehensive school health means working with school jurisdictions to promote and support employee wellness. By partnering with school jurisdictions across the province, Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan is able to help jurisdictions address their unique health goals. This can include smaller projects, like helping school jurisdictions create supportive environments for their employees, or it can involve more complex initiatives like assisting with the planning and

implementation of an entire employee wellness program.

At an individual level, you can act as a health role model by recognizing how your behaviour has an impact on those around you and making choices that support your health and wellness. This can be as simple as making healthy snack choices or encouraging healthy potlucks at work. It can also be more formal and include participating in wellness committees at work or planning healthy events for fellow staff members.

A focus on staff wellness is not just great for employees and students, it can also have many benefits for employers. Research shows that school employees, like those in other sectors, are more likely to report high job satisfaction and a better ability to handle day-to-day stress when wellness is valued and incorporated into the daily work environment.

A healthy school community must be healthy for everyone. It is truly win-win when support staff, administrators and educators can all work together to create a culture of wellness for their school communities.

For more information, contact health@asebp.ab.ca or visit www.asebp.ab.ca. ■

A healthy school community must be healthy for everyone.



GET ACTIVE



Indoor and Outdoor Activities

SUBMITTED BY TRACY LOCKWOOD

Try these fun indoor and outdoor activities with your students!

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

Builders and Bulldozers

Equipment: Pylons of all sizes.

Game Play: Split the group into two teams: builders and bulldozers. On the signal to go, the builders move around and set up the pylons. The bulldozers use their hands to knock down the pylons. This continues for a set amount of time and then the two groups switch roles. After the first round of play, invite participants to knock down the pylons with their elbows and place them back up using their knees. Be creative and think of other ways that the pylons can be knocked down and picked up. Ask your participants for ideas.

Alternative: If you don't have enough pylons, consider using hoops and beanbags. In this case, the builders place the beanbags inside the hoops and the bulldozers take the beanbags out of the hoops.

Snake Pit

Equipment: Two pylons for each group of three or four participants, music, music player and an obstacle-free space.

Game Play: Divide students into groups of three or four. Have each group line up behind a pylon along the sideline. Invite one student from each group to stand opposite their team on the other sideline behind a pylon. The space between the two pylons is the 'snake pit.' When the music starts, the person at the front of the line runs across the snake pit to the other side and gives their teammate a high-five. After receiving the high-five, that person runs across the snake pit and high-fives the next person in line. This continues until the music stops, and the student caught in the middle of the snake pit performs a balance as called out by the teacher. Have the students in the snake pit hold the balance for 5-10 seconds, then start the music again and the students continue running. Continue the game for five to seven minutes to raise heart rates and warm up the body.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

A-Z Scavenger Hunt

Equipment: One sheet of paper per group of two with the alphabet written on the left-hand side and one pencil or pen for each pair.

Game Play: Invite pairs to find objects in the school grounds beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Have them write the name of the object beside the appropriate letter on the paper. The objective is for each pair to find at least one object for each letter of the alphabet before the signal is given for the groups to come in. Happy hunting!

Mission Possible

Equipment: One "Mission Possible" sheet for each group of three or four, one clipboard per group (if available), one pencil or pen per group.

Game Play: Type out a list of 8-10 activities that each group must perform to make the "Mission Possible" sheets. Group members must stay together while performing each activity and can only move on to the next activity once everyone in their group has completed the activity. Use the space that you have to come up with the activities—playground, trees, stairs, etc. Once the group performs the activity, they check it off of the 'Mission Possible' list. See some sample ideas below:

- Perform 10 push-ups on a bench or wall
- Slide down the playground slide twice
- Run to the farthest tree in the school grounds and back
- Touch a tree, a fence and a swing
- Squat in file formation. The last person leapfrogs over the other group members, then squats at the front of the line. The group does a total of three rotations
- Perform 10 tricep dips at three different benches
- Stretch at least four body parts
- Cross the monkey bars from one end to the other with your feet off the ground. ■



Photos: (Top row, left to right) Lydia, Matthew, Stoney Creek Program students, Rhiana, Jack, (bottom row, left to right) Justine, Stoney Creek Program students, Fraser, Stoney Creek Program students, Joshua.

Tips from AMA Youth Run Club Participants

SUBMITTED BY HAYLEY DEGAUST, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

These AMA Youth Run Club participants have at least a year of running under their belts and they have some great tips to offer new runners!

1. "Wear good running shoes." – Emily, Grade 5, Forest Green School
2. "Always look where you are going so you don't crash into anything." – Matthew, Grade 3, Panorama Hills School
3. "Have a water bottle to drink from so you don't get a funny feeling in your throat." – Rhiana, Grade 3, Panorama Hills School
4. "Don't run too fast or you'll run out of breath." – Joshua, Grade 3, Panorama Hills School
5. "Keep your body still and control your breathing." – Ben, Grade 6, Stoney Creek Program
6. "Motivate yourself and never say you can't do it." – Olivia, Grade 4, Stoney Creek Program
7. "Run as fast as you can to the finish line." – Ella, Grade 2, Stoney Creek Program
8. "Warm up before or you'll be very sore the next day." – Avery, Grade 1, Stoney Creek Program
9. "Build your stamina over time with lots of practice." – Eric, Grade 1, Stoney Creek Program
10. "Keep your body weight over your belt." – Jack, Grade 5, Wheatland Elementary School
11. "Remember to listen to your body." – Justine, Grade 6, Wheatland Elementary School
12. "Don't try to keep up with one of your best friends. Run your speed." – Nathan, Grade 5, Wheatland Elementary
13. "Add a bit every time! Even if it's 100m or 30 seconds, it will help you out when it counts." – Shelby, Grade 6, Wheatland Elementary
14. "Be active every day." – Fraser, Grade 6, Westglen
15. "Keep your legs moving and don't overstride." – Lydia, Grade 6, Westglen.

The AMA Youth Run Club is a free, school-based running program designed to get children and youth active. If your school already offers a running program, that's great! We can offer free resources, incentives and support through our provincial run club coordinator. Visit www.everactive.org/alberta-medical-association-youth-run-club for more information or to register or email hayley@everactive.org. ■

Help your students reach for better posture today!

What is posture?

Posture is so much more than not slouching or standing up straight. Posture is actually how you align your entire body to keep upright against the constant force of gravity.

Having good, strong posture is important because it:

- keeps our bones and joints aligned, allowing muscles to work properly
- allows our body to use less energy for daily tasks
- helps decrease wear on joints that can result in arthritis
- prevents backache and muscle pain
- increases our spine's flexibility and stress tolerance
- makes us look better.

Health Risks of poor posture

Youth in particular are at risk. Here's why ...

- text-neck (neck strain resulting from keeping the head and neck flexed forward for long periods of time) is associated with handheld devices
- weak posture is associated with prolonged sitting while reading, using computers and watching television
- neck, back and shoulder strain is associated with overweight, oversized back packs that are improperly worn.

Straighten Up Alberta

Straighten Up Alberta is a simple, fun series of stretches designed and completely dedicated to improve posture in just minutes a day.

Straighten Up Alberta can be incorporated into your classroom routine as a mental health break, a warm up/cool down before or after exercising, an indoor activity when weather conditions are severe or a component of Wellness Education and Daily Physical requirements.

Try it!

STRAIGHTEN UP



- standing tall, feet together, align your ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles
- pull your belly button in towards your spine



CORE TWIST

- standing with feet shoulder width apart and arms out to the side
- turn your head to look at one hand and slowly twist your spine to watch your hand go behind you. Relax before slowly returning to centre, do this twice on each side



FULL REACH

- gently sweep your arms out to the side and up over head
- touch your hands together and draw your shoulder blades together
- slowly sweep your arms back out to your sides breathing in and out
- repeat three times

SHOULDER PULL



- from Straighten Up put your hands behind your head
- gently press your head against your hands and count to two before letting go
- relax, breathe and do three more times

TIGHT ROPE LUNGE



- from Straighten Up step to the front with one leg
- bend your front knee forward so your knee is over your ankle
- balance for 20 seconds and do the same with the other foot forward

TRIANGLE STRETCH



- stand with your feet wider than your shoulders
- lean to one side until your elbow can rest on your bent knee
- breathe in and slowly raise your other arm above your head
- your body should form a triangle
- count to 10 and do the other side!

To use the program in your class visit
straightenupalberta.com

Straighten Up Alberta is a community service initiative of the Alberta College and Association of Chiropractors.



EAT
SMART

A Look into the Current School Food Environment in Alberta

SUBMITTED BY KAYLA ATKEY, ALBERTA POLICY COALITION FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION

Fifty-three per cent of respondents indicated that students at their school have access to food programs or initiatives at a free or subsidized rate.

School food programs and initiatives are offered at schools across Alberta, showing up in the form of school gardens, hot lunches, extra-curricular cooking classes, community kitchens, milk programs and 'emergency' food provisions for hungry students.

A recent survey conducted by the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention, Alberta Food Matters and the University of Alberta School of Public Health gives us a look into the food environments in Alberta schools. The survey was sent to 1,350 Alberta principals and had a 27 per cent response rate. The survey explored principals' perceptions of their school's current food environment.

Several key findings include:

- 53% of respondents indicated that students at their school have access to food programs or initiatives at a free or subsidized rate
- 40% of survey respondents indicated that lunch programs are offered to their students
- 62% of respondents believe that hunger relief at their school is being addressed through the provision of emergency food by teachers
- 50% of respondents did not have long-term, sustainable funding available for food programs or initiatives at their school. >

Healthy eating environments are critical to the success of students. Currently, a number of provincial resources exist that can help guide decisions around the appropriate foods to serve for optimal health and learning for Alberta students.

For additional insight into principals' perceptions of the school food environment and the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention's efforts to promote healthy school food in Alberta, visit www.apccp.ca. To learn more about the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines and school nutrition, visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/2925.asp. To seek out funding to support healthy food environments, visit www.breakfastforlearning.ca/.

References

"June 2015: Principals' Perceptions of the School Food Environment in Alberta." Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention. <<http://abpolicycoalitionforprevention.ca/our-focus/surveys.html>> ■

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



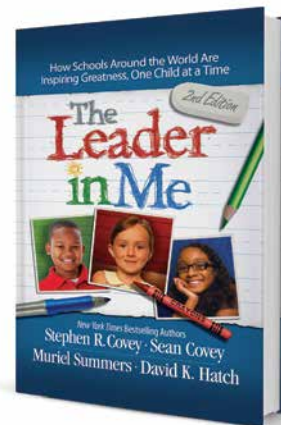
Our instructors will bring messages and materials on safe snowmobile and off-highway vehicle riding practices, safety, legal requirements and environmental respect. Our presentations can be tailored to individual classes or full assembly presentations. Contact the ASA today to book for this year or next.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



"The Leader in Me shows that the leadership we need to transform education is not outside our schools, but within them and especially in the children themselves."

– Sir Ken Robinson

Download the 1ST CHAPTER of *The Leader in Me*, at
TheLeaderinMe.org/book



JOIN THE CONVERSATION:

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 [twitter @theleaderinme](https://twitter.com/theleaderinme) #TLIM



Nature Play

Nature play is “play that is intrinsically motivated, freely chosen and personally directed” in natural environments (adapted definition, Hughes 2012).

The activity featured below is one of many developed by the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association and their research partners in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta, in an effort to make nature play an easy, go-to option. Find the complete set of cards with activities for every season at <http://arpaonline.ca/program/activities/>. ■



Supplies

Boxes
Mesh
Different sized
containers

Activity: Bug Motel

Season

Fall/Spring/Summer

Time

60+ minutes

Age

6 + years

Directions

1. Staple the mesh on the backside of the box.
2. Fill the box with different sized containers and add natural items
- think grass, sticks, etc.
3. Place your bug motel outside and see who comes for a visit!

Variation: Take a piece of cardboard and leave it on the grass overnight. See which creatures are under the cardboard the next day.

Discussion

- What natural items did the bugs like best?
- How many different bugs can be found in the motel?



Invest in your students' health

www.everactive.org/online-store <<>>

> RECIPE CARD LESSON PLANS

30+ lessons, covering the five dimensions of the Alberta K-12 Physical Education Program of Studies, printed on convenient and durable recipe card sized paper.



Available:

- K-3 first & second set
- 4-6 first & second set
- 7-9
- 10-12
- French - K-3 & 4-6

< FRENCH RESOURCES

1, 2, 3 on bouge! - A resource developed by Fédération du sport francophone de l'Alberta, containing 18 cards that support daily physical activity.



< **French Recipe Card Lesson Plans** (K-3 & 4-6) - 30+ physical activity lessons.

> SNACK & ACTIVITY BITES

Learn some healthy eating and physical activity tips while playing your favourite card game with your family or in the classroom.



< PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Discover our professional learning opportunities in the areas of comprehensive school health, physical education, daily physical activity, physical literacy, building healthy relationships, staff wellness and more! We offer 1.5 hour to full day sessions. To book, visit: <http://ow.ly/Hnr9n>.



> DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES



< **Daily Physical Activity Bins** are grade specific and include equipment for small-space activities, all stored in a plastic tote.

Daily Physical Activity Greatest Hits > is jam packed with over 60 pages of activities to support the implementation of daily physical activity.



< FREE RESOURCES

Looking for free resources?
For activities, posters and more, visit:
www.everactive.org/resources-1.
To see activities in action, visit:
www.youtube.com/EverActiveSchools.



Ever Active Schools

Supporting healthy school communities



Music and Movement Lesson Plan: Grades K-1

SUBMITTED BY RACHELLE HUGG, ELEMENTARY MUSIC TEACHER

This lesson plan will help you and your students explore the inquiry question ‘How can movement and music support exploration and self-expression?’

MATERIALS

- One scarf or ribbon for each student
- Computer, speakers, screen and projector to play the videos
- Chart paper
- Locomotor chart – <http://ow.ly/PyUMF>
- Non-locomotor chart – <http://ow.ly/PyUUq>
- “Here Comes a Bluebird” and “Five Little Ducks” lyrics – <http://ow.ly/Rq57r>

Comprehensive School Health Priority Areas:
Physical activity, positive social environments.

Key 21st Century Competencies: Engaged thinkers, ethical citizens.

VIDEOS

1. A swan swimming in a lake – www.youtube.com/watch?v=koeLdhqdU88
2. “La Cygne” ballet, one movement within the Carnival of Animals suite choreographed by Camille Saint-Saens in 1886 – www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW3GAjAKges
3. “Here Comes a Bluebird” – www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVTcHv88ZG4
4. “Five Little Ducks” fingerplay – www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOics_lRWU

ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

1. Watch the first video in the ‘Videos’ section with your students and discuss how swans move—quickly, slowly, gracefully, etc.
2. Hand each student a scarf or ribbon and ask them to move like swans to the music of the second video
3. Tell students, “Now we’re going to learn a song about a different bird. This bird moves in a different way than the swan. See if you can hear how this bluebird moves.” Sing or play “Here Comes a Bluebird” (third video)
4. Teach students the following dance and perform it to “Here Comes a Bluebird.”
 - In groups of three, two students hold their hands high (window) for the bluebird (third student) to go through
 - When singing “Take a little partner...,” the three students hold hands and hop in a circle. Repeat three times so each student can be the bluebird
5. Bring students back to the sitting area
6. Teach students the lyrics and fingerplay for “Five Little Ducks” (fourth video).

CLOSING ACTIVITY

Review the ways your students moved by listing their ideas on chart paper. Add pictures to help them visualize what the words mean. For more lesson plans, visit www.everactive.org/content.php?secondary_id=557&id=1396. ■

Writing Grants to Support School Health

SUBMITTED BY KATELYNN THEAL, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Writing a grant can be challenging, but we've collected tips and tricks to help get your project noticed!



WRITE A COVER LETTER

The cover letter is often your proposal's first chance to connect your project with the funder's philanthropic mission. It can include:

- An introduction to your project
- The dollar amount you are requesting
- A description of how your project will further the funder's mission
- An opportunity to build a case for your project; provide some research background and data introducing the issue
- A list of what is included in the application
- Contact details in case the funder wants additional information.

ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS

Before filling out a grant application, take the time to think about who else should participate in this project. Consider the enriched perspective you'll get if a variety of organizations are involved. Be sure to create a partnership agreement and a communications plan as part of project planning.

CALL THE FUNDER

Once you have reviewed the application and identified any questions associated with filling it out, it's a great idea to call the funder. Introduce yourself and your proposed project. Ask any questions you have about the application. This may take some time, but will save you from filling it

out the wrong way. Grants are not static; timing is everything—one conversation can make all the difference.

THINK BIG, BUT BE REALISTIC

When planning your project, complete a needs assessment by gathering multiple voices from the school community (teachers, students, administrators, parents and community partners) to identify gaps. From these conversations, develop community-specific programs that benefit everyone involved. Be realistic, because need generally exceeds capacity and available resources. Think to yourself, *What can we do well?*

PLAN YOUR BUDGET

Funders want to see that other funding has been committed to your project. You and your partners should take time to think, *Who and what are our internal and external resources?* Besides cash, in-kind contributions are powerful resources for a project. In-kind contributions can include, but are not limited to, staff, space and equipment.

From here, develop a budget for the grant and determine how the funds will be allocated, keeping costs as low as possible. The budget should be clear and summarize the project activities, as funders will often skip right to this section when reviewing applications.

GET AHEAD OF EVALUATION

Plan how to integrate evaluation into your project and how you will disseminate project

results back to key stakeholders. Determine which outputs and outcomes (see table below) you hope to achieve and how these will be measured.

EXAMPLES OF OUTPUTS

- Number of participants
- Number of events
- Amount of food sold

EXAMPLES OF OUTCOMES

- Learning
- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Skills
- Policies

BE READY

When you begin filling out a grant application, be prepared for all scenarios. What if you get the money? What if you don't get the money? What happens after the funding period is complete?

Before applying, ask yourself, *Do I have the resources to handle the growth I am aspiring for?* If you move forward, plan alternatives in case you are not successful with this grant. Brainstorm other grants or fundraising opportunities.

Lastly, prepare a sustainability plan. Funders want to know that the groundwork laid during the funding period will be carried on beyond the funding. Outline how this grant will set this project up for success beyond the timeline of the funding. ■



Photo: The interior of Highlands School showing a portion of the tile mosaic, a Linus Woods original painting and framed student artwork.

The Arts are for Everyone

SUBMITTED BY MEGAN HUNKA, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

For more than a century, students have learned within the classrooms of Highlands School. “A 100 year-old building can be a castle or a penitentiary. Both exist in a similar architectural style,” says Brad Burns, Principal of Highlands School in Edmonton.

Just three years ago, the interior of the school was closer to the penitentiary end of the spectrum. When First Nations, Métis and Inuit consultant Tricia Giles-Wang walked through the school, she said it reminded her of a residential school. “It was colourless and empty,” says Brad. The walls were bare, bulletin boards were abandoned and cabinets displayed trophies celebrating rugby wins from a decade prior.

Highlands School was on a closure conversation due to low student enrolment, high staff turnover and many empty classrooms. “Everything looked like it was stacked against the success of the school,” says Brad.

In 2013, Edmonton Public Schools brought in Brad as principal with the plan to pilot an arts core curriculum. Currently, only two elementary schools and one K-12 school offer an arts core curriculum in Edmonton.

Highlands is the only junior high school of its kind.

The basis of an arts core curriculum is the belief that the arts are for everyone. Students integrate visual art, music, dance or drama into their everyday learning. This means adopting a creativity-focused, projects-based approach and moving away from the traditional textbook, worksheet and exam model.

This approach applies to all subject areas. “We want to see students demonstrate their learning of the curricular outcomes in a creative way,” explains Mary Ann Dobson, Assistant Principal at Highlands School. More focus is put on the process than the actual product. Teachers assess the students’ articulation and understanding of the essential learning outcomes. Often a written component, interview or conversation will accompany the art. ➤

Photos: Mary Ann Dobson, Assistant Principal, and Brad Burns, Principal, Highlands School (top), a close-up of the display case containing student and artist in residency artwork (bottom).

They've seen an incredible change in students—a desire to learn, a love and respect of art and an overall change in behaviour.

Initially, some of the Highlands School staff were concerned about transitioning to an arts core school, especially if they didn't have an arts background. "We have an amazing staff," says Brad. "We explained that it's the kids that bring the art to class, not the teacher. The teacher just has to be open to project-based learning and portfolio assessment." After some professional learning opportunities and using the approach in their classrooms, they've seen an incredible change in students—a desire to learn, a love and respect of art and an overall change in behaviour.

There has also been an incredible transformation in the physical environment at Highlands School. Walking through the school, you'll see glass-tile mosaics, framed student art (worthy of hanging in your home), two original 5x7' Linus Woods paintings, a glass cabinet with a seasonal art installation and you might just run into one of the artists' in residency.

Last year, Keith Walker, a local glass artist, approached Highlands school looking for studio space to rent. "I told him I couldn't just give him space," says Brad. But he saw the potential for a partnership. He contacted Edmonton Public Schools about beginning an artist in residency program that would benefit the students, the school community and local artists.

"From there, it was really easy because Keith not only needed space, he also needed our help," says Brad. The students participated in the post-heat production, cleaning, assembling and spraying glass finials with a protective coating. The finials are now located on lamp posts along 108th street near the Alberta legislature building in downtown Edmonton. While helping Keith, students learned about the life of a professional artist—budgeting, writing grants, planning and juggling projects, as well as the engineering and thought that goes into creating elaborate installations.

The artist in residency program has allowed students to learn from a variety of artists. Rhonda Grywachski, a clay artist, works in the clay studio in the basement of the school. She's done a number of projects with the students, such as clay leaves that students created and painted to include in the glass tile mosaics and Valentine's Day pendants that some students still love to wear. Linus Woods, celebrated Canadian painter, also participates in the program when he's travelling in Edmonton.

"You change the space and everything else follows," says Brad, "There's been a huge transition, a cultural change." He attributes the success of changing the physical environment to the fact that the students were a huge part of the process.

The glass-tile mosaics involved students, staff, school alumni and the community. If you look closely, amongst the glass tiles you'll see piano keys, clay leaves, teacup handles, birds, pendants and even a Lego Mr. Burns from *The Simpsons*, all items that have meaning to those involved. "When we started gluing things to the wall, it went from a physical change to a whole new sense of belonging," explains Brad. There was permanence to the project. "This project really embodied the actual change that's happening here. >





“...having so many people invested and wanting to work together is as beautiful as the product.”

Photos: (Clockwise from top left) Keith Walker's glass finials ready for assembly, instructions for students on finial assembly, assembled finials, student clay art, students Jaklyn, Kelcey-Lee and Lucy in the clay studio with artist in residence Rhonda Grywachewski.

It has transformative power,” he says.

Mary Ann adds, “As much as we love the product, the process of working with every student in our school, as well as community members and parents, and having so many people invested and wanting to work together is as beautiful as the product. If we’d hired somebody to come in and do this, it would be completely different.”

With a lot of creativity and a minimal budget, the staff and students at Highlands School have created a safe, caring, welcoming and respectful environment. They’ve shown that the arts truly benefit everyone, and, without a doubt, anyone who enters the school today will agree it bears no resemblance to a penitentiary or a residential school.

For more information about the many projects going on at Highlands School, contact Mary Ann by email at mary.ann.dobson@epsb.ca to schedule a school tour.

References:

‘Arts Core,’ Edmonton Public Schools. <www.epsb.ca/programs/arts/artscore/>

Burns, Brad. Personal interview. 1 May 2015.

Dobson, Mary Ann. Personal interview. 1 May 2015. ■



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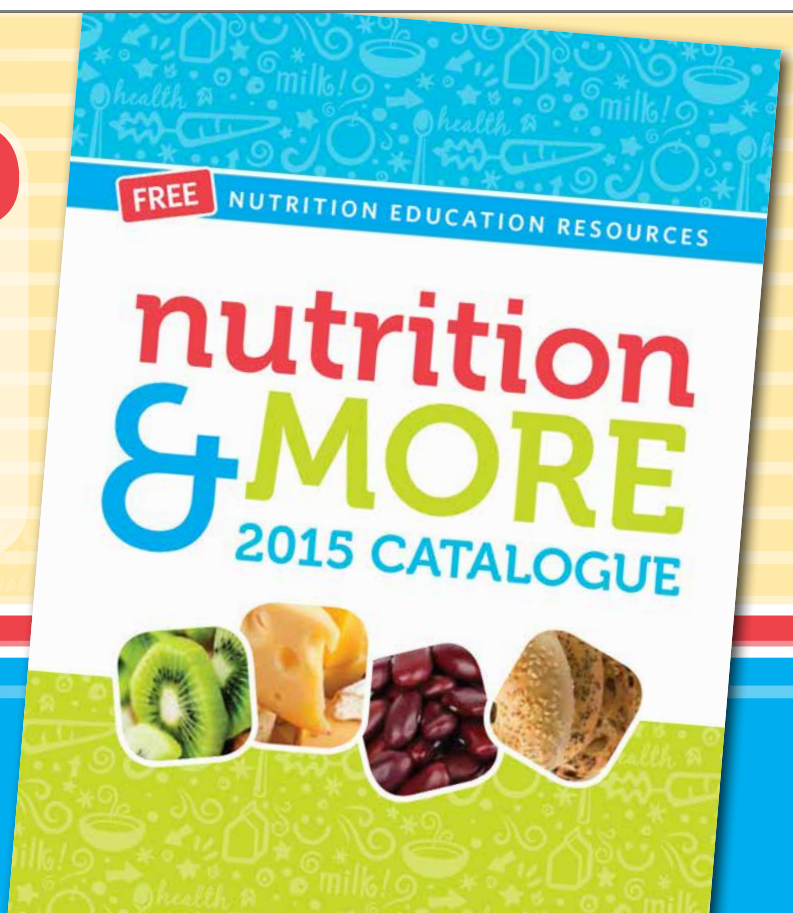


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