



CARE for Children and Youth 2000

On October 19, over 150 like-minded people representing more than 70 organizations attended CARE (Communities Acting Responsibly and Ethically) for Children and Youth 2000, a symposium sponsored by the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools and Communities Project, Lions Clubs of Alberta and Schools Come Alive.

Symposium participants came to Edmonton from as far away as Grande Prairie, Gift Lake and Stettler to (a) build a strong provincial network of communities interested in acting responsibly and ethically for children and youth, (b) share ideas and resources, and (c) learn about the Toward a Safe and Caring Community program that has been developed by the ATA and Lions Clubs.

Some of the organizations represented included the Canadian Red Cross Society, Catholic Immigration, Boys and Girls Clubs, Girl Guides and Scouts of Canada, Crime Prevention Coalition, John Howard Society, Community Youth Workers, NAARR, Women's Shelter Society, YMCA, Sexual Assault Centre, Suicide Prevention Services, SPCA, and Big Sisters and Big Brothers.

The symposium began with addresses from Janet Laddish, ATA vice-president; The Honourable Iris Evans, minister of children's services; and Paul Bourque, QC, deputy minister of justice and deputy attorney general.

The morning's highlights included the symposium's gracious host George Bevan, Mirror Theatre's "Where to Go on a Saturday Night," Barb Maheu's presentation "Toward a Safe and Caring Community" and Eilish Murphy's and Vicki Mather's "Promoting Respect and Responsibility in Young People." After lunch,

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Participants learned to work cooperatively and creatively together in Marg Schwartz's session "Get Energized with Schools Alive!"

UNESCO peace education prize awarded to Toh Swee-Hin

Dr Toh Swee-Hin has been awarded the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education for the Year 2000.

The prize is awarded annually to an individual or organization for contributions over an extended period of time to education for peace and related fields such as human rights and international understanding. Dr Toh was designated as the winner of this year's prize on the unanimous recommendation of an international jury which met September 11 and 12 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

In nominating Dr Toh to receive this year's prize, the jury sought to reward "the candidate's exceptional contribution to the promotion of the ideals of peace and nonviolence and for his practical action in favor of peace through the education of a wide range of social actors." A professor and researcher at the University of Alberta, Dr Toh has helped to pioneer and promote peace education in many countries, such as Australia, Canada, Uganda, South Africa, Jamaica,

Japan and the USA—but above all in Mindanao, Philippines, a site of longstanding armed, social and cultural conflicts. As director of the Centre for International Education and Development at the University of Alberta from 1994 to 1999, Dr Toh was able to integrate peace education into several bilateral educational development projects in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. He has always been very active in numerous international associations, networks and agencies that promote peace education.

Previous winners of the prize include the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute; Paulo Freire of Brazil; International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War; and Nobel Peace laureates Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Rigoberta Menchu Tum, the Guatemalan human rights advocate.

The prize-giving ceremony will take place December 11 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

Thank you, Patti Hartnagel!

Patti Hartnagel is the recipient of this year's Salvos Prelorenzos Peace Award. She received the award November 28 in the Councilors' Board Room of Edmonton City Hall.

The award was established in 1996 as a tribute to a man who was a soldier in the Second World War and who never forgot the horror of those events. It is managed and awarded annually by Project Ploughshares Edmonton to individuals or groups who have made a significant contribution to peace and disarmament issues in the Edmonton area.

Patti is being honored primarily for her work on peace and social justice issues both locally and nationally. She was a founding member of Project Ploughshares Edmonton, has served in a

variety of leadership roles with that group and has been the editor of the newsletter *The Furrow*. She has also served as a regional representative on the national board of Project Ploughshares. She is untiring in speaking out to the public in thoughtful, convincing words on important issues through every available means.

Patti has decided to contribute part of the award money to St Catherine's Elementary School to begin implementation of the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project. The staff of SACS wish to thank Patti for identifying the SACS Project resources as an important step in helping schools create more safe and caring environments for all students.

Thank you, Patti!

New website keeps sleazy away from young eyes

Maurice Tougas

While looking for information on volleyball on the web, Kevin Livingstone found out how easy it is to innocently stumble into the Internet's cesspool of sleazy.

Livingstone, who handles the sports content for the new web site kidzmatter.com, inadvertently left the 'e' out of volleyball while entering a search. Among the options given for linking was a site called sexhorse.com . . . which is exactly as it sounds.

"That reaffirmed to me what we were doing," says Livingstone, the father of a nine-year-old girl.

Kidzmatter.com is an ambitious web site and browser whose aim is to protect young Internet users from inappropriate material while supplying a fun and informative web site.

The growth of kidzmatter has been explosive as the company prepares for its national publicity launch.

The brainchild of partners Karen Kelly and Andrew Campbell, Kidzmatter began with just three people in January. Today, kidzmatter takes up the entire fifth floor of an office tower on 124 Street and employs about 40 people.

Campbell, who has the title of 'chief visionary officer,' says they hired an entire microcomputer training program class from NAIT to fill some of the positions.

The genesis of kidzmatter, Campbell says, came from a desire to provide a safe and secure site for kids to browse online, avoiding the pitfalls of browsing on Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Explorer.

"No matter how safe it is, kids can still find junk," Campbell says.

Kidzmatter has created its own browser that can take the place of Explorer or Navigator for parents who want the security of knowing no inappropriate sites will pop up on their child's computer screen.

The free browser will search more than 1.8 million pre-screened Internet sites, and does not allow children to move deeper into the web once



they have accessed a site. The beta version of the browser is being test-marketed in Edmonton, with 2,000 copies given away at promotional events.

Even the most innocent search can yield shocking results. A child doing research into the White House might try whitehouse.com—which leads to a hard core porno site. While researching information on legendary Olympic gymnast Olga Korbut, Livingstone found a site that offered nude photos of her.

The browser will be "almost the ultimate lock and key," says Livingstone.

Suggestions for what should—and should not—be included on the search engine will be welcomed.

"A kid can e-mail and ask for information to be included on the search engine," says Campbell, "We'll look at it, rate it in the office and add it to the site" if it's appropriate.

It's content, not technology, that will drive kidzmatter.

Web producer R. Bruce Specht says kidzmatter has taken a different approach to the Net.

"We're not technocrats," says Specht, who was the first production manager of the Edmonton International Children's Festival, and former director of production at the Citadel.

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Marg Schwartz warmed up participants with a group activity titled “Get Energized with Schools Alive!” Then delegates met in concurrent breakout sessions to discuss common concerns and share resources. Topics discussed included family violence; community involvement for youth in citizenship; early intervention; culture and multiculturalism; crisis intervention; children and youth at risk; and health, wellness and recreation. Rashmi Joshee from the Department of Canadian Heritage chaired the closing plenary session.

Comments from symposium participants included “I now have an increased awareness of other community agencies which enhances my ability to collaborate” and “I am really excited about what the ATA is proposing and the fact that it includes the community and family.”



In the afternoon, delegates to the CARE 2000 symposium worked in teams to prepare joint Safe and Caring action plans.

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Kidzmatter starts with content, then decides how it can best be presented, says Specht.

“Content is king,” he says.

That will include on-line tutorials from Academic Edge in Calgary, as well as what Campbell says will be the only atlas available on line.

The site is supported by banner advertising, but even that will have a message—stay in school, live a drug-free life, etc.

Kidzmatter has ambitious plans. The site is currently being translated into Spanish, with French and Dutch a few weeks away. A line of apparel is in the works, and kids can earn prizes based on their time on-line.

Without advertising or promotion, Campbell says the site has already had one million hits,

and kids are averaging more than an hour on line at a time.

Campbell, who is the ‘chief visionary officer’ of the company, says they want to treat the computer screen as a stage.

“What we’re trying to do is educate and entertain, just as you would at the jubilee or the Citadel.”

For Livingstone, keeping foul sites away from his daughter’s eyes is paramount.

“If my daughter is checking out where her dad works, I’ve got to make sure my site is the cleanest out there.”

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Niska News is a newsletter produced by the ATA’s Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) Project for school and community members. The goal of the SACS Project is to encourage practices that model and reinforce socially responsible and respectful behaviors so that learning and teaching can take place in a safe and caring environment. Achieving this goal requires the involvement of not just parents and teachers but also all the important adults in a young person’s life. This newsletter is designed to provide timely, up-to-date information about the project. For more information, contact the SACS office by phoning 447-9487 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (from elsewhere in Alberta). Copying and distributing Niska News is permitted as long as the source is credited. The newsletter is available online through the Alberta Teachers’ Association’s website at <www.teachers.ab.ca>. Please go to the Publications section and then to Newsletters/Fact Sheets.