



Safe and Caring Student Conference garners rave reviews

Sherry Day

"The 'Straight Talk' session with Mike Ryan was the best. I could tell it hurt him to tell us his personal story, but he was doing it for the good and I learned a lot from it," says Marc Wydra, a grade 8 student at Nelson Heights School in Cold Lake.

"I liked the session on 'Family Issues' because it really helped me to make better decisions towards my family," says Kristin Huffman, a grade 7 student at Glendon School.

"I learned a lot about cliques and peer pressure, so now I know what I'm getting into when I go to a bigger school," says Jenna Lewchuk, a grade 9 student at Wandering River School.

"I thought 'TV and Me' was the best session. Now I know some of the messages I'm getting from TV and how it impacts my life," says Nicole Arfmann, a grade 9 student at Grand Centre High School in Cold Lake.

"I really like [RCMP] Cst Jose Agostinho's session because he talked about making choices. Now I know that you can think about all the things you can do, not just the bad parts," says Lisa Cardinal, a grade 8 student at Caslan School.

These are just a few of the positive statements from some of the 310 students who attended the first Safe and Caring Student Conference in northern Alberta hosted by Northern Lights School Division No 69 (NLSD). The conference on April 6 and 7 attracted students from most of the 25 schools in the division.

The goal of conference organizers was "to give NLSD students the opportunity to participate in Safe and Caring Schools sessions, to become more aware of available resources and to gain skills they can use to help promote safe and caring initiatives within their own schools." According to organizers, they met that goal and more.

Janice Gafka, assistant principal of Glendon School and a member of the conference organizing

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Vicki Mather, director of the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project, presents Harry Anderson with a Niska Award of Merit and a SACS coffee mug on May 30. Mr Anderson had recently announced his retirement from the SACS Steering Committee. He served on the committee since its inception in 1996 as a representative of the Lions Clubs of Alberta.



Bouquets

To **Sherry Duncan** and **Shelley Magnusson**, Safe and Caring Schools facilitators, from **Cindy Harms**, Montrose Junior High School, Grande Prairie, for facilitating an “efficient, enlightening and educational” Safe and Caring Schools inservice day.

To **Barb Maheu**, project manager, ATA’s Safe and Caring Schools Project, from **Ken L Saunderson**, principal, Fort McMurray Composite High School, for providing Fort McMurray Composite High School and Westwood Community High School with the opportunity to participate in the Safe and Caring Schools Project.



Letters

Dear *Niska News*

We are a Grade 2 classroom at Thickwood Heights School in Fort McMurray. It has been a busy year in our room, ever since our principal, Ms Hanson, introduced us to Niska back in September. We have our own class website and thought it would be neat if Niska could have his own site too. Because he is a goose, we call it his home nest. Every week, we help Niska to write a new letter about being part of a safe and caring school and help him to answer his e-mail. He needs us to help him because it is hard to type when you have wings instead of fingers!

We also decided it would be fun to get the other grades in our division involved in a Niska project, so we formed the Niska High Flyers. To become one of Niska’s high-flying flock, you had to do at least six of the 10 safe and caring things we came up with. They were all things we had talked about at class meetings, like saying thank you to your bus driver, letting everyone play the game at recess and helping someone who is hurt. Everyone who took part got their names on a special bulletin board and a High Flyers certificate from Niska. Niska needed some help with the certificates. It’s that wing thing again! There are now 113 grade K-3 students in the flock, and it’s still growing. We are even thinking about starting a High Flyers flock some time soon.

Niska is an important part of our school assemblies. When Ms Hanson brought us a special song on a

tape, we decided to put actions to it. It was kind of embarrassing to be up in front of everyone, but we all flocked together, and it worked out just great.

We are very proud to be a safe and caring classroom in a safe and caring school. We are glad that we have got to know Niska and look forward to learning more about safe and caring schools next year.

*Mrs Zeglen’s Grade 2 Classroom
Thickwood Heights School
Fort McMurray, AB
pattiz@fmps.d.ab.ca*

Niska’s home nest is at
<sites.netscape.net/niskagoose/homenest>.

Dear Safe and Caring Schools

We are thrilled to share with you that we have received \$11,000 in funding from the Community Foundation of Greater Grande Prairie to continue implementation of the ATA’s Toward a Safe and Caring Community program in our area! . . .

We are working on publicity flyers, presentations to organizations and employers, and evaluation forms that provide information for reporting to funders.

Angie Dixon

Stop the bullies!

Brenton Krol

Did you know, by age 24, 60 percent of all identified bullies have at least one criminal conviction? Good morning ladies, gentlemen, honorable judges and fellow students.

Some people feel that a lot of the problems begin with bullies in schools. What is a bully? A bully is someone or a group of people that keeps saying or doing things to have power over others. Things like teasing, threatening, hitting or any other action that makes someone else feel afraid or uncomfortable. Bullies act this way to feel powerful, cool or popular. Really they are hiding their faults or problems. They are more likely to drop out of school and that means less chance of good jobs in the future.

The Alberta Teachers' Association is working on a project called Safe and Caring Schools, trying to get violence out of the schools. Their definition of violence in schools is a threatening use of physical, verbal or emotional behavior. This needs to be stopped! Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure in their school. But too many kids are victims, and sometimes victims can't take the pressure anymore and take matters into their own hands. That is also school violence. When people get bullied, their brain releases stress hormones. This causes damaged neurons that weaken the immune system. It



can cause memory loss and affects the way we feel, act and think. As we can see, neither the bully nor the victim has a very good life. Here are some tips that can help you through your school years:

1. Stand up for yourself. Keep your cool and don't allow words and actions of others to hurt you.
2. If you are being bullied, ask an adult or friend to help you. If they do not help your situation right away, ask someone else. Be persistent. Don't give up!

We must stop bullies if we want to stop violence in schools!

Brenton Krol is a grade 6 student at Ste Marie Catholic School in Spirit River. He prepared this speech for a Declamation Contest.

Safe schools: Protecting children, teachers

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) has joined forces with the Canadian School Boards Association, the Canadian Association of School Administrators and the Canadian Home and School Federation to seek amendments to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

In a brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in February, the coalition called on the federal government to, among other things

- provide increased funding for innovative, community-based approaches aimed at prevention and rehabilitation
- ensure that schools and school boards are provided with information about young offenders—to help ensure the safety of students and staff and to assist with rehabilitation.

The full text of the brief is available from the CTF's website at 209.121.244.130/e/what/BRIEFS/BillC-3.html.

Conference, cont'd from page 1

committee, says “the conference was the best thing we’ve done for teenagers in the division in a long while.” When the 35 Glendon students who attended the conference returned to school the next Monday, they quickly spread the word about some of the safe and caring initiatives they learned about. They also urged other students to sign up for the next conference.

Kathy McKale, assistant principal of Grand Centre Middle School in Cold Lake, says her student were really impressed with Mike Ryan, one of the keynote speakers. “We’re definitely going to bring Mike Ryan to our school. The students who saw him at the conference recommended him highly. He gets the kids’ attention, and they get his message immediately and they remember it.”

Ryan and Alvin Law were the conference’s most popular speakers. Ryan, also known as “Mr. Clean,” tells it like it is about his life on the streets and in jail. He tells the students how he turned his life around and why it’s important to understand your habits, attitudes, beliefs and expectations. Law, a Thalidomide baby, was born without arms. He challenges the students to believe “that anything is possible with the right attitude.” Organizers says the two speakers left a huge impression on students because they were “real” and talked honestly about how hard it is to make changes in your life. The message from both speakers is that a positive outlook will make a difference in everyone’s life.

Another keynote speaker, former Edmonton police constable Chris Braidon, also garnered rave reviews from the students. “I liked the first session ‘Be Your Own Hero’ with the policeman [Chris Braidon] because I learned that you can do stuff by yourself and you don’t have to take after others,” says Josh Stapleton, a grade 8 student at Nelson Heights School in Cold Lake.

Local presenters such as RCMP Cst Jose Agostinho, NLSD teacher Robert Gallagher and Bonnyville Centralized High School assistant principal Terry Olfert always received high marks from the students.

At the end of the two days, most of the 310 students who attended the conference were ready to start the event over again. Evaluations done at each individual school the week after indicated students supported the idea of making the Safe and Caring Student Conference an annual event. NLSD organizers are now looking into that possibility.

Sherry Day is a member of Northern Lights School Division’s Safe and Caring Steering Committee.



Notices

Check out the **Media Awareness Network** at <www.media-awareness.ca>, Canada’s leading media education organization. Mnet’s latest programs feature anti-racism education designed to help parents and teachers educate and equip young people to deal with hate on the Internet. In April, Mnet launched a hot download or CD titled *CyberSense and Nonsense: The Second Adventure of the Three CyberPigs*. This cyberspace adventure helps children learn to make wise, safe and responsible decisions about the information they come in contact with on the Net. *Cybersense and Nonsense* comes with a teacher’s kit and is designed for home and classroom use. The program is aimed primarily at eight- to 12-year-olds and is available in English and French as a download or CD.

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.

Attention Secondary School Classroom Teachers . . .

The ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project



WORKSHOP FACILITATOR TRAINING for *Toward a Safe and Caring Secondary Curriculum—Approaches to Integration* will be offered by the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools project September 18-19, 2000, from 9 am to 3:30 pm, at Barnett House, 11010 142 Street, Edmonton. The \$95 registration fee includes two lunches and a materials package.

This two-day training workshop will prepare teachers to deliver the one-day workshop and follow-up sessions to their secondary colleagues. The workshop focuses on integrating violence prevention and character education into the secondary curriculum. It is designed to provide strategies for junior and senior high school teachers to integrate safe and caring principles with Alberta curriculum outcomes. Research indicates that a successful school violence prevention program integrates safe and caring principles throughout the students' entire school experience and promotes the practice of these principles in the students' homes and communities.

Because this workshop requires two facilitators, we encourage schools or school districts to send two teachers to the training. Candidates for this workshop must be experienced, certificated teachers with exceptional teaching skills, an excellent knowledge of the secondary curriculum and proficiency in facilitating adult workshops and demonstrating leadership with their colleagues. **A letter of reference from each teacher's principal or superintendent is required. Please bring your curriculum guides to the workshop.**

To register:

Please register by contacting Sue Sheffield at

Tel: (780) 447-9487 or 1-800-232-7208

Fax: (780) 455-6481

Email: <sacs@teachers.ab.ca>

Send your \$95 registration fee to

Sue Sheffield
Safe and Caring Schools Project
The Alberta Teachers' Association
11010 142 Street NW
Edmonton AB
T5N 2R1

Please register by September 8, 2000



SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE

Nov. 23, 2000 - Preconference - Westin Hotel
Nov. 24 and 25, 2000 - Conference - Shaw Conference Centre

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Pre-conference sessions:

Pre-conference sessions will be offered on Thursday, November 23, 2000 from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Westin Hotel. The pre-conference fee is \$150.00 in addition to the conference registration fees (includes materials and lunch). The pre-conference sessions will provide in-depth training in the following areas:

1. *Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta* (administrators, police, trustees)
2. *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum ECS - Grade 6* (elementary)
3. *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum - Behavior Strategies* (secondary)
4. *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum - Instructional Strategies* (secondary)
5. *Toward a Safe and Caring Community* (school councils/parents/other adults)
6. *Conflict Resolution and Mediation Training* (General)

Group rates:

Group registration rates will only be applicable if registration forms are submitted together. Teams must be from same school, district or organization. Each team member must complete a form at the time of registering. Substitutions will be permitted during the conference. No refunds will be made after November 10, 2000 for members under the group rate. One receipt will be issued to the originator of the cheque or money order.

Hotel information:

The Westin Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada is the location for the Preconference and the host hotel for the main conference which is at the Shaw Conference Centre. Delegates are responsible for their own reservations and will be accommodated on a first come, first booked basis. Please make your hotel arrangements as soon as possible by calling the Westin (780) 426-3636 and asking for the SACS conference rates.

Day care services:

Day care services will be available on-site at the Shaw Conference Centre during the conference (But not at the Preconference at the Westin Hotel). Services will be provided for \$10.00 per day. Please indicate on the registration form whether you are in need of this service and for how many children. Parents are responsible for providing their child's lunch each day.

Cancellation/refund policy:

- Refund cheques will be issued after December 1, 2000 less \$40.00 processing fee
- A \$25.00 fee will be applied on all returned cheques due to non-sufficient funds.

Registration deadline:

November 1, 2000: Receipts will be mailed on or before November 1, 2000.

November 2, 2000: \$40 late fees applied. Receipts will be available for pickup at the conference.





SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

TO RECEIVE THE GROUP RATE, REGISTRATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED TOGETHER
One Registration form per person. Reproduce as Needed. Registration Form must be complete.

Name _____
(As it should appear on the name tag: First, last)

Title: _____

School/District/Organization: _____

Address: _____

Daytime phone w/area code: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

E-mail address: _____

Do you want your e-mail address added to the SACS list server (for future announcements) yes no

Would you be interested in being a moderator for the conference? yes no

Do you require special provisions? yes - please specify _____

Do you require day care services? yes days needed _____ # of children _____

(\$10.00 per day for day care services)

Ages of child(ren) _____

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES

Please applicable fees

	Before Nov. 01/00	After Nov. 2/00
	GST included in all prices	
Pre-conference (not included in Conference fee)		
Nov 23, Thursday: (Session # _____)	\$150.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$190.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Indicate session attending		
Conference:		
Nov 23 – 25, Thursday Evening, Friday & Saturday	\$170.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$210.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
One day only: Fri _____ or Sat _____	\$110.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$150.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Group rate 6-10 delegates, per person:	\$150.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$190.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Group rate 11+ delegates, per person:	\$140.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$180.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Student (ID # _____)	\$ 40.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$ 80.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Day Care Services: \$10.00 per day X # of days: _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
TOTAL \$ _____		\$ _____

Please make Cheques/Money Orders Payable to: **Safe and Caring Schools Conference** (No purchase orders)

TO RECEIVE GROUP RATES, REGISTRATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED TOGETHER

Complete and mail registration form(s) and payment(s) together to:
SACS Conference, Suite 246, 11215 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta. T5K 0L5
G.S.T. # 106694425RT

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION – NOVEMBER 10, 2000

Any questions contact Brenda Sautner: e-mail: bsautner@netcom.ca

For Office Use Only:		
Date received: _____	Cheque/Money Order #: _____	Amount Received: _____
Daycare: (# of Children): _____	Days Needed: _____	
Preconference	Conference	One day Only
1P <input type="checkbox"/> 2P <input type="checkbox"/> 3P <input type="checkbox"/> 4P <input type="checkbox"/> 5P <input type="checkbox"/> 6P <input type="checkbox"/>	Fri & Sat <input type="checkbox"/>	Fri <input type="checkbox"/> or Sat <input type="checkbox"/>
Receipt #: _____	Sent on: _____	Group Rate: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Cancellation: _____	Date Refunded: _____	Cheque # or Returned Original Cheque: _____