

HEALTHY SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

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Healthy Schools News

BC Healthy Schools Network Profiled Internationally

Happy New Year from all of us here at DASH BC! We hope everyone enjoyed their holidays and is looking forward to 2012. We are very excited to have begun 2012 in Malmo, Sweden, where DASH BC had the amazing opportunity to participate in the 25th **International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement** (ICSEI) from January 5th-8th. The congress brought together teachers, school leaders, researchers and policy makers from around the world. This year, the theme of the Malmo Congress focused on the interplay between policy, research and practice in education. With over 480 delegates attending the international conference, unique prospects to develop relationships and international partnerships were created.

Kathy Cassels, DASH's Executive Director, and Deborah Koehn, an administrator in the Coast Mountains School District were able to share with the 480+ delegates how BC's education system is working to develop partnerships with the health sector through the Healthy Schools Network. The title of their conference paper is: *The Interaction of Health Agencies and British Columbia's Education System Facilitated by the Network of Healthy Schools.*

The paper explores the potential for members of BC's Healthy Schools Network community to shift beyond educational institutions and structures and embrace non-educational organizations as well. The potential of the education community to partner with other institutions such as public health and community school

agencies enables schools to develop holistic



Andy Hargreaves, one of the keynote speakers at the ICSEI conference, presenting to the delegates.

approaches to positive mental health, overall well-being, and academic needs of students. The paper provides a concrete

example of how these partnerships can work, explaining how a small northwestern BC school district has connected recent research to action by involving community agencies with the purpose of enhancing the learning experiences and emotional well-being of students and increasing the capacity for school connectedness.

The chance to attend, and present, at a conference has a multitude of benefits both for the presenter and the conference participants. In the case of ICSEI, it presents the opportunity for DASH to profile the great work happening in the area of healthy schools in BC to an international audience. Strong working relationships and partnerships are a big part of the Comprehensive School Health approach. Being able to profile the effective partnerships established through the Healthy Schools Network, and provide a real world example of how this work is impacting a school in BC, is a great accomplishment.

For more information on ICSEI, please visit www.icsei.net. To view a copy of the conference paper, please click [here](#). Stay tuned for a more reader friendly version of the conference paper in next month's newsletter.

DASH BC Update

DASH BC's New Home

We are excited to announce that we will be moving soon!



In order to accommodate our growth as an organization, we will be moving from our current location to a new, larger office space on Granville Street. Please note, effective February 1st, 2012, the DASH BC mailing address will be:

1055 - 409 Granville Street
Vancouver, BC
V6C 1T2

Please make sure to update your address books accordingly! As for our phone number, we are happy to say that it will be staying the same: 604-681-0600.

As we will be starting to move things over to our new space during the last week of January, we may take longer than usual to respond to inquiries. We would like to ask for your patience during this transition period. Thank you!

Action Pages!

Action Schools! BC is a best practices model designed to assist schools in creating individualized action plans to promote healthy living while achieving academic outcomes. Updated every school year, Action Pages! is a physical activity, physical education, and healthy eating resource guide designed to link teachers, youth coaches, and community instructors with a multitude of resources available across Canada to support active and healthy school communities. Action Pages! is distributed to schools throughout BC and provided to participants at conferences, presentations and workshops throughout the province and across Canada. Download your copy at www.actionschoolsbc.ca (under Quick Links) or email Action Schools! BC at info@actionschoolsbc.ca for a hard copy.



Helpful Resources

The BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation Update



BC Agriculture in the Classroom is a non-profit foundation working with educators through various programs to bring BC's agriculture to students.

The Foundation continues its whirl of activity for 2012 with all of their programs gearing up for the year.

The BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program

continues to grow and is now available to First Nations schools. Currently, a total of 1334 schools and 433 842 students are participating in the program.

Take a Bite of BC is a program where BC grown products are donated and delivered to school teaching kitchens. The program is continuing in 2012 with 37 schools receiving product donations from local suppliers.

Spuds in Tubs, a program where schools are able to grow their own potatoes, now has 200 schools participating in the program for 2012.

The Community Garden is a program providing schools with an opportunity to visit a garden and observe and participate in growing food. This year, students from participating schools are scheduled to begin planting in April 2012.

The Summer Institute is a program for teachers in the BC school system to explore practical ways to integrate concepts related to food production and consumption, food safety, agricultural issues, and sustainability across the curriculum at all grade levels. The program began in 1999 and will be held again in July 2012.

For more information please visit <http://www.aitc.ca/bc/>.

Sip Smart! BC Facts: Sugary Drinks and Teeth



When a person sips a sugary drink, an 'acid attack' occurs in the mouth for up to 20 minutes. The acid demineralizes the tooth during the attack and weakens the tooth.

After about 20 minutes, saliva remineralizes the tooth and strengthens it. This balancing act becomes greatly challenged when a person snacks frequently

on sticky foods, or sips regularly on sugar-laden drinks. The good news is that children can sip water all day with no worries of acid attacks on their teeth.

On the other hand, if children are having their one serving (1/2 cup or 125 mL) of 100% fruit juice during the day (which contains a significant amount of naturally occurring sugar and is acidic), then they should drink it in as few sips as possible. The same applies to sugary drinks, when they are consumed as an occasional treat!

Teachers can use the short video clip, [Sugary Drinks and Teeth](#), and do some fun science [experiments](#) to show students the impact of sugary drinks on teeth.

Sip Smart! BC is an initiative of the BC Pediatric Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon whose resources are some of the best practices used by Action Schools! BC.

FRIENDS for Life

The FRIENDS program is a 10-12 week evidence-based anxiety prevention and resiliency program delivered by educators in the classroom. FRIENDS addresses many learning outcomes within the Health and Career Education K-7 curriculum. Students are taught skills to help them manage their worries and fears, and many other life skills that strengthen emotional resilience. By identifying and normalizing feelings, learning ways to relax, changing negative thoughts into more positive thoughts, and breaking down challenges into manageable steps, children are better equipped to face challenges and adversity in life.

There are three program levels available to BC schools; Fun FRIENDS (K/Gr. 1), Child (Gr. 4/5) and Youth (Gr. 6/7). Teachers are required to attend a one-day training session prior to delivery in the classroom. Visit the [FRIENDS website](#) to view the teacher training schedules or [email](#) them for more information.

The BC FRIENDS Parent Program is delivered and led by the FORCE Society for Kids' Mental Health. Parents and caregivers are educated about child anxiety and the FRIENDS program through workshops and online resources so they are better equipped to support their children and reinforce the FRIENDS skills at home. As of 2011, the

FRIENDS parent workshop and additional downloadable resources became available [online](#).

Parents/caregivers may view video clips and learn about the program from the comfort of their own home and at their own pace. Teachers are encouraged to spread the word to parents, PAC members, and others who may be interested in this program. Visit their [website](#) or [email](#) them for more information.

Dr. Adele Diamond: Nourishing the Body, Spirit and Mind

The Dalai Lama Centre for Peace and Education is hosting Dr. Adele Diamond of UBC as part of their Dalai Lama Speaking Series. Dr. Diamond's talk, titled "Nourishing the Body, Spirit and Mind," will touch on how to improve self-control, creativity and problem solving in children. As one of the founders of the field of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience and a lead researcher on executive functions, Dr. Diamond is known for her ability to take complex scientific ideas and make them accessible for everyone. Dr. Diamond's presentation will be held at the Vancity Theatre on Thursday, January 26 at 7:00pm. Click [here](#) to buy tickets or for more information, please visit [www.dalailamacentre.org](#).

Healthy By Nature Forum

In September 2011, the Healthy by Nature forum took place in Vancouver, BC. The forum, with support from Healthy Families BC, had presenters and participants discuss the extensive evidence of the health and well-being benefits of spending time in nature.



Workshops, discussions and networking allowed the participants to explore the integration of the Healthy by Nature principles into different sectors, as well as discuss next steps for collaborative action.

Podcasts of the three keynote speakers, Dr. William Bird, Dr. Frances Kuo and Gil Penalosa, are now available for download [here](#).

With confirmed support from Healthy Families BC, the Healthy by Nature forum website is being transformed into a legacy site which will host resources, audio and videos.

Kathy's Corner

Comprehensive School Health in Action

As we embark on a new year, many of us reflect back on 2011 and consider changes we wish to make for 2012. One of the most common New Year's resolutions seems to involve increasing physical activity, and while we may find motivation for change at the beginning of the year, sustaining that motivation can be somewhat of a challenge. Maquinna Elementary School of Port Alberni has found a unique way to increase the motivation of their students for participation in daily physical activity.



The Healthy Schools Team of Maquinna Elementary had noticed a lack of interest and enthusiasm from students towards physical activity and had struggled to keep students interested in the school DPA strategy, "Run for Fun." As a result, the Healthy Schools Team focused on student motivation and participation in daily physical activity; they wanted students to recognize the benefits of daily physical activity and enjoy it.

The Healthy Schools Team decided on the inquiry question: *Will the use of a competitive and motivational strategy ("Running Card") enhance our students' interest in DPA (daily physical activity) as measured by the Performance Standards?*

In setting out to address their inquiry question, Maquinna Elementary worked through the four pillars of Comprehensive School Health. Strategies included educating students on the importance of physical activity; teaching them how to take their pulse and its importance in improving fitness; expanding the opportunities for various types of physical activity within the school environment; and encouraging them to participate in "Run for Fun", giving them the option to walk or run. In striving to use a motivational strategy to increase physical activity participation through "Run for Fun," running cards were given to students. These running cards were hole-punched

if students completed the run, providing immediate feedback to students and allowing them to set personal goals for the run. If students received a 'punch' on their running card, they were then eligible for draws for healthy living prizes.

Teachers also participated in the run and the Healthy Schools Team noticed that participating students continued to connect with teachers who joined them on the run, and liked to beat the teacher back.

In addition to increased enthusiasm for "Run for Fun," Maquinna Elementary School students also showed great success as measured by the "Active Living" aspect of the Healthy Living Performance Standards. There was a noticeable shift of students moving from the "Emerging" category into the "Accomplished" category!

Moving into the future, the Healthy Schools Team at Maquinna Elementary is looking at a new incentive using Action Schools! BC materials, which include several great resources available to help increase DPA in fun and creative ways. Visit www.actionschoolsbc.ca for more information!

It is great to hear how inspired students at Maquinna are to become more physically active! You can view Maquinna's full report [here](#), or other inspiring HSN stories [here](#). Good luck with those New Year's resolutions!

Kathy Cassels
Executive Director, DASH BC

In the Next Issue

- Physical Activity and Student Achievement
- Healthy Relationships and School Connectedness
- Other Helpful Resources



Ministry of
Education



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The Healthy Schools Newsletter is distributed monthly throughout the school year, keeping readers apprised of developments in school health in BC. Please visit www.healthyschoolsnetwork.org for publication dates and submission deadlines for 2011/2012.