



Make your light LOUD!

TRANSITIONS TO HIGH SCHOOL

Your new students' first impressions of high school happen during the busiest times of your school year, so many "welcome" programs get lost in the whirl of May or the startup of September. However, in those first hours and days, these new students develop and reinforce their attitudes towards their degree of involvement in cocurricular activities and their commitment to the educational process in general.

This is the first real opportunity for these first-year students to actively choose a new behaviour or attitude in this first tangible step towards being an adult. Most of the choices in their growth up to now have been made or arranged for them; they are ready and nervous about this change. A positive, dynamic transition program run by selected senior students will provide the chance for these rookie students to make good choices and learn positive behaviours.

Those first days in September are the most effective days to influence your incoming class. Planning and execution of a positive transition program will reap benefits for the administration and *esprit de corps* of the school in years to come. The insecurity that these students feel on their first day can be translated into confidence and good habits with a caring transition program. Make it fun, but take the time to set expectations, teach accepted behaviors and reinforce positive involvement. Your present student leaders are excellent role models and sources of information for these new students. ■



Good leaders let their light shine, and they confidently act as a model for others to follow. This approach was often enough for leaders in the good old days, but even the picture above this article shows a now-outdated light bulb. It is time now for positive groups to speak out in this busy 24-hour-multi-media world, and let others know what worthwhile activities you are doing with student leadership. Teachers are often shy about letting others know about the good things that happen daily in their classrooms, and yet when bad things happen in a school, everyone is told about it immediately.

Don't confuse speaking out with shouting. Teachers are often too afraid of being considered to be rude or obnoxious about their cause, but it is a fact that the loudest voice carries the most energy: positive or negative. This is why the Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisors has chosen to start attending administrator conferences and let them know what good things are happening in schools across the country. Attending and presenting at advisor conferences is valuable for the delegates, but it is often a case of preaching to the converted. CASAA is convinced that advisors across the country need to spread the word loudly to other advisors through their principals and supervisors.

Take the time on your own to brag about what your leadership students are doing. Invite a superintendent, trustee or school board official to see an event that your students are running. Most of these administrators will love the opportunity to escape the Board Office and they will be reminded of why they are involved in education in the first place. Your students' actions and activities will speak loudly about the quality of your program.

Hero Holiday

“You must get involved to have an impact. No one is impressed with the won-lost record of the referee.”

John Holcomb

VIDEO SCAVENGER HUNT

This is a team-building activity that is built for the YouTube generation.

Create a list of things for the teams to do, and assign a point value for each item. There is a defined time limit on this activity, as all groups must hand in their material by the end time. Points are deducted for each minute they are late. Each team should have a similar number of participants. The team must use 5 minutes or less of footage to capture the items on camera. You can create scenes that are suitable for your group and location.

Video Scavenger Hunt ideas:

1. A balding man with a beard shaking hands with someone on your team.
2. The whole team singing the national anthem by a stop sign.
3. Someone getting an order from a drive-through without a car.
4. Members of your team acting as squeegee kids at a stoplight.
5. The whole team standing in a bathtub while the water is running.
6. Someone hitting a ball with a tennis racket against a wall that the whole team is standing against.
7. Someone from your team shaking hands with a police officer.
8. The whole team in a boat dressed extravagantly. Extra points given.
9. The team singing a song in a restaurant. Points given for people, who are not on your team, who sing along.
10. Members of your team walking a dog. Points for each dog and walker.

From: *“More Team-Building Activities for Every Group”* by Alanna Jones

Do you want to have your world “rocked”? If so, then Go M.A.D.!! “Go Make a Difference” is an inspirational message that CASAA and Absolute Leadership Development Inc. regularly use to challenge the youth of our country to take action . . . locally, nationally, internationally!

Absolute is a charity organization that exists to empower emerging generations to change their world by living their lives with purpose. Along with our motivational school assemblies, Hero Holiday is a program we run designed to enable Canadian high school students to reach out and touch lives in the global community. Throughout the year, we provide opportunities for high school students to participate in humanitarian relief projects, bringing practical assistance to those living in extreme poverty. Activities include building homes and pre-schools in Mexico, an orphanage in Thailand, and homes and schools in the Dominican Republic. Other activities include distributing food, clothing and school supplies, conducting mobile medical clinics, and working with children at risk. Hero Holiday allows students to see first-hand how two-thirds of the world live, expands their world view and gives them an opportunity to become educators on world poverty by sharing their experiences.

During our first Hero Holiday to the Dominican Republic in July 2005, we built several homes, constructed a 3 km water line to a village, held medical clinics for those living in the garbage dumps, visited an orphanage and distributed almost four tons of life-giving supplies to thousands

of people living in abject poverty. Just 150 students from across Canada accomplished all of this in just two weeks.

Over the past two years, the number of Hero Holiday participants has tripled and in 2008 Hero Holiday will provide opportunities for 700 people on fifteen trips to go and make a difference. Because

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

Anne Frank

of these building projects, hundreds of children, most of whom have never had the opportunity, attended school in September 2007. No doubt we had a great impact on the people we helped; as important however, is the tremendous impact these experiences have had on our students and adults alike. For them it has been life-changing; they have found direction and hope for their lives through helping others.

To students and sponsor teachers in CASAA: congratulations on assuming

The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others.

Mahatma Gandhi

leadership roles in your schools. You ARE the “movers and shakers,” you are the change agents, and you are already making a huge difference in your schools. During my time as a principal, I discovered that taking groups of my students on these humanitarian trips has had the most profound impact on the culture and the ethos of the entire school. My challenge to you is to continue to Make A Difference: to consider a global perspective, and to take part in this life-changing experience. Check out www.heroholiday.com and join us on a Hero Holiday. ■

Bill Rawlins

After having Absolute present at his school in 2004, Bill attended his first Hero Holiday trip. For more information on the assembly presentations, visit the Absolute website at www.absolute.org



“The most powerful form of communication is still one human being standing up and speaking courageous truths.”

Thomas L. Woodward

Saving the Planet?

We believe we have successfully implemented a new environmental initiative at our Provincial Student Leadership Conferences (BCSLC). While it may not save the planet, it certainly is more of a *lead by example*, rather than *do as I say* attitude.

Having been involved in the organization of a number of student leadership conferences, a number of us were becoming increasingly disconcerted over the environmental situation we were creating. While the environment seems to often be a part of the theme or at least a thread during our conferences, we were consistently being environmentally unfriendly in our food services.

For a 3-day conference of 500 people, we were throwing out 4,000 paper plates, 4,000 plastic or paper cups, 4,500 paper napkins and 12,000 plastic utensils. As well, we would have up to 5,000 drink containers to recycle.

From our food services perspective, they could not handle washing all the preparation gear, all the dishes and utensils that the delegates would dirty and still be able to prep for the next food moment, which would be about 2 hours later, if you include all the meals and nutrition breaks. If we wished to utilize our own food ser-

vices, we could not use re-useable dishes and utensils.

This continued to bother us over the years, until 2006, when our theme was A Walk in the Park, a play upon Heritage Park Secondary School, and treating the world like a park – stop & smell the flowers, leave your campsite better than you found it, etc.

We suddenly hit upon the idea of having all the delegates bring their own little pack, as if they were going on a hike. They were to bring their own dishes, utensils, water bottle and towel. We supplied washing stations after each food service time slot, which was a 3 stage process. The first bin for washing had soapy water, the second bin had plain warm water for rinse and the third had the sanitizer – 28ml chlorine bleach to 4.5 liters of water.

This plan worked very well – the second year, in 2007, we had no delegates forget their pack, and no complaints at all. Now we set out to tackle the second problem – the drink containers. This was solved rather easily. Drink water.

We have a new reverse filtration plant in Mission, so there is nothing wrong with the water from the tap, and this is what we offered for part of the event.

We had juice in large containers (10-15 liters) for breakfast, and students used their own cups. For morning nutrition break and lunch, we offered water. Get it from the taps.

We allowed cans of pop for the afternoon nutrition break, and iced tea in large containers for dinner. This method cut down the recycled drink containers and also cut back the sugar intake for delegates through the course of the event.

In two years, we saved about 10,000 drink containers that did not need to be recycled (remember, reduce is the first major R), 24,000 utensils, 8,000 paper plates, 8,000 cups and around 8,000 paper napkins. We did supply all required cutlery and crockery to eat at the final banquet, but this was all permanent equipment, and could be washed.

Did we save the planet? Not yet, but we certainly did the right thing by doing what we often talk about – you might say we ‘walked the walk’. A corollary benefit of this whole action is that we put the responsibility back on the individual, re-enforcing the concept of the importance of individual action. ■

Al LaFontaine

Relay for Life

Helping to make Cancer History!

Raising money for charity is a worthwhile activity, but some events seem to be built for success. Eight secondary schools in Waterloo region have participated in running their own Relay for Life events and have raised over \$830,000 for cancer research in the past 4 years. Preston High School raised \$130,982 in May of 2006 and Bluevale Collegiate raised \$122,446 in one night in May of 2007. Because of the magnitude of this event and the proximity of the schools, participating schools have decided to run the event every other year, ensuring that the local com-

munities do not experience donor fatigue and the student participants see this as a very special event.

What is a Relay for Life event?

It is a 12-hour overnight event that brings your school community together for a celebration of the survivors of cancer, a remembrance of those who have died from this disease and an opportunity to fight back and put an end to this disease. Participants form teams of 10 or more and each team member pledges to raise \$100.

The teams can run individual fundraising events or approach people to sponsor

them, however, all of the money must be submitted before the event begins. During the Relay for Life, at least one person from each team must be walking the circuit or track at the event at all times. Teams set up a tent site within the walking track, and entertainment activities are provided all night throughout the event.

At the opening of the event, cancer survivors are invited to walk the first lap of the Canadian Cancer Society Relay For Life to acknowledge and celebrate their courage in their struggle with the disease. This is the Survivors Victory Lap, and it is an opportunity for staff and students to share and celebrate successes in the battle against cancer with friends and family. It is truly an emotional beginning to the evening as families and friends walk together for this first Victory Lap.

At some time after dusk, the Luminary Ceremony is observed to light up the night and help the participants remember the names of cancer survivors and loved ones who have lost their battle with this disease. Luminaries are candles that are placed in special white paper bags; each bag bears a name and/or message from the person who placed it. The whole Relay for Life group is invited to walk the track in silence and read and remember the messages that are written. These luminaries then provide light and inspiration to participants all night long.



Cancer survivors begin the Victory Lap with family and friends at Bluevale Collegiate



Preston High School Relay site is lit by luminaries and is a peaceful place for walking the track at 4:00 am

A Relay for Life high school event raises money for a good cause, but it is a total celebration and education event. A cancer awareness and education station is one of the areas that are run along with the music, games, movies and entertainment. The event site is closed to visitors after 11 pm and students and staff have found this event to be one of the highlights of their school experience.

What makes it special?

- The schools in Waterloo region have chosen to make this a totally student-run event and the Cancer Society supports this effort with a single day training conference for heads of committees. Each person learns from other students who have run the event and they understand the scope and duties of their committee. Each Relay student chair is provided with an excellent resource CD ROM with all of the hand-outs, forms, speeches and memos that each committee requires.
- This is one of the few fundraising events where the charity provides participating schools with a budget to run the event. The budget must be approved by the Canadian Cancer Society, but it allows great flexibility and responsibility on the part of the student organizers.

- Students love to be part of a large overnight event and to raise the incredible totals for cancer research in one night makes them proud of their school and community. These school-based events build spirit and students look forward to the next Relay.
- The team building that happens from the participants and organizers is unique to this special event.
- Many students and staff have been touched by this disease in one way or another and it is an opportunity to do something tangible that will help to make cancer history!

Why Relay?

Relay For Life high school events provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills, learn about charitable causes and most of all to bring the whole school together for a common goal – to beat cancer. ■

Dave Conlon

Elmira District Secondary School

For more information about this great activity, visit the Relay for Life website at: www.cancer.ca/relay



Elmira students start their laps early in the evening of Relay for Life



*“He who would leap high
must take a long run.”*

Danish Proverb

THE E FACTORS

The performance of a group can be evaluated after the completion of an event by their E factors. *Efficiency, Effectiveness* and *Effort* are three measurements that can decide whether a group’s accomplishment has moved them from an empty effort to one full of success.

Before an event or activity is evaluated, the group must be aware of the definition for each word. Effort is the amount of work put into the event to make it happen. How much time was put into the organization and running of the event? Efficiency is the ability of the group to complete the job in a timely fashion. Did it happen without too many reminders to get back on task? Did all group members contribute without one person taking over and doing the bulk of the work? The third E factor, Effectiveness, is measured by the outcome of the activity or event. Did the activity or event accomplish its initial goals or intentions? What was the participation and enjoyment level of the intended audience?

Once the group understands the E Factors, create three dials on a display board. This can be very effective on a white board where the dial is held by a magnet and the dial is turned in gradations from Empty to Full.

This is one exercise where everyone involved has done a good job when the group gets a resounding F on each measurement. ■

What will you do for a t-shirt?

In the fall of 2006, our school, Heritage Park Secondary School in Mission, BC, had the opportunity to host the annual BC Student Leadership Conference (BCSLC). This is an event over 4 days with around 550 people in attendance.

When we have 400 delegates, we also have about 150 workers at this conference. What is in it for them? A t-shirt and that’s about it for tangibles. Each committee gets their own colour of shirt that has the conference logo on it. We have several committees: Food, Kitchen, SWAT (Sudden Wants and Technology), Spirit, Environment, and Video. Students each choose the committee that they prefer, and then have many hours of work. The Spirit Leaders have at least a year of prep, and the other groups spend about 50 hours working on the weekend of the event.

We were fortunate the next year that circumstances allowed us a second host opportunity. Instead of burnout, we actually had try-outs and waiting lists for our committees.

So what is in it for them and us?

The students felt they had a great experience –the pace at which they worked was very intense, but they knew that they had been a part of something outstanding. That is one thing that is in it for them. Nearly everyone likes to be a part of something important and/or good. That is why the NHL sells so many jerseys every year. The total sales of NHL jerseys in Canada over the last 25 years is more than our total population. Part of our budget for hosting these conferences is a lot of t-shirts – everyone gets one who is part of the event. Custodians, office staff, admin – anyone we can think of who helped out.

The students also know that they have been part of a defining event in the school’s history. The change in your school after hosting successfully is im-

measurable. This can be one of those “self-actualization” moments in your school’s history, to use Maslow’s hierarchical definitions.

There is also the intrinsic feeling of a job well done. We try to teach this, but it can’t really be taught until it is experienced. Everyone who had a part of this event feels they can do more now, as they have certainly challenged themselves at whatever level they could. We honestly tell each student that the job they are doing is the most important job in the conference. Someone will invariably ask “But didn’t you say the same thing to the Food team?” The answer is “Yes, I did. If you don’t believe that this is the most important job in this event, then you need to change the committee you are on.” Every job is critical to the smooth running of this conference, so we all need to believe this and work accordingly.

There is also the making of new friends, or connections made during the conference. Our students find that in a committee of 40 to 60 students, that they are working with someone they may not have given much consideration to previously. They find that they meet a lot of really nice people that they never really noticed before, and the culture of the school begins to improve. They become more willing to take a chance on activities at the school, and involvement in many areas improves.

So we can see that most of what participants and organizers receive are intangibles - those nice things that make a better world and person. It is a great opportunity to take your school to the next level. So if you ever get the chance, jump at it. It is a lot of work, but the rewards are massive.

And they get a t-shirt. ■

Al LaFontaine

Dip, Dive, Dodge and Throw

Noise levels hit record highs in the Ainlay gym a year ago when Bananaz, a Grade 10 dodgeball team, made an amazing comeback to win a semi-final match in the school's annual dodgeball tournament.

"We were so shocked," says Janice Leung of Bananaz, recalling how the crowd engulfed her team after its under-dog victory. "I didn't know what happened; we were surrounded by so many cheering people." Bananaz then came back as a Grade 11 team, one of 32 teams competing for a position in the Harry Ainlay School's dodgeball finals.

Student excitement was so high this year that for the first time ever, five teams had to be turned away because openings were filled. Hundreds of students packed the gym during lunch to watch their friends dip, dive, dodge and throw.

The tournament ran over a three-week period in both Ainlay gyms during the lunch period. One week featured the teacher tournament. The student tournament ran two full weeks. As the final, the winning teacher team challenged the victorious student team.

"The dodgeball tournament is different than most intramural programs because people do not need a specific set of skills

to play dodgeball," says Ray Bulatao, a student council member and a tournament organizer. "People just come out to have fun."

"So many people were talking about the tournament," says Grade 10 student Nimo Omar. "I had to put in a team just so I could say I'd done it."

The tournament is a great opportunity for students and teachers to connect, says teacher Ms. Hudec, part of the winning teacher team, Word. She notes it also promotes team building among staff and gave her the opportunity to amaze students with her own dodgeball moves, mainly her famous "hurricane."

Although the tournament is just for fun, it has been organized as any other sporting event. Games are carefully regulated by referees and participants follow outlined game rules. Teams are required to wear matching uniforms and be represented by a student captain and teacher.

The tournament is a sudden-death, round-robin tournament in which preliminary matches are played best two-out-of-three games. Close games between teams who really get into the game are the best. "It's so intense," says Ela Rydz. "It's entertaining and funny to watch." ■

"The real measure of our wealth is how much we'd be worth if we lost all our money."

John Henry Jowett

CONSENSUS THUMBS

Voting on an issue creates winners and losers, so understanding how to reach consensus is valuable. One step towards understanding consensus is to use a voting process that doesn't create the separate divisions of winners and losers.

The first step is to define consensus for the group. They must understand that a general agreement must be reached by the group and this means that some people may not be in total agreement, but they are willing to work with the decision made.

There are three positions for this voting procedure:

Thumbs up: I agree with the decision.

Thumbs sideways: It isn't what I want, but I will support and participate.

Thumbs down: I do not support. We need further discussion.

The group must understand that consensus is reached when there are no individuals with a thumbs down. Even if there is one thumbs down, you have majority rules, not true consensus. ■



Staff teams make it entertaining for staff and students alike.

“Persons appear to us according to the light we throw upon them from our own minds.”

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Above and Beyond

is the official newsletter of the Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisors. The newsletter is published 3 times a year for schools all across Canada.

To learn more about membership, go to www.casaaleadership.ca/join.html

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Canadian Association of
Student Activity Advisors

Resources

Be sure to visit the CASAA website for more lesson plans, activity ideas and a complete list of resources.
casaaleadership.ca



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF
STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS
EMPOWERING YOUTH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This newsletter has been printed with the generous support of Friesen Yearbooks.
www.friesens.com/yearbook

Full Deck Learning

Many learning activities do not need expensive support materials. A simple deck of cards is a great tool for classroom activities such as the following:

Sentence Shuffle

The object of Sentence Shuffle is to line up the cards in “sentences.” In this game, cards have an alphabetical value, rather than a numerical one. Each card stands for the first letter of its name. That means, Ace = A, King = K, Queen = Q, Jack = J, Two = T, Three = T, Four = F, etc. If you were dealt an Ace, you would need to come up with a word that begins with the letter “a”.

Playing the Game: Divide the team into smaller groups of 6-7. Deal each participant a card. Ask them to keep their card and not trade it with anyone. Each group must compose a sentence using their cards using alphabetical values. Participants must stand in the correct order and present their sentence to the larger group.

For example, one group of 6 participants is dealt an ace, three, two, king, four, and a seven. Their sentence might be, “A tiny taupe kangaroo falls softly.” Encourage each group to come up with 3 or 4 sentences.

Sample sentences: Four—Queen—Two—Six—Seven: “Father quit the Secret Service.”

Eight —Three—Seven—Five—Six: “Eat the soup for supper.”

Group Blackjack

Playing the Game: This is best played with 12 or more players. Have the group stand in a circle and give each participant a card that they must not look at. Inform the group that this is a silent activity and they may not talk for the duration of the activity. Ask them to place the card on their forehead so it is visible to the rest of the group. Instruct them to play ‘Blackjack’ as a large group. Seeing the card values of other players, participants are to team up and create a ‘hand’ that equals a combined value of 19, 20 or 21. Everyone should be able to find a ‘hand’ to belong to to end the activity.

Variation: Group Jackblack!

The object of Jackblack is to subtract points, rather than add them. Participants start with 21 and try to get into groups that total 0, 1, or 2. Each card still has its normal Blackjack value. ■

*from “Playing With a Full Deck” by
Michelle Cummings
Check out the website
www.training-wheels.com
for more information.*

