



# ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

VOL 12 NO 1

## Cochrane/Olds is Rarin' to Lead the Stampede!

### BEING YOUR BEST

It was the end of a long November evening, and my students had run a successful coffee house. I was not feeling the best as I was feeling a little jaded about all this activity stuff. Normally, I love coffee houses because the kids behave and parents and grand-parents come to the cafeteria to hear the talent. Earlier in the evening, I had dealt with one young lady who had been drinking, and a grade 11 boy who was running around the front foyer like a two-year-old screaming odd, inappropriate words at our VP. I suspected that this doofus was responsible for a ding in the side of my car. Over 130 kids had behaved themselves, and yet I was feeling down about the choices and behaviours of just two people.

We were packing up the gear and I was walking down the hallway behind a kid who had been a drummer in two of the bands that had played that night. He said to his friend, "Man, I LOVE coffee house! It's always such an awesome night." Now, when a drummer LOVES something, that's really an impressive statement. Drummers are different; they're the goalies of the music world. That statement immediately buoyed my mood and reminded me of why I'm still at the school at 11:30 at night helping my leadership kids put away cafeteria tables. There will always be kids who make inappropriate choices of beverage or behaviour, but there are also the drummers and audiences who do appreciate what happens for them during activities. This drummer even had his mom in the audience, and she was his roadie helping him load his kit in the mini-van. It was close to midnight and mom was smiling. The drummer was smiling. It was enough to get me through another couple months of creating opportunities for kids to be their best. ■



*Co-chairs Dorothy Karlson from Bow Valley School in Cochrane and Sandra Dorowicz from Olds High School are ready to blaze the trail for the CSLC 2009!*

Howdy folks! Just wanted to let y'all know that we're gearin' up for one heck of a showdown in 2009! We've been schemin' and dreamin' for two years now in order to rope in the best possible young leaders for this 25th Canadian Student Leadership Conference. Our combined student and staff teams are rarin' to show you our western hospitality and pioneer spirit!

The majestic Canadian Rockies and vistas of the rolling foothills will be the backdrop for the pre-conference tour based out of Cochrane. Delegates will enjoy the western atmosphere and marvel in the beauty of the area as they partake in challenging activities, tours and hikes. A traditional Canadian stage presentation will showcase our western talent and heritage. A visit to the badlands and the Royal Tyrell Museum in Drumheller will be a highlight, including a stop to see the remains of the ferocious Alberta lizard known as Albertosaurus! After being treated to the best in the west by Bow Valley High School students, staff and community, it'll be time to mosey off to Olds for the 25th anniversary of the Canadian student leadership conference.

Known as the "Gateway to the Rockies," the town of Olds is a small community with bigtime ideas and hospitality. It will be our honour to provide a program of talented, knowledgeable keynote speakers and small-group sessions as well as a variety of student and advisor activities, entertainment and connection opportunities. As a combined conference committee, our focus will be to look back at what we've learned about student leadership in the past 25 years and apply that expertise to today's issues and tomorrow's challenges. We want to Lead the Green Stampede as much as possible so will make every effort to ensure that we are as environmentally conscious as possible in the hopes of setting the tone for future events. In the meantime, be ready to Cowboy up and make a Range Date for 2009 'cause if you know what's best, you'll come to the west!

*“Teenagers these days are out of control. They eat like pigs, they are disrespectful of adults, they interrupt and contradict their parents, and they terrorize their teachers.”*

*Aristotle 350 BC*

## SPIRIT GAMES

### Toilet Paper Wrap

One person tucks the first few squares of a roll of toilet paper down the back of a team member’s pants (at the waist). Another teammate holds the roll on a long pencil. The member with the toilet paper tucked down their pants runs around three other teammates until the roll runs out. The runner may not touch the roll with his or her hands. If the paper breaks, the run is stopped until the judge tucks more in.

### Hole-in-one Contest

Conduct a contest using regular golf clubs—make sure you have a least one left-handed club. The “hole” is a hula hoop, placed on the ground, about 12 metres away from the tee. The golf “balls” are marshmallows. Participants play throughout lunch period. Award prizes for holes-in-one or closest to the hole.

### Grape Toss

Ten participants per team. The designated tosser is given a bag of grapes. Mark a circle outside of which all nine teammates must stand. The tosser stands in the center and lobs one grape to a teammate who must catch it behind her back. If she fails to catch it, the tosser tries again until successful. Once the first person catches her grape, the tosser lobs one grape at a time until the second person catches one. The first team to complete the nine members wins.

# Entrapment

## Objective

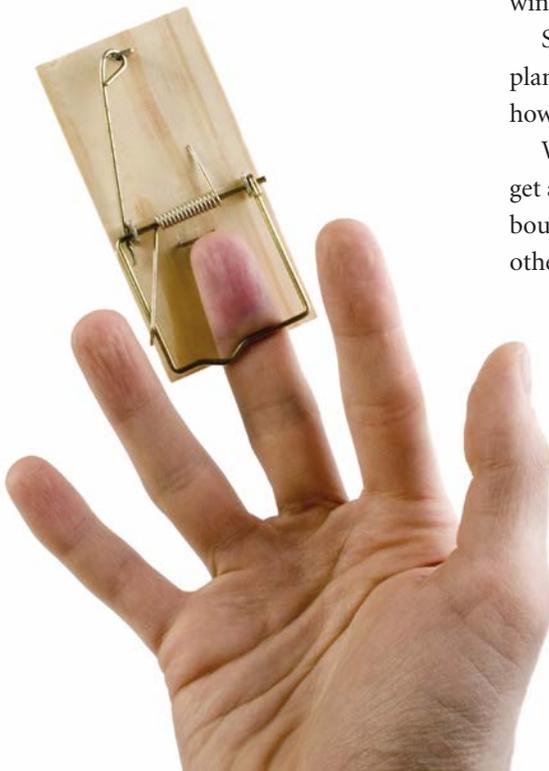
This is a great team building activity with loaded mousetraps that builds excitement and strategy skills. The group attempts to place 15 loaded traps in a circle as quickly as possible so that they are positioned like fallen dominoes. The object is to do it in as little time as possible without the traps exploding. Even if the group is less than successful, everyone has a great time and learns how to load a mousetrap (a useful real-life skill!)

## Materials

- 15 mousetraps for each team
- a stopwatch
- a picture or model of the final product

## Time Required

This will depend on the number of teams and your supply of mousetraps. One group will take 15 minutes including debriefing.



## Procedure

Put 15 traps in a plastic bag or pile them in the middle of the table for each team. They must not touch the materials before the official start time.

Each team is allowed to plan for 5 minutes to set and place all the mousetraps so that they overlap each other laying down in a circle. The group must set them so that if one goes, they all go snap! All traps must be loaded so that they will go off if touched.

After the planning time is done, the facilitator starts the groups. When the last trap is placed in position and no one is touching the traps, the timer stops. (The present record is 1 minute 5 seconds on the first try for 15 traps.)

## Processing

If a partial circle of traps explodes before anyone is finished, the team is encouraged to restart since they still have a chance of winning.

Some groups have to use some of their planning time to teach others in the group how to set the traps.

When the traps are successfully placed, get a Ping-Pong ball and take turns bouncing it inside the circle and to another person until the traps go off.

## Questions:

- What roles did people play in the activity?
- How did people define their roles?
- What was the most difficult part of the activity?
- In what ways did timing the challenge make a difference?

This activity is from “Raptor and other Team Building Activities” by Sam Sikes. It is available through CASAA. ■

# Sailboat Leadership

A sailboat and its parts provides an interesting analogy for how a leader should use his or her skills and abilities to get the most out of leadership.

The skilled sailor must use the prevailing conditions and the craft in the most efficient way possible to get where she or he is going.

The following are some of the comparisons that you might consider:

**Mast:** your aspirations

**Keel:** your center—that which keeps you balanced during calm and especially stormy seas

**Sails:** your varied leadership skills under different conditions

**Wind:** the conditions

**Rudder:** decision-making ability

**Cabin:** the number of people you can take with you during any journey

**Compass:** your goals and directions

**Plimsoll Line:** this line is painted around the hull. This is the limit that a boat can be loaded with cargo before its seaworthiness is compromised.

## Questions for discussion:

1. What happens when your mast is too tall? Too short? How does this apply to the aspirations of a leader?
2. An inexperienced sailor will not want to put out all the sails at once. Why?
3. Why would a leader want to use different sails under different conditions?

4. The spinnaker is the balloon-like sail that billows out in front of the boat. When is this sail used? When do you put out the “spinnaker leadership sail” in your experience?
5. The keel allows the boat to tack against the wind. This allows the boat to move forward even when the wind is blowing against it. How does this apply to difficult times in your experience as a leader?
6. During stormy weather the keel will right the boat if it flips over. What centers your life?
7. Why would inexperienced sailor/leaders not want a big boat to start learning with?
8. Why should leaders pay close attention to their personal Plimsoll Lines?
9. How does a leader or sailor make forward progress when the winds are blowing directly in your face?
10. How do you avoid the rocks and shoals that could sink your efforts even under calm weather?

*“If you are afraid of your future, you don’t have a present.”*

*James Petersen*

## SPIRIT GAMES (CONT’D)

### Airplane Accuracy

Mount a hula hoop on a stand. Each team has three participants with 20 sheets of paper. Participants make and throw the paper airplanes through a hoop, from a distance of about 3 metres. Use different coloured paper for each team.

### Straw Structure

Give 6 participants from each team a box of drinking straws and a roll of Scotch tape. Tell them to build the highest free-standing structure that they can in a 15 minute period of time.

These games are from “Spirit Works”. This is the must-have manual for spirit games available from CASAA. ■



**T**here is a leadership dilemma at the moment. Many top leadership positions are not being applied for, and when they are filled, the followers are not happy with the person selected as the new leader. Leadership is tending to be viewed as the realm of the elite and is not a position that a lot of students want to find themselves in.

A solution to the present predicament is to change the focus of leadership away from the traditional top-down version. Any group of people larger than 3 must develop a *leading from the middle* leadership approach. As an example, coaches

symphony has to have the leadership of all the sections working in harmony, otherwise a cacophony rather than a symphony results.

Student leadership advisors must recognize that their job is to promote leadership from the middle. Benjamin Zander is the conductor of the Boston Philharmonic, and his experience as a conductor meant that he was in a role that was dictatorial by nature. This was the structure that he was given by tradition, yet in a symphony, the conductor is the only one who doesn't make a sound. Zander says "his true power derives from his ability to

the middle), the performance goes beyond just playing symphonic music to the realm of creating art. Advisors are the conductors of the Activities Program and can produce beautiful music when they help their students lead from the middle.

**Change 1:  
Big isn't always important**

Peter F. Drucker is a business management guru who predates Stephen Covey. In an interview published in 2001, he talks about why people confuse size with importance. He says, "What do you think were the things that had the greatest

# Leading from the Middle

for professional team sports have to convince their players to lead from the middle. It's not enough to have a Sidney Crosby and a bunch of pro players. You need to convince everyone that it's his or her job to play and lead on the team if you want to make the Stanley Cup playoffs. In the same way, a conductor of a

make other people powerful." The performance of the music depends on not only the skills of the person playing first violin, but also the conductor must convince the person sitting in the 11th chair of the cello section that they have something to contribute. If the whole symphony contributes (if the players choose to lead from

impact on the 19th-century practice of medicine? Anesthesia, antiseptics? No, the fever thermometer. The fever thermometer, which enabled the mother to take the temperature of the 2-year-old, and allowed people to check whether they were sick, created modern medicine. In terms of its scientific value, the thermometer is zero; thermometers have been around since the 17th century. And yet it had an enormous impact on science, since it would measure heat." The lowly fever thermometer has more power in the history of medicine than many of the top-rated discoveries. All student leaders must be convinced that their contributions can make a significant positive contribution to the life of their school.

**Change 2:  
The perspective of leadership**

Drucker's medical example points out that the middle person can have more influence on what is happening than the "big cheese". In fact, 99% of all leadership occurs not from the top but from the middle of an organization. The leader in



*99% of all leadership occurs not from the top, but from the middle of an organization.*

the middle has to understand the real view of leadership from the top. John Maxwell identifies seven Myths of the Top in his book, *The 360° LEADER*.

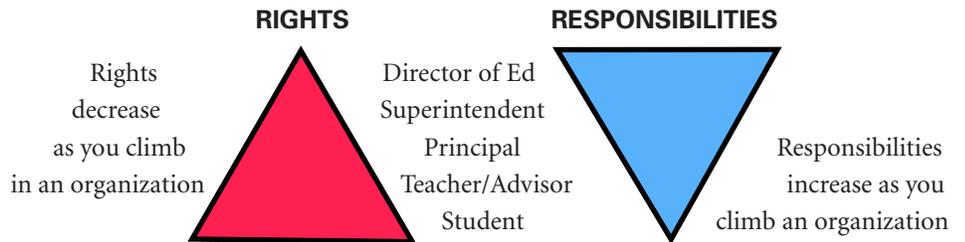
1. Position myth: I can't lead if I'm not at the top leadership position.
  - Leadership is a choice you make, not a place you sit.
2. Destination myth: When I get to the top, then I'll learn to lead.
  - Learn to lead *before* you have a leadership position.
3. Influence myth: If I were on top, then people would follow me.
  - Influence must be earned.
4. Inexperience myth: When I get to the top, I'll be in control.
  - People below overestimate the amount of control at the top.
5. Freedom myth: When I get to the top, I'll no longer be limited.
  - As you go up the ladder the amount of responsibility increases as your rights decrease.
6. Potential myth: I can't reach my potential if I'm not the top leader.
  - Work at the top of your game rather than the top of the organization.
7. All-or-Nothing myth: If I can't get to the top, then I won't try to lead.
  - You do not need to be the top dog to make a difference.

John Maxwell states that we need to develop people who are willing to lead from the middle. He calls these people a "360° leader." The 360° leader influences everyone at every level in an organization. They lead up, across and down in their organization. Like Nike, they "just do it." Their motto is, "Follow me, I'm right behind you!" Student leaders must help everyone in the group to be more successful and not wait until they are at the top.



*True power comes from your ability to make other people feel powerful.*

**Change 3:  
Understanding Rights vs Responsibilities of Leaders**



**Change 4:  
Dynamic positions of power**

When you adhere to a *leading from the middle* model, you will find that you will have different people leading at different times. This is a dynamic leadership model where a person can choose to lead when they are ready or able. Student leaders are busy people, and just because they are elected or selected to a position doesn't mean that they are able to run a specific event at that time of year. The old leadership model meant that the person who was the Spirit Chair in September remained the Spirit Chair until June no matter how effective they were. Static positions of power can be detrimental to the growth of a group. When you have leadership from the middle, your leaders choose the events where they want to take the lead role rather than being automatically assigned them.

Leading from the middle is a frame of mind for all people in your leadership group. It means that everyone takes the opportunity to lead, whether it be by running a major event or by simply putting up great posters. This approach allows student leaders to think in terms of opportunities rather than obligations. It also allows the person in the middle to initiate rather than wait for the traditional leader at the top to give permission.

This article is based on ideas from the book, "The 360° Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" by John C. Maxwell. It is available from Nelson Business Publishing. This is an excellent book for every advisor's leadership library. ■

*Dave Conlon*

*“If everybody is thinking alike, then somebody isn’t thinking.”*

*George S. Patton*

## **PAY IT FORWARD**

I am truly flattered when asked to provide a reference letter for a well-deserving senior student. It really is a compliment, and I take the request very seriously. After all, it could make a huge difference to the student applying for an honour, scholarship or position of employment.

For the past few years, I have challenged my students to ‘Pay It Forward.’ Instead of feeling personally obligated to thank me for their letter of recommendation, I have asked the student to please write a letter of appreciation to a teacher. I tell them to think of someone who inspired them into a position of leadership; someone who challenged them to follow their dreams; someone who encouraged them to set goals; someone who supported them through a rough time; or, perhaps someone who planted the seed to strive for excellence. The effect has been amazing: from kindergarten teachers that thought they were long forgotten to a retired teacher that received a letter just prior to undergoing chemotherapy. Teachers are genuinely surprised and grateful for the little unexpected notes of recognition and gratitude.

I truly believe that the ‘Pay It Forward’ challenge allows students to take the opportunity to say thanks: “I want you to know you were important to me.”

*DiAnne Simonson*

*R. A. McMath Secondary School*

## **Help Wanted**

How do you get people to help you? Why are some people willing to help, but they don’t indicate their willingness to the person asking for help?

Most student leaders will stand at the front of a group and say, “Would someone like to help me with making posters?” In most cases, they are shocked by the lack of response from their peers. This should not be shocking as the empty response given by their peers is an honest answer to a poorly phrased question. The use of “would someone like to help” is very weak, because it gives the audience an exit or excuse strategy because it is phrased in the conditional tense. This way of phrasing a request is a common weakness of student leaders because they don’t want to impose on their fellow workers.

Teach the skill of asking for exactly what you want. You don’t have to be autocratic, but you must be very clear and specific about what you need.

### **Clear Request for Help:**

*I need help making posters. I need 3 people for about 30 minutes to make posters for the next dance.*

Notice how clear the above statement is now. Volunteers now know what is being done by how many and how long it will take. When you are clear about what is needed, busy people can organize themselves to make time available to help you.

The next step, which is the hardest for student leaders, is to look someone in the eye, and say, “Janice, will you help me?” This is very hard because students don’t want to feel like they are putting other people on the spot. They will often pick their friends

with this request because they feel they will get the support.

To facilitate the proper phrasing of the request for help, students must be made aware of how their offer to help affects the whole group. John C. Maxwell says, “When you help someone on a team, you help the whole team. And when you help the team, you’re helping the leaders.” He also points out that when you step up and help, you make people feel better.

Maxwell points out that:

- the first person to volunteer is a hero
- the second person is considered a helper and viewed as slightly above average
- the third person, along with everyone after, is seen as a follower and is ignored

When you ask for help, you will get what you ask for by the way that you ask it. When student helpers understand the power of their assistance, they will be more willing to respond affirmatively. ■

*Dave Conlon*



# Action and Words for Leadership

When a student wants to take a woodworking course, there is a defined set of skill expectations that the woodworking teacher can outline as things that a student will learn by the end of the course. When a leadership course is offered, it is the teacher’s job to teach the specific skills that students will learn in the course. There is often a finished product to judge the success of the student. Too often, we define the outcomes of the leadership course by what we want our student leaders to be rather than what we want them to do. We, of course, want them to be responsible role-models who are enthusiastic and confident. However, these are ways that we want our leaders to behave and these behaviours are very hard to measure and teach. You can teach the skills of confidence, but it’s much more than just expecting your student leaders to be confident in front of an audience.

Michael Brandwein, in his book *Learning Leadership*, points out that leadership skills can be broken into two teachable and observable parts. He identifies them as leader actions and leader lingo. Student leaders can be taught what the action of teamwork looks like and most importantly what the leader should be saying, demonstrating their application of the skill of teamwork or planning.

The following chart outlines some of the actions and lingo of specific leadership skills:

Action	Lingo
<b>Teamwork skill</b>	
Works with others and shares responsibilities	I’ll do this with you. Let’s work on this together.
Solicits ideas and opinions	What do you think? What would you like to do?
Tries to increase the involvement of others	Join us; you take a turn. I think it’s important that we hear from everyone about this.
<b>Planning skill</b>	
Works with group to identify the steps needed to be taken to accomplish the goals	What’s everything we need to get the job done? Have we left any steps out?
Helps decide who will do what and when	Who is willing to take care of this? How should we decide who does what?
Makes back-up plans, to be prepared if things do not go as planned	If this doesn’t work, what will we do instead? Do we have a bad weather plan?

Every true leadership skill can be demonstrated by something that we can see or hear. It is important to teach that the skill of teamwork is more complex than just the “rah rah” action and statement of “gimme a high five!”

Find out about Michael Brandwein and his resources at [www.michaelbrandwein.com](http://www.michaelbrandwein.com). You can purchase the excellent book, *Learning Leadership* from the website.

*“The door of a bigoted mind opens outwards so that the only result of the pressure of facts upon it is to close it more snugly.”*

Ogden Nash

## COLLABORATION WITH A WIKI

A wiki is a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content. They are very easy to set up, and require no programming skill or IT support. A Wiki can be used by your leadership group to create a site for online collaboration on a major event, or it can be a “to do” list for your ongoing activities.

You can restrict contributions to the Wiki through email and passwords, so only your leadership team has access. Many Wikis are run outside of school board servers, so they don’t have size restrictions. Wikis are generally designed with the philosophy of making it easy to correct mistakes, rather than making it difficult to make them.

Blogs are great for one-to-many communication, such as one person writing about their trip to Europe. Forums are good for letting many users ask questions and letting many people answer. Wikis are excellent for collaboration. If you want to let students collaborate, add files, suggest links, and create a document that’s comprehensive and up-to-date, use a wiki.

“Wiki” is originally a Hawaiian word for “fast”. They are fast to set up and fast to learn, access and update. Students can have access beyond school hours and contribute from home.

Check out the easy and free site [www.pbwiki.com](http://www.pbwiki.com). You can learn how to set up a free wiki and be online within 30 minutes.

*“Some people walk in the rain, others just get wet.”*

*Roger Miller*

### 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](http://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](http://casaaleadership.ca)



This newsletter has been printed with the generous support of Friesen Yearbooks.  
[www.friesens.com/yearbook](http://www.friesens.com/yearbook)

## Promotion Ideas

### Cup Messages in a Chain Link Fence

Push Styrofoam cups into the holes of a chain link fence to write out a simple message. Be sure to clean it up when finished. Plastic cups work as well and add colour.

### Digi-Badges

These are small electronic devices that turn a student into a walking reader board. Each digi-badge is a pin which measures 3.125” x 1.75” and can be purchased for about \$30 each. You can program up to six different messages on the badge and the messages can be changed

as often as needed. It can generate a lot of buzz at a school. The website for ordering is [www.digibadge.com](http://www.digibadge.com)

### Four Rules of Event Promotion

1. An event is only as good as its advertising. You need to get people there.
2. The brain loves novelty.
3. One great activity is better than five poor ones.
4. Advertise x 3 = Each person should see or hear the message at least three different ways.

## The iPod of Poster Paint Kits

The iPod revolutionized the way that people listened to digital music. It was a device that made the whole listening experience easier and once people used an iPod they were hooked on the design and function. This paint kit is the iPod of poster production. Like the iPod, it has a premium price (\$350 plus shipping), but a number of schools have immediately purchased a second unit after the initial “a-ha” moment of “why hasn’t somebody told me about this!” All schools make posters: this kit allows you to make them effortlessly from start to finish to cleanup.

**Kit Contains:** carrying tray, three felt-tipped applicators that allow three different strokes per colour, and 8 quarts of ink (red, blue, black, green, pink, purple, yellow, orange).

The water-based ink is odorless, will not bleed through paper, is totally non-flammable, and cleans up with a damp cloth on most non-porous surfaces. Banners dry quickly and can be laminated to make them waterproof.

This self-contained kit will solve all your temperamental Tempra problems. Simply add water and more ink when the applica-

tors dry out. The carrying tray keeps track of errant pots of ink. Your custodians will love you for not messing up their sinks with tempra brushes and paints!

(The ink supply lasted for two school years under heavy use, including two full school elections, before more more ink was needed. *Dave Conlon EDSS*)

The ink pots and brushes can be purchased separately. Purchase your kit directly from CASAA. ■

