



# ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

VOL 14 NO 2

## A Newfound Energy — CSLC 2011



### CSLC 2011

Date: Sept. 27 to October 1, 2011

Location: Corner Brook Regional High School, Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador

CASAA has applied to Heritage Canada for travel grants for students to defray the cost of travel to the conference. This information will be available when registration opens for the conference.

Students will be billeted for the conference with local families. Advisors should book accommodations early at the Mamateek Inn (1.800.563.8300) or the Comfort Inn (1.709.639.1980)

Registration for the conference will open online in March, 2011.

Your co-chairs for CSLC 2011 are:

John Dennison

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Reuben Austin

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The website for the conference is found at [www.cslc2011.ca](http://www.cslc2011.ca)

Corner Brook Regional High, located in scenic Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador, is inviting the youth of Canada to a five-day celebration of leadership and personal development. As host of the 27th annual Canadian Student Leadership conference from September 27-October 1, 2011, CBRH is planning a conference packed full of dynamic speakers, spirited volunteers, engaging leadership sessions, and a healthy dose of Newfoundland and Labrador culture and hospitality.

The conference theme “A Newfound Energy” represents our belief in the vigor, enthusiasm and strength of our youth to forge a path of greater prosperity and social responsibility as we prepare them to carry the torch of leadership into the 21st century.

The pre-conference tour will allow our early birds to witness the rugged beauty and pristine wilderness of Gros Morne National Park, a World Heritage Site. See outport Newfoundland against the backdrop of some of Canada’s most beautiful scenery while meeting the friendliest people in Canada and learning about the towns and coastal communities that make Newfoundland and Labrador such a wonderful and unique place to live and work.

CBRH is excited about the group of keynote speakers and workshop presenters we have already booked to bring a positive message to our country’s youth. A highlight of the week will be the Kitchen Party being prepared for students and advisors. Bring your dancing shoes and a healthy appetite because Newfoundland culture and food will be in abundance. There will be lots of opportunity to have a good scoff (food) and a scuff (dance). Perhaps you will be one of the lucky participants who will get to kiss a codfish!

The trees of Corner Brook will be fully dressed in the glorious fall colours of reds, oranges, browns and golds, welcoming you to our wonderful city. Please be sure to fill your suitcase with loads of spirit, enthusiasm, and energy, because you are going to need it. Make your plans and register early so you don’t miss out on CSLC 2011. Check us out on Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube or on our website at: [www.CSLC2011.ca](http://www.CSLC2011.ca)

“Long may your big jib draw.” ■

*“The game of life is the game of boomerangs. Our thoughts, deeds and words return to us sooner or later with astounding accuracy.”*

*Florence Scovel Shinn*

## ACCOMMODATING

A valuable skill to learn is the knowledge of when to turn from asking for a compromise to allowing accommodation. This will put another negotiating tool in your skill set.

### Why should I accommodate?:

Our commonalities are more important than other issues and facing differences may hurt relationships.

### An accommodator’s attitude:

I will please others by playing down how important the issue or conflict is in order to protect relationships.

### When should I accommodate?:

- Issues not as important to you as it is to others
- You know you can’t win
- Everyone agreeing is the most important thing
- The things people have in common are more important than their differences

### When should I choose another method?:

- Some ideas don’t get attention
- Credibility and influence can be lost

## Spirit Activities: A Triple F

Everyone wants to have spirit rallies like they show in the movies. Hollywood can make a simple high school pep rally look like it’s a final from the Olympics. You don’t have the budget or special effects of a Hollywood blockbuster, but you do have the editing techniques that will make your spirit competitions more exciting and spirit-filled.

Norm Hull says that all spirit events must follow the triple F rule. This means that a class competition or pep rally event or even a root-beer chugging contest in the cafeteria will fall flat, if they don’t follow this f-in formula. They must be Fun, Fast and Fair.

■ **Fun:** understand that your idea of fun must be fun for everyone. You must be having “fun” with your participants and not making “fun of” your volunteers. Fun must mean that the participants know up front what they must do to participate and not be surprised when you change the rules after they come up on stage. Students love to do this to teacher volunteers, but they quickly find that those teachers don’t volunteer to chaperone their dances after they have been made “fun of” during a pep rally event. Also, understand that not everyone wants to enter a pie-eating contest—this is just not fun for them because it is a high risk event in terms of participation in front of an audience. Have events that involve different levels of participation risk—crowd events are low risk, relays are medium risk, and the pickle spitting contest is a high risk event. An excellent source of creative and fun ideas is found at the website of the TV show, *Minute to Win It*. [www.nbc.com/minute-to-win-it/](http://www.nbc.com/minute-to-win-it/)

■ **Fast:** know that any spirit event must not drag on. The canoe race around the cafeteria with students using toilet plungers and skateboards is fun for the first 60 seconds, but it loses its pizzazz after only 3 minutes. Try to use the rule of thumb that it must be a minute to win it. This will mean that you can get many more participants in the event if each round of the event is only a minute in length.

■ **Fair:** this is the last of the three F’s, but it is the most important. No matter how silly the event is, there must be rules that govern the event. Everyone must know the rules up front and cheaters must be stopped and disqualified. Once you allow someone to cheat, the game loses its appeal immediately and the next group will try to cheat even more. If you continue to allow people to bend the rules, you will find that your number of volunteer participants will dwindle quickly and future spirit events will not run well.

Understand that you can video all of these events and put them on the large screen, just like Hollywood. Students will get a better picture of the crazy event in a large gym when you put it live on the screen. This material is great for future assemblies or the end of the year retrospect on what happened during the year. You can have A+ spirit as long as you follow the three F’s of spirit rallies. ■

The DVD, *Capture the Spirit*, contains many more great ideas on how to run successful spirit assemblies and competitions. This resource is available from the CASAA online resource website: [casaa.myshopify.com](http://casaa.myshopify.com)





*“After the game, the king and pawn go into the same box.”*

*Italian proverb*

## Backwards Planning ... Helps to go Forward

One of the frustrations for inexperienced student leaders is their obvious inexperience. They have never run an event before, so how can they start from nothing and start planning an event successfully? One exercise to reverse the frustration of the planning process is to overcome the overwhelming feeling of getting to the end by starting at the end. One of the 7 Habits of Effective People according to Stephen Covey is to “start with the end in mind.” Once you show students how to use the backwards planning tools, they can be more effective in time management for small and big events.

The first tool you need is a calendar. Identify the date of completion and exactly what things should happen on that date. Once the specific activities are identified, work backwards from that end point and identify how long it will take to put those into place. The key question for each event is always, What will it take to make this happen? Mark the dates on the calendar that extend back to the starting point. You must assign specific dates on the calendar for all jobs.

The second, and most difficult, thing that must be done is to identify how you want people to feel on that date. These objectives are less tangible than the activities or end product, but they must be considered. Now, identify who will ensure that these intangibles will occur. This is something as simple as identifying who is responsible for the invitations going out to the thank-you notes being delivered.

Backwards planning is effective because the event is created twice. It is first created in the mind, and then it is created on paper through calendar, due dates and individual responsibilities tied to those dates. It is then triply effective because the event is then run a third time only in the forwards direction.

### Exercise

One way to practice the Backwards Planning process is to plan a school-wide BBQ using this method.

- Have students envision their perfect hamburger. They write down exactly what it looks and tastes like and how they feel eating it.
- Now, get out a calendar and using backwards planning from a date in two weeks, plan a BBQ where 150 people from your school will experience what Harvey’s Hamburgers used to call their “beautiful thing.”
- The most important part of this exercise is that the students *must* run the BBQ.

### CLEANER THANKS

Our school ran a Custodian Appreciation Supper and it was probably one of the best things we have done in a long time. We sent out special invitations for an evening supper, which we held in our library on a Friday night (when usually everyone is out of the school, except our hardworking custodians who clean up after us regularly and never complain about our messy events).

We created a beautiful candlelit atmosphere by covering the shelves in the corner with black drapery and using white tablecloths and lit candles on the round tables. A piano was brought in, and one of the leadership students played softly throughout the meal. Our student waiters and waitresses were dressed in black and white and served up sparkling non-alcoholic champagne and a lovely four-course meal (which we had purchased from the restaurant across the street except for the desserts which we made ourselves). At the end of the meal, we presented each of them with a scroll, which contained a Certificate of Appreciation for their support and hard work. They were so pleased; in fact, to the point of tears and our leadership group really experienced the joy of doing something kind and thoughtful for others.

*Sandra Dorowicz*



# The Evolution of Leadership

by Don Wheler

“Let’s meet for coffee and talk about leadership.”.... Translation: “Your teaching job and your life are about to change.”

So started my Leadership Academy journey in the summer of 2006, when I met with our new Superintendent, a retired high school principal, and a fellow student activity advisor. My former principal and mentor had been hired to write policy for our newly amalgamated school division. Through casual conversation he learned that our new young superintendent had a serious interest in student leadership development and invited me to join the conversation.

The question was asked: “What is our school division doing to promote student leadership?”

The answer became the next question and the process began. We shared the many success stories from schools in our area (the new division is comprised of 24 schools spread over 30,000 square kilometers). Many students were doing great things in their schools and communities. Some students were very involved in leading and organizing. Some teachers were very involved in leading and organizing. These successes were the result of individual passion and commitment and the ability to inspire others. None of this good work was due to any deliberate strategy, but rather isolated and exceptional work with almost ‘accidental’ success.

Our new superintendent asked how the division could support a more intentional and strategic plan to build strong leadership for students in all schools. Our idea suggested treating our expansive division as one large school in terms of population. In a school of this size, a credit leadership program would be a viable offering. We chose to not let geography be a limiting factor in our vision. “What if we created a credit leadership course to bring students together to learn and share ideas?” “What if we spread the 100-hour course over 2 years to create continuity and build our student base?” “The theory portion could be offered electronically.” “We could do a recruiting drive and have students apply for spots.” “We would have to apply to the department for course approval.” “And to the board for funding to hire someone.” “Let’s write up some course rationale and look for other approved courses for content.” “We should meet next week to share material and plan our next steps.”..... And so it began.

Fast forward to fall of 2010. The Northwest Leadership Academy has graduated two classes, currently hosts 45 student delegates in the 4th year of the program. The school board funds a .4 coordinator position (that would be me) as well as providing an operating budget and resources. Delegates attend sessions every 6 weeks throughout the division while their administrators meet in an adjacent venue. Guest presenters share their experiences to reinforce the curriculum theory. Delegates tackle the concepts of time management, stress management, decision making, conflict resolution, problem solving, event planning, goal setting, service and charity, peer support, leadership strategies, and the usual leadership course materials.

Between sessions, delegates work on interviewing local leaders, planning service projects, exploring resources to do assignments, sharing experiences and observations, meeting with mentors, journal writing, and balancing this extra course with their full academic, athletic, social, and work life.

The Academy has a mandate to serve more than the full credit delegates. Target groups include: Student Councils and Student Council Advisors, Club and Team Leaders, Beginning Teachers, Administrators, and School, Community Councils.

Our goal is to offer three distinct structural areas: An Oasis, a Training Center, and A Clearing House. This causes us to focus on continuous development and training while providing a safe environment for exploring new ideas.

I would like to share an email from a former Academy delegate to illustrate what we are about: I have not included the name but I can tell you this person flew under my radar for most of his tenure with the Academy. The female delegates from his school were extremely strong and set a very high standard of performance. This young man elected to stay on past the required two years to complete his course credit. It was during his extra time that I learned of his deeper insights into leadership and his desire to learn from other leaders in his life. Have a read.

Dear Don:

*I thought I would let you know where I am these days and what I am up to. I am in Brandon, Manitoba taking Hotel and Restaurant Management at Assiniboine Community College. Next year I am going into the Culinary Arts program. So far leadership in college has been overwhelming. I was not expecting the amount of leadership I would be encountering when I left high school. Especially in my program - Hotel and Restaurant Management. The program is teaching how to be leaders in high positions and gives the skills to get there. I found myself in the first couple days, and just a couple days ago, writing some leadership entries because I just had to put all my thoughts down on paper.*

*As well, I joined the basketball team. I am starting point guard and just a couple weeks ago I was named captain. I am encountering many problems because we are not a highly skilled team which I am not too familiar with. This is a new leadership challenge in my life. Just the other day I began reading the 10 leadership interviews I had done to try and help the position we are in. If things do not change quickly I plan on talking to some past leaders in my life.*

*Today my program was visited by the highly successful hotel chain, Fairmont. Fairmont was recruiting for their Student Work Experience Program (SWEP). All throughout the presentation they remarked about the importance of leadership in the industry. I also have a class at the moment that specifies on job skills. This class helps students with their resume, cover letter, portfolio, and the interview process. I have found that Leadership Academy has helped me to have an advantage in job skills. It helps to say a lot about my character through the things we have done in Leadership Academy. I am also using some of the projects I accomplished in my portfolio. I am able to talk about more than just leadership; I can talk about communication, creativity, and diversity. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to do all sorts of leadership related assignments.*

Sincerely,  
\*\*\*

Think of all the student leaders you have worked with. Think of the ones you know got it. Think of the ones who you wished would get it. Maybe they did.

This letter reminded me not to assume too much. I didn't know he was tuned in until I read his final journal entries that talked about all the connections and the personal growth. I thought he might be in it just because of the male/female ratio or because his advisor pushed him. Whatever his initial reasons, he ended up accepting the challenge and doing the extra work. I do not know what is going on behind their eyes. I do know that some of our former delegates will be our most valuable resource people and will spread their influence far and wide. Kind of like Rider fans....

All we can do is present opportunities for young leaders. It is up to them to accept the challenge (or not). I explain to the board that the Leadership Academy is actually just an 'Opportunity' Academy where I introduce intentional adversity into the lives of the delegates, provide a support network and high expectations, and some guidance to help them through. By accepting this extra burden, the delegates can learn to overcome obstacles, to fail and recover, and to gain the valuable character trait of resiliency. This is the gift I hope to give our student leaders to take with them out into the world. To me this is what Martin Seligman is referring to as 'Learned Optimism' in his books and what Aimee Mullins calls "Intentional Adversity" in her TED talk.

I could share many more examples of delegates doing great things during and after their formal Academy term.... don't get me started. This project continues to evolve. I invite suggestions, links to resources, and questions at any time.

Don Wheler is a leadership addict from way back who gets his kicks by challenging students to take on real leadership jobs to improve themselves and their world. He values the network of extraordinary people in student leadership development with whom he has had the privilege of working.

Contact him at [don.wheler@nwsd.ca](mailto:don.wheler@nwsd.ca) any time. Be careful what you ask for. ■



*“Happiness is not a goal;  
it is a by-product.”*

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

## Follow Through

Someone in your group brings up a unique and creative idea for an activity or event. Everyone gets excited, and it’s time to take what is initially a great idea and turn it into a smashingly successful activity or event.

But how?



First, realize what you are up against.

Everyone in the group is excited and wants to be part of a great new activity. But when it comes time to do the actual work, many who supported the idea initially can’t be found. Sound familiar?

One way to reduce the “I support the idea but don’t think I can help because I have to work” syndrome is to build accountability into your planning procedure. Rather than asking for support, ask for a show of hands from those who commit their personal involvement. Record the names of those who raise their hands and post this list of “committed” people for this activity in the office. Keep it posted for all to see until the event is over or the activity complete. That’s when you compare the list of people who pledged their involvement with a list of those who actually got involved.

### MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE

The Marshmallow Challenge is a remarkably fun and instructive design exercise that encourages teams to experience simple but profound lessons in collaboration, innovation and creativity.

The task is simple: in eighteen minutes, teams must build the tallest free-standing structure out of 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape, one yard of string, and one marshmallow. The marshmallow needs to be on top.

Surprising lessons emerge when you compare teams’ performances. Who tends to do the worst? Why? Who tends to do the best? Why? What improves performance? What kills it?

If you need to kickstart a meeting, get a team into a creative frame of mind, or simply want to encourage your group to think about what it takes to dramatically increase innovation, invest 45 minutes to run a marshmallow challenge.

Check out the background to the Marshmallow Challenge from a TED Talk video at:

[www.marshmallowchallenge.com](http://www.marshmallowchallenge.com)

Share this information with the entire group. When your members realize that they are committing themselves to actually participate when they vote or support an event, they will be inclined to speak up for only those activities or projects they really support. This way, you get an accurate read on the real interest in any particular activity.

One way to get people to continue to follow through is to have a focus on giving recognition and appreciation after the project or event is complete. Designate someone in your group whose sole job is to send “thank you” notes and find creative ways to recognize participation.

The real measurable success of an activity program depends on follow through. It’s not the glamorous part of leadership, but it doesn’t operate without it. Your effectiveness as a student leader is in direct proportion to your degree of “follow through” with all of the gritty details.

*Eric Chester*

*Eric Chester is a Hall of Fame keynote speaker, trainer, consultant, and co-author of seven books for teens. He can be contacted through the website [www.generationwhy.com](http://www.generationwhy.com)*

## Creating a Culture of Change

Teaching at a small rural school can sometimes give one the impression of stepping back in time. Anachronistic attitudes toward race and gender abound and introducing the notions of tolerance and acceptance seems as fruitful as pushing a snowball uphill in July. Yet push we do.

As most schools do, North Queens Rural High School celebrates school spirit throughout the year with a variety of theme days. This year we have forgone the old standards –pajama days, formal wear etc, in favour of more socially relevant themes. So far this year we have worn pink to stand up against bullying in September, worn purple to raise awareness regarding homophobia and suicide, grown mustaches (or drawn them on) to raise money for prostate cancer research, and celebrated our natural beauty by dumping the make-up and designer labels for “ I am not an object” Day. Each day is prefaced by education surrounding the issues. Sometimes teachers deliver the content; sometimes students are the messengers. Either way there is a sense that the snowball might just get up the hill before it melts.

Change can come in baby steps or in giant leaps forward. We are witnessing both. Our purple day especially generated a lot of conversation. We included information about famous people who are openly gay, as well as information about the biology of homosexuality. We left the display up in the cafeteria for a month and it drew a lot of attention, none of it negative. We witnessed students respectfully reading the information. We witnessed students who have gay and lesbian parents see their realities reflected on the school walls for the first time. And we witnessed a student finally feel safe enough to find his voice and come out to his classmates.

So together we push that snowball. Sometimes it rolls back on us a bit, but we push forward, because we see the difference we are making at our school. The snowball hasn't melted yet, and we can see the top of the hill from here.

*Roxanne Power  
North Queens Rural High  
Nova Scotia*

*NQRHS senior Jake White becomes  
Jake Purple to raise awareness  
about homophobia and bullying*



*“If you find it in your heart  
to care for somebody else,  
you will have succeeded.”*

*Maya Angelou*

### 20/20 PROJECT

Our two leadership classes committed to 20 days of 20 good deeds. I did this assignment along with them and realized that this was more difficult than it seemed. I asked the students to step out of their comfort zones and try to do good deeds that went above and beyond. The students recorded their good deeds in their journals on a daily basis, and then at the end of the project they had to write a reflection.

At first I thought many students were not taking this project seriously but when I read their journal entries I discovered that most of them had definitely gone above and beyond the call of duty and really performed some amazing good deeds.

*Joni Blaxland  
Riverside Secondary  
Port Coquitlam, BC*

*“I’d rather be a failure at something I love than a success at something I hate.”*

*George Burns*

### **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)**



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

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[www.friesens.com/yearbook](http://www.friesens.com/yearbook)

## **Leadership Class Structure: A Class of Many Contours**

Many advisors are interested in running leadership classes for credit, but they question how this type of class runs in a secondary system. Some schools run a semester timetable and will have a different class each semester. Other schools run this class outside of the timetable, and the class will meet all year long either before school or at lunch. The timetable will depend on the flexibility of the administration and the size of the school.

The day-to-day structure of leadership classes varies on a continuum from a focus on planning activities and projects to a focus on straight curriculum. Most classes fall somewhere in between, with a combination of lesson plans and activity/project planning. Teachers structure their day to day schedules in the following ways:

- **Activities Focused:** In this structure, the leadership class is an activity-based period in which student leaders—often elected student body and class officers—carry out the work of their office by planning activities and programs for the school. Lessons happen on an ad-hoc basis or are sporadically offered.
- **One Day a Week for Lessons:** In this option, the teacher designates one day a week as a classroom lesson day. Everyone knows that Tuesday, for example, will be focused on learning some aspect of the leadership curriculum. The other days of the week are devoted to working on various projects that are underway at any time of the year.
- **Committees, Lessons & Projects:** In this structure, certain days are designated for committee meetings and lessons, and the rest of the time is for project planning.
- **Quick Lessons Every Day:** Another way in which teachers fit curriculum into a mostly activities-based class is to offer quick lessons at the beginning of each class and then let students use the remainder of the class period for project planning.
- **Straight Curriculum:** In this structure, leadership class is much like any other class offered by the school, with students taking part in teacher-led lessons each day.

All of the above structures have generated successful learning for the students involved. It does require the concentrated effort of staff and administration to make this a healthy opportunity for leading and learning for all. ■

*Lyn Fiscus*  
[leadershipteacher.webnode.com](http://leadershipteacher.webnode.com)

Visit the above website hosted by Lyn Fiscus for more excellent information and background on running a leadership class for credit.

