



# ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

VOL 15 NO 2

## The View from the Big Chair



I have been involved in student leadership for over 10 years and was the chair of CSLC 2009 in Summerside. This year I have moved to the other side of the desk, and as a new principal, I have been asked many times how I am enjoying “Life in the Big Chair”, and I have often struggled to supply my answer. What I know with certainty is that I am learning a lot and have never had more ample opportunity to test my personal leadership philosophy. For that reason, I think I like this Chair a lot!

From where I sit now, my school looks very different. At one of our recent full school assemblies, I looked out over the crowd of students, teachers, and support staff—close to 1000 in total—and I thought: “I am responsible for all of these people!”

Before I could start to hyperventilate, I started looking at the many individual faces and I realized that—one by one— it is possible to make a difference. However, I also recognized that there are a few things that have to be in place in order for that to happen:

### CSLC 2012

**Dates:** Sept. 25 to Sept. 29, 2012

**Location:** Weyburn Comprehensive High School, Weyburn, Saskatchewan

CASAA has applied again to Heritage Canada for travel grants for students to defray the cost of travel to the conference. This information will be available as soon as Heritage Canada approves the grant for CSLC 2012.

Students will be billeted for the conference with local families. Advisors should book accommodations early in Weyburn.

Registration for the conference will open online in March 2012. You should register for the pre-conference tour early to guarantee a spot.

Your co-chairs for CSLC 2012 are:

Joanne Jensen

joanne.jensen@cornerstonesd.ca

Margot Arnold

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The website for the conference is found at [www.cslc2012.ca](http://www.cslc2012.ca)

**Vision:** I spent a lot of time this summer thinking about what I felt we could achieve together as a school. Our themes this year are “Connecting the Dots” and “Raising the Bar” and, at every opportunity, I try to connect what we are doing in the run of a day as a school community with our common vision. This gives us a sense of direction and purpose that helps to keep us all on track.

**Passion:** When teachers are pumped up about what they are doing and sincerely excited about it, that enthusiasm is contagious and our students want some of what they are selling. All the research says that the teacher is the key to student success. That means as Lead Teacher, I need to bring my passion for teaching and learning to school with me each day. I try to share my passion for people, as well. Who you are matters to me and I try to find ways to demonstrate that. Invariably, that involves a box of Smarties!

**Modeling:** It is a challenge to lead with integrity, but it is the only way to do it successfully. I try not to ask people to do what I am not prepared to do myself, and I prove this when possible. Nothing destroys faith or trust in another person than incongruous behaviour. When I make a mistake, I try to admit it right away and say I am sorry. I think my “Rookie Card” is a little worse for wear so far, but what can ya do?! We can only try our very best and learn from our mistakes.

**Chairs are Sometimes Uncomfortable:** It is difficult to realize that the buck really does stop with you as a leader. With this kind of power comes an incredible responsibility to make decisions that are well thought out and that will not ultimately be hurtful or harmful to those who count on you. Sometimes, I have to have difficult conversations from my Chair when things have gone astray. I find that using a gentle tone, offering clear expectations, and ensuring that I preserve the person’s dignity offer the best resolutions when problems arise.

*Nicole Haire*

*Three Oaks Senior High, Summerside*

*“It is not what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable.”*

*Moliere*

## CAN THE CANS

Canned food drives are an opportunity for students to help the less fortunate, but they are a poor way to help the poor amongst us. It sounds Scrooge-like but consider the realities of gathering all this food:

Most people pay retail price for their donation. This is inefficient relative to pooling the money to buy food in bulk. In fact, most Food Banks pay a nominal amount to the food industry for surplus food.

A food drive drops a large amount of product at a Food Bank that needs to be inspected, sorted and categorized. A sporadic food drive can cause a logistical nightmare. A good portion of the food is out-of-date or unusable and must be disposed of.

A large proportion of food—as much as 50 percent—provided to needy families in basic boxes winds up going uneaten. Providers know their clients better and, with cash in hand, can pull together items people are likely to want and let them pick what they need, cutting down on waste.

**Solution:** Find well-managed charities in your community and trust them to know how to do their job. They have access to food at a fraction of the price. They know their clients, and they have better things to do than to sort through your canned goods. Good intentions are commendable, but particularly in hard times it's more important to make sure your charitable dollars go as far as possible. Can the cans. Hand over some cash.

Matthew Yglesias

# Guinness World Record for Planking



Waterloo Oxford Secondary School in Baden, Ontario looks for the unique events that involve many parts of the school and W-O's unique culture. At the spring Barnyard Bash, we run a Cow Patty Bingo in which the whole football field is marked into “lucky” squares where a well-fed bovine meanders and marks the lucky spot for one winner.

Friday September 16, 2011, Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School was the site of an official Guinness Book of World Record for the “Most People Planking Simultaneously”. The record attempt was the showcase activity of the school's annual “Crazy Crusader Kickoff”, an outdoor event held early in the fall of each year to build and celebrate school spirit.

Planking is a recent fad, where the participant lies face down in unusual locations, keeping the hands along the body and the feet outstretched. When this plank-like position is achieved, a photo is taken and then often posted to the Internet.

“Every year we look for something to make Kickoff special, and after applying to Guinness we heard over the summer that our planking idea had been accepted as a new world record,” explains W-O teacher and Student Activities Council Advisor, Jeff Gerber. “They set the minimum threshold at 250 and we certainly exceeded that with 890 students participating!”

The record attempt involved 890 students planking on the school's main football field. In addition to providing guidelines on the counting and verification of the number of participants, Guinness also stipulated that participants remained in the “planking” position for a full 2 minutes.

Kickoff festivities including food, games, and grade competitions, got underway at 10:45 am with the Guinness Book of World Record Attempt for Most People Planking Simultaneously being set at 11:15 am.

*Jeff Gerber*

# Goals that Bounce Just Right

When setting goals, you don't want them to be too difficult or too easy. If they are too easy, then the challenge of accomplishment is lost and if too hard, then discouragement becomes a factor. Other aspects of goal setting include getting others to help you reach your goals.

**Time Needed:** 20 minutes and discussion time

**Materials Needed:** 3 tennis balls for each team of 4 – 6; a bucket or garbage can for each team; a pencil and piece of paper for each team

**Activity:** Divide the group into teams of four to six members. Each team will need a pencil and a piece of paper for scoring. Give each team one tennis ball. Put a bucket about 10 feet in front of each team. The person who is going to throw must have their back to the bucket. Have each person on the team try to throw the ball in the bucket without looking. You can score the activity in the following manner: give them one point if the ball hits the bucket, three points if the ball goes in the bucket and then bounces out and five points if the ball goes in the bucket and stays in. This is a lead in to why we need to set goals. Have them understand the fact that goals are needed otherwise you won't know which direction you are heading or how to get there. Blindly throwing the tennis ball shows how hard it is to hit a goal that you can't see or haven't set.

Now move each team's bucket about 40 feet in front. Give each team 3 tennis balls. Have one member of each team stand by the bucket to return the balls for the next person. Rotate positions so everyone gets a chance to throw. Facing the bucket, have the teams keep a running score of one, three or five points. For the second round, move the buckets in closer to about 20 feet. Repeat the scoring and then move the buckets in to 3 feet for the next round. Repeat the scoring.

For the final round, move the bucket back out to the 20 foot mark. This time have one team member pick up the bucket and help get the tennis ball to land in the bucket by trying to catch it in the bucket. Check team scores for which team has the most points after all the rounds.

**Processing Hints:** The first step where they are not seeing the goal shows how hard it is to reach a goal if you don't have one in sight. The 40 foot round shows goals that are so difficult to ever get reached. The 20 foot round is the most satisfying as it is challenging, but most can be successful. The 3 foot round shows that easy goals are boring and how people lose interest. During the last round when you have a team member help by moving the bucket around, you are showing that it is easier to accomplish a goal when someone helps you.



*“No matter that we may mount on stilts, we still must walk on our own legs. And on the highest throne in the world, we still sit only on our own bottom. ”*

*Michel de Montaigne*

## HMCS ORIOLE LEADERSHIP

In April 2012, the Canadian Navy will once again make HMCS Oriole sail training available to 30 students from CASAA member schools across Canada. HMCS Oriole is the vessel used by the Navy to train their own sailors and students will have an opportunity to sail on a modern Orca class vessel as well. This is a 4-day leadership experience that is not to be missed. Students pay their own expenses to and from the port of Victoria and the Navy covers all expenses from there.

Students making application should be physically fit, able to swim, and have a proven record of leadership in their schools. A positive attitude is as important as a strong desire to take on the challenges of living and working on a sail-training vessel.

Young leaders wishing to apply must be from a CASAA member school. Applications will be made available to schools in February, 2012 by email and on the CASAA website.

This is an outstanding opportunity for students to expand their leadership horizons and participate in a once-in-a-lifetime sail-training adventure.

*from More Activities that Teach by Tom Jackson available through CASAA*



Much hand wringing and expression of consternation has recently emerged over the growing academic gap between the genders in Canadian schools. Boys are falling behind girls in both performance and enrolment in the senior academic areas of not only literature, geography, and history, but also the more traditional strongholds of maths and sciences. We lament this because we care about the future for the boys. But there is a far more troubling gender gap which has emerged, one with a greater consequence than just the limitation of boys' futures. A gap that is more akin to canaries dying in the coal mine.

# The Leadership

Within our high schools, in the areas of leadership, social responsibility, and activist contribution to community are hugely dominated by females. In high schools offering leadership classes, girls are in the ever-growing majority. One can assume, this is because boys no longer resonate with the notion of being leaders.

In the past 4 years I have led two school district trips to India. These trips were demanding forays intended to challenge the personal resources of the students as they were thrust into various scenarios far outside their comfort zones. Students were told the trips would not be fun, but that they would leave them glad for the experience and feeling wiser and more confident. The poster said it would be the hardest trip they ever made. Of 19 students on the first trip, three were boys. On the second trip there were five boys out of 19. This was a surprising disinterest in an exciting emotional and physical challenge.

These examples can rightly be criticized as anecdotal and not particularly convincing. However, there is more compelling evidence. The Canadian NGO, Free The Children, annually stages a major event called WE DAY in several of Canada's largest cities. These WE DAYS involve bringing in high profile speakers and entertainers as part of a spectacle intended to inspire Canadian students to become community and globally involved in bringing about positive change. The idea is to engage our youth with the concepts of social justice and human rights, particularly as they affect children. In some respects, it's an attempt to build global leaders, to encourage and offer opportunities for youth to shape their world. And as important, to instill the idea that they as individuals have the power to bring about positive change.



WE DAYS are major youth events, unprecedented in their star power. Two years ago speakers included the Dalai Lama, Robert Kennedy Jr., and Jane Goodall plus performer Justin Bieber. In 2010, it was Al Gore, Jesse Jackson, and Martin Sheen. This year the list included Mikhail Gorbachev, Mia Farrow, and Shaquille O'Neal. The big names are rounded out with various other inspirational speakers and captivating big name entertainers. It's all a magnetic pulse of energy and significance. In Vancouver on

# gap

October 13, 18,000 students from all over B.C. and some parts of Alberta filled GM Place for this year's line-up. Schools chose the attending students on the basis of some kind of contributing to others. The school district from my area sent seven buses of 400 kids the five hundred kilometres to Vancouver. Astoundingly the ratio of girls to boys was 9 to 1. It was obvious that the ratio of the full 18,000 was no better than 4 to 1.



At the media session with Free The Children founder Craig Kielburger, I asked for his take on the gender disparity. He nodded his head and responded that of the hundreds of volunteers each WE DAY uses, 70 to 80% are female. The same ratio holds true for those who do summer internships or take part in summer programs that Free The Children operate. He said that was one reason for bringing in NBA star Shaquille O'Neal this year — an attempt to appeal to more boys. It obviously hadn't worked.

So, what does it mean and what's the big deal? We seem to be producing generations of males who either do not see themselves as fundamental to the growth and well-being of their communities and planet or who lack the desire, confidence, or will to take their place in responsibility and leadership. Both scenarios are scary. This is especially so when considering what does draw the male resonance. In Toronto, in April, 55,000 spectators snatched up tickets for an Ultimate Fighting Championship event. Mixed martial arts is the fastest growing "sport" today. I think it can be safely assumed that the vast majority of the 55,000 were men.

Since the 1960's, women's lives have surged forward with an expanding of how they see themselves, what they expect for themselves. Women's world view and self view continue to open and grow. This has not been the case for men. Their world view, if anything, has atrophied. Young girls are moving into a future where they only see possibilities and "can do". Young boys look forward and wonder "what now". Boys do not know who they are or what it means to be male. Schools don't engage them in that conversation.

And now with the total immersion in technology, everyone is channeled into more insularity in terms of their gaze. We look into our text pads, our video games, and into our computer screens. Compared to any other time in human history, we no longer look directly out to our environment or to our others.

If this direction continues, males will inevitably find themselves in such a squeezed reality that there will be predictable consequences which run from sad but benign to sad but frightening.

*Calvin White* author of *The Secret Life of Teenagers*, due out in 2013 from Key Publishing.

*“Who overcomes by force  
hath overcome but half  
his foe.”*

*John Milton*

## THINKING CREATIVE THINKING

Breaking out of our entrenched patterns of thought can bring about tremendous gain. Yet, as much as we talk about “thinking outside of the box,” we seldom purposefully engage in creative thinking.

Creative ideas are not new. Most creative advancements come by combining pre-existing ideas rather than by generating new ones. Indeed, inventive concepts don’t make a splash until someone grasps how to apply them and to advertise their benefits.

Creative thinking does not happen spontaneously from nothing. You need to accumulate and organize many ideas and thoughts that provide the fuel and source material for creativity to happen.

Creative people are not solo-thinkers. They are well-connected to other active people and are willing to solicit ideas from their network.

When you understand the nature of creative thinking, you can purposefully engage in constructive creative thinking that works.

*John Maxwell*

## Leading with Tolerance: Broadening your Horizons



The degree to which you show tolerance of other people every day is a choice – your choice.

Even though people believe they treat other people as equals, they don’t realize they often don’t treat them equally. According to studies reviewed by Tolerance.org, many people have prejudices they’re not aware of and that influences how they act toward others.

Leaders who unknowingly show their biases and prejudices can lose the respect of group members and the support they need to make things happen. People look to leaders to do the right thing, whatever the issue may be. If leaders are unaware of their biases and prejudices, they can create an environment of distrust, blame and negativity within their team.

Many people think of biases and prejudices in terms of race, culture, religion, economic class, age, gender. But people show biases and prejudices in other ways, often toward those who are overweight, extremely shy, homeless, have a physical disability, a learning disability, or come from a home that’s different from theirs.

Broadening your horizons as a leader requires recognizing and admitting any personal prejudices and stereotypes. It can be hard to step out of your comfort zone, but the more you do it, the easier it gets. Practice and promote the following principles to strengthen your tolerance skills. Tolerant leaders realize that not everyone embraces diversity. But with patience and commitment, you can create an atmosphere that values the differences everyone brings to your team.

### Tolerance Tools:

**Admit Not Knowing:** Be willing to learn and understand people’s differences by admitting when you don’t know much about their cultural backgrounds.

**Increase Your Awareness:** Encourage conversations and create opportunities in which everyone can comfortably learn more about each other.

**Immerse and Appreciate:** Find opportunities to learn and celebrate other cultures.

**Model Tolerance:** Speak up when you hear slurs and let people know that saying those things is unacceptable. Make positive statements about others.

from *Building Everyday Leadership in All Teens* by Mariam G MacGregor.  
*This book is now available from CASAA*

# WCI Human Rights Club

A lot of the time, we feel disconnected from the impacts of human rights injustices; we associate areas such as Africa and the Middle East as being victims of such prejudice. The truth is, there are human rights injustices everywhere—in third-world countries and developing countries alike. Issues which are present right in our country, or even city, are often overlooked.

One student-run group hopes to change this by bringing more focus on issues close to home. The Human Rights Club at Waterloo Collegiate is working hard to raise awareness and funds to bring aid to Sandy Lake, a Northern-Ontario aboriginal community. This group involved their school and community members through awareness events.

The students are breaking down barriers through social networking tools and pen-pal letters, allowing them to connect with members of the Sandy Lake community. Their passion is evident, as it is the driving force of their efforts to make a difference. Through many campaigns, they have provided basic necessities such as winter wear, baby clothing and baby supplies, and funds to the community, giving Aboriginal mothers access to some of the tools necessary to raise their children.

The Human Rights Club members acknowledge the fact that it is important to raise student awareness. The annual Human Rights Week gave WCI a chance to understand Aboriginal culture and issues through performances by aboriginal dancers and musicians, an elder talk, and information booths. These events help break down barriers and shed some light on Aboriginal misconceptions.

The Sandy Lake partnership is not the only project the club is undertaking. Through the years, the club adopted various causes including: donating funds to the Out of the Cold program which helps homeless people in the Waterloo Region, building a school in Sri Lanka and providing relief aid during the 2011 earthquake in Japan and the 2010 floods in Pakistan as well as the Haiti earthquake.

It is a wonder that a group that began as a business course project could have such an impact! Consisting of a core five to ten students and expanding to fifty when planning large events, the group will continue to make positive change.

The club has been recognized by CTV as the Hero of the Week in February 2011. The members of the Human Rights Club show that youth have the power to make a difference locally and globally. You can see them below as they travel to WE Day.



Suzie Zamzam  
WCI

*“A man has to live with himself, and he should see to it that he always has good company.”*

*Charles Evans Hughes*

## SUCCESSFUL TEAM BUILDING

Success is not a random act—it arises out of a predictable and powerful set of circumstances and opportunities.

When you are intentional about team building, you will have more success. This means consciously creating or putting in place opportunities for students to learn about each other before they work together.

When you concentrate on team building, you are building relationships between individuals. This builds a positive climate which is the most fertile ground to enhance and encourage success.

A well-functioning leadership team will build a positive atmosphere and more opportunities for activities within your school. Let your staff know that research shows participation in activities positively affects student academic achievement. It is worth the time you take to build your team. It is worth it for the team, and it is worth it for your school.





## The Business of School Dances

*“Brasington’s Ninth Law:  
A carelessly planned project  
takes three times longer to  
complete than expected;  
a carefully planned one will  
take only twice as long.”*

### 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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## 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)

After over 20 years of owning and operating a school-dance entertainment company I have seen many cycles of popularity with school dances. Currently, I believe there are fewer dances than ever before.

What was once a certain fundraising event is now a high risk venture that in a lot of cases requires a budget approval from your administration. I don’t believe that high school dances will ever be extinct, however what I find so interesting, is the range of success that exists between so many schools throughout Ontario. I know of several schools who have successful dances, and do raise a substantial profit from their dances. I can’t explain why so many schools fail at getting a good turnout, but I can offer some contributing factors that I am aware of.

With the available media technologies today, just about every student carries around a full library of popular digital music. The hot, new music is just a couple clicks away. The newly elected students’ council decides that they can use the PA system in the gym with Fred’s MP3 Player or IPod hooked up to it, and they try to put on the school dance themselves. The theory is that they will make lots of money because they won’t have to hire a professional company. Although their idea is good “in theory”, what they don’t realize, is that the dance will often be a huge disappointment, and for the next week, everyone that didn’t go to the dance will be told by their friends not to go to the dances because they “suck!” This negative impact can take a year or more for your school to recover from.

The same negative effect can also come from using the “local” wedding DJ or what I call the cheap guy, and there are literally hundreds of them in the province proclaiming that they do school dances, also, more often than not, are very disappointing. The other possibility that exists is that Fred, with his IPod full of music and his friend Carl, whose mom lets him use her minivan, know of an audio store where they can rent some speakers and lights and may have presented you with a flyer or website with offerings of “we’re the best”, or “we’re the biggest”, they usually have the best deal going. Once again, the disappointment is nearly certain.

The moral of my story here is, if you have Consistent, Quality entertainment, you will see increased attendance at your dances. If you’re shopping for Entertainment, ask for references, not just the name of another school, but rather a staff member at the school. Chances are pretty good that if a company has done some work for your school, you will remember if they were good or not. You will most certainly remember if they were bad! Another question might be whether or not the company carries any liability insurance. You can be pretty certain that if the company you’re talking to doesn’t have commercial liability insurance, they are not a professional company. In my 20 years in the business, I can only remember one occasion of a school asking for proof of insurance, yet we can’t step foot into any convention center without producing valid liability coverage.

A professional dance company will provide a sound and lighting package that will not fit in a minivan; they will arrive on schedule for set-up and will respect both the students and staff at your school. Most importantly, they will play exactly the right music for your school and have the dance floor packed the entire night. They will interact with your students and generate excitement and fun which students will look forward to coming back again to the next dance you have.

*Jamie Almond*  
*Main Event Entertainment Inc.*  
[www.mainevententertainment.ca](http://www.mainevententertainment.ca)

