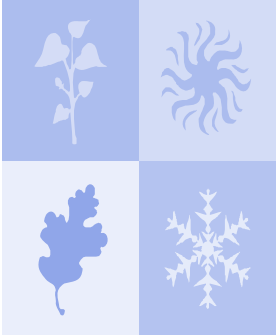


Calgary Community Conferencing

Fall 2006



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Calgary 2006 Governor General's Official Civic Call

By Cathie Christensen
Coordinator, Calgary Youth Probation

On May 6, 2006 Calgary Community Conferencing had an opportunity to showcase their innovative work to Their Excellencies Michaëlle Jean and her husband Jean Daniel Lafond. The occasion marked the Governor General's Official Civic Call in Calgary. With his Worship the Mayor and his wife Cindy, Their Excellencies heard from a young woman about the impact of going through the conferencing process and how it has changed the course of her life. The dignitaries heard Sheila Brantnall and Gail Daniels speak about their commitment and passion, about the value of restoring relationships and understanding, about accountability and forgiveness, about giving people a voice to say they are sorry. Hearing about Calgary Community Conferencing was captivating. What was to be a five minute exchange turned in to twenty minutes and only ended at the persistent prompting of those responsible for the schedule. Before being moved on Michaëlle Jean asked to receive more information about the program. She later made the request again when meeting privately with the Mayor following the tour.

Planning for the occasion began a few weeks before the visit and a "youth" theme quickly emerged as Her Excellency identified "youth" as one of her priorities during her tenure as Governor General. The City of Calgary assembled a team of staff, whose business is connected to youth, to design the program for the visit. The people assembled represented Recreation,

Leadership, The Arts and Youth Justice. It was a challenge to see how kids in trouble were going to be represented alongside the other areas, however, focusing on the strengths and diversity in all youth gave us common ground.

Our Governor General has a very strong social conscience and her background includes work in woman's shelters. She is a member of a visible minority and grew up without privilege. Michaëlle Jean believes certain sectors of our society lack a voice and she wants to make a difference. It was no surprise that a connection was established because, like conferencing, Her Excellency is focused on healing and on determining how we can come together to build a strong future for youth.

Their Excellencies will often reflect upon meeting that young lady whose life was changed because a community cared enough to come together.

The impression made on May 6, 2006 was unmistakable. We hope Their Excellencies will often reflect upon meeting that young lady whose life was changed because a community cared enough to come together.

Calgary Community Conferencing with all of its partners helped the City of Calgary to really shine that day by showing the nation why Calgary really is "The best place to live."

After Thoughts...

Young Person Fulfills Agreement

A young person committed to completing 20 hours of community service at a school to demonstrate his understanding of how his actions impacted the school community. The following letter from the Principal was provided to the court.

As per the agreement discussed at the Community Conference the young person has completed 20 hours of community service at the school. He completed those hours between August 11 and August 15. The young person demonstrated a willingness to do any task that was put to him. He was hard working, polite and pleasant.. His work ethic and willingness to meet the expectations of his community service was evident. He was a pleasure to work with and I wish him every success in the future.



Parents Express Appreciation

Below is a letter written by a parent following a community conference.

My husband and I supported our son at a Community Conference. We felt the meeting was very well organized and facilitated professionally. It was helpful for everyone to have a chance to talk and let others know how they felt about the situation. It was quite an emotional experience. From a parent perspective, it seems like teens face a lot of peer pressure and this makes it easy for them to be led in the wrong direction. I would strongly recommend parents who are going through tough times with their teens to participate in a community conference. It gives the child a chance to really be honest, and get to the root of the problem. Thank you Darrel for attending court, offering words of encouragement and for speaking highly of our son. Thank you Gail for being so caring and understanding. We can now put the past behind us. We feel the community conferencing helped us understand each other's feelings during an unfortunate time in our lives.

Calgary Community Conferencing hosts numerous professional development workshops each year. We welcome suggestions you might have about topics for future workshops. Feel free to forward ideas to **Debbie Nowakowski @ ccc.debbie@shawcable.com**

Did You Know...?

- The Calgary Community Conferencing website **www.calgarycommunityconferencing.com** has links to two new and exciting videos that highlight the experiences and reflections of past participants:
 - Global TV Part I, II, III
 - Desire 2 Learn (D2L)
- A student who went through a community conference, following his involvement in a fight at school, shared his experience at a Peace Festival hosted by Mennonite Central Committee. His courage to speak in front of peers and adults and his thoughtful reflection earned him a 2nd place prize— a \$500.00 scholarship to any postsecondary institution.



What Would You Do...?

Adam is 13 years old and a Grade 8 student who is generally quiet and withdrawn at school. Throughout his elementary school years he was the victim of bullying. When he moved to Junior High School, Adam hoped things would be different. He quickly realized nothing had changed. During Grade 7 Adam became increasingly frustrated and angry but didn't know where to turn.

By Grade 8, Adam had enough of being pushed around, teased and taunted by other students. A couple of months into the school year, as he was leaving the school for lunch, Adam was thrown up against a wall and threatened by another student. He was embarrassed and humiliated in front of many other students. Something in him snapped and he vowed to get back at the next person who harassed him. Before heading back from lunch, Adam

decided to bring a knife to school to protect himself. At the end of the school day, as Adam was walking home, a student threw a snowball, narrowly missing Adam's head. Adam pulled out the knife and confronted the student, threatening to use the knife. The other student ran away in fear and told his parents, who were horrified by their son's experience, angry at the school for allowing this to happen and concerned about their son's safety. The parents left a heated message on the school answering machine.

Adam went home knowing what he had done was wrong, but also feeling a sense of power at having stuck up for himself.

Please consider the following questions as you determine how best to respond:

Things To Consider...



1. Is this a serious incident?
2. Has someone been harmed? (Emotionally? Physically?)
3. Has this incident impacted the sense of safety in the school community?
4. Does suspension/expulsion address safety concerns?
5. Does suspension/expulsion resolve conflict between students?
6. Do criminal charges address safety concerns?
7. Do criminal charges resolve conflict between students?
8. Is there an opportunity for personal accountability?
9. Will victims feel safe when student responsible is entitled to return to school?
10. Would victims benefit from an opportunity to share how this affected them?
11. Do victims have questions/concerns they need addressed to move forward?
12. Do parents have concerns they need addressed?
13. Would the student(s) responsible benefit from understanding how their actions impacted others?
14. Is this the first time this student has been in trouble?
15. Is there a history of behavioral difficulties in the school and/or community?

Your response to each of these questions will help you consider how best to re-establish safety in your school community. For consultation, please call

Gail Daniels, Specialist @ 974-1962 or 816-9621.

Annotated Bibliography

The following is a list of books referenced in the Crazy By Design: Adolescent Brain Development Workshop, hosted by Calgary Community Conference semi-annually. They provide valuable information for parents of teens and professionals working with teens.

The Primal Teen: What The New Discoveries About The Teenage Brain Tell Us About Our Kids. Barbara Strauch. (Anchor Books, 2003).

This book highlights scientific research in a way that is understandable to lay readers, offering parents and educators a new perspective on erratic teenage behavior. It explores common challenges – why teens go from articulate and mature one day to morose and unreachable the next, why they engage in risky behavior- and offers practical strategies to help manage these formative and difficult years.

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference. Malcolm Gladwell (Back Bay Books, 2002).

The “tipping point” is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire. This book talks about how this phenomenon is changing the way people throughout the world think about selling products and disseminating ideas.

Queen Bees & Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends And Other Realities of Adolescence. Rosalind Wiseman (Three Rivers Press, 2002).

This book takes you inside the secret world of girls’ friendships, translating and decoding them so parents can better understand and help their daughters navigate through the crucial adolescent years.

Hold on to Your Kids, Why Parents Matter: Helping the Most Important People in a Child’s Life Make a Positive and Lasting Difference. Gordon Neufeld and Gabor Mate (Knopf Canada, 2004)

A psychologist with a reputation for penetrating to the heart of complex parenting issues joins forces with a physician and author to tackle one of the most disturbing and misunderstood trends of our time - peers replacing parents in the lives of our children.

Raising Cain: Protecting The Emotional Life of Boys. Dan Kindlon, Ph.D. and Michael Thompson, Ph.D. (Ballantine Books, 2000).

Dan and Michael reveal a nation of boys who are hurting– sad, afraid, and silent. They set out to answer the crucial questions: *What do boys need that they’re not getting?* The authors shed light on the destructive emotional training our boys receive. They identify the social and emotional challenges that boys encounter in school and show how parents can help boys cultivate emotional awareness and empathy.

UPCOMING WORKSHOP!

Street Drug Awareness by Steve Walton

Date: Friday, March 16, 2007

Time: 8:00 am-12:00 noon

Registration information:

Location: La Joie de Vivre

Debbie Nowakowski at 974–1868 or
ccc.debbie@shawcable.com

Cost: \$40.00 Continental breakfast included.

Register Early. Space is limited.