

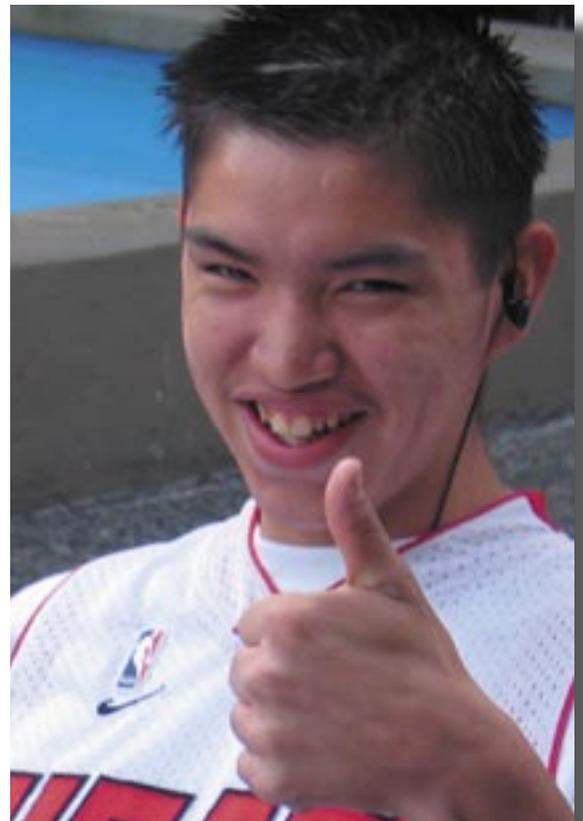
A Recipe for Success

Rita Sowden

We all know the importance of developing relationships with our students. It is often easy to get them through the doors initially, but how do you keep them coming back? What do you do with them once they are there? Is there a secret recipe that works with alternate students, especially in light of their alphabet soup of designations like ADHD, ADD, OCC, FAS-D, SLD and the phalanx of social workers, probation officers, child support workers, and foster parents each student seems to trail behind them?

Mike Ruttan, vice-principal at Alberni District Secondary, thinks the Pre-Employment Program (PEP) has figured out one recipe that works very well. And like all good recipes, the ingredients blend together very well.

The basic components are simple. The day is split into four blocks. In the morning the students work on numeracy and literacy skills, and in the afternoon, work on employment skills and participate in community outings. Students capable of getting an Adult Dogwood work on Math 11 Essentials, Communications 12, and other Grade



Ed Elliott, ADSS Pre-Employment Program success story

12 electives. Each student's program is tailored to their individual needs, but there are units that students like to work on together, such as reading ...continued on page 3

Inside:

Bursary & Award Winners 4

2007 Conference 8

A Day in the Life 9

Two Sides to the Story 10

Schmoozipe 15

Online Newsletter 15

From the Editor's Desk:

I would like to buy lunch for you and your class. Or maybe some new basket balls. I'd even considering paying the bill for an hour or two at the bowling alley or the local swimming pool for you and your class. Whaddya think of that? So what's the catch? (there's always a catch).

In the past few issues of the BCAEA Newsletter, I have been pleased to tell you about the student successes and program features of the Alternate Education Program where I work. My students enjoy reading about their accomplishments and seeing their pictures published. Our teachers and Youth Care Workers are proud of the programs we have built and of the work we do, and appreciate the acknowledgement. But enough about us.

What is it that makes your program special? What is it you do, that makes your students want to come to school every day (okay, so maybe they don't ALL want to come to school EVERY day)? What have your students accomplished lately? Got a Grad story that will warm our hearts? How about a funny story describing an interaction between you and your kids? Do your students produce art projects or write creative stories?

If you'll take the time (or encourage your students to take the time) to write the article, include the pictures, or even submit their best composition for publication, we'll publish it. And we'll throw in lunch for the whole class!

The BCAEA Newsletter will gladly pay \$50 for the best submission/contribution in each issue! That's right, \$50! My contact information is on the last page. Talk to me.



President's Message

Rick Fitch



I am finding many of my mainstream school colleagues require a great deal of enlightenment regarding alternate programming. In my school district I have been on a mission to inform my mainstream colleagues that the term *alternate* refers not to the students, but rather it refers to the delivery models which are utilized in the programs referred to as *alternate*. I find that many use the term "alternate student" in a derogatory manner. Thus my rant! I have explained (ranted) numerous times that alternate educators utilize *alternative delivery techniques* to help students who are at risk of not succeeding in the mainstream delivery model. Student statements from the BCAEA student award applicants support this premise.

"At first I was skeptical about going to the school (alternate). During the summer I had thought about it and finally I decided to go as an experiment. I wanted to see if I could get better grades or would they stay the same. When September finally came and school started, I talked to one of the teachers. He started me in English, Communications 11. I started

this course on the first day of school and I finished it by the end of October. My grades skyrocketed. Last year I received a C- and now, this year, I've gone to an A! The teachers at school are very helpful and friendly. They know all of their students very well. The teachers interact with you and ask for your opinion or a topic to discuss. They challenge the way you think, and point out different ways to think."

While reviewing the 21 BCAEA student award applications received this year, I have read several similar student testimonies. The student statements all speak to the necessity and value of alternative delivery model programs. I encourage you to enlighten your mainstream colleagues about what the "alternate" refers to in the term "alternate education."

This is my last president's column. I have accepted a position as a vice-principal for September, and our constitution requires all table officers to be full BCTF members. Mike Shaw will act as president for the year starting July 1, and I will continue to serve on the executive in other ways. ♦

Recipe for Success

(continued from page 1)

the Driver's Ed manual prior to applying for their learner's, studying for a boat operator's license, picking up Food Safe Level 1 and Super Host certificates, and acquiring WHMIS and First Aid training off campus. The usual combination of small groups, direct instruction, repetition, humour, and lots of patience seems is also vital. As the students like to remind us, it takes a lot of patience on their end until we figure out how to teach to their learning style!

Accessing services from the community, inviting guest speakers, and taking field trips are also important ingredients. The West Coast Career Centre and Harvey Toms, ADSS Work Experience Coordinator, are invaluable, helping the students learn about job skills in a community based centre, and providing valuable work experiences where the students feel needed and successful.

RCMP Constable Shelley Arnfield pops in on a weekly basis to chat about serious social issues, or joins us a billiards. She is a real asset and makes a difference with the students. They feel comfortable asking Shelley anything and she always treats their questions as important.

Next, add Tim Cummings, one of the probation officers in our community. He calls to check that his client is at school, or to track down a client who missed an appointment. FASD isn't an excuse to miss an appointment with Tim. He will meet his client at school if that is the best place. Rounding out the recipe are Ron Jorgenson, Special Education Resource Teacher, and Penn Thrasher, community liaison, both strong advocates for FASD students in our com-

munity. They are always looking for better solutions, and offered us our first paid work contract.

So how well does the recipe work? A perfect example is Ed Elliott, a 17 year old student. He lives in a foster home, struggled with academics, and made a few bad choices in his day, but with support, has been doing well. PEP seemed to be the best fit for him. He is working alongside excellent staff at the local Community Kitchen on a weekly basis. He takes two blocks of Cooks Training 12 and is in the top of his class. He enjoys serving lunch daily in the school cafeteria, is always willing to work on community service projects or paid jobs, has been the "Student of the Month" twice in the PEP, has his tuxedo ordered for grad, and is looking forward to attending college next year.

Recently, Ed also volunteered to be part of the team that presented our program at a conference in Vancouver. Ed's only previous exposure to Vancouver had been to attend the downtown east side tour. This time, Ed had the opportunity to experience living in the West End for three days, twenty-five floors up, overlooking English Bay. He thoroughly enjoyed seeing the sights of Vancouver, using city transit, shopping, and eating out. It was an awesome experience.

So how do we keep them coming back? What is the secret recipe for success? In Ed's words, "Make it fun. Make it real. Getting paid is good, too!" ♦

Rita Sowden teaches at Alberni District Secondary in Port Alberni.

“
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 ”

2006 BCAA Bursary & Award Winners

Natasha Gauthier, *Cloverdale Learning Center (\$500 Bursary)*

Since coming to CLC I have made significant changes in the way that I view and value myself and the world around me and feel I have a lot to contribute to the community. I strongly believe that children who value and respect themselves will value and respect their peers in the community thereby significantly reducing the likelihood that they will engage in criminal activity, try street drugs, or become involved in or tolerant of relationships that are abusive and destructive. I have been accepted for admission to Kwantlen University College in Langley. I will use the bursary money to further my education in pursuit of an Associate of Arts degree while continuing and building upon my commitment and passion for community service.

Dennis Miniato, *South Delta Alternate Program (\$500 Bursary)*

I am very interested in working in the video gaming industry. In order to do this my goal is to graduate from Simon Fraser University with a Computer Science Degree. Another important goal of mine is to become a better team worker, as teamwork is a crucial part of any job, and especially game design. In order to get more experience working with people, I sent out numerous resumes, participated in several interviews, and was hired by Thrifty Foods. I will put the money from this award towards one of two schools. I will apply it towards books or tuition at Simon Fraser University, or the Art Institute of Vancouver.

Johanna Morrison, *Cloverdale Learning Center (\$500 Bursary)*

Growing up, I always wanted to do something that would help people. During my adolescence I found that there was a large need for supportive and encouraging people for many of the youth that suffer through this complicated time in their lives. That is why I have chosen to pursue a career as a youth care worker. I have applied to the General Studies program at Kwantlen University College for September 2006. I plan to transfer to the University of the Fraser Valley's Bachelor of Arts in Child and Youth Care Degree Program the following year. The bursary award money will go directly toward buying the text books necessary for my September classes.

Aaron Olson, *Maple Ridge Secondary OUTREACH (\$500 Bursary)*

I got into the OUTREACH alternate program for my grades ten to twelve. This was probably the best program I could possibly get into because it helped me out so much with doing my work and catching up. The teachers have accepted me and the discipline has been beneficial to me. Now I feel I am doing great by getting my life all organized and back the way it should be. I have just finished high school and have been accepted into BCIT. I am starting the Sheet Metal Entry Level Trades Training course in September 2006. I really am excited about starting a trade program that will give me a satisfying career and give me a good income.

Mandy Raye-Abric, *Burnaby South Secondary PM Program (\$250 Student Achievement Award)*

I have been attending the alternative PM Program since September 2004. Due to the amount of courses I have managed to accumulate and extra classes I have earned I am receiving a full graduation. Graduating is something I would have never thought possible two years ago. I have always known that I want to work with children. I've always had that special connection with kids and most recently decided that I would like to help children who are considered to be "high risk". I am applying for admission to Douglas College.

Stacy Cartwright, *Maple Ridge Secondary Future STEPS Young Parent Program (\$250 Student Achievement Award)*

Ever since elementary school I have been interested in sciences, and the application of sciences. When I came to high school I knew that I wanted to pursue a career in Animal Health. During my time in high school I became a young mother at the age of 17. Even through these hard times I still want to pursue my dreams. I am currently applying to a night class to up grade my chemistry, math, and biology. I hope to be accepted into TRU in Kamloops.

Tawnia Champagne, *Abbotsford Senior Secondary Integrated Studies Program (\$250 Student Achievement Award)*

Being in ISP has made me realize how much I can change my behavior and bad attitude. The teachers helped me gain the confidence that I needed to continue my life in any career I could dream of. I have set huge goals for my future. I plan to attend Kwantlen University College to get my diploma in criminology that will lead to a degree. I then plan to move on with my life and go to law school. I have dreamed and worked hard to make it to grade 12, I plan to work even harder to accomplish my dreams, and I will work hard until my goals and dreams are accomplished.

Wesley Collins, *Semiahmoo Secondary School Alternate Program (\$250 Student Achievement Award)*

In the past year and a half I have been able to bring my straight F's to almost solid B's. All classes are going well and getting into trouble doesn't seem to happen anymore. My goal in life is to become a heavy duty mechanic, working in the mines or maybe the oil fields. I am planning on doing a Co-op mechanics program at Earl Marriot and I will use the award money to purchase tools I need.

Melissa Ekeli, *Maple Ridge Secondary Journey Program (\$250 Student Achievement Award)*

Being in the Journey Program has helped me get back into school and has helped me achieve better marks. Because of the different teaching environment, I am now getting A's and B's and last term I even made it on the Honour Roll. I used to fail all the time. Now I enjoy school more and I don't hate waking up every morning, dreading that I would have to go to school.

2006 Bursary & Award Winners

Corbin Evans, *Mark R. Isfeld Secondary Opportunities Program (Courtenay) (\$250 Student Development Award)*

I have been in the Opportunities Program for 4 years and the program has taught me how to be more organized, independent, and improved my academic goals. Before I was in Opportunities, I was in many essential and modified courses. I began to take some more challenging courses, and was successful in courses I never thought I would even take. When I finish secondary school, I am going to move in with some relatives in Kelowna and work to save enough money to see my brother in Ontario, where I may choose to stay.

Kaleigh Fairweather, *Similkameen Secondary Alternate Program (\$250 Student Development Award)*

My future goals and aspirations are to attend BCIT for film flex, a course that will give me an industry partnership certificate. With this knowledge I would like to get a job in the film and media industry. This summer I will attend, for the second time, the Gulf Island Film and Television School (GIFTS). I am going to take a week long media intensive course with a focus on documentary. I will use this award money for my tuition for this GIFTS course.

Amber Hemminger, *Elm Alternate School (Campbell River) (\$250 Student Development Award)*

In September I plan to attend North Island College in Comox for my Human Resources certificate for Social Work. I am interested in Human Resources and Social Work because I have dealt with many of the problems that people come across in my own life, and I would like to be able to help people with the same sorts of issues. Upon completing my Human Resources Certificate program, I plan to progress further into the world of Social Work. I eventually plan on attending a University to get my Social Work degree.

Corrie Lane, *South Delta Secondary Alternate Program (\$250 Student Development Award)*

Throughout the year, my class has been doing a lot of research for post secondary possibilities. We have gone on fieldtrips to different colleges and have been doing online research. After all the research I had narrowed it down to two areas: Avionics or Business. I have settled on pursuing a career in Commerce and Business at Douglas College. I hope to have an enjoyable and successful experience with this choice.

Jana Middleton, *D.P. Todd Secondary Alternate Program (Prince George) (\$250 Student Development Award)*

I have had lots of bad things happen in my life that most adults wouldn't have to deal with, but I dealt with them and didn't let them stop me from doing what I had to do. I returned to school knowing that that was the only thing that would eventually make me happy. I volunteer with a senior facility and also with a young girl who has Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. I love working with special needs students. I know if I can continue post secondary education, I will do my best and help the society as much as I can.

Robb Shields, Mark R. Isfeld Secondary Opportunities Program (Courtenay) (\$250 Student Development Award)

In the Opportunities Program I have accomplished a great deal. Some of the skills I have learned are to cooperate with teachers, learn to improve my mathematical and spelling skills, and learn how to do the best I can. I have also learned how to be able to work on a project from start to finish with minimal assistance, and to improve my self confidence. I plan to graduate grade 12 and move to Otawa to work for my uncle.

Charlene Silvester, Delta Secondary Alternate Program (\$250 Student Development Award)

I am a hardworking student, and I would love to make something out of my future. I am looking forward to an education in cosmetology at Vancouver Community College. I enjoy working with people and it would be a good chance to help others with advice on hair styling. This award will help me fulfill my dream to make others happy. I am very interested in learning new skills and facing challenges. I do not have experience working at salons, but it is certainly my dream.

Frank Truong, North Surrey Learning Centre (\$250 Student Development Award)

I have learned being successful is about what you do in life and how you do it. Although there are many obstacles, you need to find a way around them. Growing up around cars I have found interest in becoming a mechanic following in my father's footsteps. From the inner workings to the exterior I find every aspect of a car interests me with a passion. I will use this award to purchase things I might need for the next phase of my life. Perhaps I could use it to buy books or for the daily essentials needed when you live on your own.

Natalie Boardman, Maple Ridge Secondary Journey Program (\$100 Student Development Award)

When I was in regular classes I was not doing well at all. I never understood any of the work, so I never went, and when I did go to school I would work for about a half an hour. Since I am in the Journey Program I have been coming to school and doing my work. Last term I even got on the honour roll. I will use half of the award money to get some new clothes. With the other half I will get shoes. These are the two things that I need most.

Emmanuelle Dessureault, Salmon Arm Storefront School (\$100 Student Development Award)

At first I was skeptical about going to the Store Front School. I started Communications 11 on the first day of school in September and finished it by the end of October. My grades skyrocketed. Last year I received a C- and this year I've gone to an A. Before I went to Storefront School I was not a very social person. I am still not very social but I am becoming better with the other students, as well as with other people outside of school. The way they help me is by encouraging me to work with others. I will use the award money for art supplies, clothes, material for a dance outfit and books, mostly Sci-Fi and Fantasy.

2006 Bursary & Award Winners

Ashley McKenzie, Cedar Valley School MAP Program (Mission) (\$100 Student Development Award)

Two years ago I had to deal with a huge tragedy and never saw myself finishing high school, but with the help of my teachers and a lot of hard work, I'm proud to say that I can graduate. I am now ready to move on to the next chapter in my life. My future goal is to be a cosmetic dermatologist. I want to be involved in this profession because to me it will be very rewarding for me to help provide emotional support to people who have serious skin problems and help them feel better about themselves. I am registering at the University College of the Fraser Valley; this award will help my future very much because schooling is going to be very expensive.

Jacob Seal, Mark R. Isfeld Secondary Opportunities Program (Courtenay) (\$100 Student Development Award)

I am currently attending Mark R. Isfeld in grade 10 on a full time basis. This year is the first time in 18 months that I have attended school. I have been in Opportunities since September 2006. But it wasn't all easy, some of the work was really hard for the first two and a half months. I would skip and disobey teachers. After getting into some trouble out of school I went back to school to stay out of trouble. I started to attend school regularly and stopped getting into trouble. I ended up with pretty good marks. My short term goal is to finish grade 10. My long term goal is to graduate in 2008. After graduation I would like to go onto college to become a certified accountant.

Gary Phillips: 2007 Conference Keynote

Dave Lafontaine

The twentieth annual Challenge & Change conference will take place January 25 & 26, 2007 at the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre. We are pleased to have Gary Phillips as our Keynote speaker for this milestone conference. Look for further information on our website, www.bctf.ca/bcaea in early September, and full conference particulars in the fall newsletter which should be in the mail by early October. Registration packages should also be mailed out then.

We have many exciting sessions in the works, so make plans now to attend. You don't want to miss a conference that gets better and better every year. The chocolate fountain fondue will be back by popular demand, and as always, Joyce May will surprise and delight us with the vast array of food she and her hard-working crew put together for the Schmooze. We'll see you there! ♦

A Day in the Life of an Alternate Ed. Teacher

Judy Addie

I am an Alternate Ed. teacher in a high school in Prince George. When I heard that the Minister of Education wanted to visit classes to find out what is really happening in our schools, I thought I should invite her to visit my class. I then realized that she would only see a very small part of what I do everyday. The many extra tasks and responsibilities that those of us who work with at risk youth do; so many things that cannot be written down in a day book or lesson plan.

The following is an account of an actual day in November 2005. Each event or activity is followed by my personal thoughts in *italics* on how things have changed.

8:00 am I stop at the store on the way to school. I'm picking up fruit and granola bars as treats for my students when they return a paper that had to be signed. Bribery works!

I used to provide red licorice, but candy does not meet the school's Healthy Snack policy. Pizza would bring the forms in faster but it's out of my "post job action" budget.

8:15 am When I arrive at school I check my voicemail, my email, and the electronic bulletin board for my school. I also check my mailbox and the blackboard in the staff room for any news.

It was much easier when I just checked my mailbox in the office. Fortunately, there's a message light on my phone so I don't have to go through the steps to check to see if I have messages.

8:30 am I check in with the Vice Principal about the Student Conduct Review Committee meeting yesterday. One of my students was sent to the SCRC as a consequence for his second fighting suspension. I'm worried that he'll be moved to a new school just when I'm starting to connect with him.

The student will be allowed to return to our school. He also requires counseling and anger management.

8:40 am A teacher stops me in the hall to ask if a student can catch up a test in my room.

I reply that he/she is very welcome but only if I have room. I used to take 3 or 4 extra students at a time, but that was when my own classes were smaller. Twelve used to be the magic number for special programs. Now I have 15 or more per block.

8:45 am I stand at my door to greet my students as they arrive. I also watch the students in the halls as they are moving to their classes.

The halls are much more crowded this year with an increase in population at our school.

8:48 am I am just about to start my first class when a student asks if she can speak to me in the hall. We move to a quiet spot and she tells me she needs to tell me about something "very bad" that happened to her.

My mind is saying "Not now. I have to start my class", but of course I say "You can tell me anything"

...continued on page 12

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Two Sides to the Story

Cst. Shelley Arnfield



I'm opinionated, I'll admit it. Not about everything. Just the stuff I feel passionate about. Guess most people pretty much fit that mold. Imagine if we were all blasé on every subject. Having an opinion allows for better conversation over morning coffee.

Like, for example, the Toronto Maple Leafs are a better hockey team than the Vancouver Canucks - discuss. Or Johnny Depp can out act anyone on the big screen today ... you get my point.

But sports and sex appeal aside, I really get passionate (alright, opinionated) on the subject of drugs. There are so many mixed messages out there. From so many sources. Look at marijuana as a prime example. When I talk to classes I usually ask them to show me by raising their hands, how many think marijuana is legal in Canada. There's always a few hands. And they are partly right, aren't they? There is medicinal marijuana.

How's that for an oxymoron? Medicinal marijuana. Marijuana as medicine. Try explaining that one to a grade 5 class struggling to understand the debate over legalization and decriminalization. I try to get them to understand that, on the one hand the marijuana may be easing or masking some of their symptoms like nausea, but it can also be contributing to the acceleration of their disease.

In one of my grade 5 DARE classes this year I had the very great pleasure of work-

ing with a teacher who had come back from retirement to fill in for some shortages due to illness and maternity. What a great, astute gal she was. She always made an effort to pick something current out of the news (relating to one of the substances we were talking about) and to ask me about it in class.

One day she informed us that she had heard on the news that smoking marijuana was being recommended for pregnant women to help with morning sickness. I was sure she must have heard the story wrong. I couldn't believe that in this day and age someone would come out with such a statement. But we discussed this with the class and talked about the negative effects of the drug which far outweigh the condition they were trying to relieve.

I made sure to watch the news that night. Surely there was an important element to this story that she had missed. When the piece came on I was all ears. Yes, there was a society advocating that smoking marijuana would alleviate nausea in pregnant women. They interviewed several faceless, obviously pregnant women who were engaging in this activity. Yes, the marijuana helped them to keep some food down. And that was the end of the story. Where was the other side of the coin? Where was the interview with the doctor or police officer or addictions specialist to talk about the harmful negative effects of this drug on the physical health of the mother and the mental health of the fetus? Had we learned nothing from FASD?

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Fine. Run the story, but at least present both sides so that people would have all the information in order to make an informed decision.

I still get riled up when I think about the news coverage of that story. It brought to mind another news item I had caught, again pertaining to marijuana. A legalization advocate encountered a group of school kids on an excursion. He filled their heads with the notion that, when they are about 13 years old, they will be seeking out a substance to use for stress reduction and that they should smoke organic marijuana. First off: 13 year olds needing a substance to deal with stress? What happened to sports and friends and family connections and volunteerism ... Secondly - organic marijuana? Don't even get me started. Once again, no interview conducted on the news to counter this information.

And that's part of the problem. Individuals and groups that are calling for legalization speak way louder than the groups that oppose it. Either that or they're given more news coverage. Hopefully with the group I saw on the news, their teacher filled that void.

Which brings me to the internet. There's no keeping up with all of the sites dedicated to drug use and how to get high as safely as possible. I know my opinion on harm reduction can rankle a few feathers. Don't forget, as a police officer, I come at things from a different angle, a different background, with different training. It's been

the nature of my job for going on 20 years. But I'm a compassionate person. I want to see addicts get their life clean and if harm reduction is the way to get there, I'm all for it. But it's the novices I worry more about. The ones starting to try stuff, experiment some. Well, those sites giving them tips on using safely may just help to push them in the wrong direction. In my opinion.

So what's my point in all this? Be vigilant. Listen and watch for those news items that offer only one side of the story. Be the other side.

Now grab your morning coffee (or Coca-Cola). On one side, Cst Shelley just doesn't get it. On the other side, Cst Shelley makes some valid points.

Discuss.♥

Cst. Shelley Arnfield is a school resource officer with the RCMP Port Alberni Detachment. Watch for her column each issue.

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A Day in the Life...

(continued from page 9)

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8:50 am We move to the Youth Care Worker's room and luckily the YCW and Ab. Ed worker arrive early. I am able to help the student come up with a plan, and the two support-staff help her make some appointments. I hate to say that I have to leave, but my class is unattended and no one knows where I am.

Thank goodness this happened on a Thursday. The YCW is at another school on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I've had students disclose things before, but this is the most serious situation I've ever experienced. I hope that I said the right things to her.

9:05 am I get to my class and everyone is working. Phew!

They must have remembered that I said "If I'm not here, I'm not skipping out; it's just that someone else needs me."

9:10 am I collect the signed IEPs and give out the treats as a reward.

I should be meeting with each student and his/her parent or guardian to discuss these Individualized Educational Plans. I have 30 students in all. That would be a total of seven and a-half-hours if I held 15-minute interviews. That's not counting the time needed to set up 30 interviews. I still meet with many parents and speak with others regularly on the phone.

9:20 am Everyone is working and I have time to catch up on my marking. It's "mark cut off" today and everyone is handing in lots of work.

I used to mark all the work, but now I only mark tests for grade 10 courses. I just check the rest over quickly to see if the work is done. I still try to mark everything for the grade 11 and 12 courses. Thank goodness I have an excellent teacher assistant in Block C who loves to mark.

9:30 am A parent phones to see if her son is at school because he didn't come home last night. I tell her that he's in another class. I promise to phone right at 10:00 am if he's not in my class.

I would like to go to check on this boy's class right away, but I've already missed the first 15 minutes of this class.

10:00 am The second class arrives and the boy is here. I give out treats to those who have returned their IEPs. The students are all working on different courses and get right down to work.

We used to offer the four grade 10 academic subjects only (Math 10, Science 10, English 10 and Socials 10) Now there are two grade 9 courses, five grade 10 courses, five grade 11 courses and four grade 12 courses. No wonder one of my students said I'm the smartest person she knows.

11:05 am It's ten minute break. I stay in the room to catch up on the marking.

I used to go to the staff room, but the halls are too crowded now. Luckily I've stopped drinking coffee.

11:15 am Another class comes in. The YCW

stops in to tell me how the student from this morning is doing.

The student feels better since she finally shared this burden and is getting so much help. Her teachers have been concerned about her mental health and will be relieved to know she is getting some help. Her doctor said she should be on stress leave, but the girl knows that will put her farther behind in school. Her teachers will omit many of her assignments as she tries to get caught up.

12:05 pm It's lunch break. I inhale my cheese and crackers as I walk down to the office. I rarely sit down at lunch. I photocopy some tests and return a phone call from a parent. I also check the attendance book in the office and follow up with the vice-principal about yesterday's discipline problems.

Why do they call it lunch hour when it's only 45 minutes long?

12:40 pm I head back to class ten minutes early because one of my students who has a diagnosed psychiatric illness becomes very anxious about the noise and activity in the halls.

My lunch break was really only 35 minutes long.

12:50 pm Another class arrives. The teaching assistant sends a message that she'll be late as there is a crisis in the Special Needs room. The student who is waiting to have her test read to her will study a bit longer.

1:00 pm A student who attends Alternate Ed only arrives in class. He is allowed to ar-

rive late and leave early so he doesn't have to deal with the crowded hallways. He usually reads his novel for one block and then starts some work. He has many other medical and psychological issues, so I am just glad that he is here.

The other students have never asked why he has different expectations. They understand that his problems are bigger than theirs.

1:10 pm The marking is piling up on my desk.

I usually mark work the minute the student finishes. Alt. Ed. students need immediate feedback.

1:15 pm Three of my students are scheduled to write the provincial exam for English 10 next week. I phone their parents to make sure they know the exam is scheduled for Tuesday at 9:00 am.

Alt. Ed students work through courses as quickly as they can. Luckily the provincial exam is offered four times a year so they can write as close to the course completion as possible. I'm worried about the added pressure of a formal exam. I hope they don't get too stressed out; they have enough stress in their lives.

1:30 pm A counsellor stops by to update me on a student who was hospitalized on the weekend and then released due to lack of space in the Adolescent Psychiatric Unit.

The girl has been missing since her release from hospital but she has phoned to say she is okay. I breathe a ...continued on page 14

“
The girl has been missing since her release from hospital, but has phoned to say she is okay”

A Day in the Life...

(continued from page 13)

sigh of relief that she is safe and hope that she will get the help she needs before another crisis happens. School is not a big priority for her right now. I will hold her spot until she is well enough to return to school.

1:35 pm The teaching assistant has finished reading the test and offers to tackle some of the marking. She even takes some to do in her next class.

How would I manage without her? I only have her help for one block of the day. She helps the students who are Category H meaning they have a severe mental illness. She also helps the students who have a diagnosed Learning Disability and who need tests and exams read to them. She keeps me organized and makes me laugh which I need by this time of the day.

2:00 pm The last class of the day arrives. A social worker calls to check on a student's attendance. He is living on his own and must attend school in order to continue to receive financial support.

I'm happy to report that he has been at school every day this week. They want him to get a job to help with his expenses, so we'll work on his resume too.

2:35 pm I'm getting through the marking and the TA returns with the tests she has marked. When the work is marked, it is recorded on the student's mark sheet in my binder and filed in the student's file.

The TA helps me record the marks, and she files the tests. She's supposed to be in another class, but luckily she has returned to help me.

3:06 pm Class is dismissed. I still need to work out my marks for the term report.

Many teachers will be coming in on the long weekend. I want to finish my marks today.

4:30 pm I haven't put my marks into the computer, but I have everything worked out. The computer systems operator knows I will enter my marks on Monday morning.

4:45 pm I play classical music in the car to try to make the transition between school and home.

It's been a very long day, but I'll be back on Monday to go through it all again. Our at-risk students need all the support we can give them. ♦

Judy Addie is a teacher at D.P. Todd Secondary in Prince George.

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Schmoozipe: Red Beans and Rice

Joyce May

Beans and rice are an important nutritional combination which has sustained Latino cultures for years. This combination has all of the essential amino acids for a complete protein in one meal., and it is cheap too!

Ingredients

1 pound dried beans
(kidney, pinto, black, etc.)
1 pound of rice
1 onion, chopped
1 bell pepper, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups of celery, chopped
2 cups vegetable stock
1 teaspoon thyme
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon oregano
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 tablespoon chili powder
salt to taste
1/2 teaspoon cayenne
1 tablespoon oil
1 bay leaf

Directions

Rinse and soak beans overnight. Drain off soaking water, place beans in a large pot and cover with fresh water. Bring pot to a boil and cook beans for an hour.

In another pan, sauté onions, celery, bell peppers, and garlic in oil until onions are slightly translucent. After beans have been cooking for an hour or so, toss the sauted vegetables, stock and the spices into the bean pot. Let it all simmer gently, adding more water if necessary, for another hour or two. A long, slow simmer is best.

Cook the rice using two parts water to one part rice. Add the rice to the beans.

Use your imagination and kick up this recipe with your favorite spices. A can or two of diced tomatoes is a good addition. This can be eaten as a side dish, main, or rolled up into a tortilla. Chopped avocado, tomatoes, onions, cilantro, and lettuce are great accompaniments. ♦

Newsletter Available Online

As many of you may already know, the BCAEA Newsletter can be viewed online as a pdf file from our website: <http://www.bctf.ca/bcaea/newsletter.html> so here's a thought: If you are concerned about receiving more "snail mail" than you can already stand or you are just interested in conserving paper, the BCAEA would be happy to exclude you from our mailing list, knowing you can and want

to read our publication online. All you have to do is contact me, Jim Lawson, Newsletter Editor, at jrblawson@sd70.bc.ca, and I will accommodate your request.

If you are just as happy to have us keep sending you your printed paper copy, we will be very pleased to do so. In that case, please disregard this message. ♦

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