



Above and Beyond

CANADIAN STUDENT LEADERSHIP NEWS AND VIEWS

A CANADIAN STUDENT LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

VOL 20 NO 3



CSLC 2017

The Canadian Student Leadership Conference returns for its 33rd anniversary to Ontario. Join over 1,000 students and advisors in the tech hub and farmland of the Waterloo Region.

Dates: Sept. 26 to Sept. 30, 2017

Location: Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School, Waterloo, Ontario

CSLA has once again applied to the Department of Canadian Heritage for travel grants to defray the cost of student 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 Delta Hotel in Waterloo.

Registration for the conference is open online. You can register for the pre-conference tour to Toronto and Niagara Falls when you register.

Your co-chairs for CSLC 2017 are:

Sandy Millar

sandy_millar@wrdsb.on.ca

Stephen Gray

stephen_gray@wrdsb.on.ca

The website for the conference is:

cslc2017.studentleadership.ca

The Future for Leadership

In our own self-deprecating fashion, most Canadians would say that we live in a pretty nice place, that the government is fine and that the food is OK. What others in the world say about Canada is quite superlative as we were ranked as number one in the “Quality of Life” category by the US News Best Countries Report. Not too shabby numbers, eh. In fact, we placed second to Switzerland in the “Best Countries” overall. Obviously, we must be made more aware of all the pieces that made Canada so great for 150 years.

As far as I know, there has been no “own the podium” campaign conducted by our corporations or government to improve our world rankings in “quality of life.” We have been blessed with good geography and a reasonable government that promotes a social contract for all. We cannot take this blessing for granted and the future of Canada beyond 150 truly is in the hands and aspirations of our young people. This future requires that we consciously develop capable young leaders with skills and tools that have been practiced with and not just casually handed to them. Our students will put together the pieces that make the Canada of the future, and they must be engaged in leadership.

Student leaders must be given the opportunity to practice leadership in all of the varied ways that make up a school activity program. It is a mosaic of opportunity that will make our students capable and our communities stronger for the future. This is our “own the podium” campaign that will allow young people to take on the challenges of the the next 150 years in their communities and this country.

Canada will need to have an educated and able population to be as successful as our first 150 years. Our schools will provide the education, training and academics for this. Our schools must also provide opportunities for leadership training and you as the leadership advisor must actively advocate and provide support for this.

All the necessary pieces for the future of leadership is walking your school’s hallways right now. They are working on building their skills and abilities that will keep the *true north strong and free*. Thank you for your work and effort in making this a reality for Canada’s future quality of life.

Dave Conlon

RELAY U: An education in leadership

*Roads endure longer than
pyramids.*
Karol Bunsch



Charities are very interested in the support of schools, and running a fundraiser is a way of putting into practice the leadership lessons that students have learned. As a rule, most charities are the passive recipients of your good works. However, the Canadian Cancer Society comprehends the scope of the task that is accepted, and they act as a partner and mentor when a school decides to take on a *Relay for Life* fundraising event.

Each school that decides to organize and host a *Relay for Life* event is assigned a team member from the Canadian Cancer Society who is able to meet with you and your students and answer your questions as the planning for the event proceeds. This is unique in the fundraising world because schools are usually on their own until the cheque is handed over to the chosen charity. The CCS supports the entire Relay committee right up to and including the night of the event at the school.

One of the major supports provided by the CCS is RELAY U. This is a day where all of the participating schools in a region are invited to a training seminar on how to run a *Relay for Life* event. It is free-of-charge and students share best practices, inspiration and motivation to host the event at their school. The students learn about committee structure, event logistics, promotion and recruitment, finance, entertainment, and so much more. A light breakfast and buffet lunch is provided during the day and advisors have the opportunity to network with other teachers and CCS staff.

Lauren Birchenough is an acting student chair from Oakville Trafalgar High School and she relates her experience as:

Relay For Life is an event that inspires everyday people to make a change in the lives of others. My role as an Event Chair at my high school for this event is to mentor and encourage the students who want to contribute. Going to this conference and in particular hearing Heidi (the keynote) speak, helped to put a face to the cause and inspired me even further to pass on the message that I brought home that day. . . . the conference inspires leaders who will go inspire others, amplifying the initial message. Attending RELAY U certainly reaffirmed my commitment to this great cause and made me proud to be part of the youth movement which one day will shape the world.

The whole experience of running a *Relay for Life* event empowers students with valuable life skills, early leadership skills, builds school spirit and helps to weave philanthropy into the culture of the school. This event unites students, staff and the local community with one common goal – to make a real impact in the fight against cancer.

For more information contact:

Laurie McKnight
Manager, Relay for Life Youth
lmcknight@ontario.cancer.ca

HELIUM STICK

This is a quick game that serves well as an ice-breaker. A long thin stick is required. Be sure to call the pole a “Helium Stick” when you introduce the exercise.

Place your group in two lines facing each other. Have each person hold the index finger of their right hand chest high. Place the helium stick on top of the outstretched fingers. The challenge is to lower the stick to the ground while keeping everyone’s fingers touching the stick. If anyone’s finger loses contact with the helium stick, you must start again. At first the stick will seem to rise (hence the name Helium Stick). In fact, it is simply the upwards pressure of everyone’s fingers causing the stick to go up instead of down. Once everyone relaxes, they can easily lower the stick to the ground.

This usually takes ten minutes of laughter and a leader to complete. (Optional: swap the helium stick for a normal balloon with a smaller team.)

How to say NO!

One of the hardest things for a person involved in Activities is to say, “No.” In fact, the main reason you probably got involved in Student Activities is because you couldn’t say “no” to an administrator or a student who asked you to help. I believe that most of the people who end up as Student Council advisors or Leadership teachers were at the dentist on the day that the teacher taught those two letters in elementary school. We know that the letters are taught in alphabetical order, and you were getting checked for cavities when they introduced the letters “N” and “O”. You got a toy from the dentist for a perfect checkup, but you have been left with a hole in your resistance for the rest of your life.

You know that student leaders will come up with creative ideas and want to run events that might change the security of your job status. You know that if you say “no” to their crazy idea, that they will think that you are “no fun” when all you are trying to do is protect your mortgage. Instead of saying “no” to the outrageous idea that really makes you nervous, just say, “I’m not comfortable with that.” This statement will stop the adolescent immediately in fore-brain and force them to go to the back of their brain to figure out what just happened. This also allows you time to prepare for the next question and the discussion that will follow.

We know that teenagers live in the front of their brain and this area is the impulse zone where rational thought is invisible and quick reaction is the order of the day. When you say, “I’m not comfortable with that . . .” they are forced to translate your reply and then think about their response. You didn’t say “no” and have not crushed their input.

They will then be forced to think about it and come back with “What would make you comfortable?” You must then respond with something that states your position clearly and uses “don’t” instead of “can’t”. You must say, “We don’t make teachers look stupid on stage during the Welcome Back Assembly” rather than “We can’t make teachers look stupid . . .” The students know that we *can* make teachers look stupid, but when you say “don’t” there seems to be an omnipotent being who has the ultimate authority on this issue. When you frame your replies with “don’t” instead of “can’t” there is no room to change or argue the issue.

It sounds simple, but say to yourself: *I don’t say yes to things I want to say no to.*

When you use “don’t”, it is much more powerful than saying “can’t” because you know you can and will and do. You must also practice and become comfortable in saying, “I’m not comfortable with that.”

Dave Conlon



It does not matter how slowly you go, so long as you do not stop.

Confucius

BUY IN NOT BUY OUT

The support of an athletic team can be advertised with a “Buy Out” process where students will pay a loonie or a toonie to leave class early to attend a playoff game.

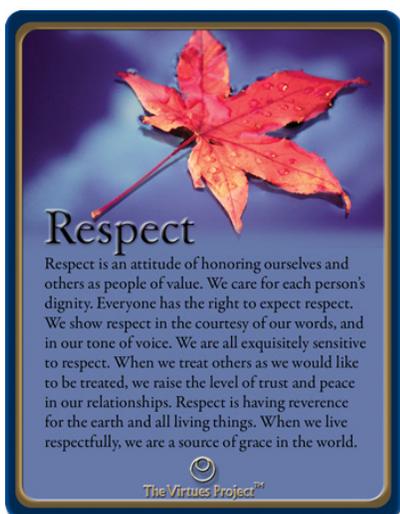
This activity is often a point of friction with your academic teachers who feel pressed for time to cover the existing curriculum.

Instead of calling it a “Buy Out” call it a “Buy In”. The time away from class is the same, but the intention appears different. Students are “buying in” to the opportunity to support an athletic team and increase school spirit.

When you change the wording of a spirit-building activity to a more positive approach, you will find positive support from more of your teachers.

Reawaken Your Idealism: Empower Your Student Leaders to Thrive

You know that your students have passion for a purpose and want to make a positive impact on the world. Do you wish to empower them to reach their highest potential and achieve their dreams? If you are reading this newsletter, I am pretty sure you answered a resounding “yes” to both questions!



Wouldn't you also agree that during this age of high-stakes testing and accountability, our own passion as educators has been put to the test? In 2005, as a result of being honoured as Disney's Outstanding Elementary Teacher of the Year, I found out about The Virtues Project — joy, meaning and purpose was reawakened in me and I was once again able to honour the idealism of myself and my students.

The Virtues Project was started 30 years ago on Salt Spring Island, BC when the founders, Dr. Dan Popov, Linda Kavelin Popov and John Kavelin, were talking about how tragic it is that kids are killing each other. They found through a Harvard study that youth ages 14–25 randomly committed acts of murder because they were “bored.” This boredom was as a result of a lack of meaning and purpose. Realizing this was a spiritual issue, the founders researched all of the cultures, oral traditions and sacred texts of the world and found what was common to humanity were the virtues. They came up with 5 Strategies to awaken the gifts of character and the project has now spread to over 130 countries.

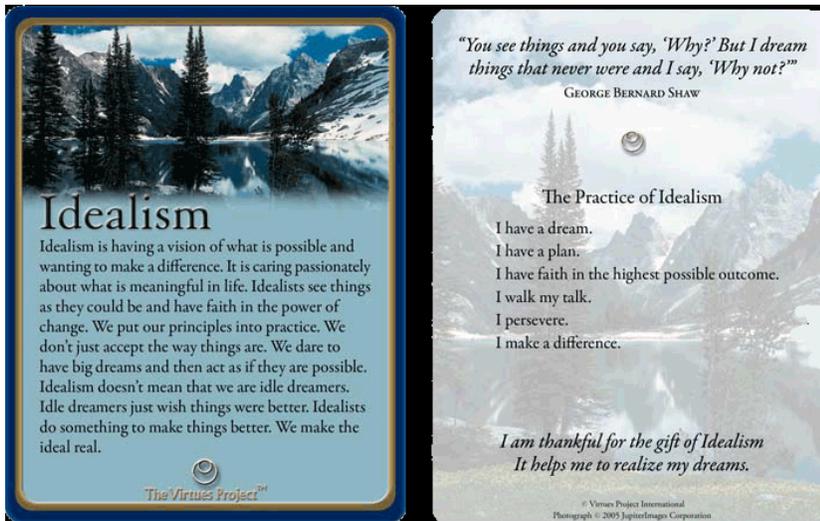
The Five Strategies of The Virtues Project™ inspire individuals to live more authentic, joyful lives, families to raise children of compassion and integrity, educators to create safe, caring and high performing learning communities, and leaders to inspire excellence and appreciation in the workplace. As you read each strategy listed below, I encourage you to reflect on the questions associated with each strategy that follow and to share these questions with your student leaders. It is helpful to reflect personally at first and then reflect within the context of the group and/or organization.

1. **Speak the Language of Virtues:** Language has the power to inspire or to discourage. Using virtues to acknowledge, guide, correct and thank awakens the best within us.

What are my/our strength virtues? What are my growth/our virtues?

2. **Recognize Teachable Moments:** Recognizing the virtues needed in daily challenges helps us to become lifelong learners open to the lessons of character.

What lessons do I/we need to be learning at this time?



The Virtue cards are two-sided and provide discussion and reflection for the reader.

- Set Clear Boundaries:** Boundaries based on respect and restorative justice create a climate of peace, cooperation and safety in our homes, schools and communities.

What boundaries do I/we have? What boundaries do I/we need?

- Honour the Spirit:** We sustain our vision and purpose by integrating virtues into our activities, surroundings, celebrations and the arts.

How well do I/we honour our own spirit and that of the group/organization?

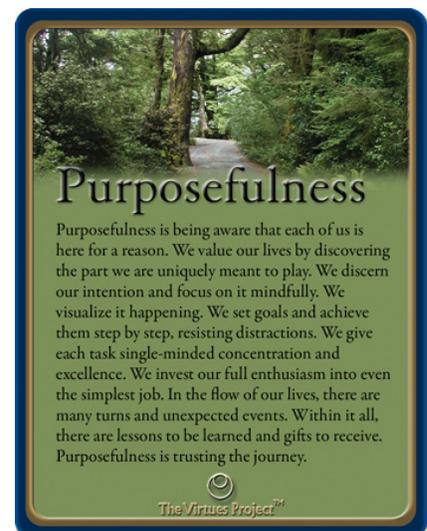
- Offer Companionship:** Being deeply present and listening with compassionate curiosity guides others to find clarity and to create their own solutions.

How well do I listen to myself/others? What really needs to be heard?

In addition to reflecting on the 5 Strategies, virtues cards can help awaken and strengthen your own character qualities and those of your students. The full virtue card of Idealism is included above, since this virtue is a strength virtue of youth ages 14-25. You can access the cards for free online at www.virtuesproject.org. I encourage you to do a daily virtues pick and think about and/or discuss how the virtue speaks to you. It will not only change your language, it will also change the way you view yourself, others and the world.

Thank you for your courage and commitment to make the world a better place. I wish you much joy, meaning and purpose always and in all ways.

With enthusiasm,
 Dara Feldman
dara@darafeldman.com



When you do nothing, you feel overwhelmed and powerless. But when you get involved, you feel the sense of hope that comes from knowing you are working to make things better.

Pauline R. Kezer

HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

Students need volunteers on their committees and events, so they will opt to use the technology that they are most familiar with to ask for help. What students know from personal experience is that it is easier to reject someone begging for help by text, but they will still ask for help by text. Students want to avoid the awkwardness of the face-to-face request because the person may say “no” directly to them. In reality, the face-to-face request has an built-in awkwardness that improves the chances of the other person saying “yes” to the request.

Students who ask for favours in person are seen as more trustworthy and they will get better results than sending the same request by text. Technology is great for an immediate response, but the personal touch will generate better responses and more help for events.

Finally, the personal request must **not** be a general, “Can you help after the dance?” It must be specific to the event and indicate how much time it will take. You will be much more successful with “Can you help us clean up after the dance for about 30 minutes?”

The 100 SC Club

The 100 SC Club started as a challenge to a local college to get 100 scarves donated by their students for a local charity at a varsity basketball game. The challenge was thought of the week before the event: a couple of signs were made, and some social media blasts were sent out. Before they knew it, the college had received well over 100 scarves, ready to be donated to people in the local community who needed them.

The concept is simple: 100 SC initially stood for the “100 Scarf Challenge”. Because of the success of this simple request, it was decided that instead of calling this the “100 Scarf Challenge” it could be called the “100 Something Challenge” to encourage anyone who wants to get involved to raise 100 of “something” and donate it to a charity. This change in name allowed for a broader range of items to be donated, as people are in need of many items, not just scarves. It is a call to action that is challenging but attainable by any group large or small.

The concept of the 100 SC Club is simple. Organizations or groups of people simply do the following:

- 1) Contact a local charity and *ask* what they need;
- 2) Collect 100 of “something” that you know your local community is now in need of;
- 3) After successful collection, donate the items to the charity;
- 4) Post to the 100 SC Club Facebook page to share with others your efforts.

Think – Act – Give

examples:

- Give 100 granola bars to the school’s breakfast club
- Collect 100 loonies to give to the local food bank
- Donate 100 children’s books to a community daycare
- Dispose of 100 kgs of garbage in a neighbourhood park cleanup

The 100 SC Club allows for an incredibly simple opportunity for individuals, communities, schools, or organizations to contribute in a meaningful way to those in need. The 100 SC Club’s only purpose is to do good work and inspire others to do it also. Starting something that will leave a lasting impact on your community has never been so easy. This can be a team or a home room challenge for the whole school contributing to a need in the local community.

Think – Act – Give

100 SC Club, the time to start is now. Join us on the 100 SC Club Facebook group and tell us what you are doing to help your community. Get started today!

Nick Foley
For speaking inquiries contact:
Nick@celebratethehero.com



Avoid Poorism

There are businesses that have emerged recently that cater to facilitating volunteerism in foreign countries, and it seems that helping “poor” people in distant lands is seen by our students as more valuable and rewarding than helping at home. In fact, the further the distance and the harsher the conditions – the more the relief is seen as honorable and worthy. Unfortunately, the end-results are often better for the travellers than the ones that are targeted for help.

Imagine if a group of twelve teens from Japan came to Canada to help with the restoration of a school on the Grassy Narrows Reserve in Ontario. The students and advisors spend 5 days on the reserve, 2 days in Toronto at Wonderland and Niagara Falls, and then return to their town in Japan and tell everyone what Canada is like, how the people act and how the residents struggle with their day-to-day lives in Northern Ontario.

Add on top of the above scenario, the facts that the teens don’t speak the local language, have trouble with the food and expect to live in a safe, clean environment. Also, a couple of the teens have been sent on this trip by their parents because “this experience will be good for them and look good on a resumé.” Consider all the stress on the hosts.

It is time that we take a step back from our well-intentioned efforts and recognize that some of these trips turn our teen travellers into poorists: a voyeuristic, destructive version of the stranger in a strange land.

Robert Lupton calls it *Toxic Charity* in his book by the same name, and he asks people to reconsider how they are helping the less fortunate, whether it be urban poor in our cities or the slums of a distant land. Lupton’s recommendations to avoid toxic charity are:

1. Never do for the poor what they have the capacity to do for themselves.
2. Limit one-way giving to emergency situations.
3. Strive to empower the poor through employment, lending and investing, using grants sparingly to reinforce achievements.
4. Subordinate self-interests to the needs of those being served.
5. Listen closely to those who seek to help, especially to what is not being said—unspoken feelings may contain essential clues to effective service.
6. Above all, do no harm.



Instead of flying in with a team of eager young teens to build a well for a poor village whose women have to carry water long distances on their heads – and coming back every year to fix ‘their’ well – Lupton argues for an approach that facilitates engaging the skills and energy of the local people to fund, build, and manage their own well.

The best way to truly “make a difference” and avoid poorism at home or away is to understand in advance what is happening. When the participants are willing to serve and learn they will leave their privilege and arrogance behind, and they will be able to truly help those who are struggling to *make a difference* in their own lives and land.

For every minute you are angry you lose 60 seconds of happiness.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

TALKING IN CIRCLES

Getting a group to work together to solve a challenging task is one way of building cohesion within the group. This is a highly challenging game that is only recommended for teams who love challenges.

Place everyone in a circle around a long piece of string that is tied at its ends to form a circle. Have everyone grasp the string with both hands and hold the string waist high. Without letting go, the team will have to form shapes with the string; a square, a triangle, a figure eight, a rectangle, etc.

Repeat the game but with everyone’s eyes shut! This will require everyone to communicate clearly and listen well. Make the shapes progressively harder and periodically have them stop and open their eyes to see their progress . . . or lack thereof.

When the group is successful, there is a genuine sense of accomplishment that adds to the comfort of being a part of the group.

If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it.

Margaret Fuller

Above and Beyond

is the official newsletter of the Canadian Student Leadership Association. The newsletter is published 3 times a year for schools all across Canada.

To learn more about membership, go to www.studentleadership.ca/join/

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Canadian Student Leadership Association

Resources

Be sure to visit the CSLA website for more lesson plans, activity ideas and a complete list of resources. studentleadership.ca



Canadian Student Leadership Association

This newsletter has been printed with the generous support of Friesen Yearbooks. www.friesens.com/yearbook

The Global Student Leadership Summit

The first large-scale, international, multi-day leadership event for student leaders from around the globe will happen in Canada in 2018!

On April 9 – 11, 2018, London, Ontario will host the first Global Student Leadership Summit at the world-class London Convention Centre.

“The Summit” will be history in the making! In an ever-changing global, political and social climate, our future leaders will have the opportunity to begin to change the conversation and work to create positive impacts for their schools, communities, cities and countries. Working with civic, educational and corporate partners at the local, national and global level, this Summit will be a life-altering, marquee event for today’s student leaders. We will take over the downtown core of one of Canada’s greatest cities, and leave a legacy of leadership behind, with our 3200 students and educators bringing an energy seldom felt in a lifetime.

Our goal is to start a worldwide ripple effect of positivity and instigate unity and change! To do this, The Summit will have a program that includes multiple large group sessions with some of the top motivators and story tellers in the world – our speakers include: Sean Stephenson, Michel Chikwanine and Alvin Law. The extensive concurrent sessions will include the most stellar line-up of youth speakers and innovators ever assembled. More than 60 speakers and facilitators (such as: Phil Boyte, Cara Filler, Ed Gerety, Jennifer Pate, Orlando Bowen and dozens more) will have a singular vision of inspiring the next generation through tracks of programming focused on school leadership, global issues, environment, personal mastery, social activism and entrepreneurship.

The Summit will also include extensive peer to peer collaboration for both students and teachers to gain a global perspective and foster new relationships. GSLS will be an event that the game-changers of tomorrow will not soon forget.

On a global scale, The Summit will allow students and educators to make real, valuable connections and work together for a better future. As so famously quoted by Helen Keller, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Registration opens online:

April 3, 2017 at 6:00 AM

For an overview of The Summit’s programs, travel, and speakers, visit: www.globalstudentleadership.com

Email kara@ylcc.com if you have any questions or for more information.

