

Trinity Review

Monthly Newsletter

Issue 8, April 2011



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Focus on Success - Program Update

Work throughout the April period was ongoing both in the mainstream high schools and the Long Term Support Programs.

As part of the continuing training we have been talking to the Peer Leaders as well as the students in the Focus on Success programs about their experience of mentoring. We asked them first to remember a time in their own lives when they received support, advice or coaching from a mentor and what the person was like who gave them the support.

The characteristics of mentors most commonly mentioned were: good listener, supportive, respectful, patient, caring, trustworthy, clear and firm, non-judgmental, open minded, gentle, sensitive, honest, and compassionate.

The second question asked concerned how they felt after they received the support from their mentor: safe, trusted a sense of security, a bonding experience, comfortable, relieved, valued, someone to relate to, let me rant, loved, felt I could reach any goal, reassured, and happy.

The follow up discussions included several key ideas: why do we call certain activities mentoring? Why are we not finding ways to mentor one another through whatever activities we're doing together? Why can't we feel valued, trusted or safe as we learn a subject?

Schools Trinity Visited This Month

Victoria Park CI

North Albion CI

Lester B. Pearson CI

Bendale BTI

Earl Haig SS

Marc Garneau CI

Norseman Jr. PS

York Humber HS

Runnymede CI

West Hill CI

George S. Henry Academy

Silverview – Attendance & Support

St. Stephens – Attendance & Support

Pharmacy – Attendance & Support

What are Schools For? An Ongoing Discussion

Continued from Trinity Review – March 2011

(xv)

When you consider the possibility that a person only learns and retains what they need to know, and that our needs are driven by our emotions – what is the primary role of a teacher?

To instill passion, spark curiosity, help the learner develop a love for learning? Make certain the student has the basic skills to survive and thrive as an adult someday?



I suggest the primary role for a teacher is to share their humanity through the process of their teaching – which means passion, curiosity, a love for learning, and the basic resiliency skill to survive and thrive in any conditions.

(xvi)

That learning is one of the primary intents of the school community is irrefutable. That learning is a biological imperative linked to our social/emotional natures is also irrefutable.

The above two statements taken together make high school one of the most exciting ties of our lives. Every teen is driven to learn. Every teen is searching for identity and meaning.



We must consider enlarging the boundaries of learning – learning and academics are not synonymous. Learning is happening in hallways, libraries, cafeterias, school offices, gyms, school yards, etc, and not just in classrooms. We need to imagine the walls of our classrooms as expandable and porous allowing all forms of inquiry and influence to travel in and out.

When I learn to handle myself emotionally with a challenging friend my learning capacity for a well instructed math equation rises as well. When the relevance of a specific period of history is brought home to me in the classroom, the attractions of a local gang and their drug culture become more manageable.

Adultism, sexism, racism, and other such attitudes are all symptoms of lazy minds stuck as a low level of social/emotional maturity, and are simultaneously limiting our individual learning capacities.



Trinity Travels

Trinity Traveled to the Sarnia-Lambton area on April 20th to attend the Sarnia Lambton Suicide Prevention Committee's Youth Forum, with sponsorship from St. Clair Child & Youth Services. The purpose of this conference is to empower students to take a leadership and mentoring role in their schools, especially around issues affecting mental health and how to access resources. We had a great time in Sarnia and look forward to returning soon. Pictures of the event will be posted early next month on our facebook site. More information on how to access our facebook can be found on page 4.





What are Schools for Continued...

We need imagination to step outside of our concepts and judgements about life into the actuality of real life as it is in our relationships. With the increasing evidence supplied by neuroscience about the links between our social/emotional natures and our intellectual development why do we objectify youth and thus impose an impassable gulf socially/emotionally between us- when so much sharing about the common conditions of living could pass between us?

delaying gratification, or paying attention, or the value of this subject or that.

In that moment we are pure learning.



None need science to tell us that when I am treated with respect, when another person recognizes me in depth and listens carefully to what I say, a sense of well-being arises within me followed by joy in our mutuality. In that moment my head and heart open as worlds pour in and my eagerness to connect with that other is suddenly without fear or restraint. In that moment a grace arises in us, one that does not need to be lectured on

One often sees how much passion and “drama” goes down between adolescents in our schools especially on the social/emotional level. If only we adults could imagine ourselves in our own deeper drama of existence – of loving and learning

Peer Leadership



The Experience of Mentoring - Student Quotes

“It’s funny how good it feels to have someone actually LISTENING to me”

“I felt accomplished, and felt that I could reach any goal.”

“I now try to live up to the trust they have in me- I don’t know what I would do without it.”

“She can be very loud when I tell her something she doesn’t like, or want to hear, but in the end she still listens to me, she’s still in my corner.”

“I feel I could learn or do anything afterwards.”

“I feel connected afterwards, as if God put me in the right place at the right time.”



Program Updates & Upcoming Events

Transition to High School Play

Trinity is excited to announce that the School Climate Play now has a name. The Students have titled the play “High School: Your Unofficial Guide”. Rehearsals for this play have been ongoing this month. Also, as part of the interactive play presentation, Trinity has been working with the students this month to create school video tours. The participating schools are part of the three SE5 schools: Birchmount Park CI, Malvern CI and R.H King Academy.

Peer Leadership Program

The Peer Leader Groups at the fourteen participating schools are continuing in the last phase of the Creating Communities We Want Workshops. This month the students have touched on the subjected matter of bullying and further work on learning assertive responses to provocation.

Anti-Hazing Campaign

In May Trinity will begin a new project with Malvern CI to bring an end to the hazing practices there. This “Stop the Hazing” campaign will entail training the Gr.9 & 10 students to work with their peers in class to strategize alternatives to the hazing practices. In June, students will begin workshops in transitions and will promote the anti-hazing campaign. Malvern has brought Trinity on board for this campaign as an effort to bring about culture change at this school.

Toronto Focus on Success Schools

Bendale BTI

Winston Churchill CI

Earl Haig SS

Central Commerce CI

North Albion CI

Victoria Park CI

Marc Garneau CI

Lester B. Pearson CI

Runnymede CI

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