

# Trinity Review

Monthly Newsletter

Issue 3 November 2010



## this issue

Creating Communities We Want P.1

Programs this month P.2

What are Schools For? P.3

Upcoming Events P.4

## Creating Communities We Want: Transition Program & Focus on Success

Both Trinity's Creating Communities We Want: Transition & Focus on Success programs began in October. These Peer Leadership programs aim to develop participant's resilience – i.e. their innate ability to meet and overcome challenges.

This is achieved through mentoring that develops an individual's self awareness and sensitivity to others, giving them the practices to balance their social/emotional life with their academic pursuits.

As well, these programs give Peer Leaders the opportunity to both learn and teach in the leading of the workshops. This is important because both teaching and learning are aspects of our social, emotional and ethncal development as human beings – as well as being ways of openly expressing our needs and connection to one another.

However, teaching and learning fail as tools in our personal development if they are done without awareness of the social/emotional realities within which they operate.

## Schools Trinity visited this month

**Lester B. Pearson CI**

**Sir Oliver Mowat CI**

**Runnymede CI**

**Runnymede PS**

**Bendale BTI**

**George S. Henry Academy**

**Victoria Park CI**

**Central Commerce CI**

**York Humber HS**

**Marc Garneau CI**

**Winston Churchill CI**

**Earl Haig SS**

**We are also visiting the Long Term Support Programs at Midland, Pharmacy & Brockton.**

# Creating Communities We Want in November

## Transition Program

Two workshops are being delivered this fall. In workshop one the Peer Leaders and grade 9 students create a common vocabulary for respecting each other and in the talking circles a way to mutually build relationships.

In workshop two the class creates lists of values in community and steps forward to identify their vision of the reality of their school community. Issues raised will be addressed in future workshops.



## Focus on Success Support Program

We've been working to develop support materials for the *Why Try?* Program. Our program puts Peer Mentors in a position to aid the students in their social/emotional development. This is achieved through theatre and art practices, and talking circles, meant to enhance their reflective capacity and communication skills.



## Trinity Travels

This month Trinity traveled to Sault Ste. Marie to research the Algoma District School Board's ABCD – Action for Building a Community that is Drug free - program. This program is a community based initiative targeted at deterring drug use in upper elementary and secondary schools.

We also learned about *The Algoma Model*, a collaborative, school-based approach to addressing child and youth problem behavior and mental health issues that promotes positive, healthy communities.

The objective of this program is to promote and support the positive behavior, well-being and mental health of all children and youth in



## What are Schools for? An Ongoing Discussion

(continued from Trinity Review – Oct 2010)

(iv)

Why do we allow the chaos of our school cultures to make students stupid in social/emotional terms?

When we cram them with facts and skills we contribute to the chaos because the authoritarian stance often necessary to achieve this cramming keeps them childish and dependant on our approval. And even those high school youth who constantly act out and misbehave- in trivial to criminal ways- show an alarming inability to understand themselves in any other way than external referencing.

This indifference to the social/emotional development of our youth in our school communities suggests a practice of adultism still finding justification in “this is good for you” style excuses – but the results of rendering our youth perennially childish – especially those in high school – is all around us in escalating patterns of social disintegration and violence.

(v)

Every once in awhile we get the chance to step back and watch how the youth in our high schools act together. They are no different than the adults in our workplace communities despite age and experience – though you could make a case for their

being more ‘dramatic’.

Like anyone when a student feels overwhelmed by others, or by their workload they may start to practice avoidance, or work hard to become more powerful than others, or learn to comply.

And like adults in a workplace, if they feel abandoned they will often identify with their apparent rejection and internalize feelings of inferiority and shame or find other sources of connection i.e. addictive processes with food, alcohol and drugs, relationships, TV, video games, internet, ideologies, etc.

Many of the youth in our schools are showing signs of being overwhelmed and/or abandoned. All of which means they are on the same path as their adults.

So instead of talking about how to create safe and caring school environments as if we could add some protective emotional layer to the school community – like metal detectors at school doors – why can’t we talk about how much longer we can afford to go on educating the way we are, pursuing academic goals without addressing our social/emotional challenges?





## Notable Calendar Events – November @ Trinity

### First Try-outs of New “Focus on Success” Program

The first try-outs for Trinity’s new Focus on Success Program began at Winston Churchill CI, Central Commerce CI & Bendale BTI.

### Developing Dramatherapy Workshops

Trinity is developing dramatherapy workshops for TDSB’s Long Term Support Programs this month.

### Peer Leader/Transition Programs Underway

The Peer Leader/Transition Programs are now underway at Trinity’s First Year schools – George S. Henry Academy, Victoria Park CI & Central Commerce CI.

### 1+1=3 Training

Training begins at the end of the month for **1+1 = 3** training: an elementary school program that deals with bullying at Runnymede PS.

### Mediation Training

Successful mediation training with Grade 11 Leadership and Peer support class at Marc Garneau CI was completed this month

## 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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## TRINITY THEATRE

434 Strathmore Blvd  
Toronto, ON M4C 1N5

t 416.421.4888 f 416.406.2011

[www.trinitytheatre.ca](http://www.trinitytheatre.ca)

Facebook: Trinity Theatre

Twitter: @TrinityToronto

[contact@trinitytheatre.ca](mailto:contact@trinitytheatre.ca)