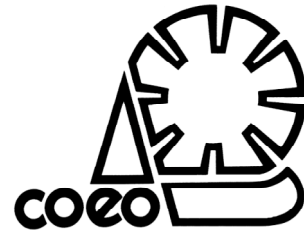


FRIENDS of COEO NEWSLETTER

The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario

www.coeo.org

Editor: Grant Linney
December 7, 2008



Please consider the environment before printing this newsletter.

COEO NEWS re ADVOCACY for OEE

On Thursday November 20, 2008, COEO President Zabe MacEachren, Past President Shane Kramer and yours truly had a 30-minute meeting with Rob Coombs, Education Minister Kathleen Wynne's new policy advisor on Environmental Education. Michelle Wasylshen from Sussex Strategy was also in attendance. (COEO has just finished a several month contract with these political consultants.)

It's clear that, like other policy advisors, Rob spends most of his day in meetings with various constituents, taking notes, responding to various queries and then deciding on what to take to the minister. And so, it's a bit of a "luck of the draw" as to whether our concerns get forwarded. It's also clear that tactful, constructive and persistent voices which happen to align with Ministry priorities do get some attention, and we believe that COEO falls in this category. The government now knows that we exist and that we have expertise to offer in terms of providing outdoor experiences that will power any comprehensive environmental education policy. We are hoping that they will accept our offer to be a proactive player in determining future outdoor and environmental education policy.

CONFERENCE 2009: "CONNECTIONS & DIRECTIONS" **September 25-27, 2008 RKY Camp**

Planning for our next annual conference is already well underway.

It will be held in Eastern Ontario under pine trees and on the rocky shores of Eagle Lake at Camp RKY (north of Kingston & just north of Parham).

Expect the best of Eastern hospitality, a rustic northern retreat setting and an all-around energetic COEO friendliness.

All interested in proposing a presentation should provide a brief write-up.

If interested in presenting, email: walt.sepic@yahoo.com

TERRY CARR

Many of us will remember Terry Carr, a long time supervisor for the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority at both the Albion Hills and Boyd Conservation Field Centres. On a personal note, Terry was the first person to offer me a full time OEE job many years ago, though it only seems like yesterday. I will remember him for dedication to conservation education, his great love of birds, and a very dry sense of humour.

It is with great sadness that I note Terry's passing in late October. He was 71.

Mark Whitcombe will write a remembrance of Terry for COEO's *Pathways* journal.

UPCOMING P.D. OPPORTUNITIES

ADVENTUREWORKS!

www.adventureworks.org

877-311-5683

Course Name	Date	Location
Special Events		
Author's Series <i>Jennifer Stanchfield</i>	November 13, 2009	Norval Outdoor School, Norval ON
Author's Series <i>Jennifer Stanchfield</i>	November 14, 2009	Norval Outdoor School, Norval ON
Ropes Course Leadership Symposium Program Leadership	March 27, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Facilitating Adventure-Based Learning	February 5 & 6 Oct. 19 & 20, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Facilitating Adventure-Based Learning II	Feb. 12 & 13, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
<i>new!</i> Building Community with Low Prop Activities	February 27, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Ropes Course Certification		
Low Ropes Facilitator (Level One)	April 1-2 May 6-7 June 3-4 Sept 30-Oct 1, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Assistant High Ropes Instructor (Level One)	April 1-5 May 6-10 June 3-7 Sept 30-Oct 4, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Climbing Wall Facilitator (Level One)	June 19-21, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Climbing Wall Supervisor (Level Two)	March 23-25, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Ropes Course Instructor (Level Two)	April 1-5 May 6-10 June 3-7 Sept 30-Oct 4, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Ropes Course & Climbing Wall Manager (CCM)	Feb 17-20, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON
Re-certification (Levels One & Two)	April 5 May 10 June 7 October 4, 2009	Canterbury Hills, Ancaster ON

For more information please check out our website, or to register for any upcoming training courses, please contact maja@adventureworks.org

UPCOMING P.D. OPPORTUNITIES

(Continued)

2009 OCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The annual conference of the Ontario Camping Association will be from Wednesday January 28 to Friday January 30, 2009. It will be held at Blue Mountain Resorts in Collingwood, and this year's theme is "*It Takes A Village*" (Editor's note: there must be a Hilary on the planning committee.) For full conference information, go to www.ontariocamps.ca

RISK IN EDUCATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2009 Risk in Education Conference: Student Success and Outside the Classroom Learning will be held February 17-18, 2009 at Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley. For full conference details, go to: www.riskmanagementconference.ca

WYE MARSH WINTER PROGRAMS

CCI: Energy & You Program

Wye Marsh is pleased to announce the CCI: Energy & You program, available for grades 5-8 students November 2008 to March 2009. The Wye Marsh designed a two-hour interactive program in the school system to stimulate student's awareness of how their everyday choices impact the environment. Included are six innovative stations engaging students with thought provoking hands-on activities. This will promote an understanding of how individuals can conserve renewable energy, foster long-term behavioural change, and contribute to a reduction in demand and consumption of energy. The stations include: Local Food Challenge, Waste Reduction & Disposal, Water Consumption, Alternative Energies, Energy Efficient Construction and Energy Conservation. As part of the program, each student is required to establish their own Energy & Me Goals emphasizing everyday energy-saving choices, with a follow-up report detailing their success. The Wye Marsh is thrilled to bring this exciting project to students, further stimulating their understanding of the direct impact they have on their community, environment and future. Cost: \$3 per student. Contact Reservations at 705.526.7809 or email at reservations@wyemarsh.com to book your group.

Nature Canada Busing Grant Available: Barrie, Newmarket & Bradford

In November, Nature Canada awarded Wye Marsh with an Urban Explorers busing grant to provide transportation for students in Barrie, Newmarket and Bradford which allows them to connect with nature at Wye Marsh. Wye Marsh is recognized as an exceptional destination for youth to explore and learn about a vast wetland and forest ecosystem through experiential based programs with passionate, experienced experts. This program is geared to develop Canada's next generation of environmental stewards allowing over 27,000 urban youth to personally become connected with nature by visiting locations such as Wye Marsh.

UPCOMING P.D. OPPORTUNITIES

(Continued)

WYE MARSH WINTER PROGRAMS

(Continued)

This is an exciting opportunity for students from urban communities to enjoy Wye Marsh and join the increasing global commitment in preserving our planet and natural habitats. For further information please contact Reservations at 705.526.7809 or email at reservations@wyemarsh.com

Winter Snowshoe Ecotours begin on December 20th from 10am – 1pm.

The Winter Ecotour adventure is a 3-hour, 3-4km snowshoe trek into the far reaches of Wye Marsh with one of our experienced naturalist.

You can learn about animal tracking, tree identification, hands-on winter survival including fire starting and GPS navigating techniques, research updates and more.

Reservations are required, \$50 per person

Free Cross Country Ski Lessons

Every weekend, January, February and March, with the purchase of a trail pass.

Winter Break Day Camp

Monday, December 29th – Friday, January 2nd

9:00am – 4:00pm

Children aged 6 -12 are invited to spend the week at the Wye Marsh during Christmas. Each day is filled with exciting activities, games and lots of fun. Outdoor activities include cross country skiing, snowshoeing or wilderness survival techniques, crafts, and much more.

Members: \$110; non-members: \$125. Pre-registration required.

Family Fun New Years Day

Thursday, January 1st

9:00am – 5:00pm

Winter Wonders Programs available

Cross country ski lessons; guided walking & snowshoe adventures; Meet the Creatures;

Winter Wonders (i.e., snowflake identification) and complimentary hot chocolate & marshmallows available at 3pm!

OTHER NEWS

ONTARIO'S FIRST "BACK TO NATURE" GATHERING

On the November 21st to 23rd weekend, the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton hosted a gathering of representatives from a wide variety of Ontario youth-serving agencies in both the public and private sectors, e.g., Active Kids, Biodiversity Education & Awareness Network, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Conservation Ontario, COEO (Zabe MacEachren), Ducks Unlimited, EECOM, Environment Canada, the Evergreen Foundation, Girl Guides Ontario, Green Communities Canada, the Halton Region Conservation Authority, the Ontario Ecotourism Society, Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters, the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Nature, Ontario Stewardship, Ontario Streams, Ontario Trails, Parks Canada, Roots & Shoots, the Royal Botanical Gardens, Scouts Canada, the Toronto Zoo, the United Church of Canada and the YMCA.

The event began Friday evening with a public lecture via satellite by Richard Louv, the now-famous author of *Last Child in the Woods: Protecting Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder*. The satellite enabled the speaker and audience to see each other and to interact at the end of Richard's presentation ... it was actually quite personable and captivating.

Saturday and Sunday morning / early afternoon sessions involved some 40 delegates from the above-mentioned organizations steadily working through a progression of comprehensive questions and topics leading to a real momentum for some form of "Children and Nature" network in Ontario, with the Royal Botanical Gardens potentially serving as a home base and coordinating agency. Cheryl Charles, the co-founder of the Children and Nature Network in the U.S. (along with Richard Louv) acted as a valuable resource person throughout the weekend, and three of the four key planners of the weekend are all long-time COEO members: Barrie Martin, Barb McKean, and Grant Linney. More will be decided at a mid-January committee meeting of several active-oriented participants from this gathering. Stay tuned for more exciting details as to the evolution of this landmark movement in Ontario. For more information concerning its inception and mission in the U.S., go to www.childrenandnature.org

RESOURCES

ARTICLE: **“WHOLE CHILDHOOD: THE PRIME SUSTAINABILITY ISSUE OF OUR TIME”**

What does the state of childhood have to do with the wellness of our planet? Planetary health stands no chance when children’s social-emotional wellbeing is compromised. What is happening to our children? Most notably, researchers cite escalating government-mandated academic forces and family pressures to succeed as the agents behind the dominoes falling onto our youngest global citizens. For fear of losing ground, we medicate and treat preschool and elementary age children for anxiety, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, and disruptive behaviors at record levels. Middle school, high school and college students are pervasively cheating, binge drinking, depriving themselves of sleep, and committing suicide at alarming rates.

Reversing this trend is as simple as child’s play. Recent scientific findings remind us how important physical and imaginative play is to a healthy childhood. A counter-intuitive and amazing fact researchers have found about play is its role in cultivating executive functioning, or the ability to focus, guide and organize one’s own thinking. This involves the critical capacity for impulse control, anticipation of consequences, the delay of gratification, problem-solving, and overall adaptability. Howard Chudacoff, author of *Children at Play*, states, “it turns out that all that time playing make-believe actually helps children develop.” He further observes, “it’s interesting to me that when we talk about play today, the first thing that comes to mind are toys.” He calls this the commercialization and co-optation of child’s play—a trend that begins to shrink the size of children’s imaginative space.

On February 17, 2008, National Public Radio broadcasted “Old-Fashioned Play Builds Serious Skills,” a program revealing a recent study to replicate an investigation of self-regulation first done in the late 1940s. Psychological researchers asked children ages three, five, and seven to stand perfectly still. The three-year-olds couldn’t stand still at all, the five-year-olds could do it for about three minutes, and the seven-year-olds could stand pretty much as long as the researchers asked. In 2001, researchers repeated this experiment. Psychologist Elena Bodrova at Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning discovered the results to be very different: “Today’s five-year-olds were acting at the level of three-year-olds 60 years ago, and today’s seven-year-olds were barely approaching the level of a five-year-old 60 years ago,” Bodrova explains. These findings coincide with increasing concern over childhood ADHD and other disorders.

Could it be that a return to imaginative and pretend play would recapture these endangered capacities of executive functioning and self-regulation? Wouldn’t it be a relief for us harried parents to discover that we do not need to entertain our children every waking hour with planned activities, bought toys, lessons, and screen time? (Cutting back on gadgets, organized sports, and computer games would even provide financial benefits in these challenging economic times of inflation and high gas prices.) In essence, children have the natural ability to access their own inner playmate in not only entertaining themselves, but expanding their states of consciousness. We often inadvertently cultivate boredom in children by continually distracting them from their imaginative interior worlds of thoughts and feelings.

RESOURCES

Article on Whole Childhood

(Continued)

Besides driving parents to exhaustion, poor executive functioning is associated with high dropout rates, drug use and crime. In fact, high executive functioning is a better predictor of success in school than a child's IQ. Children who are able to manage their feelings and pay attention are better able to learn. As executive functioning researcher Laura Berk explains, "self-regulation predicts effective development in virtually every domain." Essentially, we aren't giving kids a chance to practice policing themselves through imaginative and peer-time play.

Infinite imagination holds the key to economic sustainability on a finite planet. The degree to which we allow the stage of childhood to thrive affects whether children will be able to develop stronger essential capacities they'll need to face 21st Century sustainability and social challenges. This shift will require purposefulness, focus, ability to delay gratification, and impeccable ethics.

Waldorf Education provides an example of how we can see childhood consciousness as connected to social renewal. The fastest growing independent, non-denominational school system worldwide, there are 993 Waldorf schools in 59 countries. The educators in Waldorf schools view childhood based on the integral philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. From preschool on, nature and beauty form the hub of learning as teachers build upon children's innate curiosity and creative reasoning. Working in this way with rhythmic physical movement, handwork, imaginative play, and the arts—including sewing, knitting, woodwork, painting, athletics, and music for all children—teachers cultivate a sense of mastery, self-control, and focus within the students. In 2007, David Mitchell & Douglas Gerwin of The Research Institute for Waldorf Education, published survey results with input from college professors, employers, and students. The sample consisted of 550 participants spanning 60 years. A majority of Waldorf graduates, setting aside their very strong academics, share characteristics of well-developed executive functioning capacities, of which several are predominant. Waldorf graduates think for themselves and value the opportunity to translate their new ideas into practice. They also appreciate lasting human relationships, seek out opportunities to be of help to others, and are guided by an inner moral compass that helps them navigate the trials and temptations of professional and private life.

Once again, the implications of growth in planetary health and global relations are vast and exciting. The journal, *Ecological Economics*, is forward-thinking in calling us to blend environmental protection and human flourishing on our planet of finite resources and infinite creativity. It suggests that we need entrepreneurial thinking to expand green industries and the healthy lifestyle market, as well as to cultivate interpersonal and international relations. As a society, the time has come to ask ourselves what we could do differently to educate and raise our young to experience their own interiority and the interconnectedness of life. Imagine the revolutionary impact on all human relationships when visionary children arise from a full experience of childhood.

Joni De Groot, MS Ed, is a Licensed Marriage Family Therapist, educational consultant, and school psychologist. Joan Jaeckel has served as Development Director for the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and has organized three key gatherings of educators and social visionaries in recent years. Contact Joni De Groot with your interest and questions, networking ideas and projects at JDGConsult@cox.net or 619.741.4249.

This article may be viewed online at:

http://www.visionmagazine.com/archives/0809/living_whole_child.html

Thanks for Elise Houghton, Communications Chair of EEON (Environmental Education Ontario) for this piece.

RESOURCES

(Continued)

Building Leadership Capacity for Sustainability Education

The Environmental Protection Agency in the U.S. is sponsoring the above-mentioned program (a.k.a. BLCSE) “to help schools develop strong strategic planning and related capacity for Sustainability Education.” The following is adapted from their web site, <http://www.blcse.org/>

Over the past 3 years, Eastern Michigan University (EMU) and Creative Change Educational Solutions (CCES) have built relationships with four public school districts in three states as they enter the beginning stages of using sustainability education as an important reform approach. The project, "Building Leadership for Sustainability Education" will strengthen the capacity of these districts to re-orient themselves around sustainability and become models for other schools.

To accomplish this, Leadership Teams from each district first completed a ‘status report’ outlining the strengths, weaknesses, and needs in the areas of student achievement, opportunities for involving students in environmental stewardship, existing sustainability education reform efforts, and internal capacity. EMU and CCES designed and held a 2-day retreat based on this data, providing strategic planning training, planning assistance, and sustainability education resources. Each team will develop a strategic plan that outlines 1-, 3-, and 5-year goals and budgets for

- 1) Implementing programming (such as curriculum reform) to meet identified needs,
- 2) Involving students in environmental stewardship activities through school-community partnerships,
- 3) Evaluating the impacts of their efforts on student achievement and environmental stewardship,
- 4) Sustaining their work through internal and external funding, and
- 5) Promoting their reform work—and sustainability education—to other K-12 educators in their regions.

To support teams, EMU and CCES will provide a rigorous strategic-planning framework, technical assistance, evaluation tools, and facilitate team-to-team support and networking. A team from EMU will evaluate the strategic plans and the overall process. Finally, EMU, CCES, and teams will disseminate the project’s model and outcomes through professional journals, networks, and conferences.

*Thanks to EEON’s Elise Houghton for this item also!
Check out the above-mentioned website for more details.*

CELEBRATING OEE IN THE OTTAWA AREA

On a more local scale, check out the new website for the **Outdoor Education Council of Ottawa**, set up by Diane Beckett, this year’s co-winner of COEO’s prestigious Robin Dennis Award: <http://www.ottawaoutdooreducation.ca>.

ABOUT THIS *FRIENDS OF COEO* ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

For consistency, the COEO electronic newsletter is now published on the first of each month. Friends of COEO can receive this newsletter free of charge however, as non-members, they will not receive the outdoor education job postings or parts of the resources sections. The newsletter will also arrive a few days later.

Anyone having an item of interest to outdoor & experiential educators and desiring publication in this newsletter needs it to submit to the editor at least two days before the publication date.

The newsletter will now be organized (but not restricted to) according to the following headings:

COEO News
Resources

Other OEE News

P.D. Opportunities

If your organization wishes to post information (e.g., job postings, notice of upcoming events), it needs to be an organizational member of COEO.