

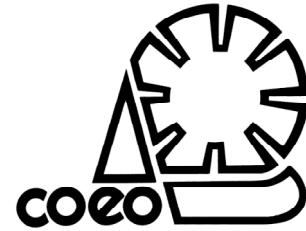
FRIENDS OF COEO NEWSLETTER

The Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario

www.coeo.org

Editor: Grant Linney

June 17, 2007



UPCOMING EVENTS

COEO ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2007

Fri. Sept. 28th to Sun. Sept. 30th

YMCA CAMP WANAKITA, Haliburton Highlands

This fall, COEO returns to a Retreat-style conference, bringing back the “weekend with friends in the great outdoors” feel of years gone by.

This year’s theme is ***Reconnecting Children Through Outdoor Education***, in support and recognition of our just-published 80-page Research Summary concerning the great and lasting values of outdoor and experiential education.

For more information about the conference including a **call for presentations**, go to www.coro.org/conference.htm

Please contact Shane Kramer if you are willing to help out. shanerkra@yahoo.ca

THE GREAT CANADIAN SHORELINE CLEANUP

September 15-23, 2007

Here’s a **great** annual national environmental event and one of the largest direct action events in the country, engaging tens of thousands of Canadians in every province and territory. It is ideally suited for teachers wanting to connect students with our great outdoors and to empower them through the sort of positive direct action that can really make a difference. If you sign up before this August 31st, (www.vanaqua.org/cleanup) you will receive shoreline cleanup supplies, instructions and educational materials free of charge. This same site also provides additional information about the event.

You can also reach them toll free: 1-877-427-2422

The founding sponsor is the TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation.

The Vancouver Aquarium is a second major sponsor, with the Ocean Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund and Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums as Conservation Partners.

Shorelines include those found along rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands and ocean shores, so virtually everyone can pitch in for this most worthy endeavour!

OTHER NEWS OF NOTE

OTTAWA-CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD WINS MAJOR EECOM AWARD

The Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) announced its 2007 Awards for Excellence in Environmental Education at a national conference in Kananaskis, Alberta last month. Here is the text for its timely recognition of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board as the Outstanding K-12 School District:

Since the founding of its first Outdoor Education Centre in 1966, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has been an innovator and pioneer in designing and delivering quality Outdoor Education programs. The Centre's facilities include wetlands, a designated Migratory Bird Sanctuary, a pioneer village, canoeing and ropes courses, outdoor and indoor classrooms, and sleeping/cooking facilities for 129 people. With the commitment of many community volunteers, the centres provide 23,000 K-12 students with meaningful outdoor educational experiences every year.

The judging committee was particularly impressed with the sustainability of their programs and the years of service and reach. Ottawa-Carleton has prioritized outdoor and environmental education, even though there is now no budget line for Outdoor Education Centres in the provincial funding formula. The Ottawa community has demonstrated its commitment to the Centres by dedicating countless volunteer time and funds to ensure that the Centres survive.

Thanks to Diane Beckett, The Coordinator of the Outdoor Education Council of Ottawa, for passing on this great news. Like Jane Veit in Toronto, Diane is a passionate and articulate parent who is a tireless advocate for outdoor and environmental education in this province and beyond.

ADVOCACY FOR OEE

- The Executive Summary of COEO's *Reconnecting Children Through Outdoor Education* is now posted on our web site at: www.coeo.org/new.htm
- An electronic copy of our submission to the Ontario government Working Group on Environmental Education (Roberta Bondar's group) is now posted on our web site at: www.coeo.org/aboutus.htm
- Grant Linney's presentation to the Ottawa Carleton District School Board as to why they should keep the MacSkimming and Bill Mason Centres open in these times of severe fiscal difficulty is now on our web site at: www.coeo.org/aboutus.htm
- To view a 25-minute web cast discussion on children and nature, go to the following link to TVO's *Your Voice*, a program and forum for parents: http://www.tvo.org/cfmx/tvoorg/tvoparents/index.cfm?page_id=483&event_id=561µsitefolder=tvoparents

COEO's Grant Linney joins Cam Collyer (The Evergreen Foundation) and author Richard Louv (*Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*) for this discussion with host Marni Jackson.

CHILDREN'S GROWING – AND ALARMING – LACK OF OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

COEO member Mark Whitcombe sends us this article from the June 15th edition of the Daily Mail entitled “*How children lost the right to roam in four generations.*” Included is a powerful graphic of how the independence of one family’s 8 year-olds has shrunk from 8 miles in 1919, to one mile in 1950, to half a mile in 1979, to 300 yards in 2007.

Copy and paste the following link into your browser:

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=462091&in_page_id=1770

Editor’s Note (er, editorial): I don’t have them at my disposal right now, but there are similar startling statistics as to the decline in the amount of time our kids spend outdoors. It is no wonder that our children lack enough Vitamin D to protect them from cancer and a host of other physical ailments (e.g., significant bone deficiency) ... what a sad, sad position taken by the Canadian Cancer Society: they have just recommended taking Vitamin D supplements, rather than encouraging our kids (and adults) to get 15-20 minutes a day of sunlight without sunscreen during times when the UV factor is not at its peak (early morning and early evening).

There is constantly growing evidence that our children’s lack of outdoor experiences is directly related to the following additional deficiencies and dilemmas: the rise of obesity and diabetes; the increased numbers of children diagnosed with ADHD and depression; the lack of independence, resilience and ability to think for oneself; the lack of connection to one’s local community, both human and natural; the lack of the kind of environmental stewardship that is needed in order to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for all life on this beleaguered planet. For more information, get your own copy of COEO’s just-published summary of the current research into the multiple, powerful and lasting benefits of outdoor and experiential education, *Reconnecting Children Through Outdoor Education*.

COEO WEB SITE UPDATES

Here’s a summary of updates to the web site, just posted today:

- 1) Under the www.coeo.org/aboutus.htm tab,
 - Statements of support for OEE by Robert Bateman, Thomas Homer-Dixon, Margaret Somerville, and David Suzuki
 - The text of April ’07 COEO’s presentation to the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Working Group on Environmental Education
 - The text of COEO’s May ’07 presentation to the Ottawa Carleton District School Board re this board’s need to keep the Bill Mason and MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centres open.
- 2) Under the www.coeo.org/conference.htm tab,
 - A Fall 2007 Conference Flyer, complete with info about our keynote speaker
 - A Call for Presentations re Conference 2007. Be sure to submit by August 15, 2007.
- 3) Under the www.coeo.org/news.htm tab,
 - Four glowing testimonials concerning our latest publication, ***Reconnecting Children Through Outdoor Education***

STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE FOR OEE

Here's a few things that you can do for OEE, our unique, powerful and lasting form of learning:

- 1) **Join COEO**: Any new memberships purchased at this time will go to the new school year (September 1, 2007 to August 31, 2008). Membership provides you with multiple benefits, as outlined on our web site (www.coeo.org). It also provides COEO with the human and financial capital essential to the realization of our mandate.
- 2) **Register for our annual conference**: Support COEO and give yourself a great experiential affirmation by planning to join us at Camp Wanakita in the Haliburton Highlands this coming fall (September 28-30, 2007).
- 3) **Volunteer**: Stay tuned for a potential re-organization of the COEO Board of Directors, designed to actively engage more COEO members and from across the province ... and please consider joining our efforts on behalf of a most worthy and timely cause.
- 4) **Purchase our latest publication**: If you have not done so already, buy your own copy of *Reconnecting Children Through Outdoor Education*. This 80-page summary of the current and international research into outdoor and experiential education continues to receive widespread praise. And, while you're at it, purchase a copy for your favourite decision maker, you know, the one who helps to decide whether or not OEE programs have a future. For further information and order forms, go to www.coeo.org/news.htm