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Formed in 1972, the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario (COEO) is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that promotes safe, quality outdoor education experiences for people of all ages. We achieve this by publishing the *Pathways* journal, running an annual conference and regional workshops, maintaining a website, and working with kindred organizations as well as government agencies. Members of COEO receive a subscription to *Pathways*, as well as admittance to workshops, courses and conferences. A membership application form is included on the inside back cover of this issue of *Pathways*.

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Pathways

THE ONTARIO JOURNAL OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Features

Columns

Learning to Fight Gracefully

How many communities are you a part of? Some people might say "too many," while others would say "too few."

How many communities are you apart from? How many times have you felt excluded from a group, outside of the circle? How many times have you watched a group crumble after a trauma or loss?

As outdoor educators the job often falls to us to facilitate the development of a healthy community. We then have to help to sustain it and, sometimes, to rebuild it. Whether working at a day centre, at an integrated high-school credit program, or out in the woods, community-building seems to always be a key component of our programs.

Why is that? Why is it important for humans to feel included by and connected to a community? What are the benefits to being part of the group? What are the benefits to being outside it? What is the progression that groups transition through on the way to becoming "true" communities? How can we help facilitate the process? What happens when a community fractures due to a loss? How do communities bond over shared experiences? How do we make our communities inclusive to all? How do facilitators create intentional models for building community? All of these questions and others are addressed here.

During a turbulent time in a group's community development, I read the group this M. Scott Peck quote, taken from *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*, while we sat around a campfire in Algonquin: "In genuine community there are no sides. It is not always easy, but by the time they reach community the members have learned how to give up cliques and factions. They have learned how to listen to each other and how not to reject each other. Sometimes consensus in community is reached with miraculous rapidity. But at other times it is arrived at only after lengthy struggle. Just because it is a safe place does not mean community is a place without conflict. It is, however, a place where conflict can be resolved without physical or emotional bloodshed and with wisdom as well as grace. A community is a group that can fight gracefully."

Outdoor education and community-building seem to go hand-in-hand. Read through these collected stories, anecdotes and articles to discover something that will allow you to foster positive community development in your teaching space. How will you move your group from a collection of strangers to a community that can "fight gracefully"?

Erin Nicolardi

Sketch Pad – Nick Sheehan is a teacher, writer and illustrator who has lived in Ireland, Japan and Canada. He is obsessed with insects, and is presently shopping around a children's book about a caterpillar in the witness relocation program who has been assigned an uncooperative boy's right eyebrow as its cover. Nick believes children need to dig around in the dirt more. Nick designed the cover artwork, as well as the images that appear on pages 5, 8, 13, 16, 20, 22, 26, 32 and 33.

Connie Kavanagh writes the Wild Words column and also enjoys sketching. Connie's daughter, Kendra Fennell, has been fascinated with bald eagles since she was a wee eaglet herself, and Connie's son, Calvin Fennell, who has contributed to *Pathways* in the past, is studying graphic design at York University and Sheridan College. The family resides in Flamborough, Ontario. You'll find Kendra's work on page 24 and Calvin's on page 30.

President's View

Spring has finally sprung! Outdoor educators across the province are delivering end of school year programs or gearing up for summer camp adventures. I don't know about you, but it feels like the energy that has gone into the flowers blooming and leaves emerging from bud has also engulfed me.

I am very excited to read this issue of *Pathways* focusing on community building. Thank you to Erin Nicolardi for putting this together as our guest editor and all of the contributors who have taken the time to be part of it!

Members of the COEO community are positively impacting children, youth and adults by connecting them to each other and to nature. COEO's annual awards provide an important opportunity to recognize individual and group efforts, as well as to celebrate the many and varied expressions of outdoor education within our organization and the province of Ontario. Please consider nominating a deserving colleague or organization and visit our website to learn how.

A chance for the COEO community to gather will be at Bark Lake Leadership Centre this fall, September 19–21, 2014. The conference organizing team has been raring to go and the organizing is well underway. The conference theme this year—*Finding our 'Place': Fostering Deep Connections to Land through Outdoor Education*—encourages practitioners to share stories of places and spaces that have inspired deep connections to the land. The call for workshops, presentation proposals and those interested in sharing stories has gone out. Please check the website for more details!

Your Board of Directors has started a three-year visioning process for COEO with facilitation offered by Adventureworks. Your input matters! Keep an eye out in the newsletters and get ready for great discussions at the fall conference to help make the next three years and beyond the best ever for outdoor education in the province. Are you interested in joining this process within a leadership role, or know someone who would make a great fit on the Board of Directors? COEO's Annual General Meeting will take place at the fall conference, offering plenty of time to reach out to the current board to learn more about positions, including the relatively new position of Student Representative. Information regarding nominations and applications, to submit by email prior to the conference, are available on the website and will be in the August online newsletter. The deadline for a Student Representative submission is September 12, 2014.

The Board of Directors next meeting will be held over a conference call, and board meetings are open to the entire membership. If you are interested in joining the conversation to learn more about any of the above opportunities, please email me for conference call information.

Happy trails and spring paddles!

Allyson Brown
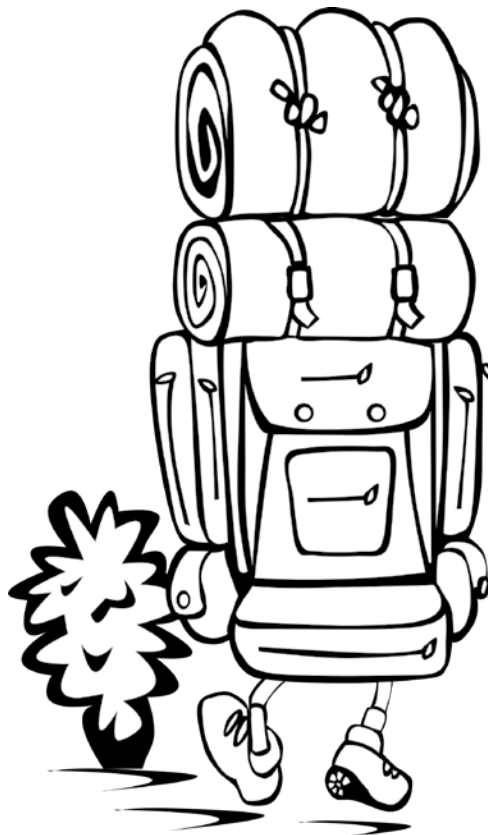
Outdoor Education and the Disability Community: Towards an Inclusive Model

By Cameron Baldassarra

Members of the outdoor education (OE) community strongly believe in the power of nature, play and adventure as means to foster an inclusive, safe and challenging environment for our students and clients. Many outdoor centres, summer camps and in-school programmes go to great lengths to provide such an environment to persons of all abilities through the provision of adaptive programming or by simply opening participation to all. The following critical analysis of adaptive programs and the history of disability in OE is an adapted excerpt from a research paper submitted to the graduate program in Geography at York University.

In an investigation of inclusivity in western European approaches to OE, Brodin (2009) suggests that common reasons for pursuing OE include healthy living and fitness, fostering curiosity, character building, nature connection and appreciation, co-operative learning and team building (p.100). Likewise, the mission statement of The PINE Project (2013), a small community outdoor school and naturalist program located in Toronto, Ontario, highlights some common goals and desirable outcomes of participating in OE:

> Our vision is to create a culture and community that raises children who … are creative, adaptable, quick-witted and strong in the face of adversity; show positivity in difficult situations and learn from them all; are alive, active, healthy, and fit; … demonstrate sympathy and empathy toward other people, other life, and their community.

Such a positive, inclusive statement might be expected from a small, newly established, community-oriented program. Yet Camp Kandalore, a large residential summer camp and fully equipped OE centre in Ontario's Haliburton Highlands, has a similar philosophy. Despite its differences in programming, specializing in canoe tripping and other "hard skills," Kandalore

(2013) presents a comparable philosophy to PINE: "We give campers the opportunity to develop an appreciation for nature while discovering their untapped potential. We've created a warm and supportive environment where kids can express their individuality, grow in self-confidence and build friendships that last a lifetime."

A brief review of mission statements from camps across Ontario, including those with accessible, integrated or adaptive programs, reveals similar philosophies and buzzwords to those presented by Kandalore and PINE: supportive, friendly, confident, community, integrity (Camp Ooch, 2013; Camp Jumoke, 2013; Camp Awakening, 2013; Camp Towhee, 2013). The characteristics presented by Brodin as representative of the European example mirror the similarly positive message of the Ontario camps. On the surface, the desired educational outcomes and desired characteristics of camper success appear to be inclusive of, applicable to, and, most importantly, achievable by all potential participants. Nowhere in these mission statements is reference made to potentially limiting hard skill-based activities such as climbing, canoeing, abseiling or trekking. Nor are there references to normative intellectual goals such as test scores. Instead the focus is on personal development through so-called "soft skills" that can be achieved through a range of activities and social interactions, depending on the capabilities of the participant. In this case, such a program or philosophy of OE should ostensibly have beneficial outcomes for participants of all abilities.

Traditionally, many of the character building, or soft skill, development goals have been approached through challenge- and adventure-based activities, and this is where the objective of inclusiveness starts to slip. In Ontario, canoe trips down old voyageur routes and expeditions

through the granite-banked rivers and lakes of the Canadian Shield have played an important historical role. Year-round OE centres and Outward Bound-style programs tend to emphasize high ropes courses, long duration trips and problem-solving challenges that take advantage of or heighten the difficulty of the local terrain (Hattie et al., 1997). The most rigid, and perhaps the most widespread, approach to these goals came through highly structured, skill-based programs found in historically significant establishments such as Scouts and Girl Guides. The scouting movement and the "para-military doctrines of Baden Powell" (Young, 2006, p. 5) are to a great extent the precursors of modern OE. Coupled with Kurt Hahn's 1941 development of Outward Bound in response to a perceived need to better equip urban youth for the rigours of the Merchant Marine (Hattie et al., 1997, p. 44), many of the traditional activities and character building aims of current OE are derived from the field's able-bodied and male-dominated historical roots. Historical approaches towards OE aimed to toughen up the youth of the day or to correct the increasingly perceived limitations of a growing urban population through a re-acquaintance with outdoor living, fitness and campcraft, as was the goal of Ernest Thompson Seton and his Woodcraft Indian movement (Davis, 1987).

While the emphasis on toughening up and building resilience through challenge and adventure still exists, the language, as evidenced by the preceding mission statements of The P.I.N.E. Project and Camp Kandalore, has certainly softened. Based on a goal to "weed out" those who cannot hack it, or Lord Baden-Powell's desire to build a generation of dutiful, responsible, fit and active men useful to the aims of imperialism, it is easy to conclude that concerns for disability appear to have had no role in the overtly ableist roots of OE. Hahn in particular emphasized the importance of physical fitness as a necessary

means to toughen up unfit factory workers and city dwellers (Hattie et al., 1997). Baden-Powell and Thompson-Seton both were working towards creating a return to what was perceived as the more fit, moral and functional roots of Anglo-American civilization. A telling example of this agenda was the title of Baden-Powell's first Girl Guide handbook: *How Girls Can Help to Build Up the Empire* (Young, 2006, p. 5).

With the ableist history of OE in mind, it is important to consider that there are practical, often geographical obstacles to the full participation and integration of disabled persons in OE programs that influence the perceptions of providers and participants alike. Returning to the earlier comparison of current mission statements, it is apparent that contemporary practitioners are very much embracing the "whole child" concept and attempting to "provide not only opportunities for access, but also for activity and variability" (Kodjebacheva, 2008, p. 230). The issue goes beyond how the various organizations represent themselves. The perceived limitations of the physical spaces and the overtly physical nature of the activities that take place therein must also be taken into account.

Further, there is a strong body of work concerning accessible classrooms and playgrounds centred around the importance of providing equal opportunities for

learning and play. Kodjebacheva's (2008) investigation of boundless playgrounds reveals a host of options for providing a more inclusive environment for children with disabilities. Some of these alterations to the typical swing set, climber castle and maze combination could very well be applied to the traditional ropes course or even nature hike. Elements such as wider paths through the play area to accommodate wheel chairs or other mobility aids, and different textures of ground cover and construction materials to provide tactile feedback for children with visual impairments, could certainly be strategically used throughout the grounds of an OE facility. Applied to an OE site, it would be possible to widen trails or alter a high ropes course to include ground-based problem solving challenges. Even something as simple as providing Braille or other tactile "sign posts" on nature trails and interpretive signs for the benefit of the visually impaired would aid in improving access. With an adapted program, specially trained staff and modified activities, the King City Day Camp and Seneca Outdoor Centre, about 45 minutes north of Toronto (Seneca, 2013), is one such accessible site.

Other alternatives exist to traditional hard skill-based programs. It is all well and good to alter rock climbing with the addition of extra staff supervision or modified harnesses, but there is still the reality that some people will not be able to participate in this activity. In this instance, it is still possible to access the outdoors and learn from nature. In the case of The P.I.N.E. Project (2013) the program emphasis is primarily on nature connection through crafts, music and nature observation and awareness in local green spaces such as High Park. Due to Toronto's fairly flat topography, its accessible public spaces and the minimal physical requirements of activities such as primitive basketry and animal observation, The P.I.N.E. Project's programs appear to be accessible. However, if the physical geography of a site and the activities presented by a program prevent certain students from participating, are we as outdoor educators truly building

character and reinforcing "teamwork" and "trust" in the group, or actively singling out the student who, by no fault of his/her own, is prevented from participating?

In my own experience as an instructor, I have witnessed the reluctance of OE professionals to include youth with disabilities in their programs, primarily out of a concern for risk and liability should such youth attempt an activity in which they may suffer an injury. This concern is often extended to persons with diabetes and asthma, health conditions not usually considered disabilities that then become disabling due to the site staff's reluctance to allow participation out of concern for the person's well being. This emphasis on risk management and liability, and its limiting effect on the participation of persons with disabilities, is reinforced by the work of Burns et al. (2013). In their work, they argue that the perceptions of well meaning OE service providers often cast the disabled community in a role of needing to be cared for, looked after or treated. They go on to argue that such actions from providers serve to make a great number of persons with disabilities feel out of place in outdoor spaces (2013, p. 404). If we consider that all persons have a different set of abilities, and embrace the idea that there is in fact no "normal" state of being, it is reasonable to conclude that it is possible for anyone to pursue an "active, healthy and fit" lifestyle, in any manner that they are capable of within their lived reality. As such, the requirements for participation in any particular programme should be limited only by one's willingness to try their best, and not by the perceived geographical dangers. I am not advocating a devil-may-care attitude towards risk management; an objective assessment of the site, activity and abilities of the potential participant all need to be weighed against the potential risks of undertaking any activity.

As OE professionals, regardless of the structures within which we work, it is possible for us to alter how we approach our work with the disabled community. In some instances I have observed well

meaning instructors view their programs and activities as providing an escape from the child's disability (this reinforces the notion that the child has a disability from which to escape), as opposed to offering an opportunity to engage in healthy, fun outdoor activities, regardless of ability. This is often accompanied by what I would consider to be a sense of pity for the child. In *Last Child in The Woods*, Richard Louv (2008) argues that exposure to nature and nature-based activities help children discover themselves and build both confidence and resilience. If we can embrace this ethos, and strive to build fully inclusive, integrated outdoor programs that avoid segregation based on ability, we would have no need for pity.

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Since 2002, Cameron Baldassarra has worked as a camp counsellor, canoe tripper, outdoor educator and supply teacher in Ontario, France and Switzerland. He is currently completing his Master of Arts degree in Geography at York University.

Building Community: An Adventurous Approach
By Shawn Stetson

Student success is about much more than just good grades; it is also about developing pro-social skills. Students can better develop these skills if they are part of an effective, healthy community where there are multiple opportunities to practice them. As outdoor educators we often have the opportunity to help students build community by enabling them to connect with each other and with their natural environment. We utilize "the magic of the setting" and take advantage of working with students outside of their classroom environment. But more than simply utilizing the natural environment as a tool to facilitate community building, it is equally important to consider the *approach* used in this process.
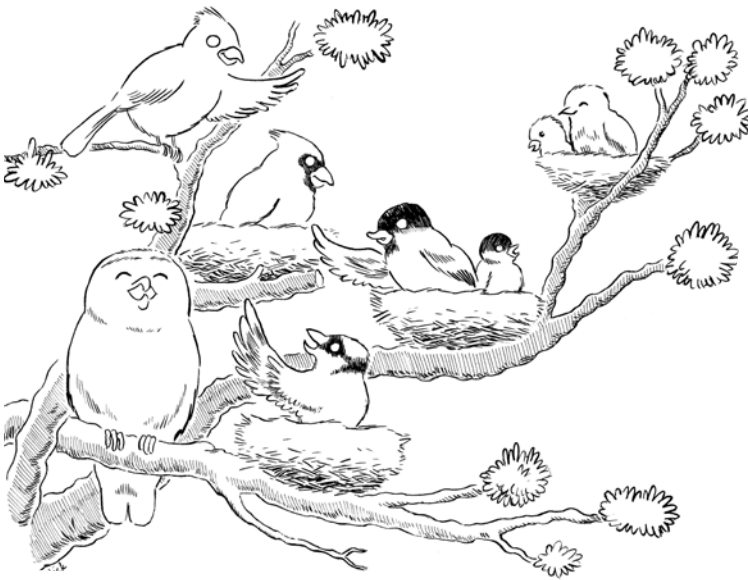
When building healthy and effective communities with students the following should be considered:

- Communities are groups first.
- Group structure and development matters, and should be understood.
- Communities have a set of basic hierarchical needs that must be met.
- Group structure and community needs should be considered simultaneously.
- Students need opportunities to practice and explore the social skills required to be in a healthy community—adventure-based activities can help achieve this.

Communities Are Groups First

We spend the majority of our lives in groups. When we are born, we receive our first membership into a group known as "family." As we progress through our lives we will become members of many other groups through schools, classrooms, teams, worship, friends, employment and volunteer services, just to name a few. A group can become a community if members reside in the same geographic area—a geographic community, and/or if group members share one or more interests—a functional community. However, a community will always be a group first. This makes knowledge of group structure and group development essential when helping groups become healthy and effective communities.

Understanding Group Structure and Group Development

The first task of a community-builder is to consider the following:

- group structure will determine how productive the group will be
- groups develop over time in various ways
- the dynamics of the group will determine its effectiveness (Johnson and Johnson, 2000).

Group structure involves the procedures and systems by which the group is able to

- communicate effectively
- develop shared values
- understand the roles of each member
- develop group behaviour and performance

Groups develop over time. One influential group development theory involves specific phases or sequential stages for groups. Bruce Tuckman's five stages focus on ways members are influenced and issues that arise during each stage. These stages are Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing and Adjourning (Johnson and Johnson, 2000).

While Tuckman's stages do provide an accessible framework for helping facilitators quickly assess what part of the group development process their group might be experiencing, Johnson and Johnson provide a more specific, seven-stage model. Johnson and Johnson's model (2000) is as follows:

1. Defining and structuring procedures
2. Conforming to procedures and getting acquainted
3. Recognizing mutuality and building trust
4. Rebelling and differentiating
5. Committing to and taking ownership of goals, procedures and other members
6. Functioning maturely and productively
7. Terminating

Johnson and Johnson's model is a great specific representation of how groups function over time. For groups to function effectively, they need to live through each stage in sequence. If a part of the sequence is missed, it is unlikely that the group will function effectively over a longer period of time. As community builders, we observe these stages on a regular basis and, when we are deliberately paying attention to each stage, we can be more effective at providing groups with what they need to be successful.

The behaviour of groups and the individuals within them is dynamic and affects group performance and productivity. If a community-builder pays attention to these behaviours they will be able to help by correcting negative behaviours and celebrating positive ones. This will help with long-term group effectiveness.

The Needs of Communities

If the goal is to build a healthy and effective community it is important to think of the community as a set of social systems or, as David Clark explains, "a human collective whose members fulfill a diversity of roles within a recognizable and sustainable whole" (Clark, 1996). This collective typically allows individuals to take on roles and strive to work together in an efficient manner. This collective will have boundaries and must be sustainable long enough for the members to recognize themselves as a collective and as diverse from non-members.

For the community to function and thrive, its needs must be met. Just like humans have basic hierarchical needs, so too do communities. These needs must be met for a community to be fully functional. Consider Figure 1, below:
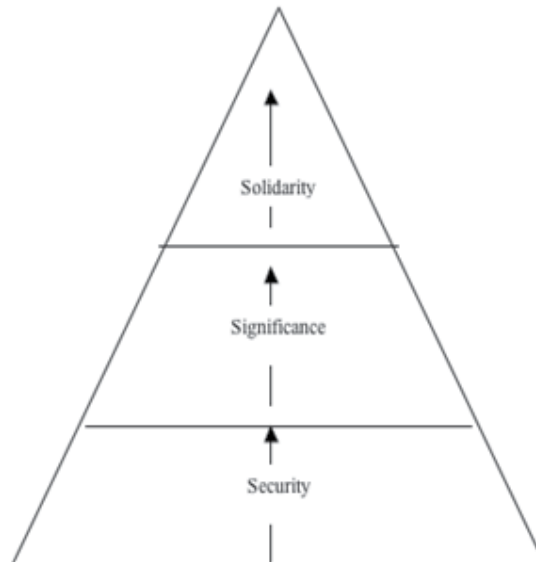

Figure 1: Hierarchy of Community Needs (Clark, 1996)

The diagram reflects David Clark's Hierarchy of Community Needs. The three "S's" as shown in the diagram are essential for a functioning community to exist.

- **Security:** The foundation of the hierarchy. All members must feel

dependent, physically and/or emotionally, on each other and the community as a whole. Community members also need to know that there is some sort of structure in place to keep them safe.

• **Significance:** The group needs to have a sense of achievement and worth. Individuals also need to feel this within their community. Once a community possesses feelings of security and significance they will likely experience feelings such as loyalty, trust and sympathy.

• **Solidarity:** Each member realizes that they have a role to play, and that together members are important to and for the community. This is often described as a bonding feeling.

Within a community development setting, significance comes before solidarity because people within a social system need to know that there is some sense of worth within the group and that the purpose is worth joining or "buying into." Only once the group members know they can depend on each other and that the community is significant will they find solidarity. When a community has achieved solidarity, it is a fully functioning, healthy community that can

set goals and achieve tasks as a collective. A community that has achieved solidarity will also hold its members accountable for their performance.

Often times educators hope, or even expect, a group of students will be a solid community that possesses security, significance and solidarity based on the amount of time they have spent together. Educators who do not make intentional efforts to help their class achieve the needs of security, significance and solidarity can be surprised when a few weeks into the school year the class is struggling with group tasks and interpersonal interactions. If a group is expected to become a healthy, functioning community, it is important that all of the group members' needs are met and in the order of the hierarchy. Similar to individuals, groups will meet their needs in one way or another. The behaviour of the community will tell you what they need. If group needs are not met in healthy and positive ways, they will likely be met in negative ways, which leads to negative group function and behaviour. If a group appears to meet one or more of its hierarchical needs through negative behaviour, the group will not be able to thrive as a healthy community. In this

STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

HIERARCHY OF COMMUNITY NEEDS

7. TERMINATION
6. FUNCTIONING MATURELY AND PRODUCTIVELY
5. COMMITTING TO AND TAKING OWNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS, PROCEDURES AND OTHER MEMBERS

SOLIDARITY

4. REBELLING AND DIFFERENTIATING
3. RECOGNIZING MUTUALITY AND BUILDING TRUST

SIGNIFICANCE

2. CONFORMING TO PROCEDURES AND GETTING ACQUAINTED
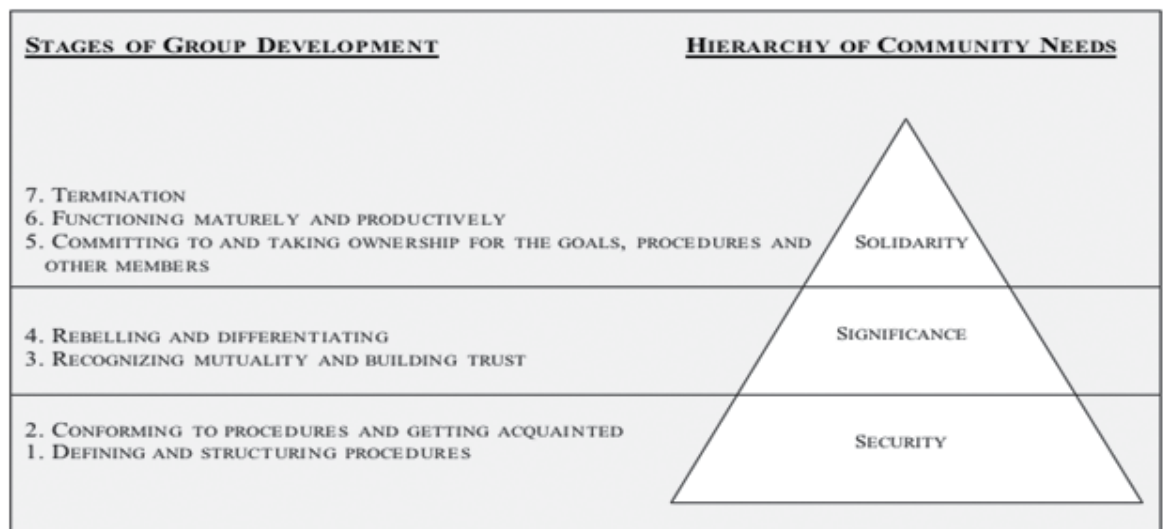1. DEFINING AND STRUCTURING PROCEDURES

SECURITY

Figure 2: Amalgamation of Stages of Group Development and Hierarchy of Community Needs

circumstance the community developer will need to help the group meet its needs in a healthy manner. Once all three pieces of this hierarchy, or pyramid, are established in a healthy manner, the community will truly start to develop and potentially thrive.

Group Structure and Community Needs

Groups and communities are dynamic in nature. To help develop a healthy community it is important to consider the community needs and the stages of group development simultaneously. Figure 2 aligns Johnson and Johnson's practical stages of group development with Clark's hierarchy of community needs.

The Role of Adventure

Students need opportunities to practice and explore the social skills required to be in a healthy community. Using adventure-based activities is an effective way to develop community; these activities purposefully expose individuals to novel and uncertain tasks with the right balance of challenge and mastery. The experience is actively engaging and often fun. The goal of adventure-based learning is to generate positive outcomes that participants can apply to their daily lives. This ability to transfer learning from one context to another depends on a program that has been intentionally designed to provide students with the right mix of content, activity and process.

Content

Adventure-based learning programs can be tailored to provide students with the information they need to improve communication, develop leadership, work effectively in groups, and increase trust (Goldenberg, Klenosky, O'Leary, & Templin, 2000). Self-efficacy (Constantine, 1993), group cohesion (Meyer, 2000), internal locus of control (Newberry & Lindsay, 2000), positive view of the future (Green, Kleiber, & Tarrant, 2000), team performance (Ibbetson & Newell, 1996) and trust (Priest, 1998) increase after groups take part in adventure programs. Since greater amounts

of material require more time to develop mastery, the most effective adventure programs engage students for 14 hours or more (Bunting & Donley, 2002).

Activity

Adventure-based learning activities highlight the roles communication, teamwork, trust, cooperation and shared leadership play in both group and individual success by providing all participants with opportunities to make a real contribution to the overall success of the group (Larson, 2000). Novel activities and a short feedback loop facilitate active participation. Positive peer interaction encourages young people to take responsibility for creating and maintaining a safe, caring and inclusive group and to make a positive impact in their classrooms, schools and wider community.

Process

The third feature of an effective adventure-based learning program is structured reflection following the activity. This process ensures that key ideas are highlighted, content is organized into a principle-based framework so the relevance of the topic to students' everyday lives is clear, and students are aware of themselves as learners (National Research Council, 2000). As students engage in various activities, they learn to actively monitor their strategies, consider their resources, assess their own readiness, and give and receive feedback.

When using adventure-based activities to help build community with groups it is important to be intentional about choosing activities that align with the desired group development and community needs outcomes. An effective way to achieve alignment is to identify the achieved group development stage, community needs to be addressed, and associated behaviours required before choosing the activities.

After the content is identified, the right activities can be chosen along with the method of processing.

Communities Now for Future Success

Building community is a process that takes time and intentionality. It does not happen by chance, or without applying knowledge. If, as educators, we are committed to the long-term process of building and sustaining healthy and effective communities with students, then we are creating opportunities for them to realize success in a social environment. If students can be successful in one community of peers, it is likely they will be able to find success in other, future communities.
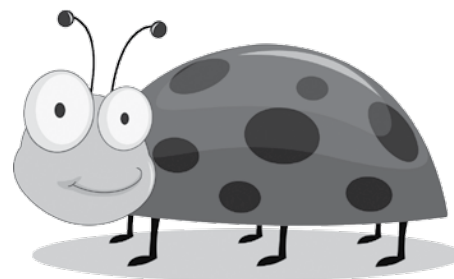
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Building Our Bronte Creek Project Community[1]

By Doug Jacques

The Bronte Creek Project[2] is an integrated, four-credit, outdoor/environmental program for students in grades 11 and 12 in the Halton District School Board. Although the Bronte Creek Project (BCP) community has been both long-lasting (more than 30 years) and expansive (over 1,000 students), as each new semester starts I am reminded that our community begins with the personal journey of every new student who chooses to be part of our learning community. Aspiring to be more than a hierarchy of teaching and procedures, each moment at BCP is an opportunity to rekindle imagination and compassion, pursue wisdom and intention, be brave and accept challenges, and build honest, respectful relationships. When we are successful, our students learn with a balance of body, mind and emotion. The impact of heart-to-head learning helps learners connect strongly to our main purposes of developing a strong connection to the Earth, developing personal attributes of a good community member, and developing an emerging understanding of one's purpose or gift in life.

The initial phase of the program is designed to rekindle or light the fires of students' imagination and compassion. A number of group building activities, coupled with immersion in the natural world, work in circles, and establishing a community contract that values equality, equity and inclusiveness, serves to break down barriers often present in institutions. This initial phase is a process of rediscovery of one's childhood connection to the natural world and an inherent sense of wonder and kindness. Eyes become brighter, laughter permeates the activities, and participants, including teaching staff, eagerly anticipate the arrival of each day.

The majority of the project is spent in the pursuit of knowledge, critical thinking skills and emerging wisdom. The key that unlocks these abilities is bringing intention to tasks both big and small. Participants grasp the need to be well prepared for the visiting grade 5 students they teach about the Earth and about becoming Earthkeepers™.[3] Participants also move towards being supportive in all outdoor activities that require collaboration with their peers, whom they now consider friends. For most there is a transfer of these skills and attitudes to personal projects, academic work, essays and work habits. The transfer is facilitated by the design of integrated learning, meaningful experiences and staff with extensive experience that is shared in an open and supportive manner. Although achievement, metacognition and intention are often categorized as skills developed in the mind, within the BCP they tend to emerge more through developing meaningful relationships and taking on both personal and actual risks in a controlled and supportive setting.

Almost half of every day is spent outside, playing games and sports, and developing outdoor skills and natural interpretation, as well as preparing for larger wilderness adventures including winter camping and canoe trips. There is a personal element of challenge and a series of small risks that

promote both bravery and accomplishment. The understanding of risk management and safety empower people to be involved in activities at a more profound level, and to apply the powers of intention, judgment and conscientiousness. Risk is present in all aspects of life, and the daily rhythm of a camp setting, combined with a new diverse peer group that offers support and acceptance, create an ideal setting to both explore and meet personal challenges.

The culminating phase of the program is a series of leadership challenges including leading and presenting during Earthkeepers™, and planning and leading a wilderness trip. The transition from learner to teacher is a very powerful experience, and one that facilitates the development of confidence, maturity, optimism and a sense of well-being. These experiences help learners in their transition to the adult world of work and mature interpersonal relationships.

The driving force of integrated credits is the emphasis on honest, respectful and authentic relationships. The daily work with peers, groups, staff, visitors and visiting elementary students requires a high level of cooperation. The early emphasis on imagination and compassion bring enthusiasm. The pursuit of knowledge and accomplishment of tasks and assignments brings both intention and wisdom. Challenge presents risk, opportunity and development opportunities for emerging leadership. A planned and purposeful dialogue between all participants and leaders enables students to develop authentic relationship with peers, the community and the extended outdoor environment community. The end of a productive semester is characterized by vitality, a sense of curiosity and a broad spectrum of positive emotions.

A journey of learning that moves a learner through a continuum of reawakening the imagination, developing purpose and intention, rising to personal challenges, and developing deep meaningful relationships often culminates in a sense of well-being.

Aanishinaabek elders[4] we work with refer to this as discovering one's gift. The gift is finding one's sense of self and place in the community, and developing a growing awareness of how to combine these qualities with the skills and ability one possesses to belong in a meaningful way to both the world of people and the natural world.

Notes

[1] A longer narrative of the Bronte Creek Project story is available on the COEO website.

[2] For more information on the Bronte Creek Project, visit www.brontecreekproject.org

[3] EarthKeepers™ is a program designed by The Institute for Earth Education.

[4] The Aanishinaabek team of elders and helpers includes Larry Mcleod (NimKewNinii) Peter Schuler (OzhibiigeNini), Nancy Rowe, (GiidaaKunadaad) and, when north, Rob (Firekeeper) and Melinda (Crafts).

Doug Jacques has spent more than 25 years designing and teaching integrated credits and 50 years wilderness canoe tripping. His learning and teaching goals include improving connections to the Earth and all living things, and pursuing wisdom through humility.

Guiding Transitions: Community Development within the Brock BaseCamp OOP Model

By Ryan Howard, Tim O'Connell and Anna Lathrop

BaseCamp is an outdoor orientation program (OOP) open to all incoming first-year, transfer and international Brock University students regardless of their program of study. BaseCamp, which started in 2010, provides students with a fun way to meet new people, the chance to learn about what it takes to be successful in university, and the opportunity to talk about student life issues such as drug and alcohol use, making healthy choices and living away from home. BaseCamp also offers students challenges to increase their self-confidence, and helps to foster an appreciation for outdoor recreation and the natural environment. Within the program participants can choose from a wide range of activities including rock climbing, backpacking and canoeing.

Sense of Community

One of the primary goals of BaseCamp is to create a positive sense of community. This has been found to ease students' transition from home to campus, and serve as a foundation for building social capital at university once the semester starts (Bell & Williams, 2006; Palmer, O'Kane, & Owens, 2009). Halamova (2001, p. 137) defines sense of community as "the feeling an individual has about belonging to a group and involves the strength of the attachment people feel for their communities or group." The BaseCamp program is intentionally designed to include the four components of community suggested by McMillan and Chavis (1986): membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection.

The first component—*membership*—is the notion that one makes an investment in the group and therefore is part of that collective of people. Membership is characterized by boundaries (an individual is in the group or not) and provides emotional safety and a sense of belonging. This often results in the development of a common symbol system (e.g., inside jokes, behaviours and so on) that ultimately serves to reinforce feelings of community.

The second component of community is *influence*, which is a "two-way street" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Individual group members must feel they have some impact on the group while at the same time being affected by group cohesion and the expectation to conform to established norms.

The third component of sense of community is *integration and fulfillment of needs*, or more simply, reinforcement of acceptable behaviours through rewards. This is accomplished through the status of having membership in the group, sharing similar values, and being with others who provide benefits such as emotional support, friendship and help with physical tasks.

The final element of community is a *shared emotional connection*. This is developed through sharing a common history or experiences; is influenced by interacting with others on a regular basis (which an outdoor adventure context provides), ensuring important events are highlighted and debriefed; and is evident through the intangible characteristic of "esprit de corp."

BaseCamp Program Model

The BaseCamp program model was developed in consideration of many of the outstanding OOPs occurring at universities and colleges around the United States. BaseCamp incorporates many elements of these successful programs and has further developed unique program attributes to fit the needs of the Brock University community. The following section discusses the BaseCamp program model as it relates to the development/maintenance of sense of community for BaseCamp participants/

alumni. Membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection are used to describe the community elements of the BaseCamp model.

In line with other OOP models, BaseCamp delivers multiday peer-facilitated outdoor recreation trips for incoming Brock University students. Trips occur in August prior to the beginning of their first semester. Currently, BaseCamp offers three trip styles: five-day canoeing or backpacking, three-day rock climbing, or seven-day canoeing with a residence transition and early move-in addition. Canoeing and backpacking trips currently travel to Algonquin Provincial Park for wilderness travel and camping. Rock climbing trips climb and camp at Rattlesnake Point Conservation area in Milton, Ontario. Upper-year students who have strong outdoor leadership skills facilitate all BaseCamp trips. In addition to guiding the trips, these upper-year students are responsible for delivering the BaseCamp curriculum and to be active peer mentors with the participants.

Participating in the BaseCamp program offers a unique opportunity to become a member of the Brock University community before the fall semester begins. Membership to the trip group, BaseCamp alumni, and

Brock University community is achieved through the defined boundaries of the BaseCamp shared experience (i.e., the experience of the trip). Through this shared experience, participants are quickly mentored in becoming an efficient and effective group as they accomplish their daily tasks of outdoor travel/activity and camping. Each trip group develops its own unique and defining system of symbols, phrases and behaviours as a result of the shared experience and the emotionally safe space that trip leaders model and guide the group towards. Membership in the BaseCamp group is solidified through a crowning and symbolic challenge. For canoe trips, groups are presented with a long (approximately 2.2 kilometre) portage on the last full day of their trip. Over the course of the trip, leaders build the students' knowledge and skill of wilderness travel, while at the same time encouraging the group to be supportive and to personally invest in the outcomes of the group experience.

An open, safe and approachable community atmosphere guides BaseCamp experiences. Students are encouraged to both influence the group with their own knowledge and to allow the shared group experience to influence their ways of knowing and their dispositions. Trip leaders bring with them a

curriculum to answer questions incoming students may have about their transition to university. This curriculum is redeveloped each year by the trip leaders to be responsive to the changing culture of the university and society, and to be influenced by the strengths each leader has. In addition, leaders allow students to bring forward areas of concern or questions about what it means to be a member of the Brock University community, and how to be successful in the transition to university. Students are encouraged to guide these discussions and to offer insights to help develop the collective learning of the group. Trip members are encouraged to take on the tasks of group leadership and facilitation whenever they feel comfortable. This often includes being the leader of the day, and being responsible for navigation, cooking or other activity-based tasks.

BaseCamp students participate in the program to fulfill three main needs; firstly, to develop friendships and relationships that will transfer into their time as a member of the Brock University community; secondly, to learn and discuss the tools, techniques and tips important to being successful while at university; and thirdly, to gain leadership and outdoor activity experience. Participants within this program feel rewarded in these ways for their participation.

By utilizing a planned and mentored outdoor recreation experience, students are presented with physical, mental and emotional challenges and mentored towards success in each of these areas. Trip leaders are challenged to mentor students towards developing a community that embodies a shared emotional connection. Students have shared participation in the BaseCamp experience, and the challenges and celebrated successes of the program model are intended to define and guide their transition from high school to becoming active and successful members of the Brock University community. At the end of their BaseCamp experience, students are challenged to be mentors within their first year cohort. They are encouraged to take the

community they have developed through BaseCamp into their social groups, dorms and other learning and living environments as a model for future success.

Program Outcomes

From the outset of the BaseCamp program, research has helped guide the delivery and evaluation of the program model. We are fortunate to have both quantitative and qualitative tools to look at our BaseCamp alumni pre-trip, post-trip and longitudinally throughout their university tenure. Currently, we empirically explore sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), sense of place (Williams & Vaske, 2003), life effectiveness (Neill, 2008), leadership style and social support (Bell, 2006). In addition, we organize focus groups biannually to bring together the BaseCamp alumni to reflect on ways their BaseCamp experiences influenced their current university experience.

In general, findings have shown that the four dimensions of sense of community (membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connections) increase from pre-trip to post-trip across all trip types. Furthermore, community is maintained amongst trip groups throughout the students' tenure at the university. Results from our focus groups indicate that students believed that *community development, transitional value,* and *commitment* to Brock where the most significant products of their BaseCamp experience. In addition, the crowning and symbolic final challenge (i.e., the big portage) is often the most significant moment of their trip. Students use these experiences symbolically to speak to what the transition to university was like and how it can be overcome with a strong community of support working towards a similar goal (in the same way they were successful as a group to accomplish their portage).

With the program now moving into its fifth year, we have accumulated a significant amount of anecdotal evidence

and experience watching our BaseCamp students move through their university experience. In general, BaseCamp students are motivated to take part in promoting a healthy social culture at Brock University, while also being invested in their academic goals. BaseCamp students regularly volunteer to take part in promotional engagements where they can share their experience. In addition, many BaseCamp students actively re-engage with the BaseCamp program to become trip leaders in their upper years, creating a unique tradition at the university.

As the BaseCamp program develops we are continually pushing the model and our students in new directions to further the transitional value of our OOP. This year, 2014, was the first year we offered a learning community with students from this past summer's trips. The learning community meets monthly to practice the core routines of the BaseCamp model. Through this learning community, students are engaged to reinforce their community bonds, further their outdoor skills, and develop academically. This upcoming year, BaseCamp is developing a living and learning community to push the OOP model even further and embed it deeper within the culture of Brock University. At the foundation of the BaseCamp program design, delivery and evaluation is the intentional use of the principles of sense of community, and we've been more than pleased with the success of this practice.

For more information on the Brock BaseCamp program model, visit our website: www.brocku.ca/basecamp or contact Ryan Howard or Tim O'Connell at basecamp@brocku.ca

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Both Ryan Howard and Tim O'Connell work within the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at Brock University. Ryan is a doctoral candidate and sessional instructor. Tim is a professor and the Department Chair. Anna Lathrop is the Vice Provost of Teaching and Learning at Brock University. Together they have developed and implemented the Brock BaseCamp program, carrying it into its fifth year and advancing the OOP model with pertinent research and best practices. Currently, the BaseCamp team seeks to spread and support the OOP model amongst other Canadian colleges and universities.

'Golden' Lessons from Frozen Lakes: Course Principles to Enhance Community-building

By Vicky Paraschak, Phil Robson, Brianna Balzer, Danielle Carter, Patrick Freeman, Adam Mailloux, Milan McNamee and Sabrina Slama

"Community" has been a central focus of the University of Windsor's Outdoor Recreation (ODR) course principles for many years. It builds on the concept that trusting in ourselves and in others is central to operating as a community. This concept will be illustrated in the following stories of our different experiences, structured around the eight course principles.

Community: "We operate as a community, trusting ourselves and each other"

As the course professor, I had to draw on trust and community last year, when we held our nine-day out-trip at the end of April. One week before leaving we discovered we could not follow our intended route because the lakes were still frozen. Heading out, all we could definitely schedule was arrival at the campground on Day 1, and return to Windsor on Day 9. We would have to fill in the details of the trip as our possibilities unfolded. I was able to draw on the trusting relationships I'd built up with outfitters, park staff and bus lines to help us make changes where possible. Additionally, the strength of the ODR community made this an amazing trip.
— *Vicky*

Preparation: "Always prepare"

It is easy to imagine students' potential concerns at this wide-open schedule, but the trust we had built during the preparation meetings gave us the foundation needed to head confidently into this experience together.

Specifically, we ensured that everyone had adequate equipment and training. This guaranteed we could head into any conditions or circumstances knowing that each participant was fully prepared for their role on the trip. This preparation enabled us to meet the challenge of this day-to-day camping adventure successfully.
— *Phil*

Pacing: "Go at the pace of consciousness of creation" (Grandfather)

Before going on the trip last year, my life had always been very fast-paced. During the trip, I realized how much I missed on a daily basis. For example, on my four-hour solo, I had nothing to do but enjoy that moment in time. I was able to sit and listen to the birds chirping and the waves hitting the rocks; I was slowing down to the pace of creation. When I practiced pacing, I was more aware of who and what was surrounding me. Because of this consciousness, I was able to build closer relationships with my fellow campers and leaders.
— *Brianna*

Experience: "I am still learning"

When I took this course, I was a first-time camper and felt like I had no experience to offer. However, I quickly learned that every person that steps into this course has experience in something; it just might not be camping. The leaders teach that each person's experience is valuable, that no one needs to be an expert, and that we can all learn from each other, thus giving value to each individual. Last year, when we were not following our planned schedule and needed to quickly organize a number of activities, each leader was able to build off of each other's experience to create valuable training experiences for our students.
— *Sabrina*

**Interconnection: "Treat yourself, others and the environment with dignity"**

The course's "no-trace camping" philosophy helps students respectfully interact with

and appreciate their environment. This respectful interaction has helped me to connect with and wonder at how large the world is around me. Also, students and leaders leave all technology behind, helping everyone to step away from the selfish, "look-at-me" attitude of social media, and to begin to really see and appreciate the others they are with in that moment.
— *Danielle*

dealing with issues as they arise, rather than powering through as we often do in our daily routines. During our planning meetings, we provide an environment of encouragement and acceptance, allowing people to shed the masks they wear (e.g., goofball, dumb jock and so on) and show their true selves.
— *Patrick*
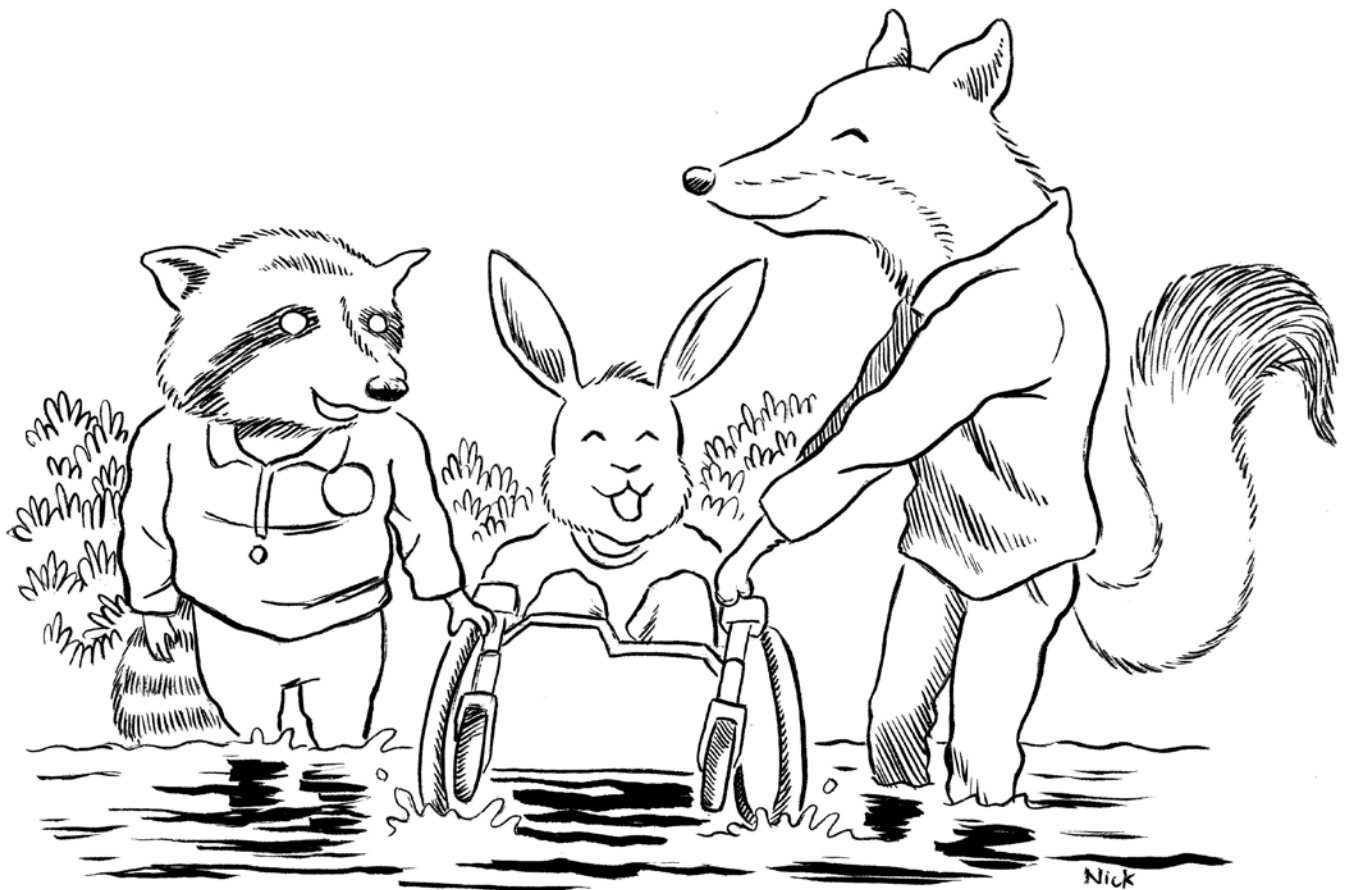
Healthiness: "The snow goose need not bathe to make itself white. Neither need you do anything but be yourself." (Tao-Tse)

While a late-winter canoe trip can be a long and physically demanding experience, ODR aims to return its participants emotionally, spiritually and physically healthier than before. We teach students to take the time to listen to their bodies, and encourage

Creativity: "Creative expression is a gift we give ourselves and others"

We enjoy seeing individuals come forward to create something magical to share with others. Whether it be something written, crafted, or performance-based, it is always accepted with smiles, laughter, tears, applause or inspiring thoughts. This comforting form of acceptance and genuine caring helps individuals to express

themselves in a way they may normally not have the courage to. I discovered a musical talent in university, but kept it to myself for fear of performing in front of others and then being judged as a result of sharing. Because I felt comfort and acceptance within the experience, ODR was my stepping stone to sharing this musical gift with others. Taking that first step of sharing your creativity with others changes you, helps you to focus on the things you love, and allows you to realize that your talents and gifts are as much for others as they are for yourself.
— *Adam*

Perspective: "See days as silver or gold, not good or bad— go with the weather whatever it is"

As a leader, it is very important to model a positive perspective while on trip, and we teach our campers to refer to all things as either "silver" or "gold" (or, in the best of circumstances, "platinum!"). Our last morning of the trip began as silver; not only were we leaving a place we loved, but we also had to part ways with our new families and return to reality. On top of this, after everyone had gotten into their canoes, Mother Nature decided to downpour on us. And yet, everyone began to laugh hysterically! Despite the downpour, we took our time making it across the lake. Due to the positive perspective we had practiced together throughout the trip, what was silver turned to gold.
— *Milana*

Vicky Paraschak is a professor in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Windsor who has been privileged to teach the outdoor recreation course since 1985. She continues to experience the joys of community-building with her students and the wonderful volunteer leaders with whom she co-teaches the course each year.

Phil Robson is a leader with ODR and a teacher with Maranatha Christian Academy in Windsor where he has started The Eremos Project, a program that combines canoe tripping with a

high school credit in environmental science.

Brianna Balzer is a kinesiology student at the University of Windsor and a first-time leader with ODR.

Danielle Carter is a graduate of the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Windsor. She has continued to practice in her field as a kinesiologist at a local physiotherapy clinic. Danielle continues to volunteer with the ODR course because she believes in the course values and the outcomes students achieve as a result of them.

Patrick Freeman has been leading the ODR course for a number of years, and each year he finds great joy in learning from the students on the trip.

Adam Mailloux is an occasional teacher with the Greater Essex County District School Board and has been a leader for the ODR course since 2005. He has found his passion working in the area of special education and enjoys the opportunity to share the gift of music with his students.

Milana Mcnamee hails from Perth, Ontario, and has been a leader with ODR for three years. She is currently a Master of Human Kinetics candidate at the University of Windsor.

Sabrina Slama loves seeing the creativity in others flourish as societal norms are stripped away. She believes it is great to see the growth in others as well as yourself.

Reflections on Rebuilding: Lessons from a Fractured Community

By Erin Nicolardi

I'd never considered that a student would ever opt to drop-out of the program. It hadn't occurred to me that an interpersonal issue between students could become too complex to be remedied in our program model. With such an open, honest, constructive atmosphere, I assumed that, with a few focused talks and larger community meetings, we could make the space workable for everyone. However, a week before our Algonquin trip in early October, we were down one student. It happened almost overnight, and

the circumstances surrounding the loss (personal space and safety, whispers of bullying, and so on) were such that we couldn't speak openly about it with our students. This left me feeling powerless and incompetent. What hadn't we done? Were we too harsh in some situations? Not serious enough about others? Either way, there was no going back. We were heading into Algonquin for five days with a group that had just been fractured.

The trip took on a more serious focus than simply bonding as a group and honing our canoe skills. In an effort to "capitalize" on the loss of a student as a lesson, a focus, my co-teacher, Darryl, and I spent more time than usual emphasizing communication, teamwork and conflict resolution. We read quotations about community-building while we

sat around the campfire. We gave students quiet time to reflect on the struggles and successes of the day. While many students seemed uneasy about the loss, others were obviously relieved that a burden had been lifted from their lives. Given that we couldn't speak to the issue specifically, it was difficult to emphasize the magnitude of the loss and how we would move forward from it.

Over the course of the five-month term, the group reformed and became a working team. There were stronger and weaker contributors, but, over time, everyone found a space that they were comfortable in. As teachers, we moved on with keener eyes and quicker responses to issues as they arose. We gave more personal feedback. We validated awesome behaviour more publically. We addressed issues immediately and, when necessary, privately. We used what was eventually dubbed "Friendly Feedback," a space where students gave each other suggestions on ways to become better community members (a student's own idea to include in our weekly community meetings). We mixed up the groups. We gave ample opportunities for students to meet and connect with their peers. We connected back to the Community Contract often and made sure that the students knew we were bound by the same ideals. We were not only giving feedback, but receiving it, too.

As a new term starts, Darryl and I are again watchful of the developing interpersonal dynamics. We're more explicitly encouraging people to give one another their time and their patience. We're clarifying what will and will not work in our community when it comes to inclusion and leadership. We're having specific, focused conversations sooner than we were. We're not so much addressing issues differently as we are expediently.

Based on my experiences, I would pass along to other facilitators and educators the following advice:
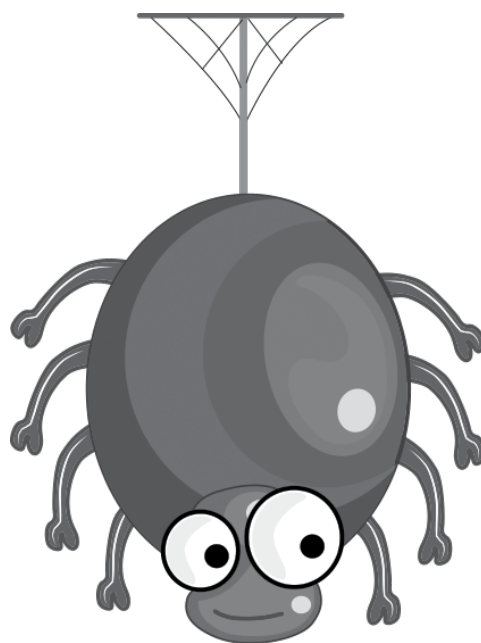
- When something negative occurs (e.g., an inappropriate remark, an intentional exclusion, and so on) talk privately and constructively to each student involved. This is especially helpful when a new group is forming. It gives you a chance to show the student that your goal is not to make him/her look bad in front of his/her peers, and you may also learn something about the student (past history of being bullied, fears and anxieties that keep them from participating) that will help you make him/her feel equally supported.

- Use routines like weekly meetings and validations (e.g., students and facilitators validating one another for positive actions, words and so on) to keep students searching for goodness in others and sharing their observations publically.

- Be consistent with your expectations (e.g., when someone is speaking, all others are listening). Bending on a simple rule like this can have noticeable and cumulative effects on the strength of the community.

- Encourage students to take themselves less seriously, to "be geeks." Make it explicit that students with all sorts of interests and talents are welcome.

- Make the effort to share the positives. Darryl and I were recently reminded of how seemingly small actions and words can have a monumental impact on a student's wellbeing. If you see improvement, especially in a student who has been struggling, let him/her know.

"The process of really being with other people in a safe, supportive situation can actually change who we think we are…. And as we grow closer to the essence of who we are, we tend to take more responsibility for our neighbors and our planet."
—Bill Kauth

With each day of each semester, Darryl and I are working to genuinely co-create a space where all students feel safe and supported. Really, it's integral that we do it right, because figuring out who you are and developing a deep sense of care for other people and the Earth are two of the pillars of the program. It's not unlike tending a garden: If we can facilitate the optimal growing conditions, it is hoped the season will be a success.

During her participation in the Queen's University's Outdoor and Experiential Education Bachelor of Education program in 2012, Erin Nicolardi was inspired by the Trailhead Program/Bronte Creek Project. (Trailhead is a semester-long, community and environmental leadership program for grade ten students in the Halton public and Catholic school boards.) Erin has worked with Trailhead for the past two years, but is excited to be relocating to Whitehorse, YT in August to pursue education and adventure. She can be reached at e.nicolardi@gmail.com.

Home Amongst the Maple Trees

By Chris Walker

Australian and Canadian outdoor education (OE) communities harbour some of the most diverse and driven educators in the field. In Australia, outdoor educators spend much of their time connecting students with sections of the Great Dividing Range, paddling the mighty Murray River and exploring sandy coastal environments. Within these places, Aussie "outsiders" gather and play in muddy rivers and dammed lakes.

For those unfamiliar with Australia, the smell of eucalyptus leaves creates a unique connection with the Bush. And, while I do miss the sight of kangaroos hopping by my tent after I've been woken up by kookaburras having a morning laugh, it's morning paddles on the foggy, calm lakes of Ontario that have me by the heart. This article will explore the types of communities that exist in both Australian and Canadian OE contexts.

Bendigo: The Outdoor and Environmental Education Community

I'm sure many would agree that the passionate community of outdoor educators around the world helps motivate the development of OE programs worldwide. Take the community of outdoor educators in Bendigo, Victoria, for example. It's made up of students, lecturers, teachers and freelancers, all somehow connected with the La Trobe University's outdoor and environmental education (OEE) courses. There are even past students from the courses who continue to live in Bendigo because of the close-knit vibe of the community.

Here the OEE community is easily identifiable: those walking around barefoot, looking at orchards in the bush or excitedly talking about Eastern Rosellas *(Platycercus eximius)* or Crimson Rosellas *(Platycercus elegans)*. You could also find them hanging around the Ironbark Centre (the OEE building) in clusters talking about the

weekend trip. It's not surprising to find them in town, looking at Op-shops for goodies, sipping on tea at Old Green Bean or bouldering on the buildings around town.

As the due date for "Nature Diaries" comes closer, the OEE'ers will flock to the library with field guides in an effort to illustrate the two hours they've spent in their "sit spots." The surrounding students will, reluctantly, have their ears entertained with birdcalls, and the books, smells and conversations create a sense of the bush amongst the books. If an outdoor ed'er isn't out developing his or her relationship with nature, good chance you can find him or her grunting, on the bouldering wall or in "The Patch," picking veggies from the community garden.

Communities like Bendigo allow outdoor educators to develop their own passion for and connection to the outdoors.

Australian Alps: Connecting to Historic Communities

Hiking through the Snowgums *(Eucalyptus pauciflora)* on a foggy morning in the alpine regions has helped travellers develop an embedded understanding of how past Bushmen lived in the hills. Throughout the Australian Alps there are huts that Bushmen would have lived in during the time that cattle could graze in the region. Modern hikers now use these huts as a place to tell old stories of the land and, when necessary, as emergency shelters. These huts help to form a true connection to Australian OE by providing a tangible link to the human history of the Bushmen.

Then there's the famous poem, "The Man from Snowy River," by A.B. "Banjo" Paterson that tells a story of the roughness of the land and about the settlement communities that existed there. The story is set in the foothills of the Australian Alps, near Mount Kosciuszko and the Snowy

River. It tells that, "the Bushmen love hard riding where the wild horses are." The story goes on to say that, "all the tried and noted riders from the stations near and far, had mustered at the homestead overnight." Eventually all the riders take off into the Snowy Mountains to retrieve "the colt from old Regret" that had taken off to be with the "wild horses."

The story of "The Man from Snowy River" is taught to children at a young age. Along with the huts, this story allows youth to grow up with an understanding of the historic relationship that Bushmen had, and continue to have, with the land. Although the story is fictional, it still sets the tone for how young Australians connect to the land and the identifiable features of rural communities.

Climbing: Connecting to Places

Mount Arapiles, Victoria, is home to some of the most famous and diverse climbing in Australia. Arapiles, also referred to as Araps, has over 2,000 climbing routes ranging from Grade 1 to 32 (5.0–5.14a) that are all within walking distance of each other.

The quartzite is as "solid as a rock" and the campgrounds are filled with international climbers, students and guides. While I spent time there as a student and a guide I met other members of this transient community, and the stories were endless. From the sponsored climber, to the father teaching his kids, to the school group making lasting childhood memories in the Gums, each story represented the diversity of the community found there. However, one communal aspect remained: Everyone had come to that place for a reason, and the community had formed because of this. In some ways it was just like the beach on Canoe Lake, Algonquin Park, with a variety of canoe trippers itching to get on the water. It's the same passion that draws people to these places and forms communities around them.

Birding and Boating: Group Identifiers Create Community

I'm a self-confessed bird-nerd, and I'm especially in favour of eagles. But what does this have to do with OE in Canada and Australia? As an outdoor educator, in Australia it's common to see Wedge-tailed Eagles *(Aquila audax)*, gliding unstably, looking for their next meal. While leading a group, there was a particular moment when a "Wedgie" appeared directly above our heads. The binoculars came out, the group got excited and we had a glorious view of this bird. As the group stood in awe and bliss, the Wedgie facts followed, and the moment became entrenched in our communal memory. No matter the country, it's moments like this that can create an instant sense of community and bonding.

Sea kayaking around the Whitsundays Islands provided ample opportunities to see White-bellied Sea Eagles *(Haliaeetus leucogaster)* and Ospreys *(Pandion haliaetus)*. They would often glide seamlessly while looking for a catch, and then land perfectly
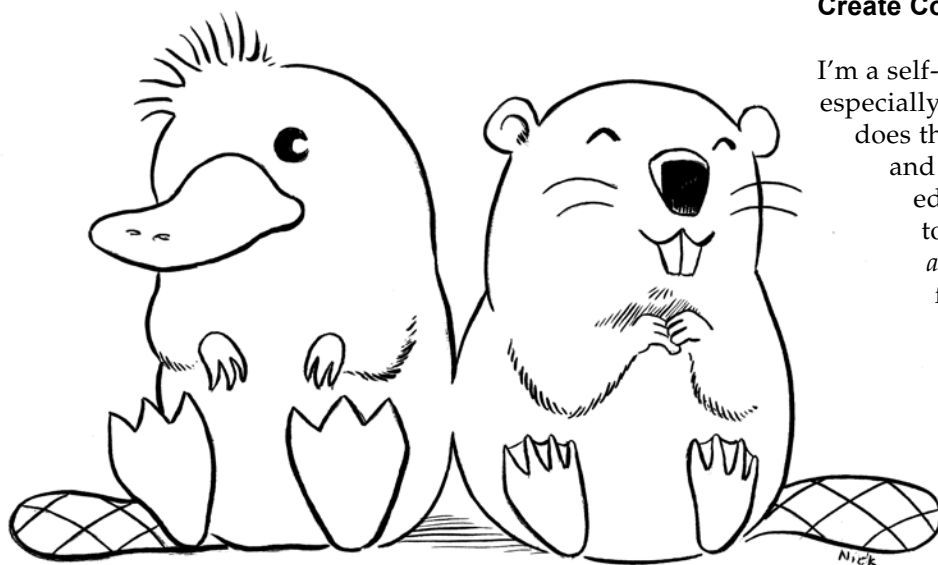
on a tree. On this occasion, the binoculars came out again, knowledge was shared and the game of "Bird Bingo" continued. Bird Bingo was designed as an educational tool, yet it helped to form a sense of our group identity. It became a part of our daily interactions, created shared excitement, and gave us a common identifier that continues to connect us to this day.

In the Canadian context, my most prized memories in Algonquin Park are of similar moments with groups. While having lunch over a fire or paddling through Burnt Island Lake, Bald Eagles *(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)* would soar over our heads and the same excitement would follow. As the groups returned to the site, the chatter amongst the students began. I heard our group talking excitedly about the bird sighting, and, again, this moment became the common identifier for our group.

Reflecting on Community in Outdoor Education in Australia and Canada

Based on my experiences, the elements that create such a passionately driven OE community are identical in each of these two Commonwealth countries. Both countries experience the extremes of the four seasons, and yet outdoor educators continue to take students into the outdoors. These educators continue to share their knowledge of places using stories of the past and experiences in the present to develop relationships between youth and the natural world.

After spending time in Canada, I believe there is a very strong, positive relationship between these countries and the OE industry. From the true Outback and the Snowy Mountains of Australia to the foggy lakes and calm waters of Algonquin Park in Canada, these countries both boast breathtaking environments our students are fortunate to experience and we are fortunate to work in.

Chris Walker participated as an exchange student at Brock University and his degree in outdoor education is from La Trobe University. He worked for Camp Chief Hector (Alberta) last summer, and he currently works for ALIVE Outdoors and Outward Bound. Chris invites Pathways readers to contact him to share stories or find out information about unique places to visit in Australia. He can be reached at christopher.walker90@gmail.com
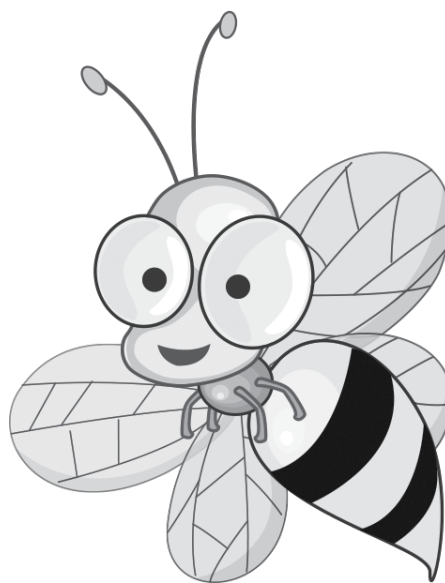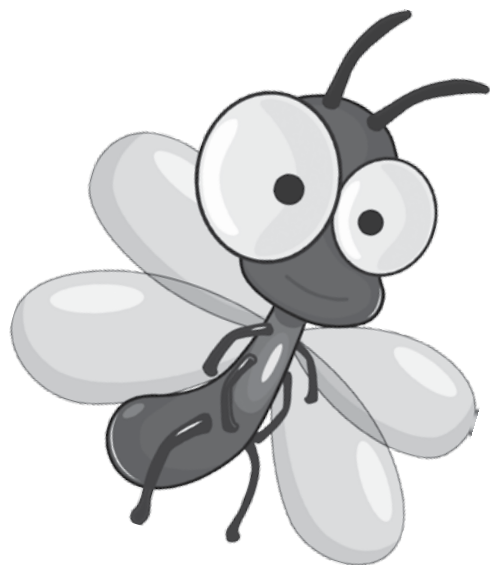
Engaging Students With/in Place through Community Mapping

By Susan Jagger

Community mapping brings together local people as they celebrate local geography, ecosystems, and stories of place through created representations of their communities (Lydon, 2003; Perkins, 2007). Mapmaking itself is a way of making sense of the world and of our place within it, and community mapping can help us to come to know our local environments. The process of mapmaking is key in community mapping; indeed, much of the value in community mapping is not so much in the product but rather in the collaborative sharing and discovering of place that leads to the map's creation (Parker, 2006). I wondered about the pedagogical possibilities for community mapping in the K–12 curriculum and began a study that examined how participation in such a project could influence grade four students' environmental knowledge, attitudes and actions (see Jagger, 2009 and Jagger, 2014 for a discussion of the research).

I worked collaboratively with Ms C.[1], a grade four teacher, to plan and teach a three-month long, cross-curricular community mapping project of Sandy Beach Provincial Park. We focused on four themes in our project: local history, natural history, First Nations history, and personal connections to the park. Our mapwork drew from multiple field trips to the park, a visit to the local cemetery, and class visits from the museum manager and school First Nations liaison person. The following is an overview of some of our project's mapping activities.

Introducing Mapmaking and Sandy Beach

We began our project with a small group brainstorming web of the question, "What can maps tell us?" To extend thinking, we shared a range of maps—from traditional topographic maps to handmade written and photographic representations of

place—and asked students to then revisit their webs to make additions. The students were drawn to familiar political and road maps; some students did not identify the alternative maps as maps at all. One student, Charles, confided in me that maps were not made by people and that "you can't make maps."

Following this initial look at maps, we had our first visit to Sandy Beach. This visit was intended as an opportunity for students to familiarize themselves with the park and, given that it was the beginning of September, a chance for the class to build a sense of community. Students used digital cameras to take photographs and several parent volunteers accompanied us, allowing for small group, free-choice park explorations.

Back at school, students made their first maps of places very familiar to them—their bedrooms and the school playground. Bedroom maps were done by students at home and in a form of their choice. Most students created bird's eye view maps of their rooms; some made their drawings to scale and in perspective. In small groups, students created a section map of the school playground (the playground was divided into nine sections to be mapped in a three-by-three grid; when completed the maps were put together to create a complete playground map). To guide their mapwork, students were asked to explore the sounds, textures, colours, shapes and sizes in the playground, and they spent time outside listening, touching and seeing the complexity of the playground space. The completed maps took on a variety of forms (e.g., side view, bird's eye view) and included a range of techniques (e.g., grass pieces glued onto map, crayon rubbings to show texture).

Connecting with Local and First Nations Histories

Ms C. and I wanted to actively bring the community—its people and places— into our mapping project. To do this, we complemented our experiences at Sandy Beach with visits from both the local museum manager (Mr. B.) and the school district First Nations liaison person (Ms E.), and with a class field trip to the local cemetery.

Mr. B. arrived from the museum with (quite literally) a treasure chest full of artefacts from Sandy Beach to share with the students. Some pieces were the very tools used by the Barry family—the family who used to live and farm on the land that would become the park. The students quickly made connections between what they discovered at the park and the stories told by Mr. B. Guided by careful observations, the students made pastel sketches of chosen artefacts.

As it was important to us to recognize the traditional uses of the land in our mapping work, we invited the school district's First Nations liaison person, Ms E., to be part of our project. Ms E. visited the class twice, and during her visits she taught the students about the traditional uses of Western Red Cedar in both practice and ceremony. In her workshops, Ms E. showed examples of woven cedar baskets and jewellery, and taught students to weave cedar mats of their own. Her underlying message to the students about cedar, and all natural elements used by First Nations people, was of respect and the importance of giving back to the land when we take from it.

The local cemetery was a short walk from the school and afforded us with a further trip back into local history. Here, the stories of the Barry family came to life as many of the family members were buried there. The students searched the cemetery for all of the members of the Barry family and used crayons and paper to make tombstone rubbings.

Exploring the Natural History of Sandy Beach

We took our second trip to the park about one month into the project. This visit was an exploration of the natural history of the park including the diversity of life and the park's ecosystems. To guide their experiences, we asked students to keep three words in mind: unusual, interesting and change. Again, students used digital cameras to capture their explorations and parent volunteers accompanied small groups in three activities: a low tide beach walk, a scavenger hunt, and a sound and colour walk.
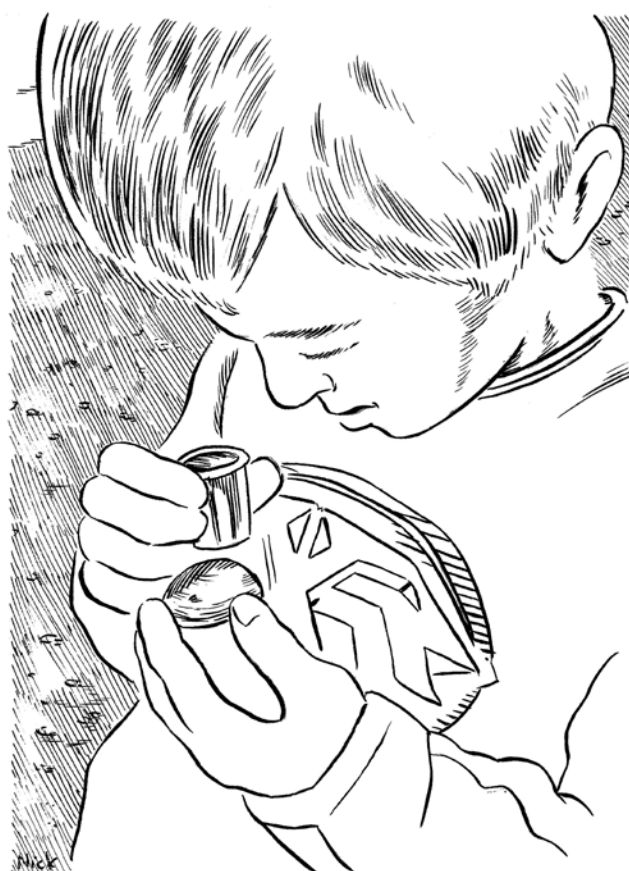

Figure 1. Quinn exploring life in the tidal zone

Ms C. led the students on the low tide beach walk. We planned our visit to coincide with low tide so the students could compare and contrast the high and low tidal zones and the transition between zones. Ms C.'s experience as a park naturalist at Sandy Beach guided the students' explorations as she helped students to identify species, ecosystems and interactions. Students also used small magnifying glasses to examine details and intricacies of the features of the beach. Below, Quinn uses a magnifying glass to examine tiny molluscs attached to a rock (see Figure 1).

I created a map for a parent-led scavenger hunt that guided groups along a planned route through several different ecosystems—meadow, marsh, forest and beach. Students were asked to be mindful of their changing surroundings and reminded of the trip's guiding words. Student observations were documented in their photographs and field notes. These photographs were put together in a class album of the visit, and back at school the groups came together again to write descriptive captions of the pictures from their walks.

To increase students' awareness of the living things around them, I led groups on a sound and colour walk during which participants were asked to slow down and stop to listen and look. We listened quietly to the sounds surrounding us: the chirping of crickets, the laughing of ravens, the crashing of waves, the crunching of gravel. Before the start of the project, I collected paint chip cards from the local home improvement store and on our walk, we matched the cards to colours noticed along our walk. We renamed those colour samples to reflect the shades

and hues of Sandy Beach (e.g., Douglas Fir Cone Brown, Rosebud Red, Arbutus Peeling Bark). The renamed paint chips were included in the class album of trips to Sandy Beach and in a mosaic frame for our emergent bulletin board map.
The photographs, stories and observations from our visits to Sandy Beach were used to create an emergent bulletin board map (Sobel, 1998). I started the map with a very basic outline of the park—the shoreline, access road, parking areas and campground—and over several days, small groups of students added to the map. Some students drew in trails we walked along.

Cunningham is.
Georgian Bay
Aug 2016

Others contributed written descriptions of features of the park they remembered. Still others added photographs that shared what we had experienced at the park. As we created the map, students looked through the album of photographs taken on our visits, shared their experiences with me, and added captions to the pictures.

Celebrating Personal Connections to Place

It was very clear to Ms C. and me that the students had developed deep personal connections to Sandy Beach. Students eagerly shared with us stories of special times at the park—recollections of weddings, first visits to the beach, earlier field trips and explorations with family and friends. It was important to us to really honour these affective understandings of place and so we focused our last visit to Sandy Beach on students' cherished places there. As with other visits, students were in small groups, but on this visit students led the exploration of the park. The groups visited students' cherished places and were told by the students what made that place so special to them. Many of these places were related to play—the driftwood pile that made a great fort, the tree that was like a swing, the tidal pools that were fun to explore. Students' special places also included spaces for quiet reflection and enjoying the beauty of the park—"the Dinosaur tree in the very quiet woods," the beach with its beautiful shells, the amphitheatre "because I feel free there." Students mapped their cherished places by creating clay sculptures and writing short descriptions of those places.

Mapping It All Together

Students shared their cherished places, along with their knowledge of the park's natural, First Nations, and local histories in their *If you came to Sandy Beach, I would show you…* class book. We used Sheryl McFarlane's *Jessie's Island* as a model for this mapwork, a book in which McFarlane shares the story of Jessie who writes a letter to her cousin describing all of the

wonders he would see if he visited her home. With *Jessie's Island* as a guide, the students wrote letters to family members and friends who had never been to Sandy Beach. Letters included descriptions of plants, animals and ecosystems that could be seen at the park. Students recalled the stories of the Barry family's first years on the farm and wrote about how First Nations peoples traditionally lived on the land. The letters also shared students' own memories of cherished places and experiences at Sandy Beach. Over the course of the project, teachers and parents shared with me special memories that they had of Sandy Beach so we invited the school community to write letters as well.

Our class book beautifully brought together all of the experiences of the mapping project and allowed students (and some teachers and parents) to reflect on the experience of being and learning in place. Other books that celebrate place and could be used in mapping projects include Harrington and Stevenson's (2005) *Islands in the Salish Sea,* Kronick's (2013) *How Victoria Has Changed,* and Moak's (1984) *A Big City Alphabet.*

Community Mapping as a Pedagogical Tool

Community mapping can be a wonderful way to infuse place-based environmental education across the curriculum. Our project was truly cross-curricular as we drew science, social studies, language arts, fine arts and citizenship together in our studies. This type of project can be easily adapted to the exploration of any local environment; the possibilities are endless. Mapping a local natural space helped the students to realize and respect the biological wealth and diversity that lived quite literally in their own backyards. Stephen Jay Gould wrote, "we cannot win this battle to save species and environments without forging an emotional bond between ourselves and nature as well—for we will not fight to save what we do not love" (as cited in Orr 2004, p. 43). Community mapping projects

can help foster this critical bonding in students.

Acknowledgement

Notes

[1]To protect the identity of participants, the names of all people and places have been changed.

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Community
By Connie Kavanagh

"Community" may sound familiar, but its long history and varied contexts qualify it as a truly wild word. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word community originates in "late Middle English: from Old French *comunete*, reinforced by its source, Latin *communitas*, from *communis* (see common)." Like the word itself, real communities have existed in diverse places, languages, cultures and times. If one of our goals as outdoor educators is to build community, then we can benefit from studying real-life communities and how they succeed, fail or change. The scope of such study is too broad to attempt in a short column, so what follows is intended as a catalyst for further thought and research by the reader.

When we speak of human communities, we often separate them from "natural," ecological communities. This is harmful to both the natural world and to us humans, as a full understanding of community should always include the ecological context.

So how do we build community? How do we positively create a sense of belonging to fill this basic human need? As outdoor educators, our tool kits often include name games, ice-breakers, group initiatives and problem-solving. Group problem-solving may be introduced as simulations, but it also translates into real-life adventure: the bus breaks down an hour from the nearest town; you've canoed all day to discover someone's forgotten their required medication. It's really the "soft skills" we're trying to impart—skills of listening to one another, contributing ideas and opinions, compromising and taking action. Allowing older students to plan a hike empowers them, while allowing them to fail can foster stronger community connections and greater learning. With younger children, stories and songs around a campfire have a powerful impact; these may be remembered for decades and passed on to future generations as oral tradition, which builds community across time. Time spent in nature can help people of all ages to remember that the ecological context of our experiences in an integral part of our human communities. Sharing meals also builds community and instills a sense of belonging by satisfying the basic human need for food; meals served under a tree or on the water with canoes rafted together on the lake can amplify the experience.

While groups of people are frequently brought together for a specific purpose, it is often the experiences shared by group members that build the sense of community. However we build our communities, and for whatever purpose, we would do well to remember that it is our shared experiences and our interactions that ultimately define us.

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Connie Kavanagh writes the Wild Words column and also enjoys sketching.

Community Building Through Group Initiatives
By Jerry Jordison

For eight years, as part of my role on the District School Board Ontario North East, I served as the coordinator of Camp Bickell, an eco-camp situated northeast of Timmins. Twice a week during the months of May and June, up to 60 grade six students from various parts of the school board district would arrive by bus. They arrived at 11:00 am on Monday and departed at 11:00 am on Wednesday, while another group arrived at 11:30 am on Wednesday and departed at the same time on Friday.

Because the students were from different schools and hadn't met before, I wanted them to quickly get to know each other and to form a strong community bond for all the activities that were planned.

Upon arrival I had them gather in an open field and form a large circle where I introduced them to their first initiative task: Group Juggling. Besides being fun, this activity served to engage students in learning each others' names, as well as build alertness, cooperation and creative thinking (see below for details).

After the conclusion of group juggling, I had the students form into groups of seven, and then introduced the next challenge: Seven People, Four Body Points. The seven students in the group must move, as a unit, a couple of metres, with only four body points touching the ground at any one time (see below for details). This activity really gets the students involved in experimenting with various ways to accomplish the task. At the same time they are learning to cooperate and bond with each other.

If there was still time before lunch, I introduced one more activity: Group Suspension, with Hands Only. The challenge is to raise the group, as one unit, off the ground with only hands touching any surface (see below for details). With each of the activities, I had the successful group demonstrate to the rest of the groups how they accomplished it. At this point, though the day had only just begun, the students were engaged with new friends and talking about their task.

Interspersed between the six unit lessons during the two days, the students were engaged in trust activities and environment games. Most instructors are knowledgeable with various trust activities. I introduced
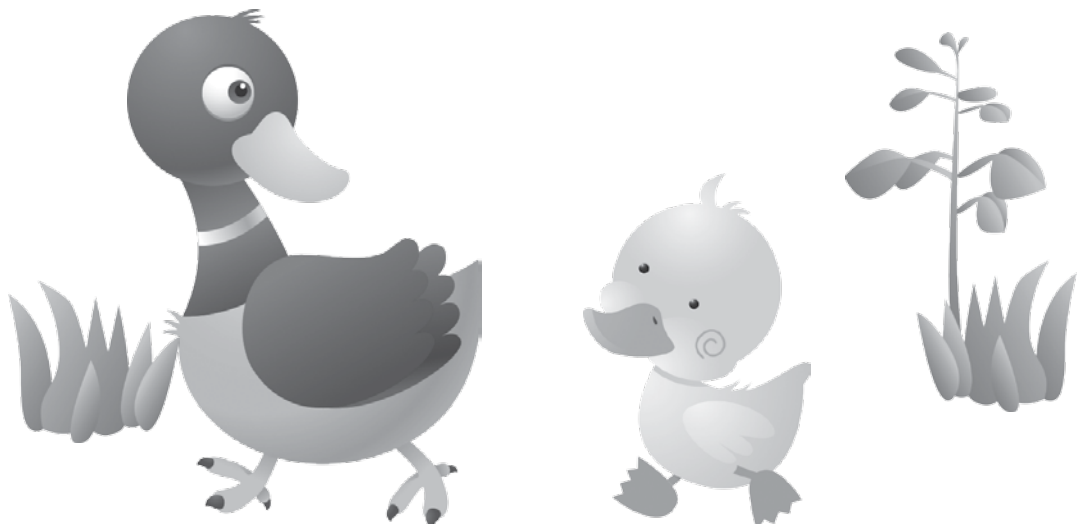
a progression of activities. First, I had them form small groups again, sometimes keeping the groups of seven that were already created, and had them form a tight circle with one person in the middle. The task is for the group to slowly pass the middle student around the circle (see below for details).

The next challenge was for the students to pick partners and have them trust each other enough to fall backwards to be caught by a friend (see below for details). I follow this by having them form a long straight line, imagining there is a 50-metre cliff behind them. The object is for students to walk, with eyes closed, towards the "cliff," trusting their friends to protect them (see below for details).

Next, we reformed the groups of seven, or so, and did a group lift. One student would lie stiff on the ground while the group placed their hands under the student's body and slowly lifted him or her above their heads (see below for details).

I usually concluded with a 90-degree backward fall from a picnic table, into the arms of a group of catchers. The students were usually excited about these newly discovered experiences, which helped them form into a cohesive group (see below for details).

The environmental games I used were knowledge-based, interactive and fun. We played such games as O Deer, Mother Nature, Find Your Mate, Camouflage, Rabbit Foxes and Trees, among others. By the end of the two days, when students are departing on their buses for home, they are exchanging phone numbers, email addresses and other contact information and thanking the counselors for a great time.

Trust Activities

Communicate with the students that, in group situations, participants need to trust each other for their own safety. A good example is rock climbing. This activity

could be dangerous; therefore some safety precautions are required. Next instruct the group how to protect their chest with their arms as follows: "With both arms extended and palms together, turn your wrist to reverse the palms. Interlock the fingers and move your arms to your chest." In that position the student will be protecting themselves, as well as preventing arms from fraying out and hitting someone else.

Then, tell them how to stand in the circle as a catcher: "Stand with one foot behind the other, with knees slightly bent. Your hands need to be open and raised to chest height, acting as bumpers—'bumpers-up.' In this position you are stable, and will not fall backwards when someone falls towards you. Do not push anyone hard. Use gentle movements to gently stop the person from falling."

Cliff Trust—Activity Description

Have all of the students form a long, straight line. Tell them to imagine there is a 50-metre cliff behind them (with alligators, and saber-toothed bunnies, and such at the bottom). Select four to six students from each end of the line, depending on the number of students involved, and have them spread out and line up, every six to eight metres or so, in front of the cliff line. Instruct the cliff line students to place one foot behind the other, for stability, with bumpers-up, keeping absolutely quiet. The walkers are instructed to walk slowly and confidently, towards the cliff with their eyes closed. The cliff line students are to gently stop them when they arrive. Have the walkers join the line and select four to six more students from each end to give everyone the experience.

Jerry Jordison is a long-time COEO member. A full description of the activities and initiatives shared here will be published on the COEO webpage.

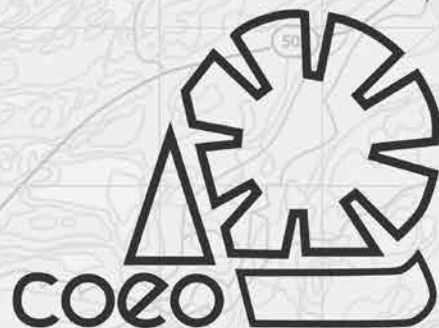THE COUNCIL OF
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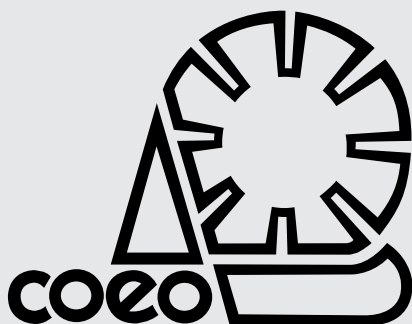OUR
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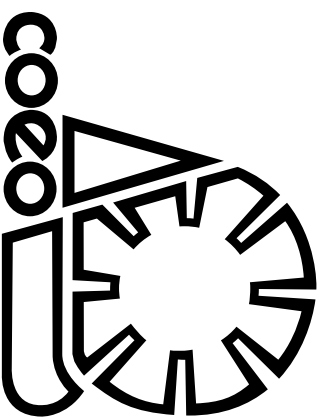*COEO Membership is from September 1 to August 31 of the following year.*

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