

E D U C A T I O N

FORUM



Building a
just and
sustainable
future

Dr. Samantha Nutt,
War Child Canada

SPRING 2010 VOL. 36, ISSUE 2 OSSTF/FEESO

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EDUCATION FORUM 3





Communities and partnerships

Working together to make the world a better place

One of the highlights at every OSSTF/FEESO Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) is the keynote speaker on Sunday morning. Invariably, these speakers are well known and passionate about their initiatives and about the role of public education in making our society and our world a better place. In recent years, we have had such notable speakers as Stephen Lewis, Roméo Dallaire, Marc Kielburger and Lieutenant Governor David C. Onley.

This year's speaker was Dr. Samantha Nutt, Founder and Executive Director of War Child Canada. The stories she told the rapt delegates and guests were at times heart-rending and at others, heart-warming. They were also of a very sensitive nature, and so as not to endanger War Child's work in the war-ravaged areas of the world, she asked us not to publish them. Since we usually request a copy of the keynote speech to use as the cover story of our spring issue following AMPA, we obviously needed a Plan B. Fortunately, Dr. Nutt was able to provide us with an article she had written for another publication but which addressed the same issues she shared with her audience at AMPA. That article, "Building a just and sustainable future," speaks of the partnerships that War Child builds within communities in order "to prevent a cycle of international-aid dependency and to promote community pride and resiliency."

The theme of community partnerships is also a significant factor in the program that Marty Wilkinson writes about in "The school that comes to the students." A partnership among the Beausoleil Education Authority and the two school boards in the Simcoe Muskoka area has resulted in a unique program for Grade 9 Aboriginal students of the Beausoleil First

Nation of Christian Island in Georgian Bay. The program comes to the students during the winter months when it is difficult for the students to get to school on the mainland. It emphasizes indigenous culture and history while also giving the students the life skills, work habits and self-esteem that all high school students need in order to be successful.

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Cameron Ferguson's article, "Teaching about homelessness," describes an excellent drama project at Markham's Bur Oak Secondary School that challenges students to learn about homelessness and then create drama pieces that address this social issue in order to raise their own and others' awareness about this issue. This project and others are available through the Homeless Hub's education

resources at www.homelesshub.ca.

"Building a dream" by Bill McGillis is a wonderful article about a unique structure being constructed in Timmins to serve as a "healing place" for Aboriginal men, women and children who have been the victims of domestic violence. Gary Martin, the Health Promoter for the Misiway Milopemahtesewin Community Health Centre in Timmins, acting on a dream he had, engaged the help of the elders within his community, submitted a proposal to the Ministry of the Attorney General for funding and obtained the agreement of the District School Board Ontario North East to enlist students in the Construction Craft Worker program to build it.

Paul Kossta's profile of Andrea Horwath, the Leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, tells us that she has been a community activist for over 20 years. His discussion with Horwath ranges widely over many aspects of public education, especially how it is being dealt with by the current government. The article touches on standardized testing, accountability, special education, the funding formula, declining enrolment, schools as community hubs, school safety and pensions.

Finally, "More than names on a war memorial" by Clint Lovell tells of a Grade 10 history project that resulted in the publication of a book, *The Boys from Barrie*, which provides profiles of all of the 63 World War II casualties from Barrie whose names are inscribed on the cenotaph. The article describes how this research project has benefitted both the students and the families of those men in ways that had not been anticipated.

As we move towards summer, we hope you will find something among these articles to inspire you in the work you do in public education. ☺



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Communautés et partenariats

Travailler ensemble pour faire de notre monde un monde meilleur

UN des points saillants à chaque Réunion annuelle de l'Assemblée provinciale (RAAP) d'OSSTF/FEESO est le conférencier d'honneur du dimanche matin. Ces conférenciers sont toujours très bien connus et enthousiastes à propos de leurs initiatives et du rôle que joue l'éducation publique pour améliorer la société et le monde. Au cours des dernières années, nous avons accueilli des conférenciers réputés tels que Stephen Lewis, Roméo Dallaire, Marc Kielburger et David C. Onley, lieutenant-gouverneur.

La conférencière de cette année était Samantha Nutt, fondatrice et directrice générale de *War Child Canada*. Les récits qu'elle a partagés avec les délégués et les invités étaient par moment déchirants et réconfortants à d'autres moments. Les récits relataient des faits délicats et, afin de ne pas compromettre le travail de *War Child* dans les régions du monde dévastées par la guerre, elle nous a demandé de ne pas les publier. Puisque nous demandons habituellement une copie du discours afin de l'utiliser comme article vedette de notre numéro du printemps après la RAAP, nous avions de toute évidence besoin d'une solution de rechange. Heureusement, Samantha Nutt a pu nous fournir un article qu'elle a rédigé pour une autre publication, mais qui abordait les mêmes problèmes qu'elle a partagés avec l'auditoire à la RAAP. Cet article « Préparer un avenir juste et durable » parle des partenariats que *War Child* a créés avec ces communautés afin « d'éviter le cycle de la dépendance à l'aide internationale et de susciter la fierté et la résilience des communautés. »

Le thème des partenariats communautaires est aussi un facteur important dans le programme qu'a écrit Marty Wilkinson dans « *The school that comes to the students.* » Un partenariat entre le

Beausoleil Education Authority et les deux conseils scolaires de la région de Simcoe Muskoka a entraîné un programme très unique pour les élèves autochtones de 9^e année du *Beausoleil First Nation of Christian Island* dans la baie Georgienne. Le programme est offert aux élèves durant les mois d'hiver alors qu'il est difficile pour ces derniers de se rendre à l'école sur la terre ferme. Il insiste sur la culture et l'histoire autochtones tout en donnant aux élèves des connaissances de base, des habitudes de travail et l'estime de soi dont tous les élèves du palier secondaire ont besoin pour réussir.

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L'article de Cameron Ferguson intitulé « *Teaching about homelessness* » décrit un magnifique projet d'arts dramatiques à l'école secondaire Bur Oak qui invite les élèves à en apprendre davantage sur les sans-abri et à ensuite créer des pièces dramatiques qui abordent ce problème social dans le but de sensibiliser les autres et eux-mêmes à ce problème. Ce projet et bien d'autres sont disponibles par l'entremise du centre de ressources éducatives *Homeless Hub* à l'adresse suivante : www.homelesshub.ca.

« *Building a dream* », rédigé par Bill McGillis, est un excellent article sur une

structure unique qui a été construite à Timmins (Ontario) pour servir de « place de guérison » pour les hommes, les femmes et les enfants autochtones qui sont victimes de violence familiale. Gary Martin, promoteur de la santé pour le *Misiway Milopemahtesewin Community Health Centre* de Timmins, a réalisé un de ses rêves, s'est assuré l'aide des aînés de sa communauté, a soumis une proposition afin d'obtenir des fonds du ministère du Procureur général et du *District School Board Ontario North East* pour recruter des étudiants du programme de manœuvre en construction afin de la construire.

Le profil d'Andrea Horwath, chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario, préparé par Paul Kossta, nous apprend qu'elle a été activiste communautaire pendant plus de 20 ans. La discussion avec elle a porté sur un large éventail de sujets liés à l'éducation publique et surtout sur la façon dont le gouvernement actuel traite de l'éducation publique. L'article aborde les tests standardisés, la redevabilité, l'éducation de l'enfance en difficulté, la formule de financement, la baisse des effectifs, les écoles comme carrefours communautaires, la sécurité à l'école et les régimes de retraite.

Enfin, l'article de Clint Lovell « *More than names on a war memorial* » nous introduit un projet d'histoire de 10^e année qui a amené la publication d'un livre intitulé *The Boys from Barrie*. Ce livre brosse un portrait de 63 personnes de Barrie décédées durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale et dont les noms figurent sur le cénotaphe. L'article décrit ce que les élèves ont retiré de ce projet de recherche de même que les familles de ces hommes d'une manière qui n'avait pas été prévue. À l'approche de l'été, nous espérons que vous trouverez parmi ces articles quelque chose qui vous inspirera dans votre travail au sein de l'éducation publique. ☺



Building a dream

A unique cross-cultural project brings together a community



In the late summer of 2008, Gary Martin had a dream. “The dream was about a young girl, walking. She was holding hands with her grandmother and talking about what was missing in her life and what she needed to develop into a strong, healthy Aboriginal woman. They were in the bush with a dwelling that looked much like a teepee.”

In his role as in-house Health Promoter for Misiway Milopemahtesewin Community Health Centre in Timmins, Martin has consistently championed the need for services that address issues of violence within the community. His dream, along with the iconic force of its defining imagery, eventually provided inspiration and a new direction for his quest to build improved services in response to issues of violence.

Although the dream was a visionary experience for Martin, it did not initially provide him with all the answers. Re-

membering the dream, he recalls that he did not immediately identify the dwelling as a teepee. Relying upon the customs of his culture, he sought advice and direction from elders within his community. “I shared this dream with community partners,” he says, “and discussed the need to help our women and families.” Through this sharing of his vision, Martin’s sense of purpose and direction achieved greater definition and the path to fulfilling the practical, long-standing dream of providing much-needed services became clear.

Dubbed The Healing Together Project, the initiative was launched under the auspices of the Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre, working in partnership with a variety of service and community organizations. As its primary objective, the project aimed to unite all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations throughout the city of Timmins and the surrounding area. The goal: pro-

viding a place where “co-ordinated healing programs and services for Aboriginal men, women and youth victimized by domestic violence can occur in a culturally respectful manner.”

At present, programs that address these needs are often housed in buildings and offices that belong to their respective organizations. With the primary practical objective being the physical construction of the teepee of Gary Martin’s vision, these services and programs could now have their own special home in a culturally appropriate structure and environment. It was decided that a teepee nine metres in diameter would be erected southeast of Timmins on bush land called Miken Otaski or Michael’s Land. Owned by the Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre, this land has a special cultural significance for the Aboriginal people of the area.

While the community partners worked on developing the proposal, Martin approached Steve Pladzyk, Superintendent of Schools with District School Board Ontario North East, with another vision. What if the Technical Studies Department at Timmins High and Vocational School built the teepee within the framework of the school’s Construction Craft Worker (CCW) classes? The response from the Timmins High teachers was immediate and enthusiastic. Under the direction of CCW teacher Barry Trebilcock, a team was assembled that included Trebilcock, Allan Daschuk, a Design Technical Studies teacher, and Dino Colasacco, the school’s Welding Fabrication instructor. They quickly developed draft blueprints for the construction. Initially they had planned to use primarily the wood and drywall materials typical of other CCW builds. However, after considering the relative isolation of the

site, the environmental rigors implicit in a forest location and the potential for fire and vandalism, they decided on a metal-on-metal design.

In a convergence that, in retrospect, seems almost providential, the philosophical concepts and practical objectives of the project were only just completed when the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General called for proposals to address issues of violence against women. As Martin recalls: "The same group of individuals who realized the need also came together to start the process. The proposal just seemed to come together. It was women who came to me in this dream and it was women who gave me direction — the elders, the children and the spirit helpers." In response to their proposal, on July 27, 2009, the ministry confirmed the Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre would receive \$203,000 for The Healing Together Project as part of the ministry's 2008-09 Aboriginal Victims Support Grant Program.

The concrete foundations for the structure have been laid and Trebilcock's CCW class were able to access the site and begin construction by mid-April. Both Trebilcock and Colasacco recognize the considerable challenges they face in putting together an all-metal building. Clearly, metal is a much less forgiving material than those the students have worked with in the past. But as Trebilcock says, "We can't accept anything less than perfec-

tion — the [students'] marks will all be fours." While the scope of the project represents new territory that stretches the existing boundaries of their department, both Trebilcock and Colasacco remain undaunted. In fact, they draw energy and inspiration from the objectives of the work and the recognition that the facility will be available

**"This whole project
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to a broad cross-section of community groups within the city. "The impact on the community and the level of gratification are new experiences," Colasacco says. "This whole project will kick-start new initiatives and build on existing

cross-cultural relationships within the greater Timmins community."

When it comes to their students, Colasacco's and Trebilcock's enthusiasm is infectious. Aaron Tinney, an 18-year-old welding student, is looking forward to "the challenge of building the teepee." Fellow student, 19-year-old Aaron Gagnon, is also eager to implement the new skill sets that will be used to complete the structure. "This project is going to expand our knowledge and skills way above the high-school level," he says, "giving us opportunities and experience that will help prepare us for a successful future in the trades." And for 18-year-old Leiland Wheesk, an Aboriginal student from the Mattagami First Nations community southwest of Timmins, there is the added thrill of building a facility that will stand as a symbol of both his heritage and his future. "It is an honour to participate," he says, "for the elders and all who will come to visit the centre."

Recently, Gary Martin visited the site of The Healing Together Project at Miken Otaski. "I put some tobacco down and asked our ancestors to guide us with the whole project." With the completion of the teepee less than three months away, Martin's faith and enthusiasm remain unabated. And already he is looking forward to "other possibilities." He speculates about holding "our own powwows" at the teepee. The surrounding acreage also offers the potential for growing the medicine plants that would be used in ceremonies conducted at the site.

But for Martin, a self-described second-generation survivor of the residential school system, the project presents the opportunity for restoration and reconciliation, and for "re-establishing the rules and responsibilities of our Aboriginal population." It is this that represents the fulfillment of his vision, and the continuation of the healing journey he has undertaken for himself, his community and the spirits of his ancestors. ☺



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Bill McGillis is the Teachers' Bargaining Unit president of District 1, Ontario North East, and an avid community activist.



More than names on a war memorial

A research project that makes history meaningful



“MY grandfather was in the war but he never talked about it. He’s dead now.” History teachers hear this a lot nowadays. Late this past winter, John Babcock, the last World War I soldier of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, passed away at age 109. Fortunately, his youth kept him out of the front-line trenches. We know this because he told us. He told us in many newspaper and television interviews.

Sadly, too many old soldiers took their stories with them. They spared their children the haunting memories of fear, regret, exhilaration and sadness they experienced in war. Men who grew up as the sons of taciturn men who had fought in places named Vimy and Ypres came of age in the Dirty Thirties, the worst economic depression in our history, then went off to war themselves, returning home to build a country, Canada, that became the envy of the world. Although

they rarely talked to their kids, they would often open up to their grandchildren or sometimes a complete stranger.

As this generation passes from us, their grandchildren have an increasingly small window of opportunity to hear their stories. But what about that kid who never knew his grandfather? Enter the history teacher.

In 2005, the Year of the Veteran, I assigned each of my Grade 10 students a name from the World War II list on our cenotaph in Barrie. Starting with Internet sources we began to put faces to the names. Further research into military-unit histories and war diaries added to our circumstantial evidence. Students spent hours, their burning eyes notwithstanding, scouring local newspapers on microfiche, since letters from boys overseas were often published in community papers. Occasionally, we got lucky if a casualty report featured a photograph of one of our young soldiers. Local newspa-

per and television coverage of our investigations brought a flurry of emotional phone calls: “He was my brother.... I was born weeks after he was killed.... I am named after him.... I have some photos.... I have some letters....”

The students were surprised and deeply moved by the gratitude they heard from those who knew our Boys from Barrie. Students such as Jordan discovered he had a great-uncle whose name was on the war memorial. His grandmother showed him photos of her cheerful brother, Harv Irwin, his Lancaster crew and their funeral. Lieut. Joseph McBride came alive to Serena through the poetry he wrote before his death near Monte Cassino in 1944. One evening, she received a call: “My name is Pat Thomson, I’m Joe McBride’s sister and I would like to meet you.” They have been friends ever since. Our online material also helped unite Pat with family she had lost touch with 45 years ago.

In 2006, we completed the list of our 63 World War II casualties and published the profiles on the Veterans Affairs Canada website (Google “The Boys from Barrie”). Yet the project never ends. The phone rings and a voice cracks with emotion, or e-mails arrive from all over the world that provide poignant details of a life lost long ago.

John Coady e-mailed us from Oregon. “I did not get to know my uncle, but every member of my family knows the story as related many times by my mother. She loved her brother very much and would have loved to know the information researched by Nicole.... It is important for students to regard the past as a guide to the future. At this time, many young soldiers from both our countries are involved in armed combat that could cost them their lives or alter their lives in a negative way. The costs of armed combat seldom include all the victims,



Clint Lovell's Grade 10 class with a visiting veteran

as death and destruction continue in waves long after the incident.... We were able to communicate with a shipmate of my uncle during the time he contracted smallpox and died. We are making plans to meet this gentleman.... This contact was a result of the project."

For Remembrance Week, we produced a poster featuring snapshots of each of our Boys from Barrie. We circulated the posters for display in downtown store windows. Local television shot a story in which students were interviewed in front of the poster. Canadian Bob Shortreed, watching the news via satellite in Florida, was stunned when the camera panned across the poster and stopped on the face of his older brother, John, who was killed in May 1944 at the age of 21. A short time after the fateful telegram arrived at the Shortreed home, Mrs. Shortreed received a bouquet of flowers. Her son overseas had not forgotten her on Mother's Day.

Bob Shortreed found me and I found

the soldier who buried his brother that night in Italy. It turned out that the man who had laid his comrade to rest actually lives two blocks from my house. For 60 years Bill Ford had often woken at night thinking of John. After the war, he tried to find the Shortreed family without success, but thanks to this Grade 10 history project, Bill is now quite close to the Shortreed family.

After a visit to my class Bill wrote, "I was realizing that I was not much older than you folks when I joined the Canadian Army. I expected that I would feel like the older person that I am and that it would be difficult to speak to you in a way that you would be comfortable with and would understand. As I looked at each one of you, time seemed to melt away and I became one of you. You will never know how much I appreciated the welcome you gave me and the questions you asked assured me that our country will be in good hands

as you seek out your place in life."


This fall we published *The Boys from Barrie* as a book and were pleasantly surprised when half the print run sold in less than two weeks. Between the book, newspaper features and television clips, almost 100 students can now Google their name and appear as a published writer! The legacy continues as another group of students travels to Europe to place poppies on the graves of their soldiers. Many will wear dog tags stamped with the names of their grandparents and great-grandparents as they see the areas their ancestors fought over long ago.

Our window of opportunity for students to meet the WWII generation will soon close. Instead of your students reading history, why not engage them in writing about it? Once they have completed their project, you can publish it online at the Canadian Virtual War Memorial. Start now — time is running out on this part of history. And history isn't in the past. We carry it inside us. ☺

Clint Lovell teaches history at Eastview Secondary School in District 17, Barrie. He also currently serves on the Governing Council of the Ontario College of Teachers.

Helpful websites for developing a cenotaph project in your community

- The Commonwealth War Graves Commission: www.cwgc.org
- The Canadian Virtual War Memorial: www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=collections/virtualmem
- The Royal Canadian Legion publishes the death of each Canadian veteran in the Last Post section of Legion Magazine: www.legionmagazine.com/en/lastpost.
- The Military and Peacekeeping section of Collections Canada: www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/military-peace/index-e.html
 - Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918
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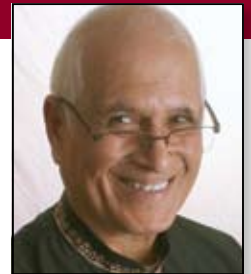
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Choosing to respond in the face of injustice
By Samantha Nutt





Dr. Samantha Nutt, the Founder and Executive Director of War Child Canada, was the keynote speaker at the OSSTF/FEESO Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA) on March 14, 2010. While she was unable to provide us with a copy of her address to AMPA because of the sensitive nature of some of the information she shared, Dr. Nutt gave us the following article that speaks to the same themes.

One of the questions I am most frequently asked, as Founder and Executive Director of War Child Canada, is: “If we really want to make a difference in the lives of those living with war or poverty, globally, what’s the single most important thing that we can do?” And my answer is always the same: support education. This support isn’t limited to initiatives that promote education at the primary and secondary levels in developing countries but is also directed at Canadian students of all ages so they, too, can be globally engaged and involved.

The challenge, then, is in knowing which kind of educational programs have the greatest impact — both on Canadian students and on students in the developing world. (To avoid confusion, the term “developing countries” has been used in this article to reference countries at the lowest end of the Human Development Index, including those that are impacted by war.)

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), for example — a war-ravaged country in which War Child Canada has been working for the past six years — children’s educational needs go far beyond bricks and mortar. While rebuilding schools is a high priority and something in which the organization is actively engaged, students need more than a safe place to learn and grow. Girls, especially, need the support of families and communities in order to make sure they have an equal opportunity to attend school. In many conflict-affected areas, ensuring girls’ access to education requires careful community sensitization and mobilization, as families with limited resources often fail to see the benefit

of girls finishing primary school. And while the challenges may be different for boys, they too require special consideration and support. Many young boys in the DRC found themselves caught up in an eight-year civil war that saw them exploited as combatants, porters and labourers for various armed groups.

Congolese children have witnessed horrors that many of us, living in Canada, can thankfully not even imagine. Congolese teachers, therefore, are faced with the insurmountable task of not only helping children learn but also of acquiring the knowledge and training they need to meet the unique academic and psychosocial needs within their classrooms. On top of all of this, schools in the eastern DRC were looted — stripped of even the most basic classroom supplies in an environment where children can rarely afford shoes, let alone textbooks, pens and paper.

So any meaningful effort to support education in the DRC — or, for that matter, in any conflict-ridden or poverty-stricken community — must carefully balance all these competing needs and priorities in order to be maximally effective. It means providing a structurally sound, child-friendly educational environment with well-trained, sensitized teachers. It also means working diligently to ensure communities take ownership of their schools and are prepared to invest both human and financial capital into maintaining them.

For these reasons, the only way to be certain that children in the developing world will have a sustainable future through education is to fully involve local communities at all stages. All of War



Child Canada’s school-rehabilitation and teacher-training programs rely on local labour and on the full participation of communities, as well as local government and civil-society groups. While this process can often be more time-consuming than sending in foreign staff or volunteers to do the work, it is the only way to prevent a cycle of international aid dependency and to promote community pride and resiliency.





I can tell you from first-hand experience that few things make my job more satisfying than watching a war-ravaged community pull together to create a brighter future for their children through education. I have listened to Congolese children, who, five years ago, could neither read nor write, tell me about their hopes and dreams to be their country's next generation of doctors, lawyers, business leaders and presidents — and it all

started with the reopening of a school.

But the success of initiatives such as these is not limited to what happens at the field level; it is also dependent upon the kind of global education that teachers impart back here at home.

When it comes to Canadian students, there are certain fundamental principles that can and must be adhered to in order to ensure younger generations of Canadians are fully engaged in and informed

about global issues. First, it is imperative that students of all ages — from elementary level through high school — understand that all people, irrespective of gender, race, religion, geography or ethnicity, deserve to live with dignity and are entitled to the same basic rights and protections. This awareness is critical to respecting and promoting human rights worldwide, and it begins with the recognition that we cannot ignore injustice simply because it doesn't directly involve us.

Second, there needs to be a philosophical shift in the didactic way in which international humanitarian and development issues are taught as an act of charity, rather than as a moral choice. When the suffering of the people of Darfur, for example, is reduced to a charitable act — something we can choose, as Canadians, to pay attention to or not — we fail to learn from the lessons of history, which teach that we have a moral and ethical obligation to respond in the face of injustice. War is, after all, a distinctly human construct, and it requires a distinctly human response to mitigate its effects, globally. The death of six million Jews in World War II and nearly one million Rwandans in 1994 should serve as an omnipresent reminder that allowing horrors to unfold anywhere in the world is indefensible. When we teach children that helping those in need, either here at home or beyond our borders, is “charity” — rather than a social responsibility — we leave them believing there is always the option of doing nothing whenever it suits us.

Finally, it is critical that Canadian students understand what good development really means. These are conversations that can be had even with elementary-aged students. All students understand the importance of learning by doing things for themselves. They are therefore capable of understanding that when we strip that opportunity from people living with war or poverty, we deny them the chance to learn and make their own positive contributions towards their communities. This also disrespects the level of knowledge, experience and capacity that exists within these communities — in effect, a form of cultural arrogance.

PHOTO: WAR CHILD CANADA; PREVIOUS PAGE: LIAM SHARP





So when Canadian students approach international development with the belief that the most effective contribution they can make is to fly to a developing country and do the work themselves, they are not fully aware of the limitations of their impact. This does not mean that overseas volunteer work involving students (“voluntours”) cannot have a major educational benefit in terms of expanding a student’s horizon and making him or her more globally aware. But, without exception, these kinds of programs give the educational advantage to Canadian students rather than to those in the developing world.

In order for development initiatives to be most effective and sustainable, the best approach — and the one that should be taught in Canadian classrooms — includes local communities in identifying their needs and their priorities, and fully engages them in the learning process.

Canadian humanitarian organizations that forge strong linkages to local part-

ners, and that meaningfully and systematically invest in local capacity-building, see first-hand the lasting impact of their efforts — an impact that can be felt long after a project has ended. For these reasons, it is essential that Canadian students learn that good development is about much more than what “we” can do for “them” or vice versa. It is, at its core, about promoting lasting change by respectfully fostering community self-reliance.

Since War Child Canada’s inception, equipping students and educators in Canada with the tools and resources necessary to tackle the issues and get involved at the local level has always been a priority. At the high school level, students have raised over \$700,000 for Keep The Beat, War Child’s signature fundraising campaign for children affected by war. Saltfleet Secondary School in Hamilton is one of War Child’s champion schools. Over the past three years, the students have raised over \$15,000 and have established a Keep The Beat tradition at their

Some statistics

- A child born to an educated mother is more than twice as likely to survive to the age of five.
- HIV/AIDS infection rates are halved among young people who finish primary school.
- Worldwide, 101 million children of primary-school age do not attend school.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 41 million primary-school-age children are out of school, and in South Asia, 31.5 million remain out of school.
- In the DRC, more than 4.4 million children are not in school. This number includes 2.5 million girls and 400,000 displaced children.
- In the DRC, more than a quarter of children ages five to 14 are working.

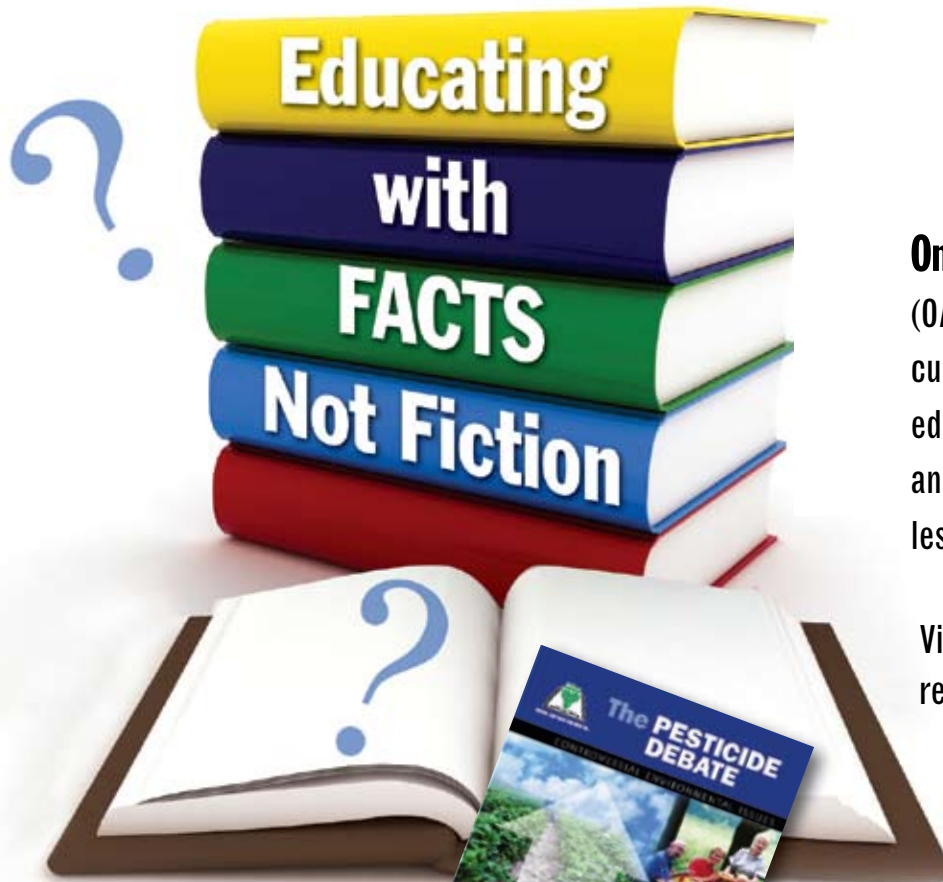
school. Funds raised through their initiatives are translated into direct financial support for War Child’s international programs, including War Child’s Access to Education program in the war-ravaged DRC, where 26 schools have been rebuilt in eastern Kivu. Like War Child’s other international programs, the students’ hard work not only creates a monetary contribution to these communities but is invested directly into the local infrastructure, since War Child works with local communities and uses local materials, supplies and labour.

Education is the greatest gift any of us can ever receive. It is the dividing line between dependence and independence, between ignorance and tolerance, and between despair and hope. Over the past 15 years of working in war zones all over the world, whenever I have asked a child — even children living in the most desperate, abject conditions — what they most want for themselves, they universally reply, “I want to learn and to go to school.” Let’s help make that possible. ☺

War Child Canada’s work

War Child Canada is an award-winning charity that provides opportunities and long-term solutions for war-affected children, focusing on education, strengthening children’s rights, reducing poverty and fostering self-reliance. War Child Canada works in partnership with local people and organizations to build sustainable programming that empowers children and their communities. The organization currently provides active support to communities in Afghanistan, Sudan (Darfur), Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Georgia and Haiti. War Child Canada also generates awareness, support and action for children’s rights everywhere and has domestic outreach programs in schools and among youth across Canada. For more information, please visit www.warchild.ca or contact 1-866-war-child.

Dr. Samantha Nutt is a medical doctor and an internationally acclaimed expert on human rights and development issues who has worked in some of the world’s most violent flashpoints.



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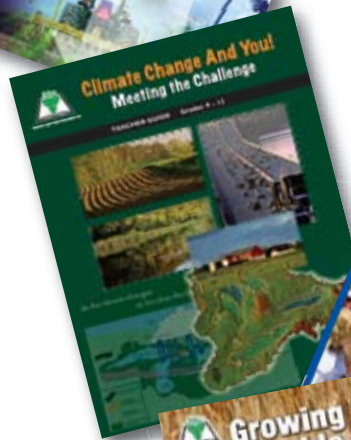
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Préparer un avenir juste et durable

Faire le choix de réagir face à l'injustice
par Samantha Nutt

Dr. Samantha Nutt, la fondatrice et directrice générale de *War Child Canada*, était la conférencière d'OSSTF/FEESO lors de la Réunion annuelle de l'Assemblée provinciale qui s'est tenue le 14 mars 2010. Si elle n'a pas été en mesure de nous fournir un exemplaire de son discours à la RAAP à cause de la nature délicate de certains des renseignements qu'il contenait, elle nous a toutefois fourni l'article ci-après qui aborde les mêmes thèmes.

L'une des questions qui m'est posée le plus souvent, en tant que fondatrice et directrice générale de *War Child Canada*, est la suivante : « Si l'on veut vraiment faire une différence dans la vie des personnes touchées par la guerre ou la pauvreté, à l'échelle mondiale, que convient-il de faire avant tout? » Ma réponse est toujours la même : appuyer l'éducation. Cet appui ne se limite pas aux initiatives de promotion de l'éducation primaire et secondaire dans les pays en développement, mais il s'adresse aussi aux élèves canadiens de tout âge afin qu'ils puissent, eux aussi, s'engager et participer à des initiatives internationales. Le défi se pose alors de savoir quel type de programmes pédagogiques a le plus grand impact, à la fois sur les élèves canadiens et sur ceux des pays en développement. (Pour éviter toute confusion, l'expression « pays en

développement » fait ici sommairement référence aux pays qui se situent au plus bas de l'indice de développement humain et comprennent ceux qui sont touchés par la guerre.)

En République démocratique du Congo (RDC), par exemple, où une guerre a ravagé le pays et où *War Child Canada* travaille depuis les six dernières années, les besoins éducationnels des enfants vont bien plus loin que le fait d'avoir un bâtiment où apprendre. Si la reconstruction des écoles est essentielle et si notre organisme y prend une part active, les élèves ont besoin de bien plus qu'un endroit sûr où apprendre et se développer. Les filles, plus particulièrement, ont besoin de l'appui de leur famille et de leur communauté pour avoir des chances égales d'assister aux cours. Dans de nombreuses régions touchées par les conflits,

l'accès des filles à l'éducation passe inmanquablement par la sensibilisation et la mobilisation, car les familles aux ressources limitées ne comprennent souvent pas les avantages pour leurs filles de terminer l'école primaire. Si les défis que doivent relever les garçons sont parfois différents, eux aussi nécessitent une prise en compte et un appui spéciaux. Nombre de jeunes garçons de ce pays se sont retrouvés pris au piège d'une guerre civile de huit années qui les a enrôlés comme combattants, porteurs ou travailleurs pour divers groupes armés.

Les enfants congolais ont vu des horreurs que la plupart d'entre nous qui vivons au Canada, ne peuvent même pas imaginer. Par conséquent, les enseignants congolais sont confrontés à la tâche insurmontable non seulement d'aider ces enfants à apprendre, mais aussi d'acquérir à l'école les connaissances et la formation dont ils ont besoin pour répondre à leurs besoins pédagogiques et psychosociaux uniques. De plus, les écoles de l'est du Congo ont été pillées, vidées jusqu'aux fournitures scolaires les plus élémentaires dans un milieu où les enfants peuvent rarement s'offrir une paire de chaussures, sans parler des manuels, des stylos et du papier.

Tout effort sérieux d'appui à l'éducation en RDC ou, dans ce cas, de toute com-



munauté touchée par un conflit ou par la pauvreté, doit soigneusement soupeser l'ensemble de ces besoins et de ces priorités qui se font concurrence pour donner des résultats optimaux, c'est-à-dire offrir un milieu scolaire structuré, accueillant pour les enfants et pourvu d'enseignants sensibilisés et bien formés. Cela signifie également œuvrer pour faire en sorte que les communautés se chargent de leurs écoles et soient prêtes à investir en moyens humains et financiers pour les entretenir.

C'est pour ces raisons que le seul moyen de s'assurer que les enfants auront un avenir durable grâce à l'éducation dans les pays en développement est de faire pleinement participer les communautés locales à tous les niveaux. Tous les programmes de réhabilitation scolaire et de formation des enseignants de *War Child Canada* reposent sur le travail local et la participation pleine et entière des communautés ainsi que des administrations locales et des acteurs de la société civile. Si ce procédé est souvent plus coûteux en temps que d'envoyer du personnel ou des bénévoles étrangers travailler sur place, c'est le seul moyen d'éviter le cycle de la dépendance à l'aide internationale et de susciter

L'éducation, c'est la ligne qui sépare la dépendance de l'indépendance, l'ignorance de la tolérance et le désespoir de l'espoir.

la fierté et la résilience des communautés. Je peux vous dire en toute connaissance de cause que bien peu de choses sont aussi satisfaisantes dans mon travail que de voir une communauté ravagée par la guerre se reconstituer pour préparer un avenir meilleur à ses enfants grâce à l'éducation. J'ai écouté les enfants congolais qui, il y a cinq ans, ne pouvaient ni lire ni écrire, me dire leurs espoirs et leurs rêves d'être la nouvelle génération de médecins, d'avocats, de chefs d'entreprises et de présidents de leur pays. Tout cela commence par la réouverture d'une école.

Le succès d'initiatives comme celles-ci ne se limite pas à ce qui se produit sur place; il dépend aussi complètement du type d'éducation interculturelle que les enseignants dispensent dans notre propre pays.

Pour ce qui est des élèves canadiens, nous pouvons et devons respecter certains principes fondamentaux afin que les jeunes générations de Canadiens connaissent parfaitement les enjeux mondiaux et apportent leur contribution. Tout d'abord, il est crucial que les élèves de tout âge, du niveau élémentaire à l'école secondaire, comprennent que toute personne, quels que soient son sexe, sa race, sa religion, son pays ou son origine ethnique, mérite de vivre dignement et peut se prévaloir des mêmes droits et protections de base. Cette prise de conscience est essentielle pour respecter et promouvoir les droits de la personne dans le monde entier. Elle dé-

bute en reconnaissant qu'on ne peut tout simplement pas ignorer l'injustice qui ne nous touche pas directement.

Ensuite, il faut opérer un changement philosophique dans les moyens didactiques employés pour enseigner les questions humanitaires et de développement à l'échelon international, qui sont plus un choix moral qu'un acte de charité. Si la souffrance du peuple du Darfour, par exemple, est réduite à un acte de charité, un fait auquel on peut choisir, en tant que Canadiens, de prêter attention ou pas, nous oublions les leçons de l'histoire qui nous enseignent que nous avons l'obligation morale de réagir face à l'injustice. La guerre est, après tout, un concept purement humain qui nécessite une réaction purement humaine si l'on veut en atténuer les effets. La mort de six millions de Juifs au cours de la Seconde Guerre mondiale et de près d'un million de Rwandais en 1994 devrait nous rappeler sans cesse que permettre à des horreurs d'être perpétrées où que ce soit au monde n'est pas une cause défendable. Si l'on apprend aux enfants qu'aider les personnes dans le besoin dans notre pays ou ailleurs est un acte « charitable » et non pas un acte de responsabilité sociale, nous leur faisons croire qu'ils ont la possibilité de ne rien faire si cela leur convient.

Enfin, il est essentiel que les élèves canadiens comprennent ce que le développement juste veut dire; ce sujet peut même être abordé avec des élèves d'école élémentaire. Tous les élèves comprennent l'importance d'apprendre en faisant des choses pour soi-même. Ils sont donc capables de comprendre qu'en privant de cette chance les personnes qui vivent dans un pays pauvre ou en guerre, ils leur refusent à tous la chance d'apprendre et d'apporter leur propre contribution à leur communauté. C'est également montrer son irrespect du niveau de connaissance, d'expérience et des ressources qui existe au sein de ces communautés et c'est, en fin de compte, une forme d'arrogance culturelle. Quand les étudiants canadiens appréhendent le développement international en croyant que la contribution la plus efficace à apporter est de prendre l'avion pour se rendre dans un pays en développement et faire eux-mêmes le travail, ils ne sont pas

Quelques statistiques

- Un enfant né d'une mère éduquée a deux fois plus de chances de survivre après cinq ans.
- Le taux d'infection par le VIH/sida diminue de moitié chez les jeunes enfants qui terminent l'école primaire.
- 101 millions d'enfants en âge d'aller à l'école primaire sont privés de ce droit dans le monde.
- En Afrique subsaharienne, 41 millions d'enfants en âge d'aller à l'école primaire sont privés de ce droit et en Asie méridionale, 31,5 millions d'entre eux n'iront jamais à l'école.
- En République démocratique du Congo, plus de 4,4 millions d'enfants ne vont pas à l'école. Ce chiffre inclut 2,5 millions de filles et 400 000 enfants déplacés.
- En République démocratique du Congo, plus d'un quart des enfants âgés de 5 à 14 ans travaillent.





totale­ment conscients des limites de leur influence. Cela ne signifie pas pour autant que le travail des bénévoles à l'étranger qui font appel à des étudiants (« volontourisme ») ne peut avoir un effet bénéfique majeur au sens où il élargit l'horizon des étudiants et les sensibilise aux enjeux internationaux, mais ce genre de programme donne, sans exception, l'avantage éducatif aux étudiants canadiens et non à ceux des pays en développement. Pour que les initiatives de développement soient les plus efficaces et les plus durables, la meilleure approche (qui est aussi celle qui devrait être enseignée dans les salles de classe canadiennes) est celle qui fait participer les communautés à l'identification de leurs besoins et de leurs priorités et qui les persuade de prendre part au processus d'apprentissage.

Les organismes à vocation humanitaire du Canada qui forgent des liens solides avec leurs partenaires locaux et qui investissent de façon significative et systématique dans le développement des ressources locales, se rendent compte de l'effet durable de leurs efforts : un effet qui dure longtemps après la fin du projet. Pour ces raisons, il est crucial que les élèves canadiens apprennent que le développement juste ne se résume pas à ce que « nous » pouvons faire pour « eux » ou vice-versa. Le développement juste est avant tout la promotion d'un changement durable qui favorise respectueuse-

ment l'autosuffisance des communautés.

Depuis sa mise sur pied, *War Child Canada* a toujours considéré comme une priorité le fait de doter les élèves et les agents d'éducation canadiens des outils et des ressources nécessaires pour s'attaquer aux problèmes et s'engager à l'échelon local. Au niveau de l'école secondaire, la campagne de collecte de fonds propre à *War Child* et intitulée « *Keep The Beat* » a permis aux élèves de recueillir plus de 700 000 \$ au profit des enfants touchés par la guerre. L'école secondaire Saltfleet de Hamilton est l'une des championnes de la collecte de fonds de *War Child*. Au cours des trois dernières années, les élèves ont recueilli plus de 15 000 \$ et établi la tradition de la collecte de fonds

« *Keep The Beat* » dans leur école. Les fonds recueillis grâce à leurs initiatives se traduisent par un appui financier direct des programmes internationaux de *War Child*, comme le programme d'accès à l'éducation dans la République démocratique du Congo, ravagée par la guerre et où 26 écoles ont été reconstruites dans l'est du Kivu. Tout comme d'autres programmes internationaux de *War Child*, le travail acharné des élèves apporte non seulement une contribution financière à ces communautés, mais est également investi directement dans les infrastructures locales puisque *War Child* collabore avec les communautés pour utiliser les matériaux, les fournitures et la main-d'œuvre de ces localités.

L'éducation est le plus beau des cadeaux que chacun d'entre nous peut recevoir; c'est la ligne qui sépare la dépendance de l'indépendance, l'ignorance de la tolérance et le désespoir de l'espoir. Au cours de mes quinze dernières années de travail dans des zones de guerre partout au monde, chaque fois que j'ai demandé aux enfants, même à ceux qui vivent dans des conditions abjectes et désespérées, ce qu'ils souhaitaient le plus pour eux-mêmes, ils m'ont tous répondu d'une même voix : « Je veux apprendre et aller à l'école. » Faisons en sorte que cela soit possible. ☺

Samantha Nutt est médecin et experte de renommée internationale des droits de la personne et des problèmes de développement. Elle a travaillé dans les zones du monde les plus touchées par la violence.

Le travail de War Child Canada

War Child Canada est un organisme sans but lucratif primé qui offre des opportunités et des solutions à long terme aux enfants victimes de la guerre en axant ses efforts sur l'éducation, le renforcement des droits de l'enfant et la réduction de la pauvreté, tout en favorisant l'autosuffisance. *War Child Canada* travaille en partenariat avec la population locale et des organismes pour mettre en œuvre des programmes durables qui renforcent l'autonomie des enfants et de leurs communautés. Actuellement, *War Child Canada* appuie activement certaines communautés de l'Afghanistan, du Soudan (Darfour), de l'Ouganda, de la République démocratique du Congo, de l'Éthiopie, du Sri Lanka, de Sierra Leone, de Géorgie et de Haïti. *War Child Canada* prend également des mesures de sensibilisation et d'appui des droits de l'enfant partout au monde et dispose de programmes d'approche auprès des écoles et de la jeunesse au Canada. Pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements, visitez le site www.warchild.ca ou composez le 1 866 war-child.



Teaching about homelessness

Learning compassion through dramatic arts

By Cameron Ferguson

When the streets are calling to me with no mercy; maybe I can change your mind.

I got nobody else that I can turn to; maybe I can change your mind.

Lyrics from "Change Your Mind," produced for *Street Stories*, a theatrical performance created by senior students at Bur Oak Secondary School in Markham





Rewind six months to a scene in my senior drama class at Bur Oak Secondary School in Markham. It's a Friday morning, second period, almost the end of the week. As the students prepare to leave the room, they find the following prompt on the board: "Write a journal entry describing everything you know about homelessness. Due Monday." The students quickly scribble down the topic, stuff the assignment in their backpacks and make their way out of the classroom.

What did I hope to uncover in my students with this assignment? A starting point for what would become a candid, six-week journey in transformative

learning and social justice? Whatever my hopes, on the following Monday, the students would begin to create a piece of theatre that would explore a topic rarely discussed in the classroom and largely ignored by society as a whole.

Homelessness is not strictly an absolute lack of shelter (though this is its most obvious manifestation) but rather an extreme form of poverty characterized by instability of housing and inadequacy of income, health-care supports and social supports. If this is how we define homelessness, then in Canada, according to www.homelesshub.ca, between 157,000 to 300,000 Canadians experience abso-

lute homelessness and approximately 3.5 million Canadians live in poverty and are at risk of homelessness.

For me, as a teacher, the starting point was a series of lessons I was commissioned to create for the Homeless Hub, a web-based research library and information centre on homelessness. As a topic, homelessness can provide educators and students with many opportunities to learn, reflect and take action on an important issue that affects every community.

As educators, we have a unique opportunity to mold students into agents of change. We are able to tackle social issues and create a climate of awareness and ac-



tion. We have the opportunity to develop and nurture caring citizens and activists who will go out into the workplace and larger society and insist on equality where before there was inequity and stigma. However, with so much pressure to contribute to the achievement of academic excellence and the production of high-level scores on standardized tests, we are sometimes tempted to push our role as agents of transformative learning into the shadows.

Some social issues such as racism and religious diversity make a reasonably regular appearance in professional de-

Common misconceptions among my students regarding the plight of homeless people were that they had reached that state as a consequence of their own decisions, they did not want anything better for themselves and they were a nuisance. My students were candid in their opinions and held nothing back; at the same time, however, they were open and ready to learn.

In reality, the causes of homelessness are complex and multiple. A slide into homelessness is the result of a number of economic and social factors that impact an individual or family at a personal level.

Our journey in the classroom began with each student asking a question about homelessness that they hoped to answer by the end of the unit. Their questions were then compiled into a worksheet with their own questions forming the basis for researching the unit. A computer lab was booked, the students went to the Homeless Hub website and embarked on their journey of discovery.

They became instantly engaged by what they found. In fact, they continued talking about homelessness and their research even after the bell excused them. What had begun as a three-week unit expanded into a six-week process. There was simply too much to explore, too much to discover and too much to say.

Once the research component was complete, the students were charged with more traditional dramatic-arts assignments based on their findings. Over the next few weeks, they created scenes depicting homelessness that were based on well-known fairy tales; they wrote journal entries in the voices of oppressed characters; they were given a newspaper article about a homeless youth arrested for shoplifting and were asked to create a scene based on the thread of events that could have led to this arrest.

For the final assignment, the students were asked to create vignettes informed by their own research, with the goal of producing a theatrical piece for public consumption. Although the resulting play focused heavily on the causes of teen homelessness, the students also looked at some of the effects on individuals. The final product imagines the experiences of five very different teenagers, who through no fault of their own become homeless due to eviction, physical abuse, teen pregnancy, trouble in the foster-care system and homophobia.

With careful cutting and pasting, the scenes were strung together to create a provocative and honest portrait of teen homelessness — its causes and its effects. The resulting product, *Street Stories*, was ready for opening night and lived up to its goal of raising awareness through public performance. The play has been performed a number of times to date,



velopment sessions. Other concerns such as homophobia and homelessness are less likely to find interest among educators in Canada. Contemporary slang, such as “no homo,” “That’s so gay” and “hobo,” heard in school corridors across Canada, attests to this. For this reason, I gladly accepted the opportunity to be part of this important initiative. The results went beyond anything I could have hoped for.

On the Monday following the journal assignment, I broached the topic of our upcoming unit with my students. The responses I received were mixed: “Why homelessness?” “What is there to say about homelessness?” “How does this relate to us?” While they were eager to create and perform a show for the public, my students were less enthusiastic about the theme. “How can we possibly create an entire show around the topic of homelessness?” Even my most politically and socially conscious students had limited sensitivity to, and understanding of, the issues of homelessness.

No one chooses to be homeless and it can happen to anyone — from a teenager escaping an abusive home to a senior citizen on a fixed income who cannot cover a rent or tax increase to a child whose parents suddenly become unemployed.

Understanding the factors that lead to homelessness is not easy considering the heterogeneity of the population and the fact that there are many pathways to homelessness. In most cases, it is the intersection of structural factors (the growing gap between the rich and the poor; the decrease in the supply of affordable housing; the decrease in services, supports and social assistance; plus discrimination and racism) with personal histories and individual characteristics (catastrophic events, loss of employment, family breakup, onset of mental and/or other debilitating illnesses, substance abuse by an individual or family members, a history of physical, sexual or emotional abuse and involvement in the child welfare system) that lead to homelessness.

but two of the performances stand out. At both the launch event for the Homeless Hub's education resources and the Sears Drama Festival, more than a few audience members left discreetly wiping away tears, while many others spoke of its resounding impact.

But more important than the impact the play has had on audiences, however, is the impact the unit has had on my students. *Street Stories* was a huge success. Rarely have I had the opportunity to see my students so immersed and engaged in a project, especially one involving such a heavy research component. The

getting employment when one does not have a home. One student observed: "Getting a job is easy in theory; however, if you analyze the whole process, it is much more complex. Firstly, a resumé is needed. Where would you get the resources to type and print it? If a homeless teen was to be interviewed, how would he/she dress?"

This exercise was, in many regards, a manifestation of popular political theatre as advocated by Brazilian director Augusto Boal, founder of the Theatre of the Oppressed and champion of those whose voices are too faint to be heard in

of the Oppressed, published in 1968. Freire believed strongly in the importance of educating our students to think critically about — and to act on — societal issues, and he tended to dismiss the validity of information distributed by capitalist sources.

My students had initially relied on the misinformation given to them by the mainstream media and other unreliable sources. In the end, however, they became aware of the truths surrounding the issue of homelessness and they expressed a commitment to becoming part of the solution. One student noted: "When we were first introduced to the assignment, I remember being excited [about getting to do the show] but remember thinking, 'Why homelessness? What's the story, I don't get it!' But that's another thing I learned: there is always a story to be told. Very rarely are things exactly the way they seem."

Although the curtain has fallen on the unit and my students now find themselves in different classrooms, the impact continues to echo in the corridors of my school. Walking down the hall to the staff lounge the other day, I paused as I overheard one of my former students correcting a friend who used the word "hobo," an offensive term referring to people who are homeless. So begins the transformative process....

Stories from the street can catch you blindly, when you dare to look around.
(From "Change Your Mind") ☞

Cameron Ferguson is a drama teacher at Bur Oak Secondary School in District 16, York Region.

In the end, however, they became aware of the truths surrounding the **issue of homelessness** and they expressed a commitment to becoming **part of the solution.**

most rewarding aspect was the apparent transformation within the students themselves. Upon completion of the unit, the students were asked to write an essay exploring the changes (if any) in their opinions and perceptions of people who are homeless. For example, whereas the students' initial responses were typical of popular thinking about people who are homeless (i.e. they're "too lazy" to get jobs), their later expressions took into account the difficulties involved in

the chambers of power: "In the beginning theatre was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in the open air. The carnival. The feast. Later, the ruling classes took possession of the theatre and built their dividing walls.... Now the oppressed people have liberated themselves and, once more, are making theatre of their own."

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire discusses these same concepts as they relate to the field of education in *The Pedagogy*

Homeless Hub resources for teachers www.homelesshub.ca

CURRICULUM UNITS: six complete curriculum units (Elementary, English/Media, Civics, Visual & Dramatic Arts, Family Studies/Social Sciences) that include individual lesson plans, learning engagements, curriculum connections and handouts, etc.

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enced homelessness.

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RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS: a lot of easy-to-understand information on homelessness, including short reports and Q & As that can also be used as handouts and teaching resources.



The school that comes to the students

Meeting the needs of the Aboriginal students of Christian Island

By Marty Wilkinson

The transition from elementary school to high school can be a difficult one for any student. Many high schools have recognized this and have implemented programs just prior to school start-up for incoming elementary school grads. Resembling a day camp, the program introduces students to the larger building, lockers, timetables, the cafeteria, the gym and so on. In other words, they are welcomed to the world of an Ontario secondary school. It is an exciting, challenging time in a young person's life.

For the young Aboriginal people of Christian Island, located near Midland in Georgian Bay, the transition can be even more daunting. Not only must they get used to a new way of schooling, they must also travel almost one-and-a-half hours by ferry and school bus to their new school. They are instantly a visible minority in the small-town high school and are surrounded by people,

adolescents and adults, who really don't understand indigenous people or what it is like to be raised on a reserve.

Beausoleil First Nation encompasses Christian, Beckwith and Hope islands in the southern tip of Georgian Bay. They are home to the Ojibwe (Chippewa) people, and much history can be found there. Originally, Christian Island, the largest of the trio, was known by the Ojibwa as Gichi Minising (At the Big Island). In 1649, thousands of Hurons and a few Jesuit missionaries from Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, a mission located near Midland, took refuge there during the Huron-Iroquois wars. The Jesuits called the island St. Joseph, but it was eventually renamed Christian Island in honour of the eight Jesuits who were martyred during the wars.

Christian Island is home to about 700 residents year round, but the population swells during the summer months when

tourists visit the beautiful island with its magnificent beaches.

Young people attend the Christian Island Elementary School, funded by the federal government, for their kindergarten to Grade 8 years. The school is relatively homogenous, attended and staffed by Aboriginal people. The Ontario curriculum is taught, but there is an emphasis on Ojibwe culture, language and traditions. It is a safe, familiar community school.

Most Grade 8 graduates both look forward to high school and are nervous at the prospect. Secondary-school education means leaving their community for most of the day. It means getting on the 7:30 a.m. ferry to the mainland, hopping onto a school bus and being driven to Midland Secondary School, Penetang Secondary School or St. Theresa's Catholic High School, located in Midland. At the end of the school day the process is reversed in order to catch the 5:00 p.m. ferry back

ILLUSTRATION: SOPHIE CASSON





home to the island. It makes for a long day with a lot of it spent travelling. Very little time is available for extracurricular activities, extra help or just plain socializing. And for the new Grade 9 students, it also means being “in town” and away from community eyes for the first time.

Winter imposes other challenges, since weather conditions such as snow, high winds, ice or dangerous waves interfere with reliable ferry service. The solution the

Many parents of a young person 13, 14 or 15 years of age going from Grade 8 to Grade 9 are apprehensive about sending their child “away,” even if it is to a community so close to Christian Island. And yet, having their child get a high-school education is a valued goal.

Natalia Pyskir and Peggy MacGregor, Director of Education for the Beausoleil Education Authority, noticed that too many Christian Island Grade 9 students

and personnel of the three school boards. Although the students attend the CIPL, they are still enrolled in one of the high schools and the Education Authority is still very much interested in their success.

The students start in September at one of the high schools and take Semester I subjects. At the end of October their Semester I studies stop, to be picked up again in April and finished in June. From November to mid-April, they take Semester II subjects at the CIPL and earn their Semester II credits. By the end of the school year, the students will have eight credits, just like every other Grade 9 student. The hope is that, by having a successful semester at the CIPL and earning credits, the students will be better motivated to stay in school, continue to earn credits and eventually graduate with a secondary-school diploma.

Angela Bosco, Simcoe County District School Board’s Facilitator for Aboriginal Education (and a member of OSSTF/FEESO’s Human Rights Committee), made me aware of this program and suggested that, because of my background with First Nations communities and students, the community might be interested in having me as one of the teachers for this program. I’d recently retired, but I had served on Simcoe County District School Board’s Advisory Board for Aboriginal Education and had a background living and teaching in First Nations communities, including a two-year stint teaching at Canada’s first Native-run school in Rae-Edzo (now named Behchokò) in the Northwest Territories. I had the time, I was familiar with the community, the program interested me and I still had the desire to serve through teaching. Before too long, I was packing up my cross-country skis and preparing to spend a winter on Christian Island.

From Monday to Thursday, I delivered geography, history and learning strategies programs to the students. On Fridays, the second teacher, who is from the island, took over and delivered an Ojibwe language and culture course.

Pyskir says the program “is an opportunity to enhance the students’ self-esteem by learning in a more relaxed atmo-



The Christian Island ferry arrives to pick up students to take them back to Christian Island

community has come up with is to board the students at homes in Midland or Penetang. From November to mid-April, most Christian Island high-school students live with relatives on the mainland, with non-Native families paid to take in boarders, or in a boarding house run by the Beausoleil First Nation in Midland.

According to Penetang Secondary School Principal Natalia Pyskir, “Boarding is a real issue.” The kids are away from their community for the better part of five months, parents lose control and the supervision at the boarding homes is a concern. Every student has a parent, grandparent or relative who can tell stories of having to endure racism during their school years, either at the school and/or at their place of accommodation. For too many, the memories of a residential school are still vivid, and boarding out seems too much like residential school.

were not dealing well with the transition. For some, attendance records were terrible. Academic success was difficult. The temptation to stay home or the lure of the mall was too great. Imposed consequences were ineffective.

Pyskir and MacGregor decided to do something about it. And so, two years ago, the Christian Island Place of Learning came into being. Quite simply, instead of Grade 9 students going to Midland or Penetang for school during the winter months, the school comes to them.

The Christian Island Place of Learning (CIPL) is a Grade 9 program for Aboriginal students attending Midland SS, Penetang SS or St. Theresa’s Catholic High School. It is funded by the Simcoe County District School Board, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic School Board and the Beausoleil Education Authority, and the program has access to all the resources

sphere.... The program is put together for the students. They will receive the same curriculum as any other Grade 9 student, but it will be delivered with a holistic approach that respects indigenous culture. My hope is that the students will feel valued."

The curriculum emphasizes indigenous culture and history — witness the history course itself, which is called Canada in the 20th Century with an Aborigi-

The Christian Island Place of Learning is opening eyes to what is possible. It is making inroads. It is building trust."

"The teachers are very important for this program to work," says Pyskir. "They are key. They must be flexible because for the most part, they really are on their own."

MacGregor agrees. "You want to be successful teaching indigenous kids? You have to realize that it is all about relation-

students, and the seven students earned all their credits.

It is very clear the Christian Island Place of Learning is a shining example of a student success program that truly works. The most significant factor in its success is that it is a truly community-based initiative on a reserve that insists on being a healthy community.

Arriving by ferry on Christian Island, visitors see a huge flashing sign outside the Band Office: "Welcome to Beausoleil First Nation. Pride, Vision, Unity." And it is more than a slogan. The Band helps sponsor various workshops for the community to learn more about the Ojibwe culture and traditional teachings. There are leadership conferences. The Health Centre sponsors Challenge Days to discuss and deal with social issues on the island, and "challenges" the community to help each other with these issues. There is a real effort to revitalize the use of the language in the community; 20 community members were taking an Ojibwe language course on the island (I was the only non-native pupil, and it was a humbling experience). Fitness programs and recreational programs are taking place; community ceremonies and powwows are well attended. People smile, wave, make small talk, laugh. It feels good to walk around the island and listen to the laughter, the dogs, the crows and the sounds of children playing.

The Christian Island Place of Learning came out of this strong community pride. The students are surrounded by support — from their parents, the community, the schools, the Education Authority and the elders, who constantly drop by to see them and invite them to ceremonies. There is a sense of purpose at the CIPL, and it didn't just come from the teachers.

It has been a privilege and a joy to be part of the Christian Island community this past winter. I appreciate how I have been accepted into the community and invited to many events and ceremonies. I am pleased I was able to assist these young people on their journeys. ☺

Marty Wilkinson taught at the Christian Island Place of Learning this past winter, and is a member of District 17, Simcoe.



Students work on an assignment in their classroom at the Christian Island Place of Learning

nal Perspective. Current events focus on Aboriginal issues as reported by Canada's thriving Aboriginal media.

MacGregor, an indigenous person herself, sees the CIPL as helping to build the life skills, work habits and self-esteem needed to be a successful high-school student. "The program emphasizes our cultural foundation. It teaches our language, our way of thinking. Aboriginal history is looked at and the kids are more aware of their culture.

"My biggest challenge," she says, "is to overcome the thinking that originates from colonialism, residential schools and the church schools that were on the island. Parents may think their kids are getting an inferior education. This idea was driven into Natives — that anything Native was not good. Not just in education but in all aspects of life — health, services, economic development.

ships. You have to create a bond. You have to understand that relationships between us are very important. We are a communal people, not individualistic or competitive. Humility is our nature. You have to take the time to get through our quietness and our shyness. Tell stories. That is how we learn. Use humour. Be subtle. Most of all, be respectful."

In the first year of the program, there were five Grade 9 students enrolled in the Christian Island Place of Learning. The success of the program was significant: 90 per cent of eligible credits were earned and attendance improved. Those graduates have continued their success. They still have positive attendance records and have attained all the credits they have attempted. Two of the students are on the Honour Roll. This year, eight students were in the program. Attendance has become a non-issue for all but one of the



Andrea Horwath speaks out

A fresh perspective from the leader of the Ontario NDP

By Paul Kossta

“If you are comparing somebody against the worst of the worst, then the relative comparison is rosy.” With those words Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, summarizes her appraisal of Premier Dalton McGuinty’s stewardship of Ontario’s publicly funded education system. In a wide-ranging interview at her Queen’s Park office, Horwath, the woman who will lead the NDP into the next provincial election in October 2011, challenges many of the assumptions that Ontario’s education system has improved since the days of the Harris-Eves governments.

While acknowledging that McGuinty’s government has successfully completed collective bargaining agreements with education workers’ unions, she says, “There have been some successes around labour relations but the education system is much greater than that, and I would suspect most teachers would think so as well.” She adds, “I think we have to look at the extent to which some of the policies that the Harris government put in place have continued under this government.”

She rhymes off a number of education issues she sees as failures of the McGuinty government, including her own priorities of accountability, special education and the health and well-being of children.

She is particularly distrustful of the McGuinty government’s efforts on accountability in the education field. “What we’re seeing is a big effort by the government to create this idea that there is accountability in the education system, but a lot of that is smoke and mirrors.” Specifically, she questions the value of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO): “We don’t think the monolith the government has put in place is really about education. The measures need to be a lot broader and a lot more diverse than they are through the measurements the EQAO gives us. Graduation rates, failure rates and all of these numerical measures that the government likes to hang its hat on don’t really reflect the quality of education.” She adds, “They tie these things to the performance of principals and put all kinds of requirements on school boards.”

Horwath doesn’t believe the McGuinty government is properly preparing students for the future, and the measurements it uses to gauge the success of the education system do not reflect reality. She

PHOTO: HENRIETA HANISKOVA



says, "What's really falling through the cracks is the broader look at the quality of the education system, and whether it is, in fact, preparing our children properly for the future. I don't think that is something they are looking at all and I don't think their false measures are going to give us the real answers. But if we don't have the real answers, how do we make the changes to actually get the education system we need?"

She asserts, "The only people who are pretty much left unaccountable in the whole process are those in the government itself. They are very difficult to hold to account when they are building this illusion that accountability actually exists in the system. So we have some real concerns about accountability and how it's characterized and how it's not really achieving anything."

Another priority for Horwath is special education. "How do we provide the kind of supports necessary for children who require them, to benefit them as well as the rest of the children and the teachers in the classroom?" She also wants to see improvements in waiting lists for assessment and supports for children.

Special education is tied in with her other priority: the health and well-being of kids. She notes there is a mental-health crisis facing the province and many young people face mental-health challenges. "The supports are not there in high school or in grade school in terms of guidance counsellors, psychologists, full-time folks in schools to help kids when they hit a crisis. Everybody knows that if we can provide those supports early on, the out-

comes are so much better for young people... We also know that in economic times like the ones we're in right now, the likelihood of increased family pressures, increased worry, increased pressures overall at the family level are going to spill into the school and the school community. And yet we have not resourced schools to be able to help us get through the increased demand that comes with these economic hard times."

Horwath also decries the lack of full-time physical-education supports for students. She says, "Physical education is no longer what it used to be in terms of the required curriculum." She is particularly concerned because "computers and gaming are the big activity for kids." In fact, her own 17-year-old son lost interest in sports activities by the age of 12 or 13 because of online games. She wants to mitigate the influence of the Harris government's neglect of physical education: "I am quite concerned that we have not seen a lot of effort to roll back those negative influences or policies that the Harris years brought."

One of the ways the McGuinty government can address these negative influences, Horwath believes, is to review the funding formula. McGuinty promised in the 2007 election that there would be a formal review of the funding formula in 2010. So far, no announcement has been made, and Horwath is skeptical that a formal review will be conducted. She implores the McGuinty government to stop simply moving money around to deal with each passing crisis. "They are plugging

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one hole and then creating another,” she says, “whether that be maintenance, special education, ESL, French immersion.”

She wants the government review to ask: How do we fund an education system? She strongly declares, “We have to look at education as a needs-based model, as opposed to some mathematical formula where you plug in a few variables and end up with a number that’s supposed to be able meet the needs of the students. Responding to local needs cannot be done using a cookie-cutter approach.”

According to Horwath, the McGuinty government is also failing on the issues of declining enrolment and school closings. She is particularly concerned with the preponderance of inner-city schools that are closing. Some of these communities have few social services and closing a school only adds to their challenges. Despite an earlier moratorium on school closings and the current policy of Accommodation Review Committees (ARCs), Horwath charges that the McGuinty government has not been creative in its approach to the challenge of declining enrolment. She claims the government doesn’t see schools as part of the community but rather as places we send our kids for an education.

By contrast, Horwath believes the role of the school should be expanded within the community. In her Hamilton riding, for instance, Horwath spearheaded a campaign to turn Benetto Elementary School into a community hub. In the press release, she wrote, “The school site now addresses widespread community needs, housing community and municipal programs, fitness programs, health/diabetes programs, multicultural programs, programs for youth, parents and seniors, and an award-winning stay-in-school and mentoring program, Pathways to Education.” In our interview, she acknowledges that school-board jobs were not saved in this instance but, for her, Benetto School is an example of a creative approach to the threat of school closings.

Another issue Horwath has worked hard to address is workplace violence and harassment. She had introduced a Private Member’s Bill (Bill 29) to amend the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to protect workers from harassment and violence in the workplace. Although the McGuinty government recently passed Bill 168 to address many of these issues, Horwath’s Bill 29 would have also addressed the right to refuse work as a result of bullying or harassment in the workplace.

And while the McGuinty government has passed Bill 157 on School Safety, Horwath says it has not addressed the lack

of adults in schools. “We’ve pulled those resources out of the schools, pulled out counsellors and psychologists and reduced the number of those folks in schools for so long now, we are reaping what the Harris government sowed.” Yet she is optimistic that violent behaviour in schools can be reversed, saying, “It’s something we can turn back the clock on if we’re prepared to make those investments.”

Recognizing that OSSTF/FEESO represents many university workers, Horwath says that funding for post-secondary education in Ontario is problematic. Compared to other provinces, she says, “We are tenth out of 10 in per-capita funding of students in Ontario in post-secondary education.” She is concerned that students will be burdened and have their futures compromised by the loan debts they will carry.

She is also concerned by the unavailability of full-time post-secondary teaching employment. Many instructors can only see a future of part-time or sessional work, and travel between facilities to secure employment. “How do you plan, how do you stay engaged in that field as an educator if you have no certainty whatsoever that you’re going to be able to put food on your table?” Horwath asks. “It’s absolutely unacceptable.”

Another concern is workplace pensions. She has proposed an Ontario Retirement Plan to help the two-thirds of Ontarians that don’t have a workplace pension plan. In response to pension-plan bailouts, she says, “People are saying, ‘Why should my tax dollars go to shore up their pensions when I don’t even have a pension?’” By creating a workplace pension plan that everyone can participate in, she adds, “If people have pensions, they’re not looking at what someone else has with envy, because they have it as well.”

As we conclude the interview, Horwath acknowledges the historical primacy of the relationship between labour

unions and the NDP. She knows that relationship has been damaged, but she is actively reaching out to labour leaders and members to remind them of the value of the relationship. While only having become NDP Leader barely a year ago, she is someone who’s been involved in the NDP for over 20 years and has been a community activist for as long. She’s certainly not a political neophyte. As she prepares the NDP’s platform for the next election, she is determined to present a clear alternative to the McGuinty Liberals. ☞

Paul Kossta is a strong political advocate and teacher, as well as the Health & Safety Officer, with District 12, Toronto.

As she prepares the NDP’s platform for the next election, Horwath is determined to present a clear alternative.



Time-travelling in Egypt

Egypt is almost unbearably hot in July, but we soon learned that travelling at this time means the tourist sites are not nearly as busy as they are in winter. Our tour, “Along the Nile: A Teacher’s Adventure,” run by Off The Map Adventures (www.offthemap.ca), included visits to the Great Pyramids at Giza, the Valley of the Kings, Queen Hatshepsut’s temple, plus temples at Luxor and Karnak, a shopping trip to Khan al Khalili market in Cairo, a climb up Mount Sinai to see the sunrise and even scuba diving in the Red Sea. It was like stepping back in time when we ventured inside the second pyramid at Giza or came face to face with King Tut in his tomb in the Valley of the Kings. It was truly a trip of a lifetime! ☺





Clockwise from top left:
Riding camels to the Great Pyramids of Giza
A felucca sailing at sunset on the Nile River
A view of Cairo from the top of the tower at the Mosque of Ibn Tulun
The legendary sphinx guarding the Great Pyramids





The Museum of Ontario Archaeology

Discovering 11,000 years of southwestern Ontario history

The Museum of Ontario Archaeology, located in London, is a unique Canadian museum devoted to the study, display and interpretation of the human occupation of southwestern Ontario over the past 11,000 years.

A non-profit research centre and resource for studies in Ontario archaeology, the museum houses over 2.5 million artifacts for analysis and also maintains a gallery that is open to the public.

The museum was established at the University of Western Ontario in 1933 to house the collection of Native artifacts that had been gathered and catalogued by Amos Jury and his son, Wilfrid. Initially named the Museum of Indian Archaeology and Pioneer Life, it was dedicated to the study and interpretation of Ontario's prehistory and early history. It eventually became an important archaeological institution in Ontario and Canada, thanks

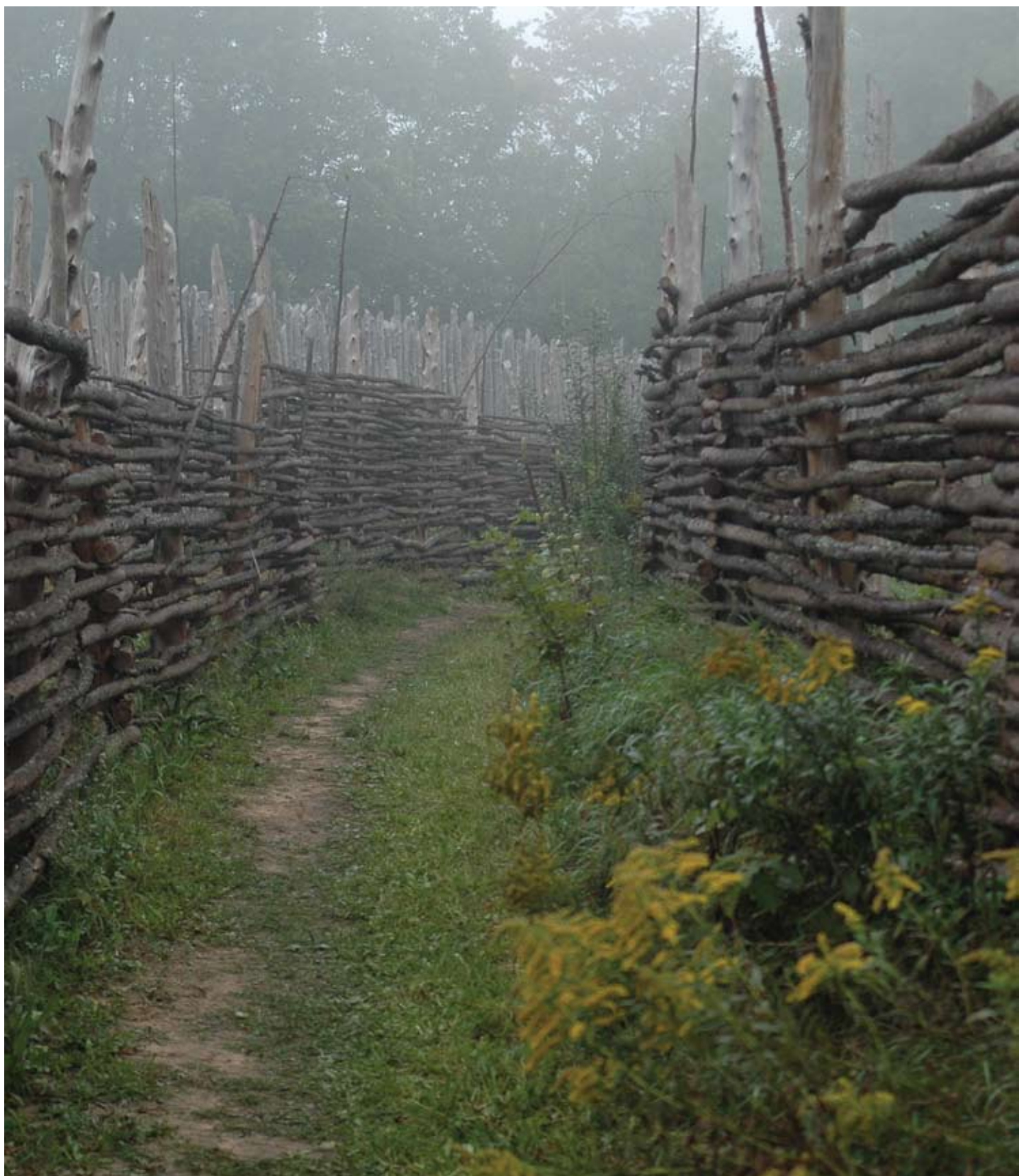
to the numerous archaeological and historical projects undertaken by Wilfrid.

Since 1976, the tradition of archaeological investigation established by Wilfrid Jury has continued through the gradual excavation and reconstruction of a Neutral village. The Lawson Provincial Heritage and Archaeological Dig Site, which is adjacent to the museum, was occupied by about 2,000 Neutral Iroquoians around 1475-1500. It is Canada's only ongoing excavation and reconstruction of a pre-European-contact village, and the only archaeological site in Canada where the excavation and reconstruction are open to the public. Archeologists have recovered over 300,000 artifacts and the remains of at least 19 longhouses, 30 middens and a palisade along the northern half of the site. The site was strategically situated, both for defensive purposes and because there was plentiful fresh water,



Harvest Festival powwow dancer





PHOTOS: MUSEUM OF ONTARIO ARCHAEOLOGY

Misty morning pathway through the maze on the grounds of the museum



plants, fish, wild game and other necessary natural resources.

Educators will be pleased to know that the museum offers a 60-minute general tour during which an interpreter takes students through the gallery, allowing them to explore how the changes in climate and environment affected the culture and technology of Native people.

The museum also offers core-program tours, which cover the same information presented in the general tour as well as more in-depth information that meets specific targets of the Ontario curriculum. The following are the various programs available.

Archaeology Ontario

Discover the history of the Great Lakes people through the eyes of an archaeologist. Hands-on experience reveals what artifacts can tell us about the people living in Ontario prior to European contact. Explore the gallery and village to discover 11,000 years of history.

Aboriginal Ontario

Discover the lives and traditions of the Native peoples of Ontario by piecing together their past lives through the hands-on examination of the tools they left behind. Find out about the changes that have occurred throughout Ontario's human occupation. Explore the gallery and village to discover 11,000 years of history of the Great Lakes people.

Early Civilizations:

Ontario and the World

A guided tour, combined with an examination of artifacts from the area, helps students understand the social, economic, political and spiritual practices of the Neutral Nation, with a special focus on comparisons with other civilizations such as ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, Central and South America, etc. In good weather, this program also includes a tour of the Lawson Iroquoian Village.

Archaeologist for a Day:

Secondary School Program

The program begins with a 90-minute introduction to the site, the First Nations people of southwestern Ontario and the

practice of archaeology. The remainder of the time is spent on the Lawson site, conducting an actual excavation as well as washing and cataloguing artifacts.

The museum gives visitors a chance to experience this archaeological site in a variety of ways. To find out which program best suits your classroom curriculum, and for more detailed information, go to www.uwo.ca/museum/education.html.

Bookings need to be done at least two weeks before your preferred date.

Tours and programs are booked on a first-come, first-served basis; note that some dates fill quickly. To make a booking, call 519-473-1360 or e-mail the museum at museum.of.archaeology@uwo.ca. You can also check out their *Educator Updates Newsletter* (www.uwo.ca/museum/documents/newsletters/EducationNewsletterWinter2009.pdf) to read about the new and exciting education programs available through the museum. ☺



Hoop dancer at a powwow event



Students participating in an archaeology day



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464 pages, \$32.95

Reviewed by Matthew Gilbert

Survival Tips for New Teachers: from people who have been there (and lived to tell about it!), second edition **Edited by Cheryl Miller Thurston**

Published by Cottonwood Press,
April 2009

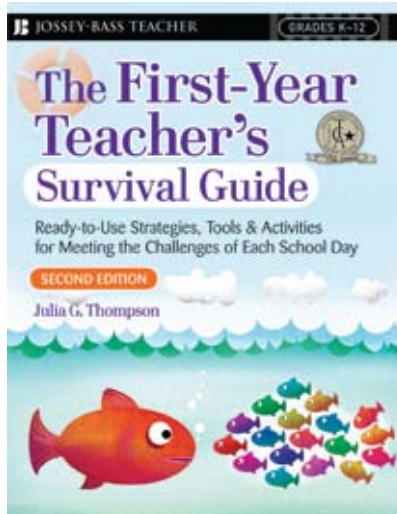
120 pages, \$9.95

Reviewed by Matthew Gilbert

"What have I gotten myself into?" This question is posed by nearly all first-year teachers at some point, whether they are on a supply list or have their own class. Two very different books that can help new teachers cope with the many challenges in their new career are *The First-Year Teacher's Survival Guide* by Julia G. Thompson and *Survival Tips for New Teachers: from people who have been there (and lived to tell about it)*, edited by Cheryl Miller Thurston.

Thompson's *The First-Year Teacher's Survival Guide*, which weighs in at over 450 pages, is organized into 17 different sections that offer tips, strategies, tools and activities. Each section deals with topics ranging from what you need to be a good teacher and getting

started when the school year starts to developing successful lessons and successfully managing a class. Information is carefully and clearly broken down, with headings for each topic and sub-topic. The size of the book is at times overwhelming, but Thompson, a teacher with more than 25 years' experience, has included a detailed table of contents and an equally detailed index. The book is written for teachers ranging from kindergarten to high school, and Thompson succeeds in answering many of the important questions facing first-year teachers, along

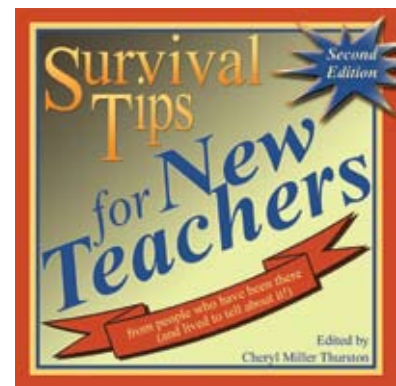


with other questions they perhaps have not yet thought of, such as how to avoid ruining your career and how to motivate students.

The *Survival Guide* was written for an American audience, so a few areas do not apply to the Ontario teacher. Thompson assumes first-year teachers who graduate from a faculty of education will have a contract and their own classes, and as a result, there is little information and few tips pertaining to supply teaching, the most common first-year teaching experience in Ontario. Many first-year teachers are desperate for lesson plans but none

is included in this book. However, despite repeated references to American educational initiatives such as the *No Child Left Behind Act*, many examples are similar to situations in Ontario, such as the increased use of standardized testing and the increased role of technology in the classroom. Thompson also includes plenty of advice on a variety of topics offered by experienced teachers, rounding things out with helpful and usually free website recommendations for everything from activities to lesson suggestions.

Miller Thurston's *Survival Tips for*



New Teachers: from people who have been there (and lived to tell about it) is a short compendium of reminders, helpful advice and tools written by over 50 established teachers from the United States (and one from Nicaragua). This book is most useful as a quick guide for the classroom. Miller Thurston has divided her book into chapters, such as "Building Rapport with Students," "Communicating with Parents," "Fitting In" and, finally, "A Few Words of Wisdom." While some of these sections could be seen as simple common sense, many are important reminders of things to do — or, more importantly, not do — while teaching.

Unfortunately *Survival Tips* includes no contributions from Canadian teachers and therefore there are no



Canadian-specific ideas or curricula. And if you are looking for lesson plans or anything subject- or grade-level specific, another resource would be more appropriate. That said, this book aims to help all teachers, from kindergarten to Grade 12, and manages to hit its mark with relevant advice. At 120 pages, *Survival Tips* is a quick read, which is helpful in itself for time-strapped new teachers.

Overall, *The First-Year Teacher's Survival Guide* provides an excellent overview of the issues you may face as a new teacher. Just make sure you have a lot of time set aside to read it. But if you are looking for a book to refer to when you simply need some quick words of wisdom or encouragement, pick up *Survival Tips for New Teachers*. ☺

Matthew Gilbert, a 2008 graduate of the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University, is an occasional teacher in District 11, Thames Valley, working towards a full-time contract position.

Les Origines de Toronto, Le Sentier Partagé/The Shared Path, 10 teaching modules

Published by La Société d'histoire de Toronto, 2009

42 pages, \$20 single copy, \$18 (10+ copies), \$16 (20+), \$14 (40+) Reviewed by Larry French

If you are like me and think of the origins of Toronto, the date 1793, Governor Simcoe, Yonge Street and Muddy York spring to mind. Toronto is over 200 years old, which is not bad in terms of Ontario's history. The town where I grew up, Kirkland Lake, is typical of many and has yet to celebrate its first 100 years.

The reality is, however, that the first human traces in what we now know as Toronto date back to 10,000 BC. Between 1000 BC and 1000 AD the first agricultural settlements took

root. In 1615, Étienne Brûlé arrived, the first European to see the Great Lakes. Around 1660, a Seneca village, Teiaiagon, on the east bank of the Humber River — near what is now the intersection of Jane and Annette streets — contained dwellings for 5,000 inhabitants. As the fur trade flourished, the French built a succession of three forts between 1720 and 1750. So when johnny-come-lately John Graves Simcoe arrived as the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, he was greeted by the well-established fur trader Jean Baptiste Rousseau, who offered him the

early life of our province and our city, all centred on the Humber-Toronto River, the lifeline between the upper and lower great lakes. The French of *Les Origines* is lucid and transparent, suitable for Français or senior French classes. An English version will be printed when funding is available. ☺

Larry French is a Life Member of OSSTF/FEESO and a former Director of Communication and Political Action at OSSTF/FEESO's provincial office.

GALLERY REVIEWS

University of Toronto Art Centre Reviewed by David Orenstein

There are many small-scale cultural institutions across Ontario eager to reach out to educators and students.

The Ottawa Art Gallery (not to be confused with the National Gallery of Canada) mounts focused shows of contemporary and 20th-century Canadian art. Kingston's Miller Museum of Geology at Queen's University brings in local classes to visit their minerals and choice fossils. And the McMaster Museum of Art in Hamilton allows you to book a class tour and also has a Facebook page (go to www.mcmaster.ca/museum and click on Resources and Related Links).

Meanwhile, the University of Toronto Art Centre (UTAC), located in the historic University College quadrangle on the ground floor of the north Laidlaw wing, has four gallery spaces.

The western gallery, a major space with six sub-galleries, holds exhibits of historical and contemporary Canadian and world art. A central area in UTAC often features the University of Toronto's or University College's own collections. A small gallery on the north side displays the Lillian Maltcove Collection, its special strength being Byzantine and Post-Byzantine art, especially icons. Finally, the art



hospitality of his large home near the mouth of the Humber.

Indeed, the key link in the thousands of years of history of our provincial capital is the Humber. As part of its project to found a historical park along the Humber, known to the First Nations and the French as the Toronto Portage, the Société d'histoire de Toronto has produced an attractive, informative, finely illustrated history of the city, *Les Origines de Toronto, Le Sentier Partagé/The Shared Path*. Its focus is on the years preceding the arrival of Simcoe, and brings to life the personalities and events that shaped the

lounge usually displays student art in a comfortable venue with a supply of art magazines.

Over the years UTAC has held many extraordinary shows. They sometimes focus on the university itself — for example, the Graduating Exhibition of the U of T Masters of Visual Studies Programme — or they may be solo shows or presentations of larger themes with various artists participating.

This summer UTAC's feature show will be a retrospective of the career of one of Canada's foremost landscape painters, Doris McCarthy, born in 1910. Part of the show will be at the Doris McCarthy Gallery (of course!) at U of T's Scarborough campus. McCarthy was a member of OSSTF/FEESO in Toronto and taught art at Central Technical School from 1932-1972, before she "retired" to an even more prolific career as an artist.

To organize a field trip to UTAC, contact Sunny Kerr, the Student and Education Programme Coordinator: (416) 946-3029;

sunny.kerr@utoronto.ca.

Admission is free. Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 12-5 p.m., Saturday, 12-4 p.m. All shows and educational events are listed on the UTAC website: www.utac.utoronto.ca. ☺

David Orenstein is a teacher at Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute and a member of the Professional Development Committee in District 12, Toronto.

CONFERENCES

OTF's 2010 Summer Program

Once again, OTF is offering three-day workshops in ideal locations across Ontario in July and August. These professional events will provide time to learn, reflect on your classroom practices, collaborate with colleagues and share best practices. Experienced teacher facilitators will guide discussions and help participants build on each other's expertise. Anticipate a rich sharing of strategies and resources. Whether you are interested in Going Green, Subject-Based or Critical Thinking workshops, the

OTF Summer Program is the place for you this summer! Space is limited — register early! Online registration closes June 18. A registration fee of \$50 covers workshop materials, on-site meals and two nights' accommodation, if required. OTF does not cover the cost of transportation. For information about specific workshops and to register, visit www.otffeo.on.ca/english/pro_camp.php.

October 21–23, 2010

Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities
Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto

This conference provides an opportunity for educators, public-health professionals and other community leaders to increase their knowledge and skills to foster healthy active living for children and youth in their schools and communities. The conference offers workshops and interactive sessions on innovative strategies for health and physical education, development of physical literacy and health literacy, sport and intramural activities, and a selection of health-promotion topics. The keynote speaker will be Craig Kielburger. For more information, visit www.ophea.net.

October 29–31, 2010

Celebrate Drama and Dance:
Inspiring the artist in the teacher
Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON

Come celebrate CODE's 40th anniversary in one of the most beautiful towns in the province, Niagara-on-the-Lake. It is a very exciting time for drama and dance in the education system within Ontario. The implementation of the new arts curriculum presents great opportunities and enormous challenges. The CODE Conference will provide drama and dance educators with the opportunity to learn and grow with these changes. This organization and the conference can also be a tremendous resource for teachers who wish to enrich their classroom

OCTOBER 27–29, 2010

TOOLS AND TOYS...TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION
OUTILS ET JEUX... TECHNOLOGIE EN ÉDUCATION
DOUBLETREE BY HILTON, TORONTO

The conference will focus on the varied impact of technology on educational settings in Ontario. All teachers, educational workers and related professionals are invited to attend and experience the dynamic presentations of keynote speakers Jesse Brown, founder of the cartoon site Bitstrips, and Marc Salzman, "trusted tech expert."

Participants will also select from workshop presentations on such topics as educating students; providing professional development for effective technology use; social networking; technology in the workplace; technology to improve student achievement; assistive technologies; wonders of technology in education; the use and abuse of technology; and understanding terminology.

Registration will be available online in the fall at www.osstf.on.ca.

experience with arts-based teaching strategies. Conference highlights include: Developing Theatre Skills for Drama and Dance Teachers; Strategies for Cross-curricular Arts Integration; Implementation of the New Curriculum; and Assisting and Supporting the Artist/Teacher. For more information, visit www.code.on.ca.

November 6, 2010

Annual OFSHEEA Conference Maple High School, Maple, ON

This jam-packed day will revive social-science and humanities teachers both personally and professionally and will provide multiple opportunities for networking with professional colleagues. Participants will be able to choose from 30 diverse and exciting workshops on topics such as gender issues, equity, environmental concerns, Aboriginal perspectives, experiential learning opportunities, assessment and evaluation, differentiated instruction, literacy, technology, Smart Board application, fashion construction, multicultural experiences and food-lab demonstrations, to name just a few. See www.ofsheea.ca for registration in August.

November 4–6, 2010

Fusion 2010

Hilton London Ontario and the London Convention Centre

The Ontario Music Educators' Association invites music teachers to attend Fusion 2010 to celebrate togetherness in music with a strong World Music focus in both clinics and performances. This year's conference features keynote performers Orchestra London, Farley Flex and acts from Sunfest, Canada's premier free outdoor World Music Festival held in London every summer.

The workshops offer opportunities for every music teacher to find new wisdom, information, tips and tricks to blend into ever-changing classrooms.

There are sessions for guitar, strings, beginning band, musical theatre, choir, 9-12 band, music technology, jazz, percussion, drumming and more. For more information, visit www.omea.on.ca.

November 11–13, 2010

STAO2010: Inclusive Science: Difference, Diversity and Equity Doubletree by Hilton, Toronto

STAO/APSO is proud to present the finest science and technology and science professional-learning event in Ontario. A comprehensive program designed to meet the needs of all science and technology (K-8) and science educators (9-12) is being offered to reflect a focus on difference, diversity and equity — from multiple perspectives in the science classroom — to promote success for all students. Join us to explore strategies for inclusivity as they apply specifically to our classrooms. For more information and to register, go to www.stao.org. ☞

OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teaching Matters PD Calendar

The OTF's Teaching Matters PD Calendar tracks subject association conferences, Additional Qualifications courses, affiliate workshops and events on a wide array of topics and across all grade levels. Most of the events are sponsored by teaching organizations and subject associations. Search the calendar by type of event, region, topic, grade or date and sign up for e-mail notification of similar opportunities as they are added. The PD Calendar is available in both English and French. Information on events that interest you can be printed. The PD Calendar is one project in the Teaching Matters program, which is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Visit www.teachingmatters.on.ca/site/index.php.

Understanding Media Literacy: Inside Plato's Cave

Recent articles in *Education Forum* have underlined the need for students to be media literate in today's society. Although there is a strong media strand within the core English curriculum, media literacy is often an area in which teachers feel they need more professional development in order to deliver that part of the curriculum well.

A new, online 13-unit, three-credit course, written and field-tested by leading Canadian media educators, is now available from Athabasca University. The course is especially designed for Grades 7-12 teachers who want to help their students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature, impact and techniques of the mass media.

The course is available as a six-week summer session July 5 - August 15, 2010; registration will take place from June 1-10. Alternatively, teachers can study at their own pace starting in September; registration for this option opens August 10.

For more information or to register, visit www.athabascau.ca/platoscave. ☞



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JUNE 21 is National
Aboriginal Day, a time for
all Canadians to recognize
the diverse cultures and
outstanding contributions of
First Nations, Inuit and Métis
peoples.

LE 21 JUIN est la Journée
nationale des Autochtones,
une occasion pour tous les
Canadiens et Canadiennes
de reconnaître la diversité
culturelle et la contribution
remarquable des membres des
Premières nations, des Inuit et
des Métis.



*National
Aboriginal
Day* *Journée
nationale des
Autochtones*



Last word

by Ken Coran, President

Mot de la fin

par Ken Coran, président

The power of solidarity

Moving forward from a position of strength

Before we focus our attention on the challenges that OSSTF/FEESO will be facing in the future, here is a snapshot of what has been facing the education sector in other parts of the world. The terrible earthquakes in Haiti, Chile and Turkey have caused tremendous loss of life, and the loss of many educational institutions and schools. OSSTF/FEESO has responded with financial donations and political solidarity in those countries.

Over the past year, we have also continued monitoring the democratic process and human-rights situation in Latin America. We have sent representatives to monitor elections in El Salvador and Bolivia. We have also joined with other education unions and non-governmental organizations on human rights fact-finding missions to Honduras and Colombia. In each of these countries, we witnessed the same thing — educational workers are on the front line in the struggle for human rights and democracy, and because of this, they are often the most visible and the most vulnerable. In Colombia, for example, nearly 900 teachers have been assassinated over the past 20 years.

In terms of provincial issues here in Ontario, even though we have had a consistent government since 2003, numerous changes to legislation related to education will have an impact on the professional lives and working conditions of our members.

- Bill 157: *Education Amendment Act* (Keep Our Kids Safe at School)
- Bill 168: *Workplace Violence and Harassment Act*
- Bill 175: *Labour Mobility Act*
- Bill 177: *School Board Governance Act*
- Bill 183: *Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act*
- Bill 242: *Full Day Learning Statute Law Amendment Act*

Some of these impacts will be positive in terms of making our workplaces safer or more accessible or providing additional services to students, but others may be more problematic. OSSTF/FEESO continues to monitor their implementation, provide input to the government on the issues that arise and provide advice to our members about how to cope with the shifting educational landscape.

Education trends across North America reflect emerging

Le pouvoir de la solidarité

Progresser et décupler nos forces

Avant de nous concentrer sur les défis qu'OSSTF/FEESO devra relever dans l'avenir, voici un aperçu de ce que le milieu de l'éducation a dû surmonter dans d'autres régions du monde. Les terribles séismes à Haïti, au Chili et en Turquie ont causé la mort de milliers de personnes et la destruction de nombreux établissements scolaires. OSSTF/FEESO a réagi par des dons en argent et en se montrant solidaire de ces pays au niveau politique.

Au cours de l'année passée, nous avons également continué de surveiller le processus démocratique et la situation des droits de la personne en Amérique latine. Nous avons envoyé des représentants pour surveiller les élections en El Salvador et en Bolivie. Nous nous sommes également joints à d'autres syndicats du milieu de l'éducation et à des organismes non gouvernementaux pour accomplir des missions d'information sur les droits de la personne au Honduras et en Colombie. Dans tous ces pays, nous avons été témoins du même fait : les travailleurs de l'éducation sont en première ligne dans la lutte pour les droits de la personne et la démocratie; c'est aussi pour cela qu'ils sont les plus visibles et les plus vulnérables. En Colombie, par exemple, près de 900 enseignants ont été assassinés au cours des 20 dernières années.

En ce qui a trait aux questions provinciales ici, en Ontario, même si le gouvernement a gardé sa cohérence depuis 2003, de nombreux changements législatifs liés à l'éducation ne manqueront pas de retentir sur la vie professionnelle et les conditions de travail de nos membres :

- Projet de loi 157 – *Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation* (sécurité de nos enfants à l'école)
- Projet de loi 168 – *Violence et harcèlement au travail*
- Projet de loi 175 – *Loi sur la mobilité de la main-d'œuvre*
- Projet de loi 177 – *Loi sur la gouvernance des conseils*
- Projet de loi 183 – *Loi sur l'Ordre des métiers de l'Ontario et l'apprentissage*
- Projet de loi 242 – *Loi de 2010 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne l'apprentissage des jeunes enfants à temps plein*

Certains de ces effets seront positifs au sens où ils rendront nos lieux de travail plus sûrs ou plus accessibles ou bien parce qu'ils fourniront des services additionnels aux élèves. D'autres, cependant, seront plus problématiques et c'est pour-



philosophies and currently focus on problematic issues such as increased standardized testing, merit pay, test scores tied to the evaluation of teachers, funding tied to student results and greater accountability, transparency and efficiency. We are not immune to the influence of these trends in Ontario. We received notice in early March that in September, Premier Dalton McGuinty is hosting an international education summit entitled *Building Blocks for Education: Whole System Reform*. This summit will be co-chaired by Michael Fullan, Special Education Advisor to the Premier, and Sir Michael Barber, former education advisor to the Tony Blair government. A keynote speaker will be Arne Duncan, President Obama's Education Secretary and an ardent advocate of the aforementioned trends.

A strongly built and properly maintained education system that is in the best interests of our members and of Ontarians is the foundation that OSSTF/FEESO fights for and protects.

OSSTF/FEESO will send representatives to this summit because, while ideas come and go, a strongly built and properly maintained education system that is in the best interests of our members and of Ontarians is the foundation that OSSTF/FEESO fights for and protects. Facing these and many other challenges should not be seen as adversity but rather as opportunities to provide well-reasoned input to make changes that will benefit and be positive for our members, our students and our communities.

Charles Darwin said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change." We know that collectively, OSSTF/FEESO is strong and intelligent, but to continue to be powerful and remain the leader in the education sector, we must also respond with appropriate changes — which means being adaptable and flexible.

The one dynamic that has been a constant, both in the past and going forward, is that the strength of our union is based on the strength of our members. We have focused on planning for the future, improving our communications and developing strategies to better involve you, our members. We need you, and we need your skills and ideas to continue to build and strengthen our organization.

My message to you and to all members is: Have faith in the union team. Our dedication, our commitment and our desire to protect and enhance publicly funded education will always see us through and will always see us thrive. We will prepare, educate and involve our members and then implement our plans.

Together, we can move forward to meet these future challenges from a position of increasing strength. ☺

quoi OSSTF/FEESO continue de surveiller leur mise en application, de donner son avis au gouvernement sur les problèmes soulevés et de conseiller ses membres sur la manière de s'adapter à l'environnement éducatif en pleine évolution.

En Amérique du Nord, les tendances en matière d'éducation reflètent les philosophies émergentes et sont axées pour l'instant sur les questions problématiques que sont les tests normalisés, la rémunération au mérite, les résultats des tests liés à l'évaluation des enseignants, le financement lié aux résultats des élèves et l'accent mis sur la responsabilité, la transparence et l'efficacité. L'Ontario n'est pas à l'abri de l'influence de ces tendances. Au début du mois de mars, nous avons reçu un avis selon lequel le premier ministre organiserait en septembre un sommet international de l'éducation baptisé « *Building Blocks for Education: Whole System Reform* ». Ce sommet sera coprésidé par Michael Fullan, conseiller spécial en éducation auprès du premier ministre et par Michael Barber, ancien conseiller en éducation du gouvernement de Tony Blair. L'un des conférenciers sera Arne Duncan, secrétaire à l'éducation du Président Obama et ardent défenseur des tendances susmentionnées.

OSSTF/FEESO enverra des représentants à ce sommet, car si les idées vont et viennent, un système éducatif reposant sur des bases solides et convenablement préservés est le fondement même de ce pourquoi OSSTF/FEESO se bat et qu'elle entend protéger, dans le meilleur intérêt de ses membres et des Ontariens. Relever ces défis et bien d'autres ne doit pas être envisagé comme un obstacle, mais plutôt comme une occasion de donner un avis raisonné et d'apporter des changements qui auront un effet bénéfique sur nos membres, nos élèves et nos collectivités.

Selon Charles Darwin, « les espèces qui survivent ne sont pas les espèces les plus fortes ni les plus intelligentes, mais celles qui s'adaptent le mieux aux changements ». Nous savons que tous ensemble, OSSTF/FEESO forme un organisme fort et intelligent. Par conséquent, pour qu'il reste puissant et demeure le chef de file du milieu de l'éducation, nous devons réagir en proposant les changements qui conviennent, c'est-à-dire montrer notre capacité d'adaptation et notre souplesse.

La seule dynamique qui demeure constante, que ce soit par le passé ou dans l'avenir, est celle qui veut que notre syndicat tire sa force de celle de ses membres. Nous nous sommes concentrés sur la planification de notre avenir, l'amélioration de nos communications et l'élaboration de stratégies permettant de mieux vous faire participer, en tant que membres. Nous avons besoin de vous, de vos aptitudes et de vos idées pour continuer à bâtir et à renforcer notre organisme.

Le message que je vous adresse, ainsi qu'à tous les membres, est d'avoir foi en l'équipe syndicale. Notre dévouement, notre engagement et notre désir de protéger et d'améliorer l'éducation financée à même les deniers publics nous permettront toujours de faire face et de réussir. Nous préparerons et éduquerons nos membres et les ferons participer pour ensuite mettre nos plans en œuvre.

Ensemble, nous progresserons et relèverons les défis qui nous attendent tout en sachant notre force décuplée. ☺



Watch for the full conference program in August 2010

October 27-29, 2010

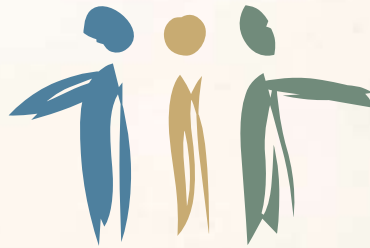
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