

January 2009 Volume 3 Issue 5

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North Van Pac: www.nvsd44.bc.ca/AboutUs/NVPAC.aspx

North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council

NVPAC Newsbytes

Message from the Editor

The recent snow conditions have created a lot of unexpected stress for all residents of North Vancouver, including parents, the school district and the municipalities, although perhaps not the kids. If mine are anything to go by the kids have had a great time of it. On return to school many of us were surprised at the conditions the schools faced and people have expressed their frustrations in a variety of ways, but I'd like to thank the majority of people for being considerate, helpful and understanding during a challenge week for many of us.

I'd also like to thank Superintendent John Lewis for the extra communication parents received from the school board on the situations in the schools. The board was stuck in the middle of a lot of the problems that occurred this week and the communications helped to explain what was being done. While there are many things that could be improved, and perhaps things NVPAC and school PACs can do to help as well, I think a lot of effort was put in to dealing with this situation and the district should be thanked for having the schools open, for working with the municipalities to open the roads and for giving parents the choice of whether it was appropriate to bring their children to school.

We've all discovered a lot of challenges with our communications and preparedness systems in the past month, and now we should take the opportunity to learn from these experiences. We'll have a chance to do that at the next NVPAC General Meeting. The agenda is going to look at what can be done to improve our responses during events such as snow conditions in terms of communications and other actions. We also want to discuss what parents expect from PACs, NVPAC, the school district, schools and the municipalities when these events occur. So please bring your ideas to the next NVPAC general meeting on Jan.22nd.

David Whitehead, Newsbytes editor 2008/9

Upcoming Public Meetings

Next NVPAC General Meeting

- January 22, 2009: 7pm - Windsor Secondary

- Focusing on two of North Vancouver School District's Vision Statements:
 - *Integrated Communities* - How to develop Integrated Families of Schools and internal relationships. Windsor PAC and other schools will share their experience with developing FOS PAC meetings and events.
 - *Community Communications* - Working with our external partners and agencies for a more effective education system. Discussion on parent expectations from the School District and Municipalities in response to storms and other emergency situation

District School Information Meetings

- International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program Information Meeting Jan. 15 at Windsor Secondary
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program Information Meeting Jan. 19 at Sutherland Secondary
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program Information Meeting Jan. 20 at Carson Graham Secondary
- Late French Immersion Information Meeting Jan. 21 at Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre

Public Board Meetings

http://www.nvsd44.bc.ca/Trustees/Meetings/2008_2009%20Meetings.aspx

NVSD44 Public Board of Education Meeting

January 27th, 2008: 7pm School Board Office

Agenda items posted on website on the Friday before the meeting

Public question period related to agenda items is available at the beginning and at the end of each Public Board Meeting.

NVSD44 Education & Programs Meeting

January 13, 2009: 7pm Seycove Secondary

A full agenda is now posted on the website at www.nvsd44.bc.ca- see "Trustees/Meetings/2008 2009 (see link above)

The agenda for this meeting will include a District panel presenting insights on achievement challenges, interventions, systemic change, and instructional differentiation with respect to gender differences as well as other topics related to teaching to identified classifications of students (ESL, Aboriginal, Boys, Girls, Students at Risk, etc)

This is a Public NVSD standing committee meeting to provide information and to facilitate discussion of education policy and programs;

Trustees and other district staff and committee reps will be in attendance at this meeting which is also open to the public.

A great opportunity to hear the latest District news in this area and to ask questions and to take part in the discussion

Upcoming Events

Speaking Up! Solving Problems in Public Schools

Tuesday, January 20, 2009, 7:00pm-9:00pm
Braemar Elementary School
3600 Mahon Ave, North Vancouver

<http://www.nvsd44.bc.ca/AboutUs/~media/BEC42865597B491192C5BBE23820A703.ashx>

North Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council (NVPAC) with Braemar Elementary PAC and the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils are pleased to sponsor this session for parents on how to speak up for students in public schools.

During the session BCCPAC Advocacy experts will teach parents how to advocate for students within the BC school system:

- Help you understand what the BCCPAC Advocacy Project is all about and how advocacy supports children in public schools.
- Discuss the basic processes for solving problems at the school, school district, and provincial levels and the importance of linking to this information.
- Introduce you to a variety of information and resources available.
- Help you learn how to gather and use information.
- Help you identify and work through problems using Speaking Up!

While the event has no charge, please pre-register by sending an email to libbybrown@shaw.ca.

Boy Smarts: Effective Strategies for Parenting Boys

Tuesday, February 24th, 7-9pm
Windsor Secondary School

www.mentoringboys.com

At this event, sponsored by Dorothy Lynas PAC, Barry Macdonald, author of "Boy Smarts - Mentoring boys for success at school" will discuss the special parenting needs for boys including information on:

- What are the varied needs of boys?
- How can we help boys navigate cultural realities like video game and Facebook?
- How can we talk with boys so they'll listen and listen so they'll talk?
- How can we help our boys to become courageous, caring and ethical men?

Advance Tickets: \$10 per person, \$15 per couple. Available at Dorothy Lynas Elementary
Contact: Cathy Piteaux 604-903-3430

BCCPAC Constitution Review - Input Sessions

BCCPAC are asking PAC members to participate in a review of the BCCPAC constitution. They will be holding 6 discussion sessions in to be determined locations across the province as follows:

- January 24: Qualicum / Parksville
- February 7: Fraser Valley / Chilliwack
- February 28: Okanagan
- March 28: Prince George
- April 1th: Cranbrook
- April 30th: Richmond

Please contact BCCPAC if you would like to comment or make recommendations on the BCCPAC constitution and need more information on these sessions.

CARSON GRAHAM Secondary - Open House - hold the date - Thursday, January 22nd - details to follow

Items of Interest

Career Skills for Women at Risk

Are you or do you know an unemployed, woman at risk between the ages of 15-30 interested in working in the carpentry trade?

The YWCA in partnership with RONA and Service Canada is excited to announce The FAB SHOP Project. A 35 week Skills Link Program from February to October 2009 for unemployed women at risk. The project will recruit 16 at-risk young women. Preference will be given to young women who have not yet completed high school and integrated into the work force. The FAB SHOP will give all participants the work experience and skills needed in the field of carpentry/cabinetmaking. It will produce podiums, risers, stanchions, signage and other items for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

The project will take place at the RONA Vancouver 2010 Fabrication Shop run by VANOC with assistance from RONA (as a sponsor of the Olympic Winter Games). The FAB project compliments apprenticeship training by preparing youth with 6 weeks of preparation/orientation to work at the Fab Shop that includes numeracy, document reading and requirements (essential skills) for on-site safety. Life skills support and personal coaching is provided.

Participants will receive an allowance of \$8 an hour for instructional time and a wage of up to \$15 per hour for work experience time. Those successfully completing the Carpenter Level 1 apprenticeship course work will receive Level 1 technical credit and up to 500 work-based hours credit toward completion of their apprenticeship.

All clients must be referred by a Case Manager. Please have interested women phone the YWCA One Stop Career Shop to meet with a Case Manager. (604) 988-3766.

Supporting BC Public Libraries

The BC Library Trustees Association are asking people to please take a moment to write to your MLA, the Minister of Education and the Premier (with a copy to BCLTA) to confirm your support of recent provincial investments in libraries and literacy – e.g., funding for OneCard, technology grants, virtual reference services, the Sitka project, staff training, library federations, etc. To abandon these important services and initiatives now would be a huge step backward after the gains made under the provincial Strategic Plan for Public Libraries.

Help us keep libraries top of mind in these tough economic times.

More information and a sample letter can be found at:

http://www.bclta.org/pdfs/BCLTA_Letter_to_Premier_re_Library_Funding.pdf

Phonological Awareness to Phonics

Friday, February 20th, 2009
The REACH O-G Learning Center
9:30am – 3:00pm

This workshop is focused on providing information to educators of 4 - 8 year olds, pre-school and day care providers, and parents who would like to support their children with early literacy skills.

Research has shown that carefully planned instruction of phonological awareness skills has a significant impact on the development of children's reading and spelling achievement and the early identification of struggling learners. This workshop will focus on explicitly teaching the following skills using a multisensory structured language (MSL) approach:

- Phonological awareness skills
- Beginning phonics
- Blending of sounds

For more information go to: www.reachlearningcenter.com

Beanies for Babies

A North Lonsdale United Church Initiative

Many of the 2 million babies in developing countries who die each year in the first 24 hours of life could be saved by simple measures like a warmth cap for warmth. Talk to your friends, family and students about knitting a beanie for a newborn baby in need. We like to extend an invitation to teachers, students and parents at all schools to become involved in this community project. If you already have a knitting club, this would be an ideal project or perhaps now would be a great time to start one. If you are interested please contact Pam Carron about patterns for different levels of knitting.

If you would like someone to come and talk to the students about the project, we would be thrilled to do so.

The project will end Christmas 2009 and we are hoping to distribute at least 10,000 beanies to new born babies in need, here in Canada and abroad. We will be distributing the beanies throughout the year and will welcome names of places that you know could benefit from our project.

If you have any further queries please contact Pam Carron at rainbow_works@shaw.ca, 887 280 3600

Reminders from last issue

“Your Issues” NVPAC meetings

NVPAC exec are planning to meet informally with individual or families of schools meetings starting in January to discuss the needs of individual PACs with respect to NVPAC support and school district plans and communication. Look for some communication from us as we start to set up these meetings, or please just send us an invite. We'd love to talk to your school(s) to see what we can do to help you get the information and support you need.

NVPAC Speakers Grants

NVPAC has approved 10 Parent Education Grants for PACS for 2008/9. These grants are \$150 each and can be used to help pay for the cost of providing useful and relevant information to your school community.

Your school PAC chair or Treasurer must apply to NVPAC for the grants with details of when and what you would like to spend the money on. Once your PAC has been approved to receive the grant, simply send in a copy of your final costs for the event or purchase and we will send you a cheque for \$150.

You may apply in advance for events that are scheduled later in the year, but your event or purchase must take place before the end of June 2009.

Grants will be awarded on a first come – first served basis throughout the year until the \$1,500 Grant Fund is fully committed.

Please send the details to NVPAC Treasurer Karen Stewart by email at karenstewart@shaw.ca or fax to 604-983-0357.

NVPAC Family of Schools Grants

At the request of our members, NVPAC has instituted Family of Schools Grants. These grants are \$200 each and can be used to help pay for the cost of an event planned to promote community between each secondary school and their feeder elementary schools.

Two secondary schools have already requested grants, one for a speaker who presented to the Family of Schools and one for a winter fair which will involve all the schools in that FOS. If your school has an idea that you think falls within the parameters of this grant, please send the details to NVPAC Treasurer Karen Stewart by email at karenstewart@shaw.ca .

“Quest of Excellence” 2009 School Bursary Program

For the 9th consecutive year, RE/MAX of Western Canada is sponsoring the Quest of Excellence bursary program. This year they are offering (24) \$500 bursaries for a total of \$12,000 to grade 12 students.

The program, which runs from September 15th, 2008 to March 6th, 2009, is aimed at schools in Western Canada and encourages students to enter an essay based on their interest and passion for a selected subject. There are six subjects that students can choose from: Leadership, Sports, Technology & Trades, Performing Arts, Fine Arts and Community Service.

Award recipients will be notified by May 4th, 2009 and a formal presentation will be arranged to take place during the students' commencement ceremonies.

Information on how to apply go to <http://www.remax-western.ca> : e-mail Maria Freeman at fre6458@shaw.cnow available in five .

BCSTA Award celebrates student citizenship

The BC School Trustees Association is now accepting applications for its Student Citizenship Award. This scholarship is presented to graduating BC public school students who demonstrate excellence through active involvement with their school and community. Let your schools and communities know – the application package is online now, ready to download.