

November/December 2008 Volume 3 Issue 4

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

North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council

NVPAC Newsbytes

Message from the NVPAC Chair: Thanks to the many parents who came out to our last general meeting (Nov20) focusing on "Parent Communications". We had almost 40 people in the room, representing at least 24 schools in our District! With a very informative update on the District Communications Audit "School Talk44" given by Victoria Miles (District Communications Manager) and a very enthusiastic discussion following amongst our parent representatives, we have some good direction from our member PACs with respect to their Communications structure and the implementation of the NVPAC "Parent Communications Protocol" released in September 2008. We will be putting together a PAC survey to followup from this meeting in the near future and would appreciate the help of any parent(s) that would like to work with us on this project in the very near future. Anyone with some electronic survey or other communications experience would be especially welcome to assist us with this. Please Lisa Cartwright, NVPAC Chair at lcartwright@northvanpac.org to volunteer for this or any other project.

NVPAC EXECUTIVE UPDATE - Farewell to Franci and looking for new Executive Members

As the school year advances, we are currently transitioning several positions on our own NVPAC Executive, I would like to take this time and space to quickly thank Karen Stewart for all her work on NewsBytes and all of our other correspondence over the last two years as we have been working hard to build our communications system and e-news as we go. Karen has taken on the role of Treasurer this year and this issue marks the first issue of NewsBytes that our new Registrar David Whitehead has taken on. Many thanks to both of you as we continue to go move tasks around internally and as we all learn new skills. Also, webmaster and member at large Leslie Uhlenbruck has revamped our webpage (go to www.nvsd44.bc.ca and click on the "NV Parent Advisory Council" on the home page to keep up with what's going on at NVPAC. Thanks to Leslie for keeping this information updated and useful to parents and for regularly filling in where nobody else is available. Thanks also go to Susan Corcoran who takes great minutes, volunteers readily to take on new assignments, and has been a fantastic addition to our team this year as our Secretary. To our other Exec members Sonya Klassen and Verna Dyk, we appreciate the time you can give us between the challenges of your family life....many thanks for your contributions. We are still hoping to fill a few other vacant Member at Large positions in order to bring new parents in to the loop,

and to build some new relationships for the future of NVPAC. And last, but not least, and for obvious reasons, Vice Chair Franci Stratton gets a whole section to herself coming up next....(Did I mention we were looking for a new Vice Chair?!)

On behalf of the NVPAC Executive, we would like to congratulate our long-time NVPAC member Franci Stratton for her successful election to the new Board of Education. We are grateful for Franci's contributions to the PAC voice for the past 16 years, with 5 terms as Chair/Co-Chair and most recently as our Vice-Chair. As she will now be stepping down from her leadership role in the parent/PAC community to take on the broader role of Trustee for the Board of Education, we will look forward to continue our great relationship with Franci as she transitions to her new position within the North Vancouver School District. We are really proud to have "grown" a new trustee from within NVPAC's ranks...its not the first time, and it probably won't be the last, but it is our time to appreciate her dedication and leadership over so many years. Please join me in saying a huge "THANK YOU" to Franci....we'll miss you at NVPAC.

Franci's departure from NVPAC will undoubtedly leave a big gap in the expertise, time, and dedication available to serve and represent parents in the community, but we still have a strong team and will look forward to bringing on new members to assist the NVPAC Executive. If you are a parent of a school-aged child in the North Vancouver public school system, and if you have an interest in the broader educational issues that affect our schools, our students, and our education policy, then we encourage you to come forward to NVPAC to offer some of your volunteer time to work with our Executive. We have a variety of positions to be filled, and can tailor the job to fit your available time and interests....but we need to know who you are and get to know you. Please contact any of your current NVPAC Executive members for more information. <http://www.nvsd44.bc.ca/AboutUs/NVPAC/Contacts%20and%20Committees.aspx> We look forward to meeting you!

Lisa Cartwright, NVPAC Chair 2008/9

Upcoming Public Meetings

Next NVPAC General Meeting,

- January 22, 2009: 7pm - location to be determined as our usual meeting room at LMCC is unavailable this night. If any PAC would like to host our NVPAC meeting on this evening for a change, please contact Lisa Cartwright, NVPAC Chair at lcartwright@northvanpac.org ASAP! Please watch for the final location and agenda details to come out in early January.
- There will not be a December NVPAC General Meeting - Enjoy the holidays!

NVSD44 Public Board of Education Meeting,

- December 9, 2008: 7pm School Board Office
- Inaugural meeting for new Board of Education.
- Public question period related to agenda items is available at the end of each Public Board Meeting.

NVSD44 Education & Programs Meeting,

- January 13, 2009: 7pm Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre - a full agenda should be posted by the Friday before the meeting at www.nvsd44.bc.ca
- The agenda for this meeting will include discussion on "Gender Differences in Student Achievement" as well as other topics of interest.
- Public NVSD standing committee meeting to provide information and discuss 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.

Latest News

NVPAC Welcomes a new Board of Education

On November 15, 2008 a new Board of Education was elected for North Vancouver School District #44. NVPAC would like to congratulate all new and returning board members. We would also like to thank the outgoing board for its work over the past three years and previously, Chris Dorais, Ginny Diebolt, and Pat Heal, as well as Vickie Vinaric and Sandy Fleming who both resigned earlier in 2008. The NVPAC Executive works very closely with our local School Trustees as well as senior administration at the North Vancouver School District. We look forward to continuing to build strong and effective relationships with the members of the new Board of Education over the coming weeks as they begin this new term of office. Our new School Trustees for North Vancouver are (alphabetically): Holly Back, Linda Buchanan, Barry Forward, Susan Skinner, Franci Stratton, Mary Tasi, and Jane Thornthwaite.

Negotiating Mental Health Workshop

December 4, 2008 from 6:30 - 8:00
 Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre Conference
 Room 810 - West 21st Street
 North Vancouver

To Register: Call Karen Bishop @ 604-903-4621

How many of you have said "I'm glad I'm not a teenager today. It was way easier when I was in school!". Between bullying on social networking sites, new and more dangerous drugs – not to mention wanting the new electronic gadgets that are always being advertised, it's hard being a teen these days. Studies show that teens are studying from higher depression and anxiety rates than ever before. What can you do and where do you find help?

On December 4, 2008 the North Vancouver School District 44 Secondary Counsellors will be hosting an information evening focusing on the resources available to teenagers and their families who are experiencing challenges of various kinds.

If you've ever tried to find support for your child, you know how hard it can be to navigate the 'system'. The workshop, Negotiating Mental Health, will present a wide variety of community resources from Capilano Community Services Society to Grief Services;

providing an opportunity for Parents and Caregivers to hear from community organizations that provide support for youth who are affected by substance use, mental health and/or behaviour issues. There will be opportunity for questions and discussion following the presentations.

Come and meet the professionals who are in our community waiting to help you and your family.

"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.

North Vancouver Outdoor School Online Newsletter

The North Vancouver Outdoor School has published the first edition of their online newsletter describing events and items of interest about this unique North Vancouver Schools program. <http://www.nvsd44.bc.ca/sitecore/content/OtherNews/OutdoorSchoolNewsletter.aspx>

The district plan to significantly increase their communications, so for information on this and more about North Vancouver schools keep an eye on the www.nvsd44.bc.ca website on a regular basis.

National Research Council Space Art Contest

The National Research Council of Canada's (NRC's) public outreach facility in Victoria, "the Centre of the Universe" are promoting an exciting event commencing January 1st, 2009. The year 2009 marks the 400th anniversary of Galileo first using a telescope to look up at the night sky. To commemorate this occasion, UNESCO has declared that 2009 will be known as the International Year of Astronomy (IYA).

Canada is involved in many activities to celebrate IYA. One of these events is a call to all grades 2 - 6 students in B.C. to create and submit their very own, original space art. More information for Canadian IYA activities can be found at <http://www.astronomy2009.ca> or at <http://www.astronomy2009.org>

Attention: Grade 2-6 Teachers and students

To commemorate the anniversary, the NRC's "Centre of the Universe" in Victoria invites you and your class to participate by providing drawings of space that will be seen by thousands throughout BC. Submitted artwork will be displayed at public venues throughout Vancouver Island during the month of February 2009 along side the finest astronomical images ever recorded. Artwork will further be displayed at the NRC Centre of the Universe for the remainder of 2009.

Type of Art:

The art must portray a static space scene i.e. nebula, galaxy, planet without spaceships, aliens etc.

Format:

Please send us either a high quality scan or the original (non-returnable) piece of art. Please include the school name, grade level, student's first name and a brief description of the image. We will make every effort to use your pictures, but we cannot guarantee that your students' artwork will be displayed. When your pictures are used, your class will be given credit.

Deadline:

Please submit your artwork by Tuesday January 20th, 2009. The earlier we receive your artwork, the better the odds of it being displayed.

Submit by mail or in person to:

NRC Centre of the Universe

5071 West Saanich Rd.

Victoria, B.C.

Canada V9E 2E7

Telephone: 250-363-8262

Reminders from last issue

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 .

'In The Driver's Seat' workshop for Parents

BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit organization that offers resources for parents on-line at www.teendrivers.ca and can present the 'In The Driver's Seat' workshop for Parents of Teenagers (Pre-learner; Learner; and Novice stage drivers)

The goal is to provide parents with the Knowledge and Resources to Manage their child's learning experience to help them become a competent and safe driver, with a responsible attitude to the use of a motor vehicle.

If your school's parents would like to find out more please contact Sandra Jones at sandra.jones@bcaa.com or phone 604.946.1480

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.

ART FOR RIGHTS

CHILDREN and YOUTH from Carisbrooke School, Windsor House School, and Seycove Secondary School in collaboration with Amnesty International raise awareness through their ARTWORK. Please join us in celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the DECLARATION of HUMAN RIGHTS. On Saturday, December 6th at Lynn Valley Library Meeting Room 1pm-4pm. Includes STORYTELLING 130-200pm, MUSIC with LORA BIRD from 230-300pm, Live and Silent AUCTION from 315-4pm. Contact Tricia Edgar 604-842-3251