



MIND THE GAP

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR YOUTH IN TRANSITION

Roberts Creek Community School

Issue #2 spring 2017

SEL BC

fosters and supports social emotional learning (SEL) in BC schools and communities.

networking
learning together
advocating
leading

...see page 6



Mind the Gap Project

Funded by Health Canada and coordinated by the Roberts Creek Community School, the Mind the Gap project is a comprehensive series of training's, programs and interventions to increase the social emotional capacity in our school communities.

Specific evidenced based programs designed for students, teachers, parents

and youth were delivered over a 2 ½ year period. Mindfulness skills and practices were woven throughout all the project activities.

How Can Mindfulness deepen Social Emotional Learning?

The effects of mindfulness-based interventions with children, adolescents, educators, and parents point to the positive indicators of social emotional well-being in relation to mindfulness.



Applying Mindfulness to SEL

Self Management	Self Awareness	Responsible Decision Making	Relationship Skills	Social Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindful practices • Sharing; taking turns • Creative problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindful practices-PAUSE • Self reflection program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Responsibility Initiatives • Community Service Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Learning • Project-Based Learning • Conflict Resolution Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature to foster perspective taking (eg fractured fairy tales) • Video Stories

Teenward Bound Retreat

HOW do you introduce and encourage young adolescents to embrace the benefits of a mindfulness practice?

Make it fun.

For two action packed days in September at a beautiful beach front location, 14 teens were engaged in a series

of games, exercises, discussion, quiet reflection and mindfulness practices all aimed at enhancing their ability to navigate the challenging teen years.

Each morning our day began with guest speaker Dr. Dzung Vo, a pediatrician from the BC Children's Hospital and author of "The Mindful Teen: Powerful Skills to Help You Handle Stress One Moment at a Time".

Dr. Dzung Vo
<http://mindfulnessforteens.com>



Dzung and his wife, Ly, guided the teens through exercises to promote resilience and help them thrive in the face of stress and adversity.

The retreat closed with parents taking part in trust games with their children and listening to Dr. Vo share insights from his years of research in adolescent development.

Participants comments:

- "Wonderful, would be great if the camp was longer"
- "It was really nice to connect with myself"
- "I could not choose just one (best thing) ..I honestly loved all the activities"

Mind the Gap Project Outcomes

The project impacted groups and networks in BC whose focus is student health & wellbeing and Social Emotional Learning. There were numerous requests for the project director and the mindfulness outreach personnel to present or speak at provincial venues. The focus of the interest was around the ecological approach of the Mind the Gap project; (a whole-school approach, offer staff trainings and proactively consider the SEL needs of staff). Through networking and 'translational leadership' the project was able to impact provincial networks

and planning tables.

During the 30 months of the Mind The Gap project:

- 30 teachers, social workers, youth mental health counsellors, and special education assistants were trained to deliver the Mind Up curriculum.
- 25 grade 8 students, 90 grade 7 students, and 20 university students received mindfulness education teaching.
- 335 students (high school grade 8 & 9) received capacity and resiliency building lessons in Social Emotional skills.

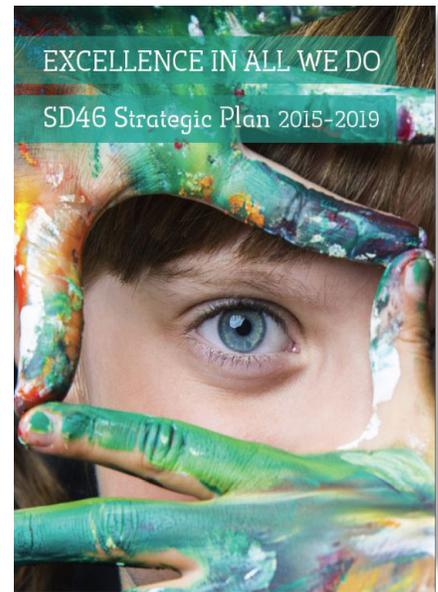
- 3 youth workers participated in the mindfulness retreat training.
- 14 students participated in the mindfulness teen retreat.
- 7 facilitators were trained to deliver the smartEducation program.
- 46 teachers, principals, and special education assistants attended MBSR training
- 8 members of the SD46 Board of Education and Management received 1 day taste of MBSR
- 15 facilitators were trained to deliver the family mindfulness program.
- 20 parents and 16 children participated in the mindfulness family program.

The 2015 School District 46 Strategic Plan Highlights Social/Emotional Learning

Our Students will:

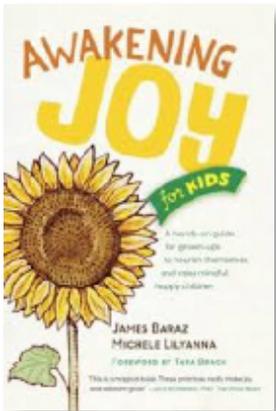
- a. enter kindergarten well prepared and with engaged, well informed parents invited to partner with their children’s teachers through a comprehensive early learning program.
- b. read at or beyond their grade level. They will discover joy on their reading!
- c. achieve the mathematical skills required for academic and life success.

- d. *develop the social and emotional skills to successfully live, work and play together; they will have resilience to deal with life’s challenges.*
- e. be supported in learning skills and awareness to manage their mental and physical health.
- f. participate in a full elementary music program and have opportunities in secondary music and fine arts program.



Spring 2017 Book Review:

Awakening Joy for Kids



Published in 2016 Authors Michele Lilyanna and James Baraz have given us a hands-on guide for parents who want to raise mindful, happy children. Michele is a teacher at Roberts Creek Community Elementary School

sense of self awareness, empowerment, and compassion: skills that form the core of emotionally intelligent, socially conscious children. Providing a synergy of real life experiences coupled with scientifically proven strategies, *Awakening Joy for Kids* is nothing short of amazing! A great resource for parents, teachers and anyone looking to bring mindfulness practices into their lives.” – Amanda Fernades, Caribbean Regional Director, Project Happiness, Trinidad.



Michele Lilyanna

and has been teaching children mindfulness and social emotional practices for over ten years.

“With the ever-increasing demands of daily life, we rarely just stop for a minute and be present in the ‘here’ and ‘now’. *Awakening Joy for Kids* provides an easy to follow, step-by-step guide for bringing mindfulness to the lives of children and even adults. It encourages children to appreciate the small things in life and to cultivate the skills necessary to deal with everyday stressors. It fosters a

“This beautiful book goes straight to the heart, so rich with simple, powerful, practical things that children and adults can do to grow real and lasting resilience, compassion, and joy inside themselves.” – Rick Hanson, PhD, *Hard-wiring Happiness* and *Just One Thing*.

<http://www.happinessandjoylessons.com>



Mindfulness Enhanced Strengthening Families Program

In our busy lives it is sometimes a challenge to find any time for “family”. Imagine taking one evening (3 hrs) a week for 7 weeks to focus specifically on The Family. Well that is exactly what 10 families (17 parents and 13 youth) did last fall at the Roberts Creek Community School.

The Strengthening Families Program is an opportunity for the whole family to share a meal together and then spend quality, focused time on developing caring and respectful relationships (Love), while at the same time having structures and guidelines (Limits) that honour everyone’s needs and wants. Love & Limits is the theme that runs through the whole program.

Objectives of the program

- Strengthen Parenting Skills
- Build Family Strengths
- Prevent Teen substance abuse and other behavior problems

A World Health Organization study of 6,000 programs proclaimed “The one with the best track record is the Strengthening Families Program...”

Parents meet to discuss the challenges of parenting and to learn parenting skills, encouraging positive behaviour, and setting appropriate limits.

Youth work on overcoming obstacles that can hold

them back. They learn how to communicate with parents and others, resist peer pressure, and manage stress

The whole family participates in:

- Discussions, skills practice, and games for the children
- Video presentations, group discussions and skill building activities for the parents
- Learning together to solve problems, build family communication skills and share family values

Participants comments:

- *‘...loved it. So good for our family. Got my husband more engaged with our family. Brought my daughter much closer together... Love the Family meetings.*
- *‘the projects and games ... made us focus on our values and strengths- saw more positives rather than dwelling on negatives.’*
- *‘The laughter, seeing my child in a new way, listening and learning what he has to say.’*
- *‘Doing the fun activities with my boys... we don’t actually have much time for those types of things... it was very good..’*
- *‘...love the focus on being present and calm’*

In 1998 the educational activist Parker J. Palmer wondered about the question we most commonly ask in educational training, the “what” question – What subjects shall we teach?

When the conversation goes a bit deeper, we ask the “how” question – What methods and techniques are required to teach well?

Occasionally, when it goes deeper still, we ask the “why” question – For what purpose and to what ends do we teach?

But seldom, if ever, do we ask the “who” question – Who is the self that teaches? How does the quality of my selfhood form the way I relate to my students, my colleagues, my world?

The SMART program helps us answer that question

SMART is modeled on the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder of the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The MBSR program curriculum was revised by Margaret Cullen to include components of emotion theory training and compassion training. Facilitator training is coordinated

through the Faculty of Education, UBC Okanagan, and UBC Continuing Studies.

The program involves experiential activities in mindfulness including: secular meditation, emotional awareness, self-regulation, and mindful movement.

The eight-week renewal program is designed to:

- *Understand and regulate emotions to manage stress*
- *Reclaim wholeness and happiness*
- *Revitalize our purpose in life*
- *Improve mental and physical health*

In the spring of 2016 six educators, counsellors and therapists from the Sunshine Coast attended a three day SMART facilitator training session at UBC. It was transformational learning.

The professional development workshop introduced us to the SMART curriculum. Experiential in nature; formal and informal mindfulness practices were interwoven throughout the course content. The workshop included a half-day Silent Retreat as well as the opportunity for participants to lead their own mini SMART sessions. In particular, the fundamentals of bringing mindfulness into personal and professional life were explored.

In 2017 the Sunshine Coast SMART facilitator cohort plans to offer an 8 week program, if you would like details of the dates and location of the program contact us at: mindthegap@eastlink.ca

Background Reading

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1990). *Full catastrophe living: using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain, and illness*. New York: Dell.

Cullen, M. (2015). *The Mindfulness-Based Emotional Balance Workbook*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Books.





Day of Silence

By Bonnie Lipp

*Hmm just writing
Let it flow
Thoughts or feelings
All let go.*

*Let it be
Enjoy, be free
Sense the wisdom
Of the tree.*

*Breath of air
This space we share
Opens spaces
If you dare.*

*Moments come
And moments go
Ebbing, flowing
Thoughts let go.*

*Feel the now
The warmth, the sun.
Smell the flowers
Living ones.*

*Do not judge
Release your guard
Off in space
Jon Luc Picard.*

*Happiness is
Deep within,
Attention given
To your chin.*

*Is all a process
Feel the now
Sense your body
Cat and cow.*

*Be in touch
Be here, aware
Then to others
We can share.*

Bonnie Lipp is a teacher with School District 46. She wrote this poem after the MBSR retreat day.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Roots of Empathy

Sheila Wilson
scroe@eastlink.ca
604.885.3481

Mind the Gap

Stacia Leech
mindthegap@eastlink.ca
604.885.3481

Roberts Creek Community School

rccs@dccnet.com
604.885.3481

<http://www.rccsel.ca>
<https://twitter.com@creek3>

SEL BC

from page 1

A comprehensive mission for schools is to educate students to be knowledgeable, responsible, socially skilled, healthy, caring and contributing citizens.

Greenberg et al., 2003, American Psychologist

What is Social Emotional Learning?

Social emotional learning (SEL) involves the processes through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

What does SEL BC do?

- Network with colleagues and leaders in SEL
- Learn about SEL - connecting practice and research
- Advocate for SEL
- Share leadership in the SEL field in BC

Mission

Our mission is to advance and connect research and practice in order to establish and sustain social emotional learning and social responsibility within safe, caring, collaborative and inclusive learning communities.

Guiding Principles and Values

We support and encourage: inclusion, collaboration, capacity building, sharing resources, integration of Social Emotional Learning from K—12 in BC schools, consensus decision making, and accountability.

Activities:

- monthly meetings
- bi-annual conference
- seminars and events
- research & practice summary papers

Who participates in SEL BC?

Our members are representatives of BC School Districts, universities and selected community organizations.

SEL BC members are from the Abbotsford, Burnaby, Conseil scolaire francophone, Coquitlam, Delta, Maple Ridge, North Vancouver, Sunshine Coast, Surrey, Vancouver, and West Vancouver School Districts, as well as from UBC, SFU, the Dalai Lama Center, and the WellAhead Initiative of the McConnell Foundation.

Ensure your school district is represented. Check out the SEL Resource Finder, developed at UBC: www.selresources.com. Contact us: sel.bc.network@gmail.com