



# CYC Chronicle

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Winter 2012/2013

ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CHILD AND YOUTH COUNSELLORS

Founding Member

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## The Value of Professionalism

Since the New Year the Association has seen strong growth in membership, and most notably a reinvigorated membership base. A grass-roots movement has blossomed, and members have initiated campaigns to advocate the benefits of membership and professional representation within their communities. One of the key groups is the TDSB OACYC committee, as will be discussed later in the Chronicle.

The future of our profession is served well by members who recognize the value of professional advocacy; our successes are attributable to the sense of pride our members have in calling themselves CYW's. Such passion does not only impact their colleagues but inspires the next generation of CYW's, and in turn this makes us stronger advocates for the children and youth we help daily. However, in order for us to protect our identity as Child and Youth Workers, we need to equip ourselves *en masse* with the skills to become stronger advocates of our profession and in turn our future.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the Association is ardently advocating for legislation, we have made tremendous inroads with all provincial parties and are presenting a comprehensive legislative prospectus to the government. We passionately believe if we were labeled as 'mental health therapists,' under the *College of Psychotherapists & Mental Health Therapists*, we would lose our identity as Child and Youth Workers, and more importantly it would impede our ability to aid in the therapeutic care of our provinces most vulnerable children and youth. We have reached a critical point where we are only months from having the numbers required to present our plans for legislation. When you speak with your colleagues, remind them of what's at stake professionally, and the realistic repercussions of losing their professional identity. Given the economic climate, employment

opportunities remain scarce and too often our CYW's are forced into accepting positions that do not match or appreciate their level of skill. Nonetheless, we are pleased to see that an increasing number of prominent employers are asking that CYW's belong to the OACYC, as they recognize this guarantees a professional standard of care and accountability.

Over the past four-months, the Association has engaged in a letter writing campaign with the Conservative Part of Ontario, the new Minister of Child and Youth Services (Teresa Piruzza), all the Ontario Liberal Leadership Candidates earlier this year, as well the registrar of the Transitional Council of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists. We hope to develop strong working relationships with all political parties, and arrange meetings to present our goals for legislation this spring.

Moving forward, the Board of Directors has decided to reprioritize our operational mandate. Our Executive Director, Debbie Sliwinski, is now working part-time, focusing her time on political advocacy and assembling and overseeing a legislative working group. Resulting from the decrease in membership fees last year the office has been forced to reallocate resources to best optimize the services we provide to our members – the office update will highlight some these changes.

I believe that at the core of professionalism is respecting yourself and your colleagues, and ensuring that all CYW's adhere here to a uniform standard of care that best represents the profession. I ask you to consider how you advocate for your profession and what professionalism means to you.

Yours Truly,  
~Keith Lindsay

## Office Update

In the last 18-months the association has doubled 'Full-Professional/Certified' members, we can attribute this success to both the overwhelming community support the Association received, as well as the reduction in membership fees announced in the Spring of 2012; the Association has made accessibility of membership one of its chief concerns. However, along with a reduction in membership fees and an increase in membership, new challenges emerge, one of them being the need to ensure a standard of efficiency to meet the needs of all members.

We are honored to announce that WM+A, a leading service provider, has identified the benefits of membership and is strongly encouraging their associates to join, demonstrating their commitment to fostering professionalism and the value of CYW's in the community.

*"I believe our company philosophy, work practices and reputation within the social service community are strong indicators of the desire to proceed with registering our Associates as OACYC members. We have a strong commitment to providing evidence-based child & youth services, enhancing professional development of our team as well as the use of technology to increase accountability. OACYC membership for our team is in step with our company's stamp of approval of excellent quality assurance."* ~ Dunya Marijan-Winterson C.E.O. WM+A

As announced in Keith's letter, the office has been forced to prioritize resources; however, in order not to compromise the quality of representation and accessibility, the Board of Directors in consultation with management has made the strategic decision to relocate the Office to 55 Eglinton Ave E. in central Toronto, this move centralizes the office and makes access more accessible to members, as well as our ability to better engage in meetings with provincial associations and with Queens Park; this move is effective March 1<sup>st</sup>.

To help us communicate with you better, we ask that you ensure that your contact information is up to date, including: mailing address, phone numbers, and email. In the last year the Association has received roughly 2,800 pieces of returned mail, this results in undue cost as well as considerable administrative time to try and contact members – often to no avail, resulting from the lack of updated and complete contact information. Further, due to the increase in member inquiries and membership related questions we ask that you email questions to [office@oacyc.org](mailto:office@oacyc.org), you will receive a reply within one business day. Calls to the office are returned within one business day; during the peak of the membership renewal campaign this time frame will increase to two business days. Our new mailing address is:

**2384 Yonge St  
P.O. Box 1214  
Toronto, ON  
M4P 3J6**

*To clarify two common membership questions:* First, the Association did not issue certificates/stickers for the 2012/2013-renewal campaign due to the change in renewal date. However, for this June's campaign we will offer new certificates and stickers reflecting both 2013 and 2014, this will cover the previous campaign, as all Active members would have received a 2012 sticker with the 2011/2012-renewal package — new certificates will cost \$5-. When renewing your membership please allow 2-3 weeks for processing. Second, the membership renewal fee paid of \$50 (plus HST) in October of 2012 covers your membership until June 15, 2013. Your 2013/2014-membership cost will be \$80 (plus HST) and will be valid from June 15, 2013 to June 15, 2014. Membership renewal reminders will be sent out in early May.

~ **Debbie & Peter**

### **Krista Sepp Awards 2013**

The annual Krista Sepp Memorial Awards provide a forum to recognize the high quality work and dedication of direct service Child and Youth Workers/Counsellors across the province and help promote awareness of children's mental health issues.

Nominees for the Krista Sepp Horizon, or Mentoring Awards, must work directly with children and youth and be members of the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Counsellors or possess a CYW/CYC diploma or degree. Only those nominees meeting these requirements will be considered.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Krista Sepp Memorial Awards nomination process, or the luncheon on **Thursday, May 2, 2013**, please contact Anne Rappe, Communications Director, Kinark Child and Family Services, at 1.800.230.8533 ext. 353

The Krista Sepp Memorial Awards and Celebration Luncheon are sponsored by Kinark Child and Family Services and supported by the participation of all Children and Youth sectors across the province. The OACYC is proud to be an advertising sponsor, as well as a member of the selection committee.

## Grassroots: Strengthening Our Community

In the fall 2012 issue of *The Chronicle*, President Keith Lindsay put a call out to members to actively support the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Counsellor's (OACYC) new member initiative. In response to this request, a committed group of Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Child and Youth Services (CYS) staff responded. The first TDSB/OACYC Committee was formed with a specific drive to communicate the importance of professionalizing our association to the masses in a grassroots way.

Commitment, dedication and a shared vision are key components of this 16-person committee, and from this basis, the committee has given life to a strategic plan that has progressively developed over the past three months. Setting out to align with the OACYC'S goal to increase membership, the committee has held productive meetings to develop an active communications campaign that aims to educate the general population on the need to professionalize the field of child and youth care.

Our mandate, which reads, "The TDSB/OACYC Committee will liaise with the OACYC to help grow and strengthen our profession to provide optimum care for our children and youth," has led to an active partnership with the OACYC, and has helped us to build a rapport with the OACYC's Director of Communications. From this partnership, plans are to help sell OACYC swag, volunteer to help with office and clerical duties and share the message with others, specifically the post-secondary institutions.

In our presentation to all Child and Youth Services staff in the TDSB, workers were engaged through a PowerPoint presentation and had the opportunity to dance "Gangnam Style". We ensured the message focused on the necessity for joining the Association through pointing out the benefits of the OACYC. As a result of our efforts, approximately 20 membership forms were collected, which, overall, is equal to six percent of our entire department.

Moving forward, the committee is continuing to put into action plans to determine which TDSB CYC staff are already members, to be able to focus specifically on targeting non-members to provide information and education to encourage them to join. Initiating contact with colleagues to establish professional connections will strengthen our community. As part of the strategy, the committee members have begun to send out letters, e-mail blasts and are making personal phone calls to colleagues. Evaluating and tracking progress towards the overall goal is a component of this plan. Documenting the journey and writing about the impor-

tance of moving towards legislated practice through the submission of articles in our respective publications is well underway.

As you can appreciate, much work and dedication has been directed towards this cause. However, we still have a lot of work ahead of us. It is our aim that through peer-to-peer interactions at a grassroots level, change will occur and the result will be historic for Child and Youth Care Workers across the province.

While we are not likely to be the first group to undertake a grassroots approach to improving our association, at this time a direct challenge is being presented to our colleagues in all sectors. We encourage those colleagues who have been making efforts to supporting the OACYC to share these developments so that we can continue to build on our communication and accountability province-wide. Supporting can be as simple as renewing your own membership individually or through systematically reaching out to others to do the same. Reflect on everyday successes of our practice; write about the excellent work of your colleagues, or innovative and successful programs and interventions that Child and Youth Care Workers are involved with.

One thing is certain; it is going to take many people doing many things to help us to be seen as a legitimate profession in addition to recruiting new OACYC members. We need to promote ourselves and convince the general public about the importance of Child and Youth Care to the children and families we serve.

The TDSB/OACYC Committee meets once a month with the following members from the Toronto District School Board's Child and Youth Services (CYS) Department (in alphabetical order): Trong Chung, Geraldine Diamond, Elise Figueira, Patrick Frackowiak, Christine Gaitens (OACYC, Board of Directors), Lasburn Gordan, Jennifer Gyebi-Ababio, Brad Hall, Margaret Kalajdjiev, Lynne Lathangue, Crystal Lovegrove, Kimyata McIntosh (Co-Chair), Kim Perry (Co-Chair), Catlin Thorn, Latoya Williams (Committee Correspondent to OACYC) and Jessica Zambito. Bianca Humbert (Ryerson CYC student) attends as a guest member. If you would like more information on how to get involved, feel free to contact Kim Perry – [kim.perry@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:kim.perry@tdsb.on.ca) or Kimyata McIntosh – [kimyata.mcintosh@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:kimyata.mcintosh@tdsb.on.ca)

*~Brad Hall and Kim Perry*

## Societal Trends & Shifting Gears in Child and Youth Care

One of the greatest challenges we face as mental health care professions is to be a part of a system that is outdated by societal trends, and failing to launch kids with the appropriate structure and means in the aging out process.

Societal laws and regulations prescribes to the notion that youth become adults at 18 and given their developmental growth and maturity, need less support as they strive for independent development and adult roles.

*Times have changed.*

According to Statistics Canada, trends took notable change in the 1970's and heavily in the past 10 years. In recent years, social scientists have found that transition to adulthood is taking longer to complete. Young people are living at home with their parents longer, are pursuing higher education, and attending school longer than their parents did. Basically, the transition times of young adults has changed and become a delayed process. There has also been an increase in "reverse-direction" transitions, such as young adults leaving home for school or employment, only to return after losing, leaving, or completing.

How can young adults, leaving home or care, receive on-going support? Very few at this point in their lives have reached any of the 5 transitional milestones: leaving secondary school, leaving home, steady full-time employment, conjugal union, and parenting. This becomes an overwhelming time, and our system of care can't expect this to come together in a seamless and linear process. Overall, the tasks for today's youth who seek independence are taking longer to achieve; they leave school later, stay longer in their parents' home, enter the labour market later, and are postponing conjugal unions and parenthood.

At the Youth Leaving Care Hearings of 2012, a former youth in care stated, "25 is the new 21". This couldn't be truer. The hope was for Crown Wards who are financially supported up to the age of 21 under Extended Care Maintenance Agreements (ECM), to receive elongated support from CAS until the age of 25 or longer. The advocacy by voices of all generations has helped to bring attention to the trends and subsequent need for reconstruction. There are nearly 8, 300 Crown wards in Ontario alone.

*Changes are coming*

Currently, 44% of youth in care graduate from High School, compared to roughly 81% graduation rate among the general public. (statcan.gc.ca). Starting in September, Ontario will

provide \$500 per month to those aged 21 to 25 who are pursuing post-secondary education and training programs. The Ontario Government will also cover 50% of the tuition costs with a cap of \$3,000 annually. Full tuition of up to \$6,000 per year, will be covered by 11 participating Colleges and Universities. This is the first time tuition grants have been made universally accessible to aged-out Crown wards over the age of 21.

*Tracking the flow.....*

Youth leaving care are overpopulated in the youth justice, mental health, and shelter systems. Use of shelter systems amongst youth populations has increased, with attention coming from regional shelters that saw a 16.2% increase between 2006-2009. In addition, one-third of homeless people in Canada are between the ages of 16-24 years of age (www.statcan.gc.ca).

*For those of us working with youth, what can we do now?*

As youth care leaders, we are needed to support Crown wards to remain in foster and group home care to the age of 25, from the current age of 18. Although the Ministry has not yet approved this, our youth need us to stay connected to them. It is important that we create transitional worker positions, and/or transitional-focused responsibilities that aim to adapt our approach to their new developmental needs. This carries a new-aged philosophy that young adults need more support at 18, not less.

Inform care workers and parents, and children and youth, about the changes coming into effect. Plan how to implement a care system that helps kids have a better chance to attain a post-secondary education.

Change to residency extensions to group and foster homes go hand-in-hand with the extended educational support by the Ontario Government. While our hope is yet to be reality, remember that all youth need counsel and careful planning for the following: How and where to complete high school, finding a place to live, learning transportation, employment, employment skills, applying for College or University, budgeting practice, and identifying family, friends, community support systems. This is possibly our greatest responsibility to our kids while they are in our care; transitional planning and genuine regard for their lives beyond our care.

Here's to change.

~Ryan McLeod Child and Youth Care (Cert.)

## Self-Care: The Power of Yoga

As a Child and Youth Worker and yoga enthusiast I encourage the children and youth I work with to be physically active and lead a balanced life style. Included in that life style I always try to introduce yoga and some form of meditation or self-reflective practice to them. In this day in age it is so easy to get lost in our fast paced society where being silent and finding time for ourselves self can be almost impossible. That is why yoga is so important and I believe an invaluable tool. It teaches us self care, mental well being focus and overall balance. It provides a workout for the body, mind and spirit. I have been teaching yoga to children for several years, recently focussing on children and adolescent mental health, and have seen the benefits that yoga provides in all client populations.

Yoga is a century old practice that reflects real and proven scientific concepts. Yoga is a unity of the body, mind and spirit. It is a focussed exploration of the body. The practice balances the mind, strengthens the body and nurtures the spirit. High states of stress and reactivity can be calmed through a balanced yoga practice. For the “stressed out survival oriented” child, yoga gently resets the nervous system, creating a shift from survival mode to a feeling of internal safety and coping. As children develop a sense of internal control and calm, they become better able to interact with others and the environment without stress. Creating a positive sense of self is what yoga helps us to achieve when we lead our youth through a practice. In instructing classes I have observed the shift in energy within the class of the children and youth from the beginning of the class through till the end. When we gently draw the attention inwards towards the self while regulating the breath results in facilitating development in nervous systems that were previously stuck in survival mode. Then the child can shift from ‘survive’ to ‘thrive’.

### The benefits of breathing

Breathing is one of the few body functions which occurs both at the conscious and unconscious levels...respiratory patterns often tell the story of a life. The way a person breaths reflects emotional states and stress levels as well as the general state of the mind and body. For over 5000 years, eastern medical practitioners have argued that control of the breath could have a profound impact on the health and well being of the individual. Today medical researchers are confirming that these ancient views with studies that show the relation between the ways we breathe and our circulatory, cardiovascular, metabolic, endocrine, muscular, vascular and

autonomic homeostasis. We see children whose breathing patterns are “out of sync”. Many of the children present with very shallow breath patterns and these same children are typically in states of heightened stress and reactivity. Breathing patterns influence arousal state, and stress and arousal states conversely influence breathing. By consciously controlling the breath, one can reset the nervous systems to a more harmonious and functional state. Working the breath can effectively “wake up” or “calm down” the child who is out of balance. Deep regular breathing sends a signal to every cell in the body to relax...a state necessary for healing and learning to occur. The breath is unique in that it is controlled equally by both voluntary and involuntary processes. When breathing in the involuntary mode, there seems to be a natural pacemaker for inspiration. The rate of inspiration is directly linked to physiology. When the sympathetic nervous system reacts with a fight, fright or flight response, breathing quickens and becomes shallower. Breathing practices in therapeutic yoga serves to connect the body and the mind via the breath. The first challenge is helping the child to develop breath awareness.

### Yoga, Brain Chemistry and Behaviour

When we perform yoga postures, the muscle receptors elongate. This elongation releases a chemical in the brain that counteracts stress, necessary for coping. The chemical is known as serotonin and helps us feel calm and alert. It provides a sense of well-being. Many children (and adults) have depleted reservations of serotonin. Many people, and an increasing number of children and adolescents, in this country are on anti-anxiety medication and this is a reflection of these depleted reserves. A daily routine helps to effectively enhance the amount of coping chemical available to deal with transitions, demands and the challenges of the classroom. Over time, a regular program can effectively rest a child’s stress response, making one calmer and more resilient to stress. Additionally this powerful ant-stress chemical serotonin helps us to anchor information in memory which enhances learning.

Serotonin is the chemical that is depleted under stress. Our ability to cope with our day-to-day stress is dependent on several factors, one of which is the amount of coping chemicals we have in reserve. Our yoga practice helps us to replenish our reserves...essentially “filling our tank” with chemicals that allow us to handle stress without overly heightened arousal over reactivity. Yoga practice impacts the way the body handles stress.

*Cont'd Pg. 6*

## Yoga Cont'd

Several studies have shown that the physiology of the body changes in regular yoga practitioners, resulting in both lowered physical and emotional reactivity.

Movement during the yoga practice stimulates the vestibular and proprioceptive pathways. These sensory-motor systems fire in response to muscle elongation (proprioceptors) and changes in position of the head in space (vestibular). The proprioceptive pathway enhances the brain-body connection which helps children develop greater body awareness and motor planning abilities, stimulations of the vestibular system influences changes in muscle tone, arousal, alertness, energy levels and attention as well as motor registration and coordination.

### Yoga as a Sensory Diet

Sensory processing refers to the way the brain registers, interprets and responds to input/sensation from both the body and the environment. When sensory processing is disordered, the brain may interpret ordinary input as threatening or may not interpret at all. This disordered processing can result in heightened reactivity or under registration. Yoga as a therapeutic tool brings the body and mind into balance. It gently organises and orients the body/mind and helps the child to make sense of the sensations and his/her environment while enhancing self-awareness. When stress is reduced the brain interprets and responds differently. This can be seen in children who over react as well as under register sensory information. For the child with integration problems, yoga organises the body/mind and helps make sense of and enhance multi-system information processing.

There is no doubt that there are internal and external benefits to doing yoga. However, it is when I see my students taking what they have learned and practiced on their yoga mats, apply it in their everyday lives and take concepts that they have learned on their mat out into the world that I know the therapeutic work is being done.

**~Vanessa Di Rollo BA (Hons), CYW**

*Vanessa Di Rollo currently works in and north of the GTA as a CYW working with and supporting youth in care. Vanessa brings passion, positivity, energy, creativity and care to her programming and therapeutic interventions. Vanessa fosters experiential learning, in addition to bringing a strength based approach with all individuals she works with in and*

## | Member of Distinction

*In recognition of her outstanding contribution to the profession and Association, we are proud to name Colleen Kamps a Member of Distinction. In the last year Colleen has helped shape our profession development training series-- presenting and certifying over 150 members. Further, Colleen has recognized the importance of promoting professionalism to the next generation of CYW's; she has helped spearhead the Association's third-year initiative that aims to ensure that all graduating CYW students have access to Full-Certified membership.*

Colleen Kamps holds a BA in Child & Youth Care from the University of Victoria and a diploma in Child & Youth Work from Centennial College. She has been working in the helping field for over thirty years. Over the past twenty years she has specialized in assessment and treatment of children who have been sexually and/or physically abused, children who have witnessed interpersonal and/or community violence, and prepubescent children with sexual behaviour problems. Colleen co-developed an Assessment and Treatment Program and an assessment for Prepubescent Children with Sexual Behaviour Problems in Toronto. She is a faculty member of Centennial College in the Child & Youth Worker Program and also trains and consults with several treatment programs, child welfare agencies, and specialized foster care agencies and children's mental health treatment residences. Prior to Colleen's specialization in child abuse and trauma, she has worked extensively in the area of child welfare, education, residential services, and youth outreach. Colleen is a member of the Child & Youth Care Association of Ontario.

### **Reflections on a Lunch and Learn with Thom Garfat**

In early December, I had the pleasure of attending a talk with Thom Garfat on The Therapeutic Use of Daily Life Events. The event, organized at Humber College, by the OA-CYC, was very well attended. Thom is a very charismatic speaker, who engaged and enlightened participants through retelling and sharing his stories and experiences. While I thoroughly enjoyed his talk, which has rekindled my quest for profession-specific knowledge, I couldn't help but wonder if the meaning I made out of this interaction was similar to that of my colleagues.

In his article titled Meaning-Making and Intervention in Child and Youth Care Practice, Garfat points out that the subject of meaning-making has been a focus in the literature (2004) and in his talk he provides us with many examples of how this process plays out in our daily interactions.

## Reflections on a Lunch and Learn with Thom Garfat

It is generally accepted that in the helping professions, through an interpretive process, we tend to create our own meaning (Garfat, 2004). Furthermore, Thom states that “culture, personal history, sequencing and specific circumstance play an important role in determining how one uses one’s personal interpretive frame to make meaning of his or her encounters” (Garfat, 2004).

In the process of thinking about the specifics of ‘meaning-making,’ I realize that I have applied significant importance to being present at this talk with Thom. There we were in front of a veteran of the field of Child and Youth Care. A man who has directly worked front line; developed programs, led teams and consulted and advised around the globe on issues related to Child and Youth Care. He is a professor and trainer and a prolific published Canadian author --a true leader in our field.

When I think back to the moment that I received the notice about this workshop, the sequencing I relied upon was to think that the PD generally offered to Child and Youth Care Workers is often a member of another discipline. Albeit, there is much to learn from other disciplines, I was thrilled to learn that a true Child and Youth Care Practitioner would be delivering this session to other Child and Youth Care Workers. In reflecting on our culture as a field, it is my experience that as a field we tend to be humble and often avoid boasting, but this, to my process of ‘meaning-making,’ is certainly worth boasting about.

*Garfat, T. (2004). Meaning-Making and Intervention in Child and Youth Care Practice. Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care – Celicis.org.*

~**Kim Perry**

### A Student Perspective

*My name is Kevin, and I met a giant...* To be more specific, I met Thom Garfat whom Keith Lindsay, President of the OACYC, called a “giant in the field [of Child and Youth Work], one of the great leaders.” Keith gave that description during his introduction on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, when Thom came to Humber College, Lakeshore Campus, to give a talk to over seventy students and faculty on the use of Self in child and youth work. The joint OACYC-Humber College-sponsored event was simulcast to students at Sault College. As a first-semester diploma student at Humber in the Child and Youth Work program, I felt privileged to be present to hear a man whom many of my instructors and textbooks had spoken highly of, share personal insights and entertaining and educative stories. I was amazed by how easily Thom could grab and hold onto the audience's attention – espe-

cially given that the audience was mainly composed of first-year college students, and the talk took place first thing in the morning; a time students generally want to sleep. However, Thom kept everyone involved by getting the participants to break apart into small groups to discuss issues relating to Self, ending with an activity where each group had to make a sculpture out of two-dozen balloons, tape, and ribbons. The sculptures were as diverse as the youth CYWs work with. So, in addition to learning a great deal about the Self, I also had fun; quite appropriate, as Thom ended his talk by reminding all present that “working with kids should be fun.”

Thom Garfat The Speaker is in high demand, so after finishing his morning session with the Humber College students and faculty, he went straight away to a lunch-and-talk, also jointly sponsored by the OACYC and Humber College, for Child and Youth Worker professionals. I had the privilege of escorting him to the afternoon session and during our brief eight-minute walk between buildings, I came to appreciate even more Thom's ability to create a space for a relationship to develop. His mannerisms and genuine interest put me completely at ease and made it incredibly easy for me to talk to him. For a brief moment, I toyed with taking him on a detour so that I would have more time to discuss with him my thoughts about Child and Youth Work, but in the end I figured it would not be fair to the sixty or so professionals waiting to hear from him.

I was fortunate to be invited to attend Thom's afternoon talk and, looking around the room, I could see that the professionals present were just as impressed by Thom's easygoing, engaging delivery as the students in the morning. Thom spoke about the importance of using daily life events to connect to youth. Again, as in the morning, he peppered his talk with amusing anecdotes, small group discussions, and some Q&A. There were many nods of agreement and appreciative laughs among the youth workers as Thom shared some of his personal experiences, leaving me with the impression that all those present came away from the talk with something positive, renewed and re-energized in their work.

Two different talks, two different audiences, but the same result: the participants left with a better understanding of the field of Child and Youth Work and with a better idea of who a good Child and Youth Worker really is. Through his talks, Thom Garfat showed us how he is exactly one of those really good Child and Youth Workers, well deserving of the title “giant in the field.”

~**Kevin Devotta**

# A Child & Youth Care Perspective

Another Way to Think About It . . . *Education* . . .

Why do our schools pay so little attention to having fun in school . . . not to say that there isn't play; that teachers, educational assistants, and child & youth workers don't promote fun and play, but generally it is as a filler between the real 'work' of learning. We know that children and adolescents learn best when they are relaxed, accepted and not anxious, but our school system, at times, pits students against each other, against a set standard of achievement, and to some arbitrary provincial standard that all must meet despite circumstance and ability.

Competition, hard work, seriousness, and accountability are certainly key objectives that must be learned by students in our school system if the participants are to grow up to be able to care for themselves and others in society. But, the art of learning these skills can, in many cases, be completed through play, cooperativeness, and fun.

Really the only reason for children and adolescents to go to school in 2013 is to learn to cooperate. All the information we try to cram into their brain is available on line and could be delivered electronically as they lie about at home or with their friends. School therefore should be about emotional, social, and physical engage of the students (plus some one-to-one tutoring when a student has demonstrated a need for academic support). So why have classes where students sit for lengthy periods of time and are asked to listen to a lecture or complete an assignment or read a chapter or write an essay . . . why not real problems or life's puzzles get discussed, reasoned, and solved by groups working together using laughter, fun, and engagement?

If students were having fun at school instead of being lectured, consequence, threatened and punished would they really have to join sub-groups to lie, steal, fight, and carry on? Don't children when having fun drop their fears, anxieties, and feel less threatened? Don't children when feeling accepted by the adults around them, and their peers, have little reason to behave in antisocial ways? Isn't it antisocial behaviour that restricts children and adolescents from achieving success in their academic, social, and emotional lives?

What if child and youth workers who are employed in the schools in Ontario, only played with students and thus demonstrated to all the other adults that play, fun, and laughter is the platform for real learning and achievement.

Wouldn't it be great if play was considered important work too . . .

~ *CYC Canoeist*



*The association welcomes contributions from all 'active' members; our publishing mandate necessitates the topic be relevant to the profession. We embrace divergent views; we believe in the importance of democratizing narrative exchanges; we hope the Chronicle will provide such a forum. The following submission is an op-ed contribution; therefore, we respect the author's choice of words and style; it is not our role to alter such writing. If requested, anonymity is respected, however, confirmation of active membership is required. For Submissions or Comments, please email: [office@oacyc.org](mailto:office@oacyc.org)*

## Up Coming Chronicle Submission Deadlines

**Summer 2013 Release Date: June 3, 2013**  
**Summer 2013 Edition Submission Deadline: May 15, 2013**

**Fall 2013 Release Date September: 6, 2013**  
**Fall 2013 Submission Deadline August: 20, 2013**

**Please Send Submissions to: [office@oacyc.org](mailto:office@oacyc.org) (subject Chronicle Submission ATTN: Editorial Committee)**

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