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AGM Announcement - October 17th, 2015

Once again it's that time of year! Please join us for our Annual General Meeting this October 17th, 2015 at the Smith Zone Gallery, 2422 Lake Shore Blvd. West, Toronto. This year, we're very pleased to welcome the children's performance ActingOUT, who will be kicking off our afternoon with their latest production. Come meet your board members and get involved with the association!

In order to reserve your seat, please visit http://www.eventbee.com/event?eid=185932934. We hope to see you there!

Board Update

September is here again and time for school, routines and sweaters! At the OACYC the fall means membership renewals continue and planning for the AGM gets started.

So far we have had a pretty successful membership renewal. We have received great feedback about the membership package this year and the addition of online payment through email transfers. Please remind your friends and colleagues that it is time to renew. The more of us there are, the louder our voice!

Some of you may have noticed that we very briefly, again this year, had an online membership
form live on the site. As we told you previously, we went through a process to find another programmer, our third, to complete our website (members only site) and the online membership form. This work was substandard and the form did not work. We have ended our work with this individual and once again, we will look for a programmer. Do you have a recommendation?

We are preparing for the Annual General Meeting being held in the Toronto region in October this year. We are excited to announce that Acting OUT will be presenting and providing all who attend with some important professional development. See the details in the information about the AGM. We have mailed out notices and proxy forms. Please complete the proxy forms and send them in if you are unable to attend the meeting. Although students are not able to vote, all members are welcome at the AGM and so you will have received the notice in the mail.

We didn’t take the summer off. In August the board came together to complete a strategic planning exercise. The Board has identified long term and short term goals and tasks for the focus of the board. We will share the report at the AGM.

We hosted a meeting of the Canadian Council this summer as well. Members representing CYC associations from across Canada came together to plan and work on the National perspective.

Your OACYC membership includes membership in the council. Check out the Council website http://www.cyccanada.ca/ for information.

Our work on achieving legislation has continued. As you may have seen we have recently asked for members to volunteer an hour or two to review our report so that it is ready for presentation. Your input is important in the final stages of getting this report ready. This week we are sending a letter to the Premier of Ontario to welcome her back to the Legislature after the summer break. We will be asking for a meeting to discuss our request for regulation.

Thank you for being a member and please let us know if you have something for the next chronicle!
Krista Sepp Award

2016 marks the 25th Anniversary of the Krista Sepp Memorial Awards! These Awards recognize and honour the work of direct service staff working in the child and youth care field. We want to hear from you about how we should celebrate the 25th anniversary. We also want to reflect on how we should shape the awards for the next 25 years.

A survey has been created to help capture your feedback. It will only take a few moments to complete. Click the following link to be directed to the survey: https://fluidsurveys.com/s/kristasepp2016/

Please feel free to forward this survey as we will be sharing it with all child and youth service agencies throughout Ontario.

What are the Krista Sepp Memorial Awards?

The Krista Sepp Memorial Award was established in 1991 in memory of Krista Sepp, a Kinark Child and Youth Worker who lost her life on February 3, 1989 while performing her duties as a child and youth counsellor. The Awards provide a forum for annual recognition of the high quality work and dedication of front-line workers across the province and continues to promote awareness of child and youth service and a commitment to service excellence. Nominations are received from across Ontario from all child-serving sectors including child and youth mental health, child welfare, youth justice, education and health.

For more information, visit http://www.kinark.on.ca/kristaSepp/Default.aspx

Call for Book Reviews
Have you read a great book about our work, our field, new strategies, or stories? We would love to include book reviews in future issues of *The Chronicle*. We invite members to consider reviewing the following recent titles:


Please send notice that you would like to complete a book review by emailing office@oacyc.org.

**'Pump Up the Jam' - Reflections on Music & Movement**

Aurrora DeMonte

The National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) conference in Cape Town, South Africa was unlike any I have ever attended, due to the infusion of song and dance into the daily events of the conference. That music and movement were ingrained in our daily relational practices was awe-inspiring (for someone raised predominantly in North American culture where these practices do not appear to take a lead role in our learning or institutions), and encouraged me to consider the significance of song and movement within our practice and the field of CYC.

Krueger (2000) discusses CYC practice as an improvised dance. In dance, partners must be aware of each other's presence so as to ensure synchronicity in movements, mood and emotion. Our relationship with others requires reading and responding (not reacting) in our interactions with others. The young people with whom we work are modern dancers, trying new motions and positions with us, migrating at various tempos and rhythms. Our role, as their dance partner, is to explore, improvise and shift our daily practice in a manner that is meets their shifting needs.
Cultural practice such as song and dance are embedded in the deep history of African culture as in all cultures. Folk music is understood as a traditional type of music that recounts oral narratives of a culture, for example, myths, tale, traditions, festivals, etc. (Nnamani, 2014). Buis (2013) in discussing the significance of music and song during apartheid and their power in cultivating ‘ways of being’, states, for “South Africa in particular, it is singing that occupies the central role of music-making in cultural life. Therefore, singing is a primary cultural expression in that country” (p. 58). Songs provide a way form people to understand their experiences and form aspects of their identities. Elements of culture and identity that may be addressed in song and movement may be about relationships, roles, celebrations, power, spirituality, humour or education. We are aware of the significance of dominant narratives in the lives of the young people and families with whom we work, and one way these are transmitted is through traditional and popular song and dance. I love music and it has power to move us emotionally in ways that may seem magical. As in the article by Millar (2003) people find strength, voice, power, and hope in song. As well, Hodas (2007) reminds us of the use of sharing music can be an effective tool in practice. How are the songs that our young people are singing promoting a resilient sense of self? How are the songs that we are listening to, as practitioners, promoting our identities as strong, people?

So, as we are talking about music and movement, and to share a connected moment from the conference, one of the songs sung, was a song dedicated to being a Child Care Worker. A whole song! It was sung with pride and meaning, transmitting passion and commitment to the field and to the people with whom they work. So I am curious to ask what would be our song? What is our dominant narrative as Child Care workers? How would the song of OACYC members sound? A collective unison of pride, passion and commitment is how I hear it, what about you?

Aurora DeMonte. Faculty Member, Child and Youth Worker Program, Fleming College, Peterborough, Ontario.

References


Relationships Can Take Us to Legislation as an Option for Professional Regulation

This article was originally published in the 2005 edition of Relational Child & Youth Care Practice, 18(2), and is reprinted here with express permission.

As the current Director of an undergraduate program in Child and Youth Care I am often asked for guidance on the next steps in the professional careers of both current practitioners interested in the B.A. program and students already in the program who are deciding on the next steps in their careers.

I am always amazed by two things. Firstly, how easily someone could be swayed by those in positions of power who believe that child and youth care is not legitimate; and secondly, by how committed we can still be to the field and to the development of the profession in the face of perceived power.

I had a practitioner visit me recently. She was obviously committed to lifelong learning and to professional development. She described the pressure she was getting at work (she’s been with the agency ten years and expects to be there ‘for life’) to complete her C.S.W. instead of her B.A. (Child and Youth Care). She was very clear that her supervisor didn’t think that a B.S.W. would give her better preparation—in fact her supervisor preferred to hire child and youth care educated practitioners, they were better. The problem was that the agency was experiencing pressure to have ‘registered’ people on the team. To be registered in Ontario you apply under the Social Work and Social Services Professions Act and must meet their pre-requisite educational qualifications. Eventually all agencies will be required to have registered people on multi-disciplinary teams as only registered people will be ‘allowed’ to perform certain functions, specifically counseling and case planning or case management. Her CYW diploma was not one of the educational pre-requisites that would make her eligible for registration. I explained to her what I knew about the reasons for CYW diplomas not being part of the act. I also suggested to her that the way to change the dilemma was to get CYW diplomas into legislation, either the Regulated Health Professions Act, or the Social Work and Social Service Worker Act. Of course there are several strategies for making this happen, including professional association advocacy to government and application for recognition under the rules of the legislation. In the end this is all an analysis of what needs to happen, which contained little that she could do now to begin to move things forward and still be comfortable with her decision to take a B.A. (Child and Youth Care). She was ready to take some action but
had no idea how.

As I have said before, the prospect of legislation can be large and overwhelming and easily pushed to someone else. There were however small things that she could do to advance the notion of change in the legislation. She could go back to her supervisor and ask, why doesn’t this agency, if they believe so strongly in the quality of service provided by child and youth practitioners and would prefer to hire them, advocate to the local MPP; to the ministry contract manager; to the professional association(s) that the agency belongs to, and petition for changes to this act. A second thing she could do? Ask the same questions of her professional association. A third thing? Demand an answer from the supervisor and the professional association to make them accountable for what they have done in this direction. This might require that the supervisor ask a manager, who would need to ask the Executive Director. They very process of asking would involve three to four other people in thinking about legislating or regulating child and youth care practitioners. Not only did she think she would do this, she decided that in fact she could go directly to the Executive Director (this is an agency that covers the whole province folks, not just a small agency where everyone knows everyone else) and she could ask why the agency wasn’t pressuring for change in this manner if they were so supportive of hiring child and youth practitioners and believed that they did a better job.

Obtaining legislation, or any other kind of systemically recognized manner of regulating our profession and ensuring quality care for the children that we work with, takes persistence, on-going effort and a long-term commitment to the field. Sometimes it also takes good timing and the right conditions for change and while it seems odd that a legal process could take relationship, sometimes that is the critical factor. Only through good and judicious use of her communication skills and her relationship with people in her agency could this practitioner have the confidence to take action and the potential for some effect.

Only by being committed to her profession would she have a membership in her association and therefore the legitimate right to ask the association what their strategy was for ensuring that the profession was regulated and that only people with appropriate educational or training qualifications could practice child and youth care.

Over time as we get to know the issues that affect children and youth, we can take our knowledge about these issues into the advocacy relationships that we have, pressuring managers, elected officials and civil servants for change and improved service and care for children and youth. Members of parliament and government officials change ministries but often stay within and area of expertise. Maintaining those relationships and watching for the opportunity to join in a common cause to enhance the lives of children and youth through good practice is essential.

If someone suggests to you that a Child and Youth Work diploma or degree isn’t recognized and perhaps another degree would be appropriate because the position you are in is dead-end, or they are going to have to re-title it and only hire a registered professional, ask him or her to become part of advocating for adding Child and Youth Work to the legislation. If the agencies providing the services, the professional association for child and youth care in your province, and the ministry personnel funding the services all believe in the worth of the child and youth care practitioner, then together they can pressure for change in the way our practice is regulated.

Carol Stuart. Adjunct Professor, School of Child and Youth Care, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario.
Our Members Speak Out!

Last summer we invited our members to share their thoughts on what the most valuable and challenging aspects to being a child and youth care practitioner were. Among the many excellent responses we received was the following letter from Yvonne Bristow:

The most valuable part of our profession is our versatility and strong skill set as Child and Youth Workers [CYWs]. I find Child and Youth Workers adapt many styles and techniques that are at the forefront of evidence-based practice. We are innovative, curious and pioneering new ways to work with children and youth. We don’t accept one way as the only way; we know that the strategies we use should be as unique as the young people we serve. When we are present with young people in everyday life moments we create valuable co-created relationships with young people that lead towards our distinctive attitudes and interventions (Garfat & Fulcher, 2011).

For a field that can carry a lot of stress and burn-out for professionals, there are still CYWs fighting to stay true to their role as Child and Youth Workers (Bardford & Whelton, 2010). Every time I go to a meeting, conference or workshop with other Child and Youth Workers I meet CYWs designing new programs, advocating for new policies and building profound relationships with young people. I always walk away from these encounters with new knowledge and ideas that help make me a stronger professional. These people and their ideas are exceptionally valuable to me and always leave me loving the profession even more than I thought possible.

One aspect that I hope to improve is something that we are required to do every time we are asked, “What is a Child and Youth Worker?” When we discuss our careers with our family members, other multidisciplinary professionals and all people who cross our paths we are creating a stronger awareness of our profession; but this can also be a source of frustration. Some other professionals do not seem interested in our value and at times treat us as if we are below them on the professional ladder.

As a school-based Child and Youth Worker, I was recently referred to as a ‘Teacher’s Assistant’ by a Gym Teacher in my school. When I politely corrected the Teacher it was obvious that the term ‘Child and Youth Worker’ did not hold a strong value for this person; they appeared to not care what my official title or role might be. In these moments, it’s hard to not feel unacknowledged and unappreciated. In another experience in my career I met a professional who expressed how they were, “surprised” that I would hold a University Degree as a Child and Youth Worker. It seemed to them that our role was much too simple to require academic accreditation at this level. I anxiously wait for the day where future generations of Child and Youth Workers will be viewed with positivity and understanding within their professional
communities.

The task of constantly advocating for our profession can seem repetitive and sometimes exasperating, but it always makes the profession known. People should know who we are and what we do. This is something we can improve on every day by our own actions, and hopefully one day it will be improved on a long-term systematic level.

-Yvonne Bristow. OACYC Member.

References


Do you know of great training opportunities that you would like to share with other Ontario CYCPs? Please let us know and we will post the information on our website and share on social media.

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