



Parent Update...

Inclusive Education

Celebrating Inclusive Education Practices in Manitoba Schools

September 2007

Exciting things are happening in Manitoba schools! We can see a progression towards inclusive education all across the province and there are some shining examples of school divisions, schools and school leaders who ensure that all students in Manitoba schools are valued for their diversity.

Over the past few months, I've had the wonderful opportunity to visit four schools within Manitoba to speak with parents, students, teachers, educational assistants, and school administration about how they work to include all students in their school communities. I asked each group what practices their school uses to promote a culture of inclusion.

The results have been so positive that I have to share some of them with you... For example: At Dawson Trails School, in Lorette, there are the "Gotcha" awards for students, designed to catch them doing good deeds or simply being good school citizens. Education Assistants are involved in a division-wide training program that builds upon their core strengths. This three year program is a big commitment on the part of educational assistants. This year a caretaker from the school is attending the training so that he/she can one day work as an educational assistant within the Seine River school division.

Oakbank Elementary school promotes a strong focus on social responsibility as part of its aim at promoting "pawzitive" behaviour (the school mascot is a lion). This is done with age and grade appropriate projects including a "Big Brother/Sister Club," that matches older students with their peers or with younger students to reinforce classroom teaching, "Da Club," led by the

school vice-principal, that promotes social skill development, the "Not in My School" anti-bullying program, and the "Clean-up program" which gets students out of the school and into their community.

At Gillis Elementary School, in Tyndall, the grade 2 class got together to send in a successful application to the "Dreams Take Flight" program on behalf of one of their peers. John Isbister, principal of Gillis Elementary School, is a strong voice for inclusion and his leadership has led to such practices as planning, in advance of a child's enrolment in the school, for their special needs by providing training to educational assistants who have been selected to work with the child upon their enrolment in school.

And finally, at Ste. Anne's Collegiate, in Ste. Anne, Elaine Lougheed, the principal of this high school, was recently awarded a "Yes I Can" award by MCEC for her leadership in inclusive education. This leadership is evident among staff and students at the school. The students at this school, who may or may not be aware of the special needs of some of their peers, make sure that all who want to participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular programming, including student council and sports teams, feel welcomed and are able to do so.

As we launch into a new school year, it is important to remember the many positive examples of inclusion within our own school communities, however big or small those examples may be. I am looking forward to continuing this work over the coming months and look forward to sharing my many discoveries with you along the way!

• **Anne Kresta,**
Education Consultant,
Community Living Manitoba



This Fall Community Living Manitoba, in partnership with Community Living Winnipeg, will offer evening workshops devoted to educational issues including the following:

- * September 27, 2007—Parent-professional relationships.
- * November 1, 2007—Individual Education Plans.
- * November 29, 2007—Transition Planning.

Look for more information in upcoming mailings from CL-MB and CL-Winnipeg.



Inside this issue:

Provincial Summit on Inclusive Education	2
National Inclusive Education Week	2
National Survey on Inclusive Education	2
Community Living Manitoba is coming to visit!	3
One Family's Story	3
Do Schools Kill Creativity?	3
Upcoming Opportunities for Learning	4
Contact Information	4

Breaking News!

Manitoba's "Parent Guide to Inclusive Education" is now available! This comprehensive book can be obtained through Community Living—Manitoba and will help parents of children with special needs work towards an inclusive education for their child.





Provincial Summit on Inclusive Education February 20, 2008

The Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children (MCEC) and Community Living Manitoba (CL-MB) are working together to create a memorable, thought-provoking program for their annual provincial summit, February 20th, in the heart of National Inclusive Education Week.

The program will include guest speakers like Vianne Timmons, a Professor of Education at the University of Prince Edward Island, representatives from the Children's Advocate office, from Manitoba Foster Family Network, SpecialLink's Debra Mayer, Brian Harley, the Dispute Resolution Coordinator from Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, and many others. Topics to be addressed include The role of the Children's

Advocate in Education, Transition from Daycare to School, Transition from School to Post-Secondary Education, and Parent-Teacher Partnership in Planning.

Vianne Timmons will also be providing a snapshot of her work in promoting inclusive education within the province of PEI and on a national level with her peers among the many universities across Canada.

Plan on attending to lend your voice to the many discussions that will be happening within the sessions, during lunch and in the hallways of the Victoria Inn. Registration information will be available through both MCEC and CL-MB offices. We look forward to seeing you there!

National Inclusive Education Week

How will you celebrate National Inclusive Education Week? Will you share your family's experiences of successful inclusion with other families across the province at the provincial forum on inclusive education, February 20th, or will you help your child's school plan activities for the week to heighten their awareness of the richness that diversity brings to every community? Would you or your child's school like to create an event and share it with the rest of the province? Perhaps a school song, or classroom activity like a diversity quilt, a research project on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, or a school-wide assembly. Any event, big or small, that helps to open the doors to conversation and appreciation of all of the diversity around us in our communities would be great.

Let us know if we can help! See the back page for our contact information.



National Survey on Inclusive Education...

In November 2007, the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) will be releasing a national Report Card on Inclusion – a report that will comment on how well we are doing, as a country, with respect to inclusion in the areas of Deinstitutionalization, Disability Supports, Family Supports, and Education. In November 2008, at the 50th anniversary of our national association, we will be releasing a more comprehensive report that will speak to our national performance in each of the 10 Goals in our 10 Year Agenda.

We want to make sure the report card is accurate and reflective of the voices of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. In order to do this we need your help. Access to accurate, reliable and comparable information on the education of students with intellectual

disabilities is extremely difficult. In order to obtain reliable and up to date information on the educational experiences of children and youth with disabilities and their families, a survey has been developed and is available for completion on-line. This survey is short (can be completed in less than 10 minutes) and is completely anonymous.

The data obtained from the survey will be critical in painting a picture on the national status of education for students with intellectual disabilities, the extent to which it presents as an inclusive experience, and the extent to which families are satisfied with this experience.

The survey can be accessed at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=PBiTxo3P0ApmO3aHwpXaVA_3d_3d

If your son / daughter is of school age we would ask that you take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your participation in this survey is critical to ensuring that our report on Education is based on real and up to date experiences of children and their families. If you know of other families who have school aged children with disabilities please feel free to share with request with them also.

We thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter. If you should have any questions regarding the survey please contact Anna MacQuarrie at amacquarrie@cacl.ca.





Community Living Manitoba is coming to visit!



With the launch of “A Parent’s Guide to Inclusive Education” by CL-MB, we are travelling to The Pas, Flin Flon and Thompson in early November to distribute the guide to families of children with special needs as well as conduct presentation related to inclusive education within these communities.

Anne Kresta will be in The Pas, Monday, November 5th, in Flin Flon, Tuesday, November 6th and Thompson on Wednesday, November 7th. If you or your group are interested in hosting an afternoon (1 to 3 pm) or evening (7 to 9 pm) presentation please contact Anne at Kresta@shaw.ca as soon as possible.

Topics for presentation include the Appropriate Education Act, Individual Education Planning, the Dispute Resolution process, and much more...

We are looking forward to meeting as many families as possible and expanding our family network.

See you then!

One Family’s Story of Inclusion...

Susan and Alan are active in the elementary school with their two youngest sons, Jonathan and Nicholas. Susan recalls the start of school for the boys and the amount of time she spent there before the right supports were in place...

Though Susan and Alan recall the many challenges they have experienced along the way, the support of good teaching assistants and the willing spirit of many school

staff has contributed to an inclusive environment. Susan thought back to a time with Nicholas and Jon were segregated during lunch hour.

"The reasons that the school gave were valid from a safety perspective but they did not understand the situation from an inclusion perspective," she points out. "We suggested a plan that would address the school's concerns and also be inclusive.

We were able to ensure that both boys share meal time with their peers in their classrooms. This has also created a positive change for other kids who used to be segregated at lunch.

It takes communication to raise awareness. Our family is active in the community, and I am a member of the parent advisory council. It really makes a difference to be present and active and to speak up."

Do schools kill creativity?

Sir Ken Robinson makes an entertaining (and profoundly moving) case for creating an education system that nurtures creativity, rather than undermining it. With ample anecdotes and witty asides, Robinson points out the many ways our schools fail to recognize -- much less cultivate -- the talents of many brilliant people. "We are educating people out of their creativity," Robinson says. The

universality of his message is evidenced by its rampant popularity online. A typical review: "If you have not yet seen Sir Ken Robinson's TED talk, please stop whatever you're doing and watch it now." This is worth taking a listen to and sharing with teachers, and other educational professionals. www.ted.com/index.php/talks/view/id/66



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*Community Living - Manitoba
is dedicated to the full
inclusion in the community of
persons of all ages who live
with an intellectual disability.*

We're on the web at
www.aclmb.ca

Calling all parent of children with special needs!

In continuing with our focus on the upcoming Inclusive Education week, and in preparation for Community Living's 50th anniversary, I would like to hear some of your stories of celebration.

Inclusive Education week is about celebrating the big and small gains that have been made in quality, universally inclusive, accessible and developmentally appropriate education for our children with special needs.

I would like to be able to share your stories with more parents throughout the province so that we can see how inclusive education can and does work in Manitoba.

Please contact me with your story as soon as you can...some may even be featured in upcoming issues of Parent Update!



Upcoming Opportunities for Learning...

Laurie Thomson, the director of the Community Inclusion Initiatives for Ontario, will be visiting Manitoba from December 3rd to 5th to describe the **"Inclusive School Cultures"** initiative, and present it to two schools within Winnipeg.

An inclusive school culture permeates through all school community members from the students, to the educational and support staff, the parents and administration. In a truly inclusive school all members feel accepted for who they are, the contributions that they make, and the diversity that they provide.

In the past this initiative has been presented to both Maples Collegiate and West Kildonan Collegiate in the Seven Oaks School Division. Lauri's presentation to the public on December 3rd will include testimonials from both of these

schools, plus many more from participating schools across the country.

This innovative program allows schools to work with all of their community stakeholders to determine their current perceptions of the state of inclusion within the school and to come together to advance their inclusive school practices.

If you know of a school that would be willing to participate in this program please contact Community Living Manitoba as soon as possible.



Do you have an idea for a workshop that you would like to have delivered to your community or group that would address various aspects of Inclusive Education in Manitoba?

Please contact Anne Kresta at Community Living — Manitoba for information on how your needs can be met.

Community Living — Manitoba has worked diligently over the past 50 years to promote an inclusive society where everyone belongs and is valued for their contributions and their diversity