

School Division supports provincial initiative

Jennifer Lealand

Friday, Oct. 2, 2014, schools from the Fort Vermilion School Division took their kids on a field trip to the High Level Evangelical Church to participate in a provincial program called the Healthy Active School Symposium.

The events were designed to be a collaboration between the schools and Alberta Health Services to provide schools with the knowledge, skills, and resources to enhance wellness in the halls of their schools.

The events focus on sparking leadership, engaging thoughts, and enhance ethical citizens

through what is called a “comprehensive school health approach”.

For the FVSD the students were separated by age groups having the 8 – 12 year olds downstairs focusing on the difference between positive and productive thoughts, and negative thoughts. Games were constructed to illustrate the difference and promote helping out peers when they were being held back by “red thoughts”.

There was also a partitioned off section that helped students gain confidence in public speech.

Young students were encouraged to make mistakes to see that it was

possible to recover from them.

FVSD teacher, Anne Roberts, reiterated a fact that the best public speakers make, on average around 400 mistakes in half an hour of public speech but that no one realizes this.

Activities were centered on the students being able to think on their feet and improvise.

Outside the Dene Tha Community School had come to educate the FVSD students on First Nation’s traditional games.

Kevin Smeltzer, the Alberta Health Services Health Promotions representative, said that it was important for a healthy school community to reflect its local communities.

The older students of the region stayed upstairs to discuss what having a healthy and positive school environment meant.

The students were encouraged to leave their peer groups determined by school and class and to participate with students from other regions to gain a better idea of how collaborating and networking worked.

Smeltzer said that HASS is a way of trying to get schools engaged.

“A lot of ideas come from the schools, and then kids go home and get parents involved, and then it gets pushed out into the community,” he said.

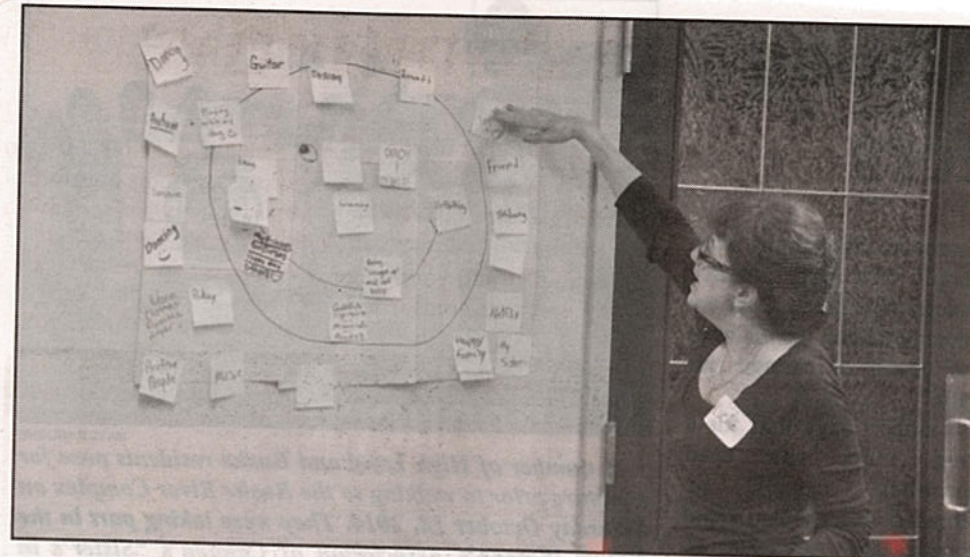
He also said that the program spawned from the idea that if children get involved with the community at a young age they get more comfortable

earlier and easier. It also allows them the comfort of knowing that it’s okay to make mistakes.



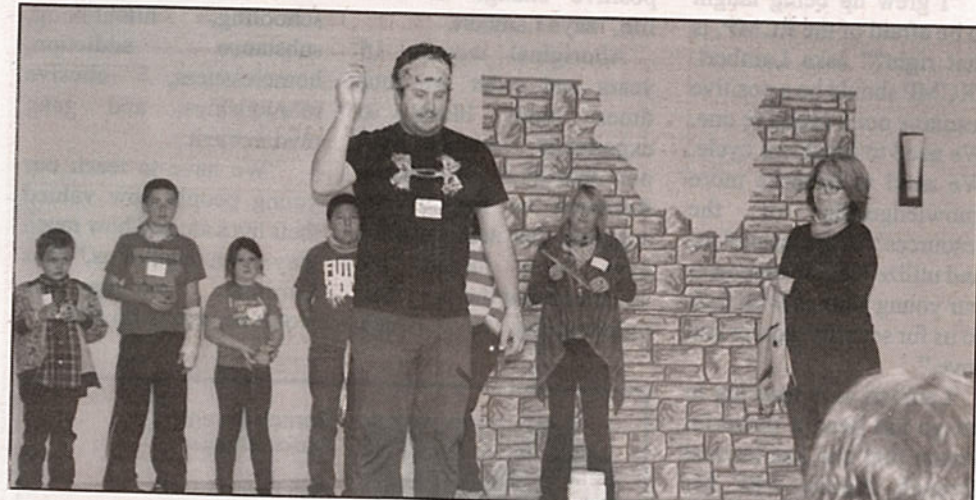
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Representatives from the Dene Tha Community School teach children from the Fort Vermilion School District how to play the traditional handgames of the First Nations people during the Healthy Active School Symposium.



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Constructive and positive emotions filled up the feelings board to allow some of the older students an outlet to share things that made them happy. Responses ranged from Netflix to dancing. Part of the the Healthy Active School Symposium, Oct. 2.



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Kevin Smeltzer, Alberta Health Services Health Promotion representative, displays how to improvise speech on the spot with a rubber ball. See story on page 14.