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Happy Almost Spring!

The days are getting longer and spring is just around the corner. I hope that you have used our mild winter to play outside. Now with fresh sticky snow on the ground in many places in Alberta, there are even snow people popping up in yards, evidence of laughter, rosy cheeks, and ACTIVITY!

Ever Active Schools is dedicated to helping your school meet the dynamic needs of your ever changing daily physical activity needs. In this issue you will find tools and information that will surely help you in your quest for creating a precedent for healthy active communities. For information not found in this publication, be sure to contact me at doug@everactive.org

Live Outside the Box (LOTB) encourages youth aged 10-14 to get active and reduce screen time. Apply for an EAS / LOTB banner from the EAS office and use it as an incentive for youth to decrease their amount of screen time.

Appetite for Healthy Celebrations Festivities are almost synonymous with munchies of the decadent variety. But, it doesn't need to be that way.

Bully For You A cross curricular way to highlight bullying to students in a home-room setting.

Alberta Trekking A trip across the Alberta Teacher's Guide accenting Alberta's Centennial Project where kindergarten through grade six students and teachers see more than footprints.

Fun Softball For Kids A program designed for five to ten year-olds receiving rave reviews from the Minor Softball Association, parents and especially kids.

Tanking The Tube Five Ways The results of a study of students and teachers. Three categories of T.V. reduction strategies are listed.

A Student Leadership Workshop On Living Outside The Box The outlines of a campaign targeting ten to fourteen year-olds with the motivational tools to escape the clutches of 'the box!'

Energizer Days Recap

This bulletin only scratches the surface of what is available at Ever Active Schools' website: www.everactive.org

Yours in perpetual motion,

Doug Gleddie
Provincial Coordinator

Promising Practices

PROMISING PRACTICES

The three selections on this page are taken from the EAS Promising Practices document. This resource shares all the good things our member schools are doing to build and support healthy active school communities.

BANNER MOTIVATION

(SEE THE APPLICATION FORM ATTACHED WITH THIS BULLETIN EMAIL TO RECEIVE YOUR BANNER)

Equipment: EAS / LOTB banner, highly visible place to hang it, stakeholder creativity

Organization: Live Outside the Box (LOTB) encourages youth aged 10-14 to get active and reduce screen time. Apply for an EAS / LOTB banner from the EAS office and use it as an incentive for youth to decrease their amount of screen time. Initial motivational ideas include:

- ☞ Have the entire school community sign the banner prior to a pep rally to kick off your LOTB initiative. Unveil the banner at the pep rally
- ☞ Students, staff and parents record their physical activity levels and screen time reduction in a log book or journal. Once levels have reached a certain point (100 hours) successful participants are able to sign the banner
- ☞ Unveil the banner at the first school community meeting of the year (Meet the Teacher). Distribute paper to collect ideas on how to reduce screen time and increase physical activity. Have your leadership students organize the information and “publish” the ideas in the school newsletter.

**AN APPETITE FOR HEALTHY CELEBRATIONS**

Equipment: fresh fruit or vegetables, healthy snacks

Organization: When planning class parties or celebrations encourage and require healthy alternatives to the usual pop and chips. Options include fresh fruit, vegetable plates, whole wheat breads and crackers, real cheese and milk or juice. Use parent volunteers to help with the preparation. Survey the students in your class to find out what types of healthy food they would enjoy and plan accordingly. Consider conducting a school wide survey and sharing this information with all staff, parents, the school store and local community providers.

DEFINITION: BULLY!

Equipment: 2-3 staff, administration, student leaders, class-time

Organization: Begin with an anonymous paper and pencil survey of all students to ask what constitutes bullying at your school. Ask for specific examples of what bully behaviour is and how students can help stop this issue. Have a team of students staff, parents and administration organize the information and share it with the school community. Ideas can include:

- ☞ put up posters describing what bullying is in the words of the students
- ☞ work with students to write and perform a drama based on the information you have collected and perform at a school assembly, parent meeting or any large school event.
- ☞ Develop a 1-2 day lesson plan for all teachers that summarizes information from the survey. Allow students the chance to react to and discuss the findings, then make a plan to move towards solutions.

TREKKING ACROSS ALBERTA

The Trek Across Alberta Teacher's Guide supports Alberta's Centennial Project and encourages Kindergarten to Grade 6 teachers and students to explore the province through 30 sites that reflect a variety of flora, fauna, cultures and environments. Each day, using pedometers to count their steps, students will advance through a virtual tour of Alberta. Each site has a link to a relevant Alberta Community Development webpage that challenges the students with grade specific activities linked to various curricular outcomes. This resource is now available on the Alberta Education website at http://www.educatin.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/physed/default.asp. To promote healthy, active lifestyles and support DPA, schools can purchase pedometers from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC) at website <http://www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca>.



Get WinterActive and chase away the winter blues. Discover winter fun and move towards regular physical activity and healthy eating with this national community-based initiative.

WinterActive will occur February 28 to March 6, 2006. For more information about WinterActive and to download winter safety, activity and healthy eating tips visit <http://www.liveoutsidethebox.ca>.

IT'S A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME!!

Getting Involved in one of North America's favorite sports is now easier and more fun than ever! The **Learn to Play Program** for five to ten year-olds has been designed to address the needs of this age group by replacing the old game of T-Ball!

This program was piloted in communities across Canada in 2003 and 2004. Since then it the **Learn to Play Program** has received rave reviews from parents, kids and the Minor Softball Association. Kids can't wait for the launch of the program this Spring.

The primary goal of the program is make the game FUN for kids. This is done by providing the coaches with all the tools they need to run a successful program. Among the eighteen easy to follow lesson plans are games and activities that are sure to elevate the heart rates and smiles of children while challenging them in appropriate ways. Softball skills are successfully sewn together with life and team skills.

The **Learn to Play Program** differs from sports like mini-soccer where only the assertive children touch the ball. Small groups are implemented to ensure that skill development is accomplished along with a healthy injection of self-confidence.

Softball Alberta along with Softball Canada is committed to making a positive difference in the lives of young people and to supporting the grassroots level of their sport.



TOP 5 WAYS TO REDUCE SCREEN TIME?

In support of the Live Outside the Box Campaign, Ever Active Schools hosted a Student Leadership Workshop in November of 2005. 47 students aged 10-14 and 17 teachers came together to participate in activities and discuss leadership opportunities in schools designed to increase physical activity and reduce screen-time. As part of the day's events, students were asked for their top 5 ways to reduce screen time among their peers. Suggestions fell into three basic categories and are described below:

The students all recognized the importance of parents setting limits on the amount of screen-time allowed for youth. Their un-edited comments were:

- Impose a screen time limit.
- Set limits.
- Create time limits.
- Parent regulation (other activities must be done first, responsibilities sports, volunteer work).
- Setting limits on TV time.
- Parents enforcing the rules!
- Make a time limit.
- Hide the remote and take out the batteries.

A number of the suggestions involved including friends:

- Encourage interaction/socialization with friends face to face
- Invite people to do active stuff
- Take a walk and find friends
- Hang out with friends
- Encourage friends to play

Finally, the youth questioned had definite ideas regarding what would help them become more active:

- Make easily accessible activities (ie: don't have to travel long distances and when it is cold outside, make good indoor activities)
- Expanding playgrounds/gyms
- Decrease cost of sports
- More activity workshops (ie: learning about the benefits of sports)
- Join extracurricular activities
- Create teams and new games
- Start a family game night

When looking for ways to decrease screen time for youth, be sure to include them in the planning and decision making stages. Discuss acceptable limits for screen-time and provide viable, sociable and enjoyable ways to physically active.



LIVE OUTSIDE THE BOX - STUDENT LEADERSHIP

The Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF) launched the Live Outside the Box (LOTB) campaign in February 2003. The campaign targets 10-14 year olds and encourages them to increase physical activity and reduce screen time. In 2004, EAS partnered with the LOTB campaign to offer a pep rally for two schools promoting physical activity and screen time reduction. This year we were able to partner again to provide the first ever EAS / LOTB Student Leadership Workshop.



Thirteen EA member schools came together on November 16, 2005 to discuss leadership, share ideas and collectively plan for increased activity and screen time reduction at their schools. As part of the day, each school received a banner – ***Our School Chooses to LIVE OUTSIDE the BOX*** – to be displayed in their school.

The Foundation (ASRPWF) has generously agreed to provide up to 95 EA schools with a similar banner to promote the LOTB campaign in their schools. In return, we would collect your strategies and plans for carrying this out in your school community. The banners will be ready in mid-March (delays with suppliers!!) – to qualify for yours please fill out the back page of this letter and fax to **780-453-1756**. The first 95 EA member schools to fax in their form will receive a banner! The EAS office will then collect these strategies and share them within the Promising Practices document which will be available to download from the website.

ENERGIZER DAYS 2005

The Ever Active Schools (EAS) Program hosted eight Energizer Days in collaboration with the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia www.arpdc.ab.ca. Thanks to everyone who attended and shared their enthusiasm, energy and ideas. Participants had the opportunity to network, offer peer support, learn about new resources and share ideas. Remember, all non-member schools have until February 28 to complete the membership process.

Plans for next year's Energizer Days tentatively include:

- * Expanding the participant list to include teachers, administrators, students and parents
- * Opportunity to focus on individual school needs
- * Time to plan with stakeholders for the new school year
- * Changing the dates to be earlier in the school year

Please share any ideas and feedback you feel may improve these professional development day that we are able to meet the needs of your school community.

