



# ABEONA

Newsletter of the Child and Youth Care Association of Newfoundland of Labrador – Spring 2008

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## A Time to Celebrate

May 4 – 10 is *International Child and Youth Care Week*, a time to recognize and celebrate the amazing, life changing work done every single day by CYC workers the world over.

One of the constant and most important things we do in our work is help children believe in themselves. We do this by supporting them and cheering them on when they face challenges, and we celebrate with them when they have triumphs and successes. It is remarkable to see how well youth respond to our sincere encouragement, to watch them develop a new-found confidence, to start believing in themselves, and begin to understand their true potential. When children believe in themselves, there really is no limit to how much they'll grow as individuals, how greatly they'll achieve in their lives, or how high they'll fly – the sky really is the limit.

So, to all members of the CYCANAL and to Child and Youth Care workers throughout our Province, be sure to take some time for yourselves and each other in early May, to celebrate and reflect on all the triumphs and successes you've helped bring about in your last year of working with children, youth and their families. Your genuine compassion, enthusiasm and creativity make their world a better place every single day. Thank you, one and all, for your dedication and continued efforts. Keep up the good work!

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*What's in a name? In Roman mythology, Abeona was a goddess who protected children the first time they left their parent's home, safeguarding their first steps alone.*



## **Speaking From Experience:**

### *An Interview with Andy Leggett*

*Andy Leggett is the Executive Director of Broken Arrow Residential Treatment Services, a residential treatment program that provides treatment foster care. Andy lives and works in Ontario, although his program has been used extensively to care for children and youth in the care of the Director of Child, Youth and Family Services in Labrador.*

*I had the pleasure of meeting Andy and seeing firsthand how passionate and committed he is to the work that he does, and was thrilled when Andy agreed to be interviewed for ABEONA.*

### **How long have you been a Child and Youth Care Worker? How did you get started in the field?**

Yikes! These days I have a hard enough time remembering how I got started this Morning!

Long prior to going to College, I always seemed to find myself surrounded by kids and loving it. Therefore when it became time to decide “what I wanted to do” after high school, I knew pretty much the direction that I was headed. My brother-in-law was a Child Care Worker and after talking with him, I was hooked!

Although I actually graduated from St. Lawrence College in Kingston Ontario in the then Child Care Worker Program in 1984, I actually started “in the field” in the late 1970’s. I got a job about two weeks into my first year in College primarily because I had biceps and a pulse. Fortunately, the standards for employment in our field have risen over the years!

I worked in a couple of residential programs throughout college, only partially explaining the five years that it took me to complete the three year program.

Interestingly enough, Dennis McDermott, now (and seemingly forever) the Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Counselors, was one of my professors at Saint Lawrence. In my opinion, Mr. McDermott has done as much for our profession in this country as anyone I know.

Following my graduation, I have worked in virtually all aspects of the field from residential to family to community to school before becoming involved in Treatment Foster Care in 1990.

### **You currently run a Treatment Foster Care Program. Can you describe your program? What was your first experience in treatment foster care?**

That goes back to the late 1980’s when Ontario was going through similar struggles that your province is going through now in terms of meeting the treatment needs of hard-to-serve children and their families.

Historically, these children were placed in staff-modeled residential programs. Research at that time, much of which was Canadian-based, was indicating that many of these children could get their needs met as well if not better in family-based treatment programs.

So in 1990, I was working as a behaviour consultant for a school board when I saw an ad in the paper. Three local Children’s Aid Society’s were working together to develop a Treatment Foster Care Program. I applied and was fortunate enough to be one of two Child and Youth Counselors to be hired to work with the managing Social Worker to develop and implement the program.

That two year pilot project developed into one of the most respected Treatment Foster Care Programs in Canada that is still in operation today.

Not only did we have a superb treatment team, we were able to be lucky enough to surround ourselves with some of the best clinical minds in Ontario as consultants. For example, Dr. Paul Steinhauer, at that time the head of psychology for the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and one of the most renowned experts in the field of Attachment in North America, consulted with us regularly.

When our Program published a book on the Treatment of the Aftermath of Sexual Abuse (the three words that I wrote were brilliant), Dr. Steinhauer came to our “book opening”. I have a picture from that day of the fellow authors and a couple of the consultants to the program. Who is standing next to me but Dr. Steinhauer! It was kind of like Albert Einstein standing next to Elmer Fudd!

### **Your Program has a Newfoundland connection. Can you explain what that is?**

As I mentioned earlier, Newfoundland is currently struggling with its foster care and treatment facilities in a much similar way that Ontario has. Although Newfoundland is doing all that it can to meet the needs of the children in their own communities and its own province, there are times when their resources are exhausted and they need to look outside the

province for treatment facilities.

My program, Broken Arrow Residential Treatment Services, is one of the Treatment Programs that Newfoundland uses in these circumstances. I have also had the distinct honour to have worked extensively with many of the Native communities in Labrador and have a number of Innu and Inuit children and teens currently placed in our program.

As I work in those communities, I am in awe of the dedication, commitment, and courage displayed by those families and leaders in the communities as well as the Social Workers who work hand-in-hand with them to overcome the many challenges that face them.

### **What is your proudest accomplishment to date?**

You mean besides continuing to persuade and bribe my wife of over twenty years to stick around and convince the community that my three great children aren't adopted?

I guess if I had to pick one it would be the fact that I have gotten to the point, as a Child and Youth Counselor, that I own and operate my own Residential Treatment Program. I have learned that many of the strategies that you use in the "Quiet Room" are just as effective in the "Board Room".

As you are aware, I am also very active in the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Counselors (OACYC). I believe strongly in the "professionalization" of our profession and being involved in and actively supporting an association that promotes that is important to me. An Association is only as strong as its members' commitment to it.

**Thanks, Andy!**

**Heather Modlin**

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## **Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man:** *Charlie Appelstein at the Annual Child and Youth Care provincial conference*

Last June the provincial child and youth care association hosted yet another successful, annual, provincial conference. The conference was host to many talented youth care professionals who provided a variety of information sessions. A major highlight of the conference was the keynote speaker, Charles Appelstein. Author of "No Such Thing as a Bad Kid" and "The Gus Chronicles", Appelstein discussed a range of ideas, which included a discussion on responding versus reacting, using strength based approaches, and using music as a novel form of communication.

In his discussion about responding versus reacting, Charlie basically explained that in order to be productive with the youth we are engaged with we need to be aware of our feelings, but set them aside in an attempt to look for hidden messages in young people's behaviors. So for example, while a young person might be yelling and swearing at a staff, the staff makes an effort to not take the insults personally and look at what the behaviors mean, in this case they could mean the youth is hurt or disappointed. In an effort to respond as opposed to reacting, the staff might identify that the youth appears really angry and that this anger might be stemming from some disappointment. Had the staff member taken the remarks personally, he or she may have taken a different approach to the outburst and as a result may have had far less success reaching the youth during their time of greatest need.

Charlie also discussed his ideas and experiences using a strength based approach. This can be difficult because it requires a slight shift in thinking, but once achieved it can prove to be a very positive tool. He demonstrated how we can take behaviors exhibited by youth that are often viewed as negative and transform them into strengths of the young person. An example of this could apply to a young person who would have traditionally been labeled as being manipulative, and could now, through reframing in a positive light, be identified as being rather creative and successful at getting what they need.

One very entertaining element of Appelstein's address, his 'one line raps for girls and chaps', had him standing on a chair, shaking his tambourine and singing, which earned him some air time on the local news network. He uses music as a form of communication and prompting with youth. Basically, he identifies areas that a youth is struggling with and puts a positive message into rap form. This is fun, non-confrontational, and easy to remember. For example, if a youth is struggling with getting out of bed for school a suitable one-line rap might be: "*Rise from bed, sleepy head. Go to school, school is cool.*" This was an interactive segment of his presentation that left some people with a spirit for one line rapping.

It was obvious from his address that he is not only a seasoned youth care professional but also very intelligent, entertaining and passionate about his work, something he shares with youth care workers around the world. This passion is the driving force behind his work and the work of other youth care professionals. As Alexander Pope once said "Passions are the Gales of life," and everyone attending the conference was certainly blown away by Charlie's attitude and enthusiasm.

**Angela Squires**

## **The Rowan Center:**

### *Addictions Counseling and Treatment for Youth and Their Families*

In the spring of 2007 a pilot project was started in St. John's for an adolescent day treatment program focused on youth 12 to 18 years of age with substance abuse and gambling problems. Since that time The Rowan Center has proven to be a successful program in the community. As a result, in November of 2007 the center had its official launch during Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week.

With a set of highly trained professionals and specialists, the Center offers their clients a program which is youth driven and comes from a youth friendly perspective. Components of the program include:

- A comprehensive assessment and individualized treatment plan
- Individual and group counseling
- On-site academic schooling and school liaison
- Recreation therapy and life skills development
- Family and sibling counseling and support
- Psychological services
- Follow up and ongoing support

Staff of The Rowan Center are committed to giving their clients the guidance, tools and supports needed for them to achieve their goals and go on to live a more stabilized and enhanced way of life. Supports are also given to families and care givers so that they too can be a part of the development of healthy life changes; as well as attain a better perspective on how to handle the stresses of caring for a loved one with addiction and or gambling challenges.

Although the youth must volunteer to enter the program and all its components to start the treatment process, a referral to the center can be made by the youth themselves, family members, or other professionals involved in the youth's life. Further information can be obtained and referrals can be made by contacting the intake coordinator at addictions services by phoning (709) 752 – 4929, or via FAX at (709) 752 – 4920.

A warm congratulation goes out to The Rowan Center, its youth and their families for all their successes thus far and well wishes and good luck for all the successes yet to come!

**Melanie Cook**

*“Praise youth and it will prosper”*  
~ Irish Proverb ~

## **Ryerson University's Certificate Program in Residential Care for Children and Youth**

We have been reading about issues within the residential care community. In response, I would like to introduce the Certificate in Residential Care for Children and Youth offered at Ryerson University in Toronto. The certificate is for front-line care workers currently employed in a residential care facility. It is designed to help develop the student's abilities by providing tools and resources that will augment the experience gained on the job and to help move to supervisory roles with the residential care community.

In order to accommodate the demands of the job, the Certificate is offered entirely online through distance education. You can take the course from anywhere in Canada at any time of day during the term in which the course is offered. All courses are approved by Ryerson University's Academic Council and the majority of them are equivalent to Child and Youth Care Program degree courses and therefore transferable to the degree if the student is subsequently admitted.

For more information about the Certificate, please visit our website at [www.ryerson.ca/ce/RCCY](http://www.ryerson.ca/ce/RCCY) or contact Sheldon Reinsilber, academic Coordinator at either (416) 979-5000 extension 4594 or by email at [sreinsil@ryerson.ca](mailto:sreinsil@ryerson.ca).

Any information and/or feedback would be appreciated as we attempt to provide leadership in the field of residential care.

**Ryerson University**

## **Memorial University Sets Up Committee to Establish Child and Youth Care Degree**

Memorial University has been studying the feasibility of establishing a degree program in Child and Youth Care, and as a result of this research has decided to seriously consider the offering of this degree at the St. John's campus. According to Dr. Michael Collins, Acting Vice-President (Academic) “the next step would be to...develop a more detailed proposal, budget, and work plan.” Work on this proposal will begin in September, 2008. The CYCANL will receive regular updates on the progress of this initiative, and will keep you posted as new developments occur.

**Heather Modlin**

## Satisfaction Guaranteed:

### *A Matter of Perspective*

Being ‘on the floor’ is a term well known to anybody who calls themselves a youth care worker. It means being present and involved with the young people in our care – actually being in the young person’s life space as they go about their day to day lives. It is an exciting and often fast-paced environment that can have you laughing one moment and crying on the inside the next, as you share in the remarkable triumphs and heart-breaking sorrows of the youth.

For many of us, however, as we spend more and more time working on the floor, learning effective practices and interventions, we become increasingly aware of the ceiling that looms over us, hampering our upward advancement in the child and youth care field. Such difficulty moving up the ladder isn’t due to any lack of commitment or passion for the work being done, but rather, it exists because of the typical size and structure of organizations devoted to child and youth care. With only a few steps separating the large group of front line staff from the handful of administrators and directors, the reality is that there is usually little opportunity for upward career advancement within an organization.

The limited potential for professional growth can be a hard pill to swallow, especially when staff on the floor possess all the characteristics commonly associated with success in the workplace: they are formally educated, hard working, creative and empathetic team players, and they’re eager to turn a good job into a great career.

When considered in this light, it is no wonder that youth care workers frequently suffer from job dissatisfaction or are completely burned out after four or five years in the field. The truth is that it can be difficult to maintain focus and energy on the job without the promise of something better waiting for you at the end of your day, because for many of us, that’s how we’ve learned to measure success in our lives.

If success is determined by the size of our bank accounts, then we as youth care workers have failed miserably in choosing a career path, as we are seriously underpaid for the important work we do. If we envisioned professional success in terms of a wardrobe filled with fine dress clothes, then we are failures as well, because no youth care worker is likely to wear an expensive outfit to work when he or she could be playing tackle football in the backyard, participating in a spaghetti eating contest, or building a snow fort in the middle of a raging blizzard.

Having our work recognized and respected by the general public is something else we rarely enjoy, as most people think of youth care work as glorified babysitting. If we measure success in terms of task completion, the way an engineer or contractor might, then we’re due to suffer further disappointment, as our work is of an

ongoing nature, and we rarely ever get to say that we’re actually finished. The end result is a less than inspiring picture, as we toil away in relative obscurity, earning less than we deserve at a job we can never really complete, knowing full well that our options for advancement are limited, and wondering how the hell we’re going to get the spaghetti stains out of our favorite jeans before we come to work and start sniffing the grindstone again tomorrow.

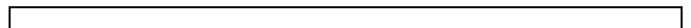
However, in spite of the negative image presented above, there is still hope for the burned out and disillusioned among our ranks. As with most things, our perspective plays a huge role in the way we interpret and experience our lives. Instead of lamenting the lack of job completion, we could instead choose to look at the ongoing nature of our work and take comfort in the fact that our efforts are needed today and every day, and that we’ve got an opportunity to build upon today’s good work tomorrow.

We may not have expensive work clothes, but that also means we don’t have to spend a lot on an expensive wardrobe. Our work may not be understood and respected by the general public, but we’ll know we did something good when we meet an ex-resident years from now and they tell us how our belief in them helped them believe in themselves, and ultimately helped turn their lives around.

As far as advancement goes, if you can’t move up, then take what you’ve learned and move sideways. You may be waiting a long time before you become a lead hand, senior counselor, coordinator or administrator, if ever, but that doesn’t mean that you can’t become a more important member of whatever organization you work for. Maybe your employer needs a certified first aid trainer, an Occupational Health and Safety representative, or someone willing to get the ball rolling on a recycling campaign. You could also bring a personal interest to work and use it to start up a new program or event like a weekly jam session, a winter camping excursion, a floor hockey tournament, or a cooking class. The sky really is the limit when it comes to enriching the lives of the young people, and the more responsibility you assume in this area, the greater your job satisfaction will be.

By choosing a new perspective and expanding your role beyond the basic duties and responsibilities of working the floor, you are helping ensure that you stay motivated and invested in the work you choose to do. You may never get rich or manage to get that spaghetti stain out of your jeans, but at least you’ll be enthusiastic about coming to work each day, and for a young person in crisis, the enthusiasm and interest you’ll be able to show them could make all the difference in the world.

**Greg Squires**



## Provincial Standards for Child and Youth Care Workers

A provincial committee is being established to look at the need for standards and regulation for child and youth care workers. This committee will address issues related to education, training and overall qualifications for child and youth care practitioners in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a great opportunity for us to highlight the significant amount of knowledge and skill that is required in the field, and to take much needed steps towards ensuring that everyone who works with troubled children, youth and their families is adequately prepared for the job.

The committee will have representation from child and youth care workers in all areas of practice, including child welfare and youth corrections, and will make recommendations to government about how to effectively regulate the field. The CYCANL is quite excited about this initiative and hopeful that it will lead to an improved system of care and increased support for, and recognition of, child and youth care workers in the future.

If you are interested in knowing more about this committee, you can contact Heather Modlin at [heathermodlin@nl.rogers.com](mailto:heathermodlin@nl.rogers.com) or 368-6390, or you can check out the Pre-Conference Day on June 4, 2008.

**Heather Modlin**



*Building "Bridges" in  
Child and Youth Care -  
The possibilities are endless  
October 8 – 10 / 2008*



The 15th National Child and Youth Care Conference, Building Bridges in Child and Youth Care, promises to be three days of interactive and educational presentations, activities, as well as an opportunity to enjoy the company of fellow colleagues in the relaxed atmosphere of Prince Edward Island. The Child and Youth Care Association of Prince Edward Island is pleased to announce a line up of highly respected leaders in the field of Canadian Child and Youth Care, Keynote Speakers Michael Ungar, and Thom Garfat, as well as many well established and dynamic presenters. For program and registration details please check our website at [http://garthgoodwin.info/National\\_Conference.html](http://garthgoodwin.info/National_Conference.html)



Sponsor: The Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations is pleased to participate with the CYCA of PEI providing a start-up grant, sponsoring the Opening Reception and guidance for this, the 15th National Child and Youth Care Conference.

3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Provincial Conference

# RECLAIMING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

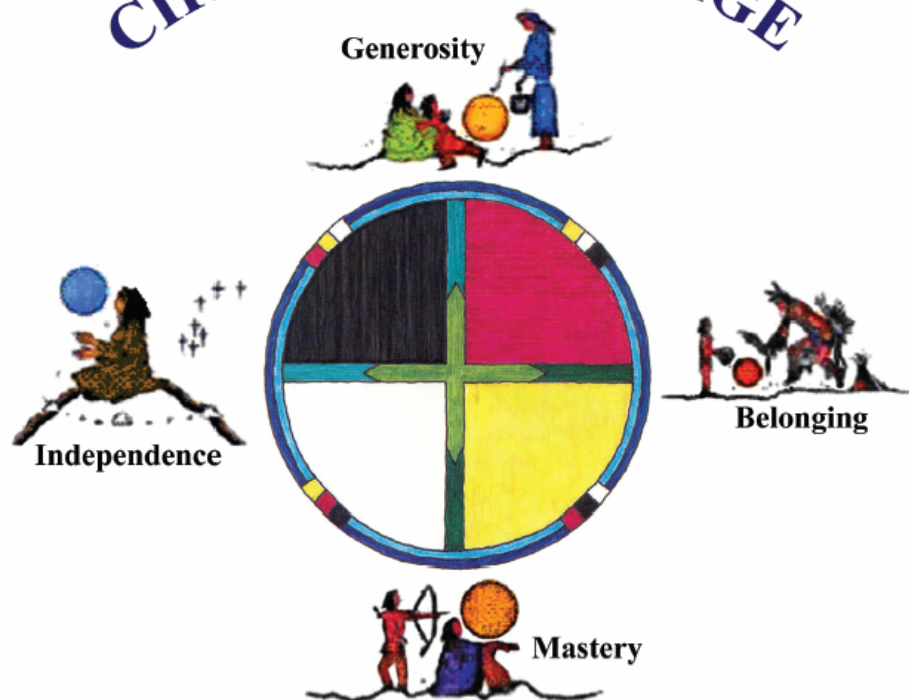


Child and Youth Care Association  
Newfoundland and Labrador

June 5-6, 2008

Battery Hotel, St. John's

## CIRCLE OF COURAGE



age, Inc.  
PO Box 57, Lennox, SD, USA, 57039  
www.reclaiming.com  
artist: George Blue Bird

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Larry Brendtro

**Dr. Brendtro** is founder of Reclaiming Youth International and author of *The Other 23 Hours* and *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*, classics in the field of Child and Youth Care. Dr. Brendtro's keynote address *The Circle of Courage* will be followed by two full days of presentations

#### REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Early Registration (April 30, 2008)  
Registration (by June 5, 2008)  
Single Day Registration  
Presenters/Students

#### CYC Member

\$120.00  
\$145.00  
\$ 90.00  
\$ 60.00

#### Non Member\*

\$160.00  
\$185.00  
\$100.00  
\$60.00

To register follow NL link at [CYCCanada.ca](http://CYCCanada.ca), call 368 6390 or email [cycanl@nl.rogers.com](mailto:cycanl@nl.rogers.com)