



PREVspectives

Networks of Centres of Excellence—New Initiative



Volume 1, Issue 1

Inside this issue:

The Premiere of Elijah's Kite	1
Governor General: Official Patron	1
PREVNet's First Annual Confer- ence and Launch	2
Student Collabora- tion Network	3
Five Minutes With: Ross Francis, Scouts Canada	3
PREVNet's Work- ing Groups	4
PREVNet's Per- spective	4

The Premiere of Elijah's Kite

Elijah's Kite, a new opera for children premiered before Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Governor General of Canada, Michaëlle Jean and school students at Rideau Hall on October 30, 2006. Dr. Debra Pepler, PREVNet Scientific Co-Director, worked with Tapestry New Opera Works, a PREVNet partner, in the development of this opera that explores themes of bullying, exclusion, diversity, acceptance, and cooperation.

The opera is set in a school playground, where 9-year-old Elijah is often bullied by Big Billy Brett and others. For comfort, Elijah brings his kite to school and dreams of flying away from his problems. One day, Elijah meets a strong new girl, Miriam, who stands up to Billy. However, Miriam soon learns to use her new power in a negative manner and begins to bully others herself. In the end, by developing empathy for each other and appreciating diversity, they all discover what it takes to make Elijah's kite fly: caring and cooperation.

Dr. Pepler and her doctoral student, Katherine McKenney, along with education consultant Pat McCarthy, developed a comprehensive study guide to help teachers discuss the themes, content, and music of the opera. The guide also presents teachers with empirically-based information about bullying and the importance of



Governor General Michaëlle Jean and the cast of *Elijah's Kite*

healthy relationships among children, as well as the guiding principles of PREVNet. As a result of PREVNet's involvement with *Elijah's Kite*, every student who watches the opera will receive a postcard of tips and strategies to manage bullying situations that they can take home and discuss with their family. This opera, study guide, and tip sheet represent innovative forms of knowledge mobilization.

Elijah's Kite toured across Ontario schools and community centres in November, through the aegis of Prologue to the Performing Arts. For a copy of the teacher study guide, please visit: http://www.tapestrynewopera.com/elijah_kite/Study%20Guide_final.pdf

Governor General Michaëlle Jean joins PREVNet as official patron

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, has agreed to serve as the official patron of PREVNet, a new Networks of Centres of Excellence New Initiative Network. PREVNet is a trans-disciplinary initiative bringing researchers, non-

governmental organizations, and governments together as partners to reduce aggression and promote healthy relationships among Canadian youth.

For more information, please visit: http://qnc.queensu.ca/story_loader.php?id=446cc7c92e2e3



PREVpectives

PREVNet Launch & Conference, May 25-26, 2006 at Carleton University

"I wish with all of my heart that your research and expertise will propose new insights to find solutions to this ever growing problem among Canada's children and youth. Let's all rise up for a world where respect is valued above all else" - Michaëlle Jean (in an inspiring, supportive letter written by Her Excellency, read by Samira Ahmed)

Just two months after the Networks of Centres of Excellence's March 2006 funding announcement for PREVNet as a Networks of Centres of Excellence—New Initiative, PREVNet hosted its first annual two-day conference 'Addressing Bullying Through Partnerships: Canadian and International Perspectives', which was attended by over 250 participants including:

- Senior Canadian researchers
- Representatives of partner NGOs
- Professionals in agencies—psychologists, executive directors, social workers

- School staff—principals, teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists
- Public health representatives
- Members of provincial and federal police forces
- International researchers from Australia, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, and Switzerland
- Graduate students working with attending researchers from Canada and abroad
- Government representatives

The Keynotes and Workshop Presentations from this conference are currently available at

<http://www.cipb.ca> and will be available at <http://www.prevnet.ca> when the site launches.

The next annual PREVNet Conference will take place at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada from May 16-18, 2007. Be sure to mark your calendars now to reserve these dates. More information will be available about the conference in March.

Highlights of the PREVNet Launch & Conference May 25-26, 2006

The launch began with a very warm welcome presented by PREVNet Scientific Co-Directors Dr. Wendy Craig in English and by Dr. Debra Pepler in French. Other highlights include a reading of a letter written by PREVNet's Patron, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean who was unable to attend the launch, PREVNet's Honourary Board Member Landon Pearson speaking about the

rights of the child and her support for our activities moving forward, and finally, the plaque presentation, which ended the official part of the launch ceremonies on a tremendously high note. It became clear to everyone in attendance that with all of the support and expertise among the PREVNet partners and researchers, it will be possible to make a positive difference in the lives of Canadian children and youth.



From left to right: Dr. Debra Pepler (Scientific Co-Director of PREVNet), Dr. Wendy Craig (Scientific Co-Director of PREVNet), and Jean-Claude Gavrel (Director, NCE)



Front Row: Susan Marlin (Queen's U.), Martha Tory (Ernst & Young), Debra Pepler (Scientific Co-Dir.), Honourable Landon Pearson (Carleton University), Wendy Craig (Scientific Co-Dir.). Second Row: Alain Canuel (NCE), John Bankes (Chair, PREVNet), David Sculthorpe (Cadbury Adams Canada), Howard Breen (MacLaren McCann).

A monumental event at PREVNet's launch and conference was the appearance of Jean-Claude Gavrel, Director, NCE.

Mr. Gavrel joined us for the launch event and presented Dr. Craig and Dr. Pepler with a beautiful plaque in honour of

PREVNet's launch. He talked about the value of PREVNet's partnership model to enhance social capital, and promote mental and physical health, healthy relationships, school engagement, and crime prevention.

PREVNet Establishes Unique Pan-Canadian Student Collaboration Network

PREVNet's partnership model brokers collaborative relationships among established Canadian researchers and national non-governmental organizations that study and work with children and youth. The purpose of building trans-disciplinary teams is to exchange knowledge and technology, share empirical research methods and findings, training programs, assessment and evaluation models, prevention and intervention programs,

and to encourage advocacy and policy development.

This model is reinforced and enriched with the establishment of the graduate student network, mentoring and involving students in opportunities to do research, work directly with NGOs, enhance the student experience and knowledge base in building the next generation of researchers.

The Student Network will immerse graduate students from

related disciplines, as well as students of senior researchers in the research network to come together from all Canadian universities. Students will have first hand experience working, not only on set research as defined by the ongoing PREVNet theme-focused working groups, but also to have a role with the partner NGOs in sharing their knowledge and expertise.

The network will be run by stu-

dents and will have a student Listserve. Each student will create a profile which details their interests and 'dream' research project. These profiles will be posted on the PREVNet website. Students will be given the opportunity to create communications on their Masters or PhD research, which will be highlighted on the PREVNet website.

Five Minutes With: Mr. Ross Francis, Executive Director, Scouts Canada

The mission of Scouts Canada is to contribute to the education and development of youth through a values-based system. In the past year some really exciting work has been happening in our organization. We have spent time formally outlining the Strategic Directions for Scouts Canada which we think will unify the organization across the country and help us achieve our mission on a wider basis. We have also worked with government and corporate sponsors on a climate change initiative, played a leadership role in the international Scouting world, and partnered with Veterans Affairs

Canada to honour our veterans.

2007 is the 100th anniversary of Scouting worldwide. In honour of this occasion, Scouts Canada has been asked to provide a "Gift for Peace," a youth-run project that will contribute to peace in the world. Scouts Canada's Gift for Peace was recently chosen by our youth committee; it will involve breaking down racism and building relationships within Canada. In this gift you can see both the leadership role that youth occupy within our organisation, and also our commitment to building healthy relationships.

Respect for others is one of the core values of Scouts Canada; it is central to our Promise and Laws. We also encourage each Scouting group to come up with their own code of conduct. This involves engaging young people in an age-appropriate discussion about what is acceptable in our language and in actions toward others. Rather than imposing rules, we consult widely on just about everything we do so that every stakeholder has an opportunity to have their views heard. Through our partnership with PREVNet I hope that Scouts Canada will be able to educate our leaders and youth about



what bullying looks like and how to prevent it. PREVNet's definition of

bullying extends beyond physical harassment. Indeed bullying can be very subtle and have varying levels and means of expression. Youth and adults in leadership roles need to have an idea of what bullying means so that they'll be able to recognise it when they see it. We also need proactive solutions for dealing with bullying problems. We want people within our organization to be aware of bullying and the role they have in preventing it.

PREVNet Establishes Working Groups

A set of four Working Groups have been established to focus on critical issues and themes that are directly relevant to our objectives and to our partners.

The groups established to date invite researchers, graduate students, and NGO partners to identify their areas of interest and commitment based on the following list of Working Groups and focus areas:

- Assessment/Evaluation Working Group, focus area: developing a web-based assessment tool conducting research with over 7,000 youth ages 11-18 at the Scouts Jamboree (Quebec, Summer 2007).

- Education and Training Working Group, focus area: developing key messages, manuals, and training materials for NGOs.

- Social Aggression Working Group, focus area: defining and assessing relational aggression, contextual influences, and intervention (Note: This working group was initiated by Bonnie Leadbeater prior to PREVNet setting up the working groups).

- Cyber Bullying Working group, focus area: assessment of cyber bullying, conse-



quences and outcomes, development of key messages, information and resources for children, youth, and parents.

PREVNet’s Perspective: Bullying is a Relationship Problem that Requires Relationship Solutions



PREVNet recognizes bullying as a relationship problem, rather than solely as an aggressive behaviour problem. Bullying is a problem that unfolds in the context of a destructive relationship in which power is used to cause distress to another. With the repeated dynamic, the child who bullies is learning how to use power and aggression to control and distress another. The child who is repeatedly victimized becomes trapped in a relationship in which he or she is being abused and is increasingly unable to escape. Peers who witness bullying may also be negatively affected.



Bullying occurs in relationships at all ages and in all cultures. Lessons of power and aggression learned in childhood bullying can lead to racism, sexual harassment, dating aggression, and may later extend to workplace harassment, as well as marital, child, and elder abuse. Victimized children may also carry the hurt and fear from bullying forward into adult relationships.

Bullying requires relationship solutions. Children and youth need to learn that bullying is wrong and is hurtful. Children who bully need to learn empathy, compassion, how to

get along with others, and positive ways to acquire power, and to appreciate the human rights of everyone. Children who are victimized need protection and support in developing friendships. Children who are bystanders can be part of the bullying problem or part of the solution. Bystanders need guidance in recognizing their role in bullying and in developing strategies to intervene when they observe bullying. Interventions should begin early and be tailored to children’s age, gender, and diverse needs and capacities.

PREVNet is Canada’s strategy to promote positive relationships and eliminate violence for all children and youth.

PREVNet is based on partnerships between and among Canada’s leading researchers and national organizations, governments, and communities.

Together these partners mobilize knowledge related to the PREVNet four Strategy Pillars:

EDUCATION & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

PREVENTION & INTERVENTION

POLICY & ADVOCACY

PREVNet’s research themes focus on social adaptation and relationships across developmental stages:

EARLY CHILDHOOD

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

ADOLESCENCE



98 Barrie Street Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 3N6 Tel 613.533.6672 Fax 613.533.6732 www.prevnet.ca prevnet@post.queensu.ca

