

The Caring Classroom

Program Areas

- COOPERATION:
- COMMUNICATION
- TRUST
- PROBLEM SOLVING

As facilitated by the Kinark Outdoor Center staff

Working With the York Region DSB , York Catholic DSB, Simcoe County DSB, Simcoe Muskoka Catholic DSB

Again this school year, educators from the Kinark Outdoor Center will be facilitating a Character Education initiatives in response to school and neighbourhood requests. The **Caring Classroom** Program involves one 90 minute session a week for 10 weeks. It is a large group program that includes all the students in the selected class and it is designed so that it can be slotted into the existing classroom schedule. The program is planned to begin either the week of October 5 or October 12, 2010. This booklet is intended to serve as background for classroom teachers and community organizers to a planning meeting with Kinark staff to be arranged during the week of September 27, 2010. The Caring Classroom is intended to help the classroom teacher achieve the character education goals of the Board, not make more work. To that end, it is important that you tell us as much as possible about your

class, individual student needs, classroom management system and that we discuss how best to integrate the Caring Classroom within the existing structure. What follows is information that teachers have found helpful as they prepare to host the program. In order to maximize the value of the program, it is important that we customize the Caring Classroom to match your needs, individual student skill levels and the school-community environment. Please let us know any information that you think may be of value to our facilitators and do not hesitate to contact us with your questions.



'Nurturing values and understanding through hands-on learning'

Teachers Working With Teachers

We pride ourselves in the richness of our staff team. In addition to working with school groups, we deliver therapeutic recreation programs to a diverse range of people with disabilities. The Centre is recognized as a leader in the provision of adapted social growth experiences in an outdoor setting. Our program diversity, staff training resources and philoso-

phy has enabled the Centre to attract highly skilled practitioners from the fields of adventure based programming and education. We are fortunate to have experienced and certified teachers from both Ontario and Europe. Understanding and appreciating the role, responsibilities and needs of classroom teachers is an important value for us.

The Caring Classroom

Scheduling the Program

We recognize that each school and each class will have different needs and restrictions when it comes to finding the right time during the day and during the week to host the Caring Classroom Program. For the most part students are active and up from their desks during the length of the session. For scheduling the program, we ask only that the time and day of the week remains consistent throughout the 10 week period. Some schools due to scheduling challenges have elected to have the program compacted in two sessions a week for five weeks. This model while providing for increased retention places greater emphasis on the classroom teacher to support integration and to link the Caring Classroom with other character education initiatives. models have been successful in different schools. An brief opportunity to meet with the classroom teacher prior to each session is a valuable component for the Kinark facilitators as they strive to understand the students and integrate the learning process.

Resources and Support

One of the goals is to support the work of the classroom teacher. We supply classroom teachers with a resource manual for the program and additional materials to support the ongoing use of language, framing and problem solving strategies. The degree that the teacher chooses to become involved in the activities and integrate ideas into the classroom routine is entirely dependent on the assessment and comfort level of the teacher.

Program Evaluation

The Caring Classroom has been identified as a promising practice. The evaluation process has been modified for 2009 to include: 1) Teacher reports through a post program interview 2) Observer ratings at the start and end of program (Kinark Staff) 3) All class discussion/interview

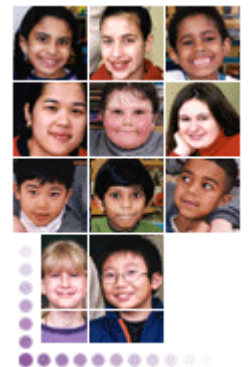
Available Space

Many of the activities require space. The ideal and preferred space is reserved gym, portable or drama room. If the fall remains warm and dry, we will try to be outside. The classroom has been used in the past. In the event of needing to use the classroom, students will be asked to help in moving desks and chairs to the side or hallway. In small classrooms that space is sometimes not enough.



Classroom Information

Before sessions begin, the facilitators will require a class list, a classroom profile, and a specific set of outcome goals the teacher has for the students taking part. Any pertinent medical or allergy information should be passed along at that time. As well, pertinent daily or weekly class and school information should be passed along. For example, is the class or school participating in other character initiatives? Can we link with that program to have increased impact on your students?



Respect Responsibility Honesty Empathy Fairness
Initiative Courage Integrity Perseverance Optimism



What to Expect: Adventure Programming and Social Skill Development

COOPERATION

The cooperation sequence includes icebreakers, the defining of program expectations, a 'full value contract' and a series of activities that address put downs, peer support, acceptance, tolerance, sharing and listening. This sequence forms the foundation for the rest of the program. Activities utilized for this sequence vary dramatically with grade level and level of readiness.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication and types of communication are explored in this sequence. A major social skills component addressing a variety of "communication blockers" is often added in where effective communication skills have yet to develop. Students may be asked to work in small groups, to perform, to role play or to wear a blindfold.

TRUST

This sequence involves higher behavioral expectations than the first two, as the perceived level of risk for individuals is increased. In trust we examine that it is ok to make mistakes, that other's feelings are important, to respect and support other's needs and to try new things, and, to take risks and support others to do the same. Learning gained through these exercises are immediately transferable and recognizable in all aspects of school life.



Problem Solving and Achieving Success

During this sequence the class builds on the skills learned and develops an awareness of their capacity to work as a unit and to accomplish tasks with little direction from the teacher or facilitator. The staff will have a strong role but will be obviously less active in the success of the group. Students will develop an awareness that they are all different from one another and that they can do great things when they can all work together. Win-win solutions and a group decision making model will be .



Using Adventure Activities to Build Character and Create Community





'memories that last a lifetime'

"This program was an excellent way to reinforce key objectives I have for my students" (Bogart P.S.)

"I have been amazed to see my class learn skills that were directly relevant to character objectives. The students LOVED the caring classroom" (Bakersfield P.S.)

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Previous Caring Classroom School Communities

- Warnica PS
- Divine Mercy
- Park Avenue
- Bogart PS
- St. Francis of Assisi
- Prince of Wales PS
- Lakeside PS
- Jersey PS
- Deer Park PS
- Keith Wrightman PS
- Windham Ridge PS
- St. Alphonsus
- RL Graham PS
- Aldergrove PS
- Armadale PS
- Wilclay PS
- Coppard Glen PS
- Randall PS
- Glen Shields PS
- Blue Willow PS
- Bakersfield PS
- Woodbridge PS
- Forest Run PS
- Harriet Todd PS
- Joseph A Gibson PS

