



Safe Schools Community Meeting Minutes

DATE Feb. 14, 2024

TIME 9:00 a.m. Zoom Video Conference Meeting

Welcome/Introductions

Confirmation of Agenda

Board of Education	
City of Kelowna	<i>Ron Cannon- Counselor of City of Kelowna sends his regrets</i>
COTA	Lori Dawson Bedard
COPAC	Jeannette Watson
CUPE	Jessica Teasdale
District Administration	Al Lalonde, Kevin Kaardal, Sherri Roche, Rick Taylor, Allison Goreas, Nathan Elliot
Traffic Safety Officer	
Kelowna Fire Department	Candace Friesen
RCMP	
City of West Kelowna	Melissa Hunt-Anderson
District of Lake Country	
Brain Trust	
Regrets	<i>Ron Cannan, Sherri Lund, Michelle Price, Lee-Ann Tiede, Mohini Singh</i>

Welcome & Land Acknowledgment

Sherri welcomed everyone and acknowledged that this meeting was being held on the traditional, unceded territory of the Okanagan Syilx People.

Take A Hike Program (TaH)- Nathen Elliott

- TaH is a new program to SD23- collaboration between Take a Hike Foundation, Central Programs and Services and the school district.
- Referral themes: many students struggling with mental health and attendance issues; many are younger referrals and located in West Kelowna; referrals come from families and school administration; struggling to meet the needs of students in West Kelowna through programs at Central due to distance and transportation barriers.
- TaH Foundation partners with School districts to engage vulnerable youth in a full-time, mental health and well-being program. TaH uses the outdoors and adventure to engage youth in experiential learning, intentional clinical counselling, and community. TaH is a model based on trauma-informed, evidence-based practice.
- The program is being piloted in West Kelowna, and has various locations in the lower mainland, West Kootenays, Vancouver Island etc.

- Objectives of the program: regular school attendance, social and emotional learning, knowledge of outdoor skills, improve mental and physical health and well-being, safety and belonging, improve academic success, develop trusting relationships with staff/peers, and support transitions.
- Focus on land-based learning (ex. snowshoeing); understanding the youth we are supporting.
- Philosophy of the program: trauma informed practice, attachment theory, social emotional learning, mental health promotion, learning on and from the Land, First People's Principles of Learning, Systemic Approach to Clinical Counseling, Emotional Focused Family Therapy, Client Centered Counselling, and Understanding of Adolescent Development.
- Five Core Values: relationships that are safe and caring; an environment that is safe and predictable; individualized and responsive support; relationship continuity through shared time/learning w/staff and students; the belief that all students can succeed and what constitutes success is individually determined.
- Program takes ongoing referrals and has three intakes during the year to support and engage students and build trust/community- January, April, and September.
- Staffing consists of three full-time employees- mental health clinician, SD23 teacher, and YMCA youth worker.
- Program Structure: circle time, academic instruction, counseling, building community, 4 days in classroom, 1 day learning from Land, 4-10 nights camping.
- General information on TAH: George Pringle gymnasium is their current site; program supports/targets grade 8/9, younger population (District program); currently at 13 youth; full-time program; weekly trips, travel, food, and gear provided by TaH Foundation.
- Ideal candidate for TaH- requires additional support to manage mental health; seeking skills to cope in healthy manner; motivated to attend; open to receiving counselling support, seeking sense of belonging/connection in smaller, calmer setting; values the benefits of nature.
- **AI comments**- People are wondering why it is therapeutic- that is an important message that was covered in this presentation.

TaH Foundation is a non-profit organization that does a lot of fundraising- that is how they come up with the money for the program.

Comment to Melissa- George Pringle is not a permanent location for TaH so we would love to look for an alternative location on the Westside.

We also have access to the TaH regional people for support.

- **Lori questions**- Are there 3 employees there consistently? Yes, 3 full-time employees work consistently, aside from sick days etc.
Have these workers received additional training from the TaH Foundation in the Lower Mainland prior to engaging in this pilot project? Yes, we had a few days in August; they are also piloting a program in Vernon, Trail, and Merrit, so all the TaH staff came together to train and go over the theory of change.
- **Kevin comment**- TaH is for the highest priority students; Kevin introduced this to Burnaby, and it had a positive impact over time; it was a high school program, whereas now we are trying to help them earlier.
- **Lori comment**- regarding the TaH site at George Pringle gym; space is at a premium; nothing concrete at this time, as stated earlier.
- **Melissa question**- What size of space are you looking for? Classroom? Does it need to be a gym? It does not need to be a gym but needs storage. A classroom would be ideal, as would a cooking facility. An office is necessary for counselling.
- **Lori question**- Who is the internal TaH team? Nathen, the teacher, the clinician, youth worker, partner from the YMCA, Sherri, and Allison.
- **Sherri & AI comment**- Grateful for all our community partners coming together for these meetings so we can create safe and supportive environments inside and outside of schools. Networking is the benefit of these meetings, as well as highlighting something in the meeting, and learning from each other.
- **Amy question**- if we were to find space, could we launch TaH in Lake Country in a short period of time? Cost and number of students who meet criteria need to be determined before another site is launched; need to do analysis of students who would meet program and meet with TaH for funding. It would be beneficial to have more accessible services, in more areas. We are still a bit early for a next site.

- **Sherri comment-** We are the first district to pilot TaH in a district for Middle school ages; we had to get permission since it is more of a high school program. We need to look at the outcome of this pilot before expanding.
Transportation is a big issue- families or youth need to get themselves to the program.

Partner Group Update

- **COPAC-** sponsoring two Digital Literacy and Internet safety events put on by the White Hatter; virtual events; links will allow parent groups to gather and watch together.
March 5th Digital Literacy and Internet Safety for Parents- 101 for families to stay safe online
April 23rd Supporting Youth Being Targeted by Aggression Online Violence (cyberbullying, threats, hacks etc.) navigating these topics and supporting youth; host is White Hatter; links will be sent out to parent community. Virtual events, and also recorded and available for 48 hrs. afterward. Save the date will go out today on Facebook page.
- **CUPE-** working on keeping schools safe and procedures are being followed, i.e. First Aid.
- **COTA –** support members with following procedures and processes in schools, working closely with Rick Taylor for any H&S issues that emerge; district safety advisory meeting tomorrow.
- **Lake Country Fire Department-** April 24th SD23 Bootcamp, one day, grades 10-12, 70 students come to fire department and have a day with firefighters, lecture on skill sets on becoming firefighter, hose pulls, fire extinguisher training, live burn at end, pizza lunch, organized through Sarah Wood.
Fire Safety House will be going out in the end of May / first 2 weeks of June for grade 1-3's.
Fire Chief for a Day program in October- for all of our schools, dinner with Chief, picture with Chief, t-shirts, etc.
Jr. Fire Setter program- any fires set on school grounds, department will come to school and explain issue around fire setting, prevent future arson.
- **City of West Kelowna-** working on accessibility plan, launching feedback survey in April, will share with group, then share with inclusion committee for September.
Partnership with Interior Health- Care Kiosk- harm reduction/hygiene center, close to Lion Centre/Urgent care. Safety with homelessness, triple number of homeless individuals in West Kelowna since last year, working to increase safety of community as the new library and school opens.
COWK is planning for another wildfire season.
April 27th is Wildfire Season Gratitude event, full-day event, firefighters receive awards, and a big surprise!
Amy question- What is a Care Kiosk, and is it the same issue as homelessness? These are two separate issues. Care Kiosk is a harm reduction vending machine, holds drug testing supplies, condoms, granola bars, water etc. Free and available 24/7.
- **District Administration-**
 - Busy month with Black History month, and inclusive education; shout out to Fed, our youth school officer.
 - Shout out- to the Operations department for keeping our schools safe- burst pipes, flooding etc.
 - New cellphone policies coming in- parents are excited that the province is taking sextortion and similar issues seriously.
 - **AI-** Fed and COK has added .5 with constable Mike, LC has constable Rigby, constable Lund moving to WKFN after 15 years. Thank them all for all their work.
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- **Sherri-** Upstream is a collaborative project overseen by A Way Home Canada, Raising the Roof, and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. It is a prevention and early intervention model, aimed at ending school disengagement and youth homelessness. IT has currently been running in KLO and Spring Valley Middle. Funding has now been secured to add a third site, Dr. Knox.
HRVY- went live with HRVY in October; focused on prevention, early intervention, and sustained support for youth engaged in or susceptible to high-risk activities; 21 referrals to date, actively supporting 17 youth; average age of youth is 12 yrs.; committed to co-developing prosocial activities. Support of community partners, individuals, and businesses in the Central Okanagan region is key to creating sustainability.

HRVY supports all youth in the Central Okanagan (West Kelowna and Lake Country) even though it is a COK grant.

- **Kevin-** the Premiere's announcement on cell phones will not cause a lot of change, as we already have cell phone policies in place in middle schools; elementary school not an issue.
Recognized all staff at GE and AME with the floods- incredibly hard work; staff were accommodating, adaptable and supported each other. The city does the bulk of the work in such an emergency but stays in contact with Superintendent- coordinated effort.
We are a cyber security lead- there have been attacks in the province, we support the schools, and protect private information.
A lot of the work that goes on is reactive but we also try to be proactive, (TaH and HRVY) affect their trajectory, paint a different future, with appropriate supports.
We have a phenomenal Post Critical Incident Response Team- AI is lead. Kevin was asked to present at the last partner liaison meeting about learnings. One question to ponder- how do we support the caregivers? TRU researcher friend doing research on long-term stress with trauma work.
How do we support those that provide that care?? Reactive and long-term. We need a collective response.
- **Amy question-** Is there a bike safety program in coming Spring? In upcoming mtg? Usually starts in Spring. Dan Glasscock- Community Safety Officer- targets certain schools and might be able to report at next meeting.
- **Sherri comment-** Dr Hayley Watson- Open Parachute program, leading free series Feb 20th & 22nd for parents on substance use, Sherri will send information.
- **Candace question-** Nathan does TaH touch on fire safety? Just fire procedures: Candace does free fire talk, fire safety etc. COWK could partner with TaH.

Correspondence

New Business

Summary and Wrap Up- reach out to Sherri if you would like anything added to the next agenda.

Next Meeting Date: May 15, 2024