

The Legacies of a Leadership Conference

October 19, 2010

Carpenter High School of Meadow Lake successfully planned and ran a superb provincial Student Leadership Conference this past month.

The theme of the conference, “If The School Were A Village,” challenged delegates to reach out to people– and to seek to bring together the diverse groups that make up our world. Five keynote sessions afforded the students a glimpse of what can be accomplished by purposeful leadership. David J. Smith, a teacher, author and consultant from Vancouver kicked things off with his keynote address on the Wednesday evening by inviting leaders to reach everyone within the community of the school.

On Thursday morning students participated in Rachel’s Challenge, a powerful presentation that called upon each person to make a positive difference in life through kindness and compassion. In the afternoon Ian (the motivational speaker not the singer) Tyson delivered a compelling, funny and heartfelt talk that was aimed at teaching students how to lead through action and with excitement. His message was very positive, very optimistic and filled with practical leadership skills. It was the highlight of the conference for many students.

Friday featured two keynotes: Absolute Leadership, a presentation that featured a live band and speakers, promoted leadership development through the acquisition of purpose, perspective and challenge; then, in the afternoon Lt. Governor Dr. Gordon Barnhart delivered a very practical message about planning for the future and goal setting.

When asked how she felt about the conference one of the staff advisors in attendance, Adele Muzyka, enthused, “I thought it was very well done! The kids were active and involved, the speakers were fantastic, and there was time for the kids to meet one another and touch base. It was great!”

Her thoughts were echoed by student delegate, Taylor Farrell. “It was excellent, the town was filled with friendly people and the thing I liked the most was meeting new friends. Ian Tyson was a great speaker -funny and he had a good point.”

Delegate Scott McAleer praised the diversity of the speakers: “I liked hearing about the different ideas on how to approach things: everything from leadership outside of school, to how to treat people, and especially the variety of global perspectives.”

Provincial leadership conferences leave behind two legacies: The impressions made in the minds of those who attend by what they see and hear, and a longer, and arguably stronger one, for those who are instrumental in planning and carrying out such a worthwhile event. As student Kendra Hopkinson noted, “It’s very satisfying. You feel proud of yourself because you’re a part of something that brings such a large group of people together. When you step into the gym and hear the speakers and feel the energy, and you see the effect it has on people, it’s really

rewarding to know that you've contributed to that. Hosting something like this gave a lot of students a chance to help out and lend a hand and feel that they were a part of something very significant. It brought those kids together- kids who you normally wouldn't see at SRC or in a club or group - it brought them together. We had to depend on each other to get certain things done at certain times. We had to rely on each other. It was very cool to see that."

Student Madison Esau spoke movingly about the purpose of the conference: "It's nice to be able to help better your community and your province by helping all these students gain better leadership skills and become better leaders."

Her thought was echoed by Kendra: "It gives you hope too, to know that there are that many student leaders just in Saskatchewan who want to better themselves and their schools and their communities. It gives you hope for the future to know that they're going to be out there."

Stats For Those Who Love Them

839 days of planning and preparation
4080 hrs. of work by the volunteers over the 3 days of the conference
825 people attending (675 students delegates, 150 advisors)
486 – the number of students at Carpenter High
1,157 burgers cooked at the opening barbeque
140 l. of potato salad (and that's a lot of potatoes)
5 keynote speakers,
30 speakers leading breakout sessions and seminars
31 years – the longest running and the first conference of its kind in Canada
121 local billet families and ...
1 city that came up BIG.

