



McCreary Centre Society

Winter/Spring 2011 www.mcs.bc.ca

New Report Now Available



We recently released a new report entitled *Moving in the right direction: Physical activity among BC youth*. Funded by the Vancouver Foundation and using data from the Adolescent Health Survey (AHS), the report shows that between 1998 and 2008, participation in strenuous exercise among BC youth increased, as did participation in sports and in dance and aerobics classes. Nearly half of students took part in one or more types of physical activity at least four times a week.

Youth who were physically active reported better mental health, good nutritional behaviours, greater body satisfaction, and higher rates of injury prevention behaviours such as seatbelt and helmet use. They were also less likely to report risky behaviours such as smoking, using cocaine or ecstasy, or misusing prescription pills.

However, the results also show that there are some young people who are missing out on the benefits of being active, including new Canadians, those who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, youth who have to work in excess of 20 hours a week, and those living in poverty or with an unstable home life.

The report received good media coverage, and Webinar presentations of the results were attended by participants from as far afield as Port Alberni and Prince George.

The creation of the report was truly a team effort. Overseen by an advisory board of experts in the field of sports and exercise participation, the original analyses that led to the report were conducted by Douglas College Child and Youth Care diploma practicum students Phill Screeton and Ashley Cole, and the foreword was written by leading Canadian sports psychologist and 30-year McCreary supporter and Board member, Dr. David Cox. Meanwhile the layout and graphic design was done by McCreary's newest employee, former YAC member Sylvia Eskoy.

The report is available free to download at www.mcs.bc.ca. A youth-friendly fact sheet of the results, as well as a power point presentation are also available. Hard copies of the report can be ordered for \$15 from mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.

In person or webinar presentations of the findings are available upon request.

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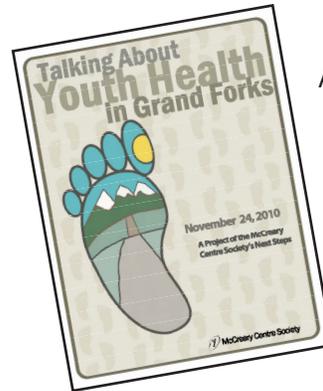
Next Steps

In addition to the media coverage for the launch of the physical activity report, McCreary made the front page of the Creston Valley Advance with an innovative project that engaged 100 Grade 7's with the results of the Adolescent Health Survey.

Grade 7 students from four elementary schools across the Creston area came together to learn about local results and share their ideas to improve youth health. Two day-long workshops were also used to ensure the students had an opportunity to connect with Grade 7's from other schools, who will be their high school classmates next year, and to meet peer counsellors from the high school.

With the help of Reel Youth and McCreary staff, students made a total of 16 short claymation films about the youth health issues most important to them. They then hosted a film night for family and friends. Despite icy conditions, well over 150 community members attended the film premiere. Many students were brave enough to introduce their films and the statistics that inspired them. These ranged from issues such as peer pressure to the need for young people to wear helmets when playing sports. The films will shortly be available on the McCreary website and can currently be viewed at www.reelyouth.ca/mcscreston.html.

Public Health Nurse Claire Bouchard, who coordinated the project locally, facilitated a discussion with the students about drug use in the valley. "I was impressed because it wasn't just, 'Drugs are bad,'" she said. "They have the understanding that if you want something in Creston, you can get it. They had some very mature suggestions too."



Another AHS project which grabbed local headlines was the Grand Forks Community Dialogue. This project again brought together Grade 7 students from several different elementary schools to discuss the AHS results and offer suggestions for what was needed to improve youth health in the area.

Following an intense morning of discussion, the students compiled a list of the top issues and their suggestions for how to tackle them. Their ideas were then presented to adults in the afternoon. Adult participants included school personnel, health professionals, parents, community workers and the local media.

A report generated from the students' discussions is now being used to inform policy and programming within the school district.

Presentations

McCreary had a strong presence at the 2010 International Conference on Urban Health in New York with poster presentations highlighting the research partnership between PLEA, Douglas College and McCreary, and the youth in custody study. An oral presentation was also featured about McCreary's collaboration with the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth and the Provincial Health Officer on their report, *Growing up in BC*.

Other recent presentations have offered specific regional AHS data for Kamloops, Vernon, Grand Forks, Creston, Langley, and New Westminster, as well as a talk about the AHS youth engagement data to the BC School Trustees annual meeting.

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Annual General Meeting



Sports psychologist Dr. David Cox provided the key note speech at McCreary's Annual General Meeting. Dr. Cox shared his experiences working with elite athletes at the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, and discussed the many benefits sports can provide to young people in BC. The sports theme was maintained as McCreary staff previewed some of the results of the Moving in the Right Direction report.

During the business section of the AGM, the following new Board members were elected: Anik Muhuri (YAC representative), Ajay Purey (Student group representative), Tara Chang and Stephanie Konefall.

Dr. Anton Miller was re-elected to the Board but has subsequently stepped down due to other commitments. Anton is sincerely thanked for his contribution to both the McCreary Centre Society and previously the McCreary Youth Foundation.

Members at the meeting approved changes to the constitution which will allow the Society to gift funds for the improvement of youth health in the province. Although no funds are currently available for this purpose, the aim is to allow the Society to continue the work of the now defunct McCreary Youth Foundation, should the opportunity arise.

Upcoming Projects

We have just learned that we have received funding from Vancity to conduct a Next Steps in West Vancouver. This project will start shortly and will culminate in a youth-led initiative to improve health in the area. Another Next Steps project in Port Hardy will start in February.

Youth Advisory Council



McCreary's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) has been on a recruiting campaign to get some younger members. We welcome new YAC-ers Kareen Chen, Karmina Cordeiro, Kenny Leung, Rooney Pham and Kate Zhou. If any youth between 14 and 25 years of age are interested in improving youth health in the province, have some free time and want to be actively involved, please contact youthparticipation@mcs.bc.ca for more information.

Bullying and Victimization

We recently completed 8 focus groups with youth in all five regions of the province, as part of a project for the federal youth justice program. Youth responded to AHS data as well as the survey results for the street-involved youth study (*Against the Odds*, 2006) and the alternative education report (*Making the Grade*, 2008). It is not clear when the full report will be published as it will include similar projects in other provinces, but more details will be available in April.

Program Evaluation

McCreary's independent program evaluations have been in full swing with a packed schedule of focus groups and survey collection across several local agencies.

Douglas College practicum students will continue working with McCreary research staff to enter and analyze the data collected from youth in PLEA programs. Data collection started in 2008 and will be ending this year.

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Students

Student group

McCreary's student group continues to encourage graduate and undergraduate students to access available data sets for their thesis and dissertation work. The group meets regularly to share their findings and to learn more about McCreary and the data they are working with.

At the most recent meeting, Yuko Homma, PhD nursing student at UBC, presented her analysis of the AHS which considers the relationship between ethnic identity and sexual initiation among East Asian students.

Student practica

The ongoing partnerships with Langara School of Nursing and Douglas College Child and Youth Care diploma program continue to produce useful community research. The two latest Langara practicum students at McCreary took an in-depth look at injuries among BC youth. Their findings will soon be available as a McCreary Fact Sheet.

The Douglas College students meanwhile looked at homelessness and unstable housing among youth taking part in a PLEA research project, and also in the AHS. Their findings were shared with PLEA senior management and the posters they created will be submitted to the Douglas College research day.

Library

After a period of inactivity, McCreary's library has now been updated and is functioning again. Sincere thanks are due to volunteer librarian Selina Tang who has spent the past few months cataloguing and organizing. Anyone interested in learning more about the library's collection is welcome to contact librarian@mcs.bc.ca.

Donation Form

The support of government, business and community members is critical as we look toward funding more priority initiatives, conducting future research and implementing community-based youth leadership projects. McCreary needs your support to ensure that we can continue to address the unmet health needs of young people and their communities.

I would like to contribute to McCreary Centre Society

Name

Address.....

City..... Postal Code

Phone Number

Email

Enclosed, please find my donation of:

\$50 \$75

\$100 \$150

Other _____

Please send donations and forms to:

McCreary Centre Society
3552 Hastings Street East
Vancouver, BC V5K 2A7

Registered Charity # 1294218632 RR0001
A tax receipt will be issued to acknowledge your generosity.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of young people in BC.

