

Adolescent Health Survey IV is Underway Across BC!

Adolescent Health Survey IV (AHS)

The fourth AHS is underway, with unprecedented school district participation. Over 80% of school districts across the province have chosen to take part in AHS IV, including several school districts participating for the first time, such as Surrey, Delta, and Nisga'a. The AHS continues to receive valuable support from Public Health Nurses around the province, who are administering the survey through the spring term. McCreary is aiming for a representative sample of at least 30,000 students from across the province to complete the survey. Stay Tuned for the results!

Hot Off The Press!

New Report: Improving the Odds: Next Steps With Street Involved and Marginalized Youth in BC

McCreary has released a new report, *Improving the Odds: Next Steps workshops with marginalized and street-involved youth in BC*. This report summarizes workshops McCreary facilitated with street-involved and marginalized youth in the North, Interior, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and Vancouver regions. The workshops provided youth with an opportunity to discuss the results of the report *Against the Odds: A profile of marginalized youth in BC (2007)* and to make recommendations for change in their communities and across BC.

In addition to the workshop findings, the report also includes information from a wrap up event at which youth from across the province who had participated in the workshops came together to discuss the findings, decide how these should be presented in the report, and talk about what had happened in their communities since the *Next Steps* workshops.

The youth identified three key points from the workshops that they agreed were important to emphasize:

- 1) Age 19 is too young to lose youth services. There is a need for better services to help youth transition to adulthood
- 2) Outreach workers play a vital role in supporting youth
- 3) There needs to be programs that continue to raise awareness of sexual exploitation.

The youth then produced 3 claymation films to highlight these key points. The films can be viewed at www.reelyouth.ca, and will soon be available at www.mcs.bc.ca.

Fact Sheets from Against the Odds

Youth who participated in the original survey for *Against the Odds* contributed to the production of a series of fact sheets to accompany the *Next Steps* workshops. Topics include: Sexual Health; Substance Use; Mental and Physical Health; Sexual Exploitation; Housing, School and Work. The report and fact sheets are available at www.mcs.bc.ca

Coming Soon...

Making the Grade: A review of Alternative Education programs in BC

Making the Grade: A review of Alternative Education programs in BC will be published in the spring. The report is based on a survey of over 350 youth attending Alternative Education programs in the province, as well as interviews with teachers, parents, school administrators social workers and probation officers. The study, which took place in the same communities that participated in McCreary's marginalized and street involved study (*Against the Odds, 2007*) considered what it is about these programs that keeps "at risk" and "high risk" youth engaged in education. Stay tuned...



MCS and MYF Merge!

After four years as a separate charity, The McCreary Youth Foundation (MYF) has merged into McCreary Centre Society (MCS). Through joined efforts, the newly merged McCreary Centre Society will continue to ensure that:

- 1) Youth issues remain on the agenda
- 2) Young people are provided with leadership and skill building opportunities
- 3) Communities around the province are provided with resources to address the unique need of their youth.

In the Community

Aboriginal Next Steps

McCreary (e.g. *Raven's Children II*, 2004) and other researchers have shown that Aboriginal youth today face many unique challenges in their development into adults. These challenges include greater risk of substance use, HIV, Hepatitis C and suicide than non-Aboriginal youth. However, all too often the risks and health problems of some Aboriginal youth overshadow the fact that many are doing well.

The *Aboriginal Next Steps* project takes a positive approach by supporting innovative youth-led community projects. Aboriginal youth (ages 13-19) in nine communities are participating in a *Next Steps* workshop series to: discuss the current status of youth health; dispel negative stereotypes and myths; identify priority issues associated with substance use; address those issues with an action plan; and then using a creative tool, generate a message they can share with their school and community. Following the workshops, facilitators help youth turn their ideas into action and develop a sustainable community project with the help of a \$5,000 grant and support from McCreary staff. Participating communities include Cranbrook, Hazelton, Bella Bella, Westbank, Courtenay, Prince Rupert, Lytton, and Vanderhoof.

Visit our website to learn more about their community projects and see their films.

Community Research Partnership PLEA Community Services Society and Douglas College

McCreary is involved in a community research partnership with PLEA Community Services Society and Douglas College's Faculty of Child, Family and Community Studies (CFCS). The goal of this partnership is to produce community based, academically rigorous research with an emphasis on evaluating best practice for youth services in British Columbia, and on improving the understanding of high-risk youth in the province. The three partners have developed a Memorandum of Understanding and have committed to disseminating the findings of the research project to a national and international audience of researchers, youth, community agencies, and policy makers at all levels of Federal and Provincial government.

McCreary is currently welcoming the second wave of Douglas College students who are completing their research practica at McCreary.

Representatives from McCreary, Douglas College and PLEA will be conducting plenary and/or workshop sessions at the following conferences: *Knowledge Without Harm: Strategies for Ethical Research with Youth* on April 25 & 26, *CUPEXpo 08* conference in Victoria on May 5th & 6th, and *The Conversations on Community Research Symposium* at Douglas College on May 8th & 9th.

Youth Consultations on the Family Relations Act

In partnership with SPARC BC, McCreary is conducting a series of youth consultations to support youth participation in the Provincial review of the *Family Relations Act*.

McCreary and SPARC BC have facilitated groups with youth in the Lower Mainland and in Victoria to discuss suggestions for including the voices of children and youth in the family law process. Feedback from participants and



their suggestions will be included in a report to be considered by the Provincial Government as they review the *Family Relations Act*.

Young Decision Makers Project

Three members of McCreary's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) got the opportunity to travel to Ontario recently for the inaugural meeting of the national Young Decision Makers project, coordinated by the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement. The project aims to ensure youth have a voice in legislative and other decision-making processes and that the views of youth in all communities in every province and territory are represented.

Since the meeting, the youth have stayed connected to the project through video conference and e-mail. Another meeting is planned for Montreal in the spring.

Transitions to Adulthood Roundtables

In partnership with the Centre for Youth and Society at the University of Victoria, McCreary has facilitated a series of roundtable discussions on Transitioning into Adulthood. The purpose of the roundtables was to hear young people's suggestions on how to address challenges youth face during this transitional period.

Participants varied in age from 14-24 years old and their voices represented diversity in ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, gender and sexuality, as well as marginalized youth from rural communities, and youth who have experience living in government care.

Stay tuned for more updates!

MCS Updates

Commercial Sexual Exploitation Program (CSEP) Funding Initiative 2003-2007 Final Evaluation

For a copy of the evaluation, contact Kathy Powelson kathy@mcs.bc.ca

B4 Breaking Barriers Building Bridges Youth Health Conference

This year's Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges (B4) Conference, held at Evan's Lake Camp in Squamish, was an unprecedented success.

The weekend provided a forum to promote health and leadership development amongst youth, attracting a diverse group of over 50 participants from Vancouver Island, The Sunshine Coast, and throughout the Lower-Mainland.

The theme, designed and delivered "for youth" by McCreary's YAC, was "Healthy Youth Development". Members of the YAC had opportunities to develop and demonstrate their skills in facilitation leadership, and mentoring. All participants had the opportunity to make new personal connections, share their voice and participate in activities designed to strengthen leadership skills and self-confidence.

McCreary and the Youth Advisory Council are looking forward to the 2008 B4, October 3-5, at Evans Lake Camp in Squamish BC.

If you are interested in participating, or have any questions, please contact: stephanie@mcs.bc.ca

Upcoming Conference

Knowledge Without Harm: Strategies for Ethical Research with Youth

April 25-26, 2008
Wosk Centre for Dialogue
Vancouver, BC

A two-day conference focusing on emerging challenges, trends, opportunities and strategies for ethical research with youth is being hosted by the Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Consortium (SARAVYC) and will feature presentations by McCreary researchers and youth participation staff.



The conference aims to explore new strategies for ethical research with youth. Topics will include innovative ideas for research methods, engaging youth in research, issues of consent, using technology, translating research results for youth and communities, and balancing perspectives about risk and resilience.

McCreary presentations will include workshops on the unique partnership that has been established between McCreary, PLEA Community Services Society and Douglas College and a workshop giving examples of projects that meaningfully engage youth in research.

If you are interested in attending the conference, some travel bursaries will be available for youth, researchers, members of youth-serving organizations or students from BC. For more information go to: <http://new.venuewest.com/sery.aspx>

Congratulations!

Dr. Elizabeth Saewyc, McCreary's Research Director, has been awarded a CIHR/PHAC Research Chair in Applied Public Health. The 5-year Chair focuses on answering questions around policy and public health interventions using the AHS and other McCreary datasets.

Partner With Us Today!

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.

Donation From:

The McCreary Centre Society (MCS) is a not-for-profit organization that is committed to improving the lives of BC youth. This organization has a 30-year tradition of developing youth engagement and leadership models, engaging in research and community-based projects and ensuring that the voices of youth are heard by policy makers and program planners.

I would like to contribute to the McCreary Centre Society

Name Address.....

Postal Code..... Phone NumberEmail.....

Enclosed, please find my donation of:

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$150 Other _____

Please send donations and forms to: The McCreary Centre Society, 3552 E. Hastings, 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.

