



## *In this month's newsletter:*

- 1 Report from Joanne Roussy
- 2 Community Stories
- 3 News and Upcoming School Visits
- 4 New Member Introductions
- 5 Upcoming Events
- 6 Literacy Links

## *Upcoming Events*

- 1 RBS Monthly Meeting  
May 15, 2014
- 2 "Promoting Healthy Body Image and Satisfaction among Teens"  
May 15, 2014
- 3 HELP Fall Research Expo  
October 15, 2014

## *Editor's Note*

Please send articles before the last Thursday of the month.

Katrina Hsu  
katrinah@sfu.ca

# The Reading Bear Newsletter

April-May 2014

*From Joanne Roussy, RBS Chair, May 2014*

## Report

*From the depths of our compassion, we can free ourselves of all that limits our imagination about what is possible.*

*Arianna Huffington (2014) Thrive. The third metric to redefining success and creating a life of well-being, wisdom and wonder.*

I believe this affirmation perfectly captures the sentiment and vision which brought the Reading Bear Society (RBS) to life. A group of thoughtful individuals can indeed change the world! I was asked twice in the past few weeks, what makes the Reading Bear Society (RBS) unique? What differentiates the RBS from other peer reading programs?

The RBS is not solely about peer reading buddies; the RBS has its foundation in a worldview that fosters healthy communities for all. The RBS rests on four fundamental pillars: (1) Community, (2) Educating the heart-mind, (3) Early literacy, and (4) Mentorship. What makes the RBS unique is how these pillars intertwine with each other, creating a sustainable, evidence-based foundation that promotes

early literacy and community health promotion. This month, the *intergenerational mentorship* pillar is featured. Testimony of this was evidenced during a recent school visit. On April 29<sup>th</sup>, six RBS ambassadors visited Queen Alexandra Elementary (QA) School and read with 36 kindergarten children. Also present were the Faculty of Medicine Coordinator of Communications Daniel Presnell and Melissa Carr, RBS president Joanne Roussy, Treasurer Dr. Trevor Newton ('87), and a student volunteer, Katrina Hsu. The group was warmly received by the school's Principal Ms. Cheryl Mathews and the teachers Julie Gelson and Melanie Moore. The children participating were introduced to each ambassador's stuffed bear. Lead by ambassador Andrew Pursell, the children listened to Dr. Seuss's, *The Lorax*, Andrew's favorite childhood book. To finish our visit, each child received a bag of books to take home and so start his or her own home library.

Many thanks to KidsBooks for providing the take home book bags!



Here is a note from kindergarten teacher, Julie Gelson:

*My class was talking about the visit this morning. They remembered all the stuffies that your students brought and made good connections between their reading buddies at home and the medical students reading friends. It was very cute!*

See other pictures:

<https://vimeo.com/94472167>



Another key aspect of the RB is the creation of school clubs.

Ambassador Andrew Pursell has begun his work with the Reading Bear Club at St. George's School. Since mentorship is a key component of The Reading Bear initiative, St. George's School is pioneering a new club that empowers students to mentor their peers in the program. This committee of five boys aims to provide leadership, support, and sustainability to the program.

Under the mentorship of Dr. Andrew Pursell ('03), Ms. Santhe LeBlanc, Head of Grade 8, Andrew

Mo, Joey Miller, Johnny Newell, Ryan Karimi, and Zehan Zhou will help guide the development of The Reading Bear.



This month, school registration (2014-2015) opened for enlisted kindergarten, middle, and high school classrooms. Beginning next fall, participating schools will receive a RB manual and workbook. These two documents are being co-written by a team of medical students (second year elective) in consultation with directors and advisory board members. Each Reading Bear session will include a heart-mind theme and incorporate the BC Ministry of Education curriculum for kindergarten and service learning guidelines for middle and high schools.

Two important dates for this upcoming week (May 5-9)

- Dr. John Helliwell will be at the LSC on Wednesday, May 7th from 12:00-1:00 pm. Please join us for a stimulating dialogue with *RBS* advisory board member and



international expert on happiness and community cohesion.

- The Dalai Lama Centre is hosting The Science of Kindness on May 8-10<sup>th</sup>, at the UBC Old Auditorium. In the context of this conference, the RBS members are invited to a dinner with Dr. John Tyler Binfet, UBC Researcher on Friday, on May 9th at 5:00 pm. Dr. Binfet's latest study investigates students in K-3rd grade to draw what kindness looks like to them and an example of kindness they have done recently at school. RSVP [roussynewton@shaw.ca](mailto:roussynewton@shaw.ca)

I recently meet Dr. Shimi Kang at KidsBooks while attending her book launch: *The Dolphin Way. A parent's guide to raising healthy, happy and motivated kids without turning into a tiger*. Her book addresses the so-called era of *affluenza*, which is the first book in history to address the impact of high economic status, a risk factor for youth depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. She states the importance of being involved in your community and being connected to others in meaningful relationships are key to for a healthy childhood. She notes that children of today require what is called the *Complete Quotient* (CQ): creativity critical thinking, communication and collaboration.

With Mother's Day just around the corner, I hope these practices are helpful to all you mothers out there, as well as to those who hold you in their hearts.



In honor of Mother's Day, here is a selection of stories relating to childbirth, parenting, caring for aging parents and dealing with their passing—with mindfulness. <http://www.mindful.org/at-home/parenting/8-mindful-practices-for-parents>

Please note that the next RBS monthly meeting will be May 15th at 4:00PM at Watson Inc.

Thank you.



## COMMUNITY STORIES

### Queen Alexandra Elementary Visit

by Katrina Dutkiewicz

I attended the YHS visit to Ms. Julie Gelson's class at Queen Alexandra Elementary. After hearing so much about the program, it was absolutely wonderful to see it in action. The YHS girls arrived a little before the kindergarten students returned from their recess, and were ready and waiting on the reading carpet when their buddies arrived. They had a Kids Books gift bag for each of their buddies, but these were put aside while the pairs were quickly given instructions on how to make a Valentine's craft, and then proceeded to make the craft together. The YHS girls seemed to click immediately with their buddies at this visit, and they worked so well together to make the craft. A few of the kindergarten students were not there that day, and their YHS partners looked very sad to be missing them. They were paired up with other groups, and put their energy and enthusiasm into working with their new buddies. One of the girls showed me how she was making a Valentine's Day heart for her little buddy who was not there.

Once they had finished the craft, they moved to the carpet to share what they had brought in their gift bags. There were some books, of course, which the pairs proceeded to read together, as well as a small craft kit for making Valentine's Day cards, which the kindergarten students were able to take



home. Each of the YHS girls had also made a Valentine's Day card for their little buddies, and it was amazing to see the creativity and effort that they had each put into making their card.

As a past student of YHS, it was wonderful to have the opportunity to interact with the Grade 5 students who participated in the buddy visit. I was so happy to be able to take part in this visit, and to have the opportunity to speak with some of the YHS girls and some of Julie Gelson's kindergarten students. They are two wonderful groups of students to bring together!



## NEWS

### Upcoming Dates for School Visits

- ◆ *Strathcona*: Monday May 12<sup>th</sup> depart 12:15, return 2:15 (DAY 2)
- ◆ *Graham Bruce*: Monday May 12<sup>th</sup> depart 12:45, return 2:45 (DAY 2)
- ◆ *Collingwood Annex*: Thursday May 15<sup>th</sup> depart 12:15, return 2:15 (DAY 1)
- ◆ *Admiral Seymour*: Thursday May 23<sup>rd</sup> depart 12:15, return 2:15 (DAY 1)
- ◆ *Queen Alexandra*: Tuesday June 10<sup>th</sup>
- ◆ Delivery to StrongStart classrooms:  
*Queen Alexandra* June 10<sup>th</sup>  
*Admiral Seymour* June 12<sup>th</sup>

***If you wish to participate in these sessions, please contact [info@thereadingbear.ca](mailto:info@thereadingbear.ca)***

### RB's Isabel Chen Nominated for YWCA Award

Our very own Isabel Chen, co-founder and Director of Students has been nominated for the YWCA Women of Distinction Award to be held on June 3, 2014. For more information: <http://www.ywcawomenofdistinction.org/#!tickets>

### Reading Bear Society Monthly Meeting

The monthly RBS meeting was held on Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup>. Following the meeting the ambassadors and new members attended the second half which was chaired by Isabel Chen (former head girl at CHS '06), Director of Students and co-founder, on the implementation of RBS

school committees. The RBS would like to welcome new members Kerry Harding, School Liaison for Crofton House School, and Brigitte Scholte, Administrative Assistant. See picture below.



Clockwise from left: Joanne Roussy (co-founder and Chair), Santhe LeBlanc (Director of Schools), Kerry Harding (Crofton House School Liaison), Brigitte Scholte (Administrative Assistant), Katrina Dutkiewicz (Ambassador to YHS), Isabel Chen (co-founder and Director of Students, ambassador to CHS), Andrew Pursell (Ambassador Chair of Research), Lynne Stanger (founding member and advisory board member), Lani Morden (co-founder and Director of Education).



## Fundraising News

Thank you to St. George's grade 12 boys, the Student Life Committee, and to Mr. Brian Lee, Senior School Associate Principal for their assistance with Christmas cards sales. For the second consecutive year, Christmas cards were made by children at Admiral Seymour and Thunderbird school. The RBS received a cheque for \$1,000 that will go to the purchase of home library units for the StrongStart children (2-4 years of age) at Admiral Seymour School this June. Thank you for your inspiring leadership and for your unwavering commitment.

## Thank You Mr. Ezekiel

Thank you to Mr. Ron Ezekiel for his legal assistance and expertise. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Mr. Ezekiel is a partner at Fasken Martineau DuMoulin. His son is in grade 8 and a part of the RBS program.

## Good Luck Medical Students!

May is exam time! As the medical students embark on exams this month, the RBS wishes you all the best for your upcoming exam period. We look forward to celebrating your successes in early June.

## Earth Day Celebration

In celebration of Earth Day on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the kindergarten buddies at Lord Strathcona Elementary School made these beautiful Earth Day necklaces for their grade 8 big reading buddies. Thank you to the kindergarten teachers Colleen Sturrock and Evelyn Tam.



## Interesting facts from advisory board member Dr. John Helliwell

### What makes us happy makes us healthy?

The art of community connectedness is inherently learnable and caring for one another is the premise of a healthy society according to Dr. John Helliwell, Professor Emeritus of Economics, UBC. He summarizes nine facts that make communities and cities happier and healthier.

<http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/2012/02/01/six-things-science-tells-us-about-happiness>



## INTRODUCING...

### RBS Administrative Assistant – Brigitte Scholte

I'd like to formally introduce myself to the RBS members. I moved to Vancouver in late August 2012 from Winnipeg, Manitoba. Currently I am a Development Coordinator with UBC's Athletics and Recreation department. Prior to starting this position in March, I was the Administrative Assistant for Campus Based Fundraising (CBF) based out of the David Strangway Building. I was very excited to receive an email

about The Reading Bear and all the work that you do. To think that I am now a part of this amazing project makes me feel truly blessed. Together we will do amazing things! I will be assisting with fundraising and office tasks such as website maintenance, proof reading, and materials for presentations. Please drop me an email as I am keen to help out. [britscholte@shaw.ca](mailto:britscholte@shaw.ca)

### St. George's School Representative – Ryan Karimi

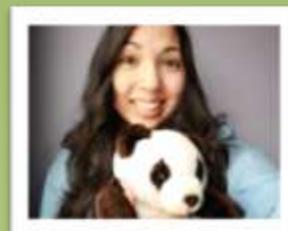
After joining the St. George's community in Grade 8, Ryan Karimi quickly discovered his passion for service leadership and giving back to the community. He now chairs Student Government meetings, and is an avid participant in his school's community service club, debate club, and concert band. Ryan's true passion, however, is science. Outside of school, when he is not backpacking or kayaking in scenic

British Columbia, he can often be found hunched over a desk, attempting to learn about redox reactions, superstring theory, or the various functions of melatonin. He hopes to see this humble initiative evolve into a city-wide program, and firmly believes that this initiative is an integral step in progressing towards 21st century education.

### Newsletter Editor – Katrina Hsu

Katrina has just completed her 3<sup>rd</sup> year at Simon Fraser University as a major in Biomedical Physiology. While she has never held a position as an editor before, it was her childhood dream to be a book editor because she couldn't think of anything that sounded better

than reading books for a living. She has since abandoned that dream with the hope getting into medical school, but continues to read books other than her textbooks when she gets the chance. Please send her any articles for the newsletter at [katrinah@sfu.ca](mailto:katrinah@sfu.ca).





## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PROMOTING THE HEALTH OF YOUTH: HEALTHY NUTRITION, POSITIVE BODY IMAGE, AND ACTIVE LIVING

*MAY 14, 2014, Britannia School Auditorium 3:30-6:30pm*

Dr. Bryn Austin, SAHM Iris Litt  
Visiting Professor from Harvard  
University School of Population and

Public Health presents  
"Promoting Healthy Body Image  
and Satisfaction among Teens".

### HELP FALL RESEARCH EXPO

*OCTOBER 15, 2014, UBC Robson Square*

Mark your calendars! HELP's Fall  
Research Expo will take place on  
Wednesday, October 15, 2014 at  
UBC Robson Square. Details,  
including keynote speakers,

workshop topics and registration  
instructions, will be announced  
this summer. In the meantime,  
we invite you to Save the Date.

### HELP WEBINARS

In case you missed the recent  
webinar series the videos have been  
posted online. HELP researchers  
focused on some of the key factors  
that we know make a difference in  
early childhood development. Each  
session was a 45 minute  
presentation followed by a 15  
minute question period. Topics

include: Lessons from 12 years  
of ECD research, International  
Family Policy Comparisons,  
Making Sense of Social  
Epigenetics and the Middle  
Years Development Instrument.

[http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/  
events/past](http://www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/events/past)

*An elderly  
woman hand  
made these  
bears which  
were generously  
donated to RBS.*





## LITERACY LINKS

### Books and Documents of Interest

#### *The Practicing Happiness Workbook by Ruth Baer*

How mindfulness can free you from the four psychological traps that keep you stressed, anxious, and depressed.

#### *School Health Manual 2010*

Information for teachers and school staff about health services for school-aged children and youth in Vancouver.

[https://www.vch.ca/media/School Health Manual Sept 2010 web.pdf](https://www.vch.ca/media/School_Health_Manual_Sept_2010_web.pdf)

#### *2011 Census & National Household Survey Data*

Census data tables include 82 commonly used socio-economic and demographic variables for HELP Neighbourhoods. These variables have been selected for their particular relevance to early child development research, program planning, and policy development.

<http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/maps/data/>

#### *The Middle Years Development Instrument 2010*

A child self-report survey that gathers information from children on their social and emotional development, physical health and well-being, relationships and connectedness with parents, school and neighbourhood adults, and peers, school experiences, and how they spend their time during the after-school hours. [http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/publications/mdi\\_our\\_childrens\\_voices\\_report.pdf](http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/publications/mdi_our_childrens_voices_report.pdf)

### Great Video Links

#### *Early Language and the Brain*

The Economist on the importance of early literacy 0-5, key from 0-3: The number of words a child hears in early life will determine their academic success and IQ in later life. <http://econ.st/1c4Sac4>

#### *Dr. Mary Bennett*

Dr. Mary Bennett, pediatrician at BCCH, supports RBS and attended the session last December at Thunderbird Elementary School. <http://vimeo.com/90519443>



### *SoundSeen: In the Room with Adele Diamond*

Dr. Adele Diamond, a UBC faculty member in the Department of Psychiatry, recently sat down with Krista Tippett, host of American Public Radio's Being to discuss what cognitive science can tell us about education.

<http://www.onbeing.org/program/learning-doing-being-new-science-education/121>

## **Other Great Websites and Interesting Articles**

### *Decoda Literacy Solutions*

Decoda is the new provincial literacy organization for BC. It works to address and support the full continuum of literacy and learning priorities identified by communities. <http://decoda.ca/resources/>

### *The Compassion Gap*

Article sent by Isabel Chen; New York Times, March 1, 2014

<http://nyti.ms/1eMs4uP>

### *Society for Children and Youth of BC*

The SCY is a unique provincial organization dedicated to improving the well-being of children and youth. They have an impressive track record of creating and delivering programs that have motivated change in research, legislation, policy, and practice in Canada. <http://www.scyofbc.org/>



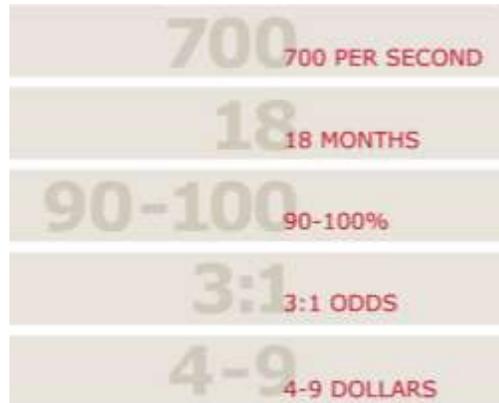
## **THANK YOU!**

Mother Alice Yuen and her three children donated their childhood books to the RBS. Thank you for the book donation.



## ***Five Numbers to Remember About Early Child Development***

Here are five numbers to remember about early childhood development from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Go to [http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/interactive\\_features/five-numbers/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/interactive_features/five-numbers/) to discover what these numbers mean.



## ***One Approach to Head Start: To Help Kids, Help Their Parents*** ***by Eric Westervelt***

Sent from Isabel Chen, Director of Students; NPR, April 23, 2014

President Obama has called repeatedly on Congress to help states pay for "high-quality preschool" for all. In fact, those two words – "high quality" – appear time and again in the president's prepared remarks. They are also a refrain among early childhood education advocates and researchers. But what do they mean? And what separates the best of the nation's preschool programs from the rest?

<http://www.npr.org/2014/04/23/303797060/one-approach-to-head-start-to-help-kids-help-their-parents?sc=17&f=>



***“ A peer-reading buddy can have a fundamental impact on a child’s success in learning to read. ”***

-Dr. Adele Diamond,  
Developmental Child  
Neuroscientist at the University  
of British Columbia

**The RB will be meeting with  
Dr. Diamond on June 4<sup>th</sup>!**

