

AAFSLW Liazer

ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY SCHOOL LIAISON COUNSELLORS

MAY, 2016

Top Stories for the Spring Newsletter



2016 AAFSLW Conference

Mindfulness

Mental Health Psychologist

Empathy

Submitted Articles



AAFSLW Executive



"Hi Everyone, Happy Spring! I can't believe how fast this year is going by. We are busy planning our 25th Annual conference in Banff. It will be awesome, hope to see you all there. My term as Secretary is winding down and I would like to say how much I've enjoyed the opportunity to be part of the Executive; it's been a great experience and I've met some amazing people. So that means we will be looking for a new Secretary this fall. If you are interested or have any questions about the role please email me at cmasse@countygp.ab.ca or phone/text at 780-933-0918. See you in September!"



2016 AAFSLW Annual Conference — 25 Years Strong !



We are excited for the presenters for our 25th Annual AAFSLW Conference that will be in scenic Banff on September 28-30 at the fabulous *Buffalo Mountain Lodge*. We will be exhibiting some historical memories from the past 25 years as a way to honor those members and executives who came before us. We are asking all of those long-term members for historical contributions; if you have photos or memories you would like to share, please send your contributions to the executive through the AAFSLW webpage at <http://www.aafslw.ca/>.

Conference Teaser Sheldon Kennedy!



* Membership Renewal *

Is your membership up to date? If you are paying your membership online with PayPal, you must complete a renewal form or new membership form. The electronic version is available online, at the AAFSLW website <http://www.aafslw.ca/> Please send it directly to our membership worker, Kelsie McCabe. If you are renewing for more than one person, **each** person must submit a renewal form. There are pdf. copies of the forms online <http://www.aafslw.ca/> that can be printed and faxed if you prefer. Fax or email for **each** person renewing their membership. Please note, both payment and renewal form will need to be completed prior to your membership being processed. Have a fabulous Spring!



President
Christie Badry is a Supervisor of the Family School Liaison Worker and CHAMP programs in Camrose Alberta. Christie has been part of the executive in the past and is excited about rejoining the team.



Past President
This is Christine's seventh year serving on the AAFSLW executive. "It has been an awesome opportunity to connect with so many passionate caring people pouring their lives into the well-being of students and families across this province. I feel privileged to help bring resources and guidance through the AAFSLW."



Treasurer
Eva Rasmussen has been a Family School Liaison Worker for Westaskiwin Regional Public Schools for 11 years. This is her fifth year on the AAFSLW executive. Eva enjoys her position as Treasurer of the association and she looks forward to a great year.



Secretary
Connie Masse is a Community School Liaison with the County of Grande Prairie. This is Connie's third year serving on the AAFSLW executive. She is looking forward to working at a provincial level and continuing to network with members province-wide.



Membership Worker
Kelsie McCabe "I have been working for FCSS as a Family School Liaison since 2012. I enjoy the outdoors and I like to experience new things. I am excited to take on this new opportunity as an executive member."



Public Relations - Newsletter—Julie Isaac, with Livingstone Range School Division for 14 years. "I've been lucky to have experienced different schools, grades, teams and I look forward everyday to the connections we all make that are fulfilling and excitingly unpredictable!" Julie's Masters' Degree is Sport Psychology which she has enjoyed practicing for 18 years. "I am enjoying my fifth year serving as an Executive member!"



There is currently a vacancy for President Elect. If you are interested in serving in this capacity please feel free to contact Christie Badry or any member of the executive.

EMPATHY



Today, I interviewed my grandmother for part of a research paper I'm working on for my Psychology class. When I asked her to define success in her own words, she said... **Success is when you look back at your life and the memories make you smile.**

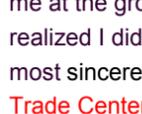
Today, I asked my mentor - a very successful business man in his 70s- what his top 3 tips are for success. He smiled and said...**"Read something no one else is reading, think something no one else is doing."**



Today, after my 72 hour shift at the fire station, a woman ran up to me at the grocery store and gave me a hug. When I tensed up, she realized I didn't recognize her. She let go with tears of joy in her eyes and the most sincere smile and said...**"On 9-11-2001, you carried me out of the World Trade Center."**

Today, after I watched my dog get run over by a car, I sat on the side of the road holding him and crying. And just before he died...**he licked the tears off my face.** **Today** at 7:00 A.M., I woke up feeling ill, but decided I needed the money, so I went into work. At 3PM I got laid off. On my drive home I got a flat tire. When I went into the trunk for the spare, it was flat too. **A man in a BMW pulled over, gave me a ride, we chatted, and then he offered me a job ... I start tomorrow.**

Today, as my father, three brothers, and two sisters stood around my mother's hospital bed, my mother uttered her last coherent words before she died. **She simply said... "I feel so loved right now. We should have gotten together like this more often."**



Today, I kissed my dad on the forehead as he passed away in a small hospital bed. About 5 seconds after he passed...**I realized it was the first time I had given him a kiss since I was a little boy.**

Today, in the cutest voice, my 8-year-old daughter asked me to start recycling. I chuckled and asked, "Why?" She replied, "So you can help me save the planet." I chuckled again and asked, "And why do you want to save the planet?" **Because that's where I keep all my stuff," she said.**

Today, when I witnessed a 27-year-old breast cancer patient laughing hysterically at her 2-year-old daughter's antics, I suddenly realized that...**I need to stop complaining about my life and start celebrating it again.**

Today, a boy in a wheelchair saw me desperately struggling on crutches with my broken leg and offered to carry my backpack and books for me. He helped me all the way across campus to my class and as he was leaving he said... **"I hope you feel better soon."**

Today, I was feeling down because the results of a biopsy came back malignant. When I got home, I opened an e-mail that said... **"Thinking of you today. If you need me, I'm a phone call away."** It was from a high school friend I hadn't seen in 10 years.

Today, I was traveling in Kenya and I met a refugee from Zimbabwe. He said he hadn't eaten anything in over 3 days and looked extremely skinny and unhealthy. Then my friend offered him the rest of the sandwich he was eating... **The first thing the man said was, "We can share it."**

Reprinted from a forwarded email-----**The best sermons are lived, not preached.**

The AAFSLW will be turning **25** in 2016 and we will be celebrating our history, accomplishments, involvement of our conferences and are looking forward to the Associations' future. After the success' of past conferences, the plan for the 25th Annual AAFSLW conference in Banff is already secured! The unmatched backdrop of the Rocky Mountains, the inviting Hot Springs, fabulous food, hiking and skiing in addition to the colleague connections and networking...

Seriously, "What could possibly go wrong?"

Please peruse our website for information on this exciting conference: <http://www.aafslw.ca/> As we approach the warmer season, my wish for all is a calm yet invigorating summer. Treat yourself with warm sunny evenings that calm your spirit and fill your bucket.



Thank you for all you do to support the kids and families in Alberta.

The 2016 AAFSLW Executive.



In my capacity as a Mental Health Therapist/Psychologist working in a Mental Health office, I am fortunate to be able to work with my most favorite population; children and teens. Unfortunately, I am confined to see them only in an outpatient office, away from the two places most spend the majority of their time; home and school. Fortunately most parents are typically available to consult and provide much needed follow up, but without collaboration from the schools, I may miss the contributions that teachers, school counsellors, administration, and assistants are able to make. These are vital as they often spend a great deal of time with these kids and can offer insights that both I and the parents do not have and can provide supports at a time and place where the kids often need it the most.



In my 5 years of work with children, I have looked for opportunities to build relationships with the schools in which ever capacity is appropriate or needed. This has often involved attending case conferences with school teams, consulting one on one with teachers, learning support staff, or administration, and coordinating with Family School Liaison Workers. One of my favorite activities has been providing presentations to classes, staff or parent councils on specific topics that have been identified as concerns with students, a wonderful opportunity to reach a great number of people in a short period of time.



My coordination with the Family School Liaison Workers is the most established partnership and the most essential. They are the eyes and ears of the school, the best link between students and teachers, students and parents and the student and their peers. I am so grateful for the ability to touch base with them about how a client is doing at school, provide consultation to help them in their own work, and receive important referrals that may have otherwise been missed. It is a partnership I strive to nurture.

Patti Helmer-Desjarlais

Psychologist



My name is Rob Charchun, I am an off-campus teacher/coordinator for 5 schools in my school division. I've been practicing mindfulness meditation for about 22 years- mostly practices known as Shamatha and Vipassayana- which are known as quiet mind or empty mind practices. Over the years I have benefited tremendously because of my practice. The typical feelings of reduced stress and anxiety are only a shadow of the overall benefits. The broader range of positive changes include:

- A growing sense of loving kindness and gentleness
- Awareness that translates as "wakefulness"
- Internal , emotional and spiritual balance: ' equanimity'
- Spiritual generosity
- I sleep like the dead (lol)
- An ever increasing sense of being in touch with my wisdom centers
- A feeling of 'universal wisdom' manifesting (known as Prajna)
- A soft hearted and kind type of confidence
- A 'rich' texture to my day that I might call " awareness of everyday beauty"



Probably the most important and significant change that has been augmented because of mindfulness meditation has not directly benefitted me. Instead it's something that others have appreciated : compassion. In this case it's been a very whole or complete sense of what we generally think of compassion (not simply or limited to kindness). Because of mediation I feel that compassion manifests very naturally as tendency to act on the direct behalf of others (doing, giving, creating or even limiting what I can for the needs of others).

Being a school teacher I've naturally wanted to share with my students by teaching them mindfulness meditation - hoping that it could impact their lives and relationships as it has mine. So for roughly the last 20 years I've been teaching and facilitating the practice in my classrooms. This has happened in a lot of different ways and to different degrees, but essentially it means putting time aside in the day when the class can use their breath to unite the mind and the body. Of course there must be ongoing instruction, support and discussion around breathing meditations.



Results are generally what one would expect - kids gradually start to act in a more balanced way. Quite a large proportion of students eventually begin to 'crave' the practice - often asking me if we could do it more than once a day. A common reaction to mindfulness practice is for students to take it up at home, even encouraging their parents to do it also. I think it's important to address those students who do not choose to do the practices. We do our best to not make them feel excluded or uncomfortable in any way (but we do ask that they respect the silent, reflective nature of the practice and thus remain quiet and settled).

Unless you are living in an ashram or deep in the forest you are certainly aware of our society's movement toward speed, aggression, materialism, spiritual materialism and ultimately, aggression. This personally generates some distinct and specific anxieties within me. I am witnessing similar results with our youth.

Mindfulness meditation not only works as a response or a remedy to that, but more importantly acts to awaken our natural tendencies towards a higher level manifestation of the truly human spirit.



Hello Members

I am excited to report that Buffalo Mountain Lodge in Banff has been confirmed as the host site for 2016 AAFSLW conference September 28-30. The site is located on Tunnel Mountain Road an easy 3 minute drive or 15 minute walk to downtown Banff. There are 108 rooms and each room features a wood burning fieldstone fireplace, cable TV, DVD player, private entrance, full bathroom, coffee maker,etc. The cost per room varies from \$179-\$239 and 30 rooms have been set aside for the conference. Included in conference registration are two breakfasts, three breaks, and one lunch. It has not been determined what the cost of registration will be but we will try to keep it minimal. The format of the conference will be different. There will be minimal or no breakout sessions with the focus on providing exciting and informative keynote presentations. Hope to see you all there.

To all Members new and renewed, we look forward to another fabulous 25 years and having you all go along on the ride with us.



We look forward to your registration, see you all soon—AAFSLW 2016 Executive

