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A Conscious Evolution in Living

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Avalon School Residency Program Guide

Multicultural Arts, Whole Health and Sustainability Education
for Elementary and Secondary School Classes and Events



Comprehensive School Health Model

Draft Proposal, for discussion purposes only.

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I. Definitions

SCHOOL RESIDENCY PROGRAM – A program that integrates specialized instructors into a broad spectrum of classroom and event subject areas in order to:

1. support anti-racism and anti-bullying initiatives in the school district,
2. build student awareness and abilities in subjects related to arts and culture, global studies, holistic health and sustainability,
3. enrich the creativity, good character, health and well-being of young people, and
4. fulfill curriculum learning outcomes and prepare students for related career paths.

AVALON FACULTY – With the exception of our volunteer cultural representatives, Avalon Alliance guild instructors are either educators by profession or are experts in their field with experience that enriches conventional subject areas. Our faculty is further categorized into two main groups, Multicultural Artists and Whole Health and Sustainability Educators.

MULTICULTURAL ARTISTS – Community-based professional artists from diverse cultural backgrounds that promote positive social values, facilitate first-hand experiences of the creative process and teach about world heritage through various forms of expression – dance, music, visual art, crafts, drama, song, writing and storytelling.

WHOLE HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATORS – Holistic health Instructors trained in learning enhancement and wellness approaches help children discover their full potential and integrate mind, body and spirit. Holistic health education contributes to the school district's *Career and Personal Planning Program* and the *Health Promoting Schools Policy*. Our sustainability educators address local and global themes such as international development, sustainable communities, environmental stewardship, green design and technologies, peace and social justice. All our educators aim to create a balance between cerebral and experiential activities, and promote respect and understanding of self, other people and the Earth.

II. Program Background

Over the years, cultural diversity and human values education have come to the forefront as important programming areas for Central Okanagan schools. Initially the Lions Quest curriculum for personal and social values development was a welcome addition for students taking *Career and Personal Planning*. School District #23 then declared itself a racism-free school system, establishing advisory committees in conjunction with the Central Okanagan Teachers Association (COTA) to ensure that this mandate was implemented. More recently the BC Ministry of

Education has taken positive action against racism, bullying, sexism and homophobia by developing a *Framework for Diversity in BC Schools* and a *Guide for Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools*.

While these initiatives are all steps in the right direction, more action must be taken to ensure that students are prepared to become responsible, caring citizens in a global society. Teachers and community members have testified that acts of hatred and discrimination still affect our school system and require strategic, grassroots action. Our young people clearly need inspiring role models, as well as curriculum activities that teach universal human values while building appreciation for cultural and social diversity. Moreover, there is a need for more programs focused on global environmental and social justice issues, which are beyond the scope of conventional geography and ecology. Vernon (School District #22) has recognized this need by formalizing a grade 11 *Global Education* course with a field study component in Nicaragua.

One of the most powerful ways of transforming consciousness is through the medium of cultural arts and creative expression. A number of school education performance groups have formed in other parts of the country with the purpose of building cultural understanding and promoting social harmony, equality and human dignity. Over the years School District #23 has sponsored some of these groups to come into our local schools, such as Marang (African music and dance theatre), Carousel Theatre (Dreamer's Rock), and the Maxwell Bahai Youth Workshop. These shows were very well-received by both the teachers and students, but because the artists came from outside our community there was little opportunity to develop any lasting relationships and integrate what was being learned into the classrooms on an on-going basis. The costs of bringing the performance groups in from elsewhere can also be very substantial.

These problems could be effectively addressed by actively engaging the very diverse and talented multicultural artists we have in our own valley. Furthermore, by adding holistic health and sustainability instructors to the program, schools can also achieve the wider objectives of *Comprehensive School Health*. This progressive model is an internationally recognized framework for supporting improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic way. *Comprehensive School Health* is intended to draw on resources in the surrounding community and create educational partnerships with other organizations.

The Okanagan's cultural groups, arts sector, holistic practitioners and sustainable community professionals care about the future of our children. They would like the opportunity to share with young people their knowledge, experiences, talents and gifts of heart and spirit. They want to get to know the children, support their growth and to be able to serve as resources and mentors for them. The children will be best served by developing real relationships and hands-on activities where they are being seen, heard and nurtured by people in their community.

By integrating an Okanagan-based Residency Program into our schools, the potential for enhancing the personal development, cultural awareness, social and environmental responsibility of children is tremendous. Several years ago, Avalon's founder shared this residency concept with COTA's Social Justice committee, School District representatives, Art Starts in Schools, Kelowna and District Arts Council and Kelowna Immigrant Society. The initial response was enthusiastic and it seemed promising that a future community initiative would be well-received.

III. Program Purpose

The purpose of this program is to link young people with experienced multicultural artists, holistic health practitioners and sustainability educators living in our region, through building long-term Avalon School Residency Program contracts with Okanagan schools. By integrating our exciting faculty into classrooms and events, the subject matter literally comes to life through participation in a wide variety of activities. The different learning styles and capacities of the children will be effectively met by the program's diverse forms of expression. Holistic health and sustainability learning activities can range from nutritional cooking, yoga and Brain Gym exercises to organic gardening, solar technology demonstrations and school waste reduction projects. Artistic activities can include: dance, music, visual art, crafts, drama, song, creative writing and storytelling. The personal stories, ethnic history and ways of life shared by the multicultural artists can give students insight into cultures they might otherwise only read about. Interacting with these dynamic artists and educators will build real global understanding and compassion, and help bring to an end discrimination against other cultures and minority groups. Moreover, many learning outcomes set out in the provincially prescribed curricula can be achieved by this program. For example, the *Fine Arts Integrated Resource Package* (IRP) specifically promotes the development of artist residencies in schools.

IV. Educational and Operational Objectives

The specific educational objectives of Avalon's School Residency Program are as follows:

- To provide students with opportunities to meet and develop long term relationships with local artists, health practitioners and sustainability experts (guest instructors from outside the valley will be invited to participate in the program only when suitable local instructors are not available).
- To create classroom sessions that promote human dignity and global awareness, and engage the students in resolving their personal and social issues through interactive moral inquiry and non-sectarian values education.
- To have the instructors share their heritage, personal stories and creative expertise in the

classroom, thereby helping students and teachers deepen their interest and understanding of a subject area that they are working with.

- To encourage students to develop their intellect, creativity, coordination, communication skills, personal and social values through active participation, group work and cooperation.
- To promote a programming approach that emphasizes and supports the children's creative process, and minimizes anxiety around any performance-based activities.
- To celebrate Canada's multicultural heritage with special events programming for the School District such as World Music Day.
- To integrate and enhance appreciation of the fine arts, multiculturalism and holistic education, making cross-curricular connections.
- To deliver the program to a broad spectrum of age groups and subject areas, including: Physical Education, History, Geography, Home Economics, Woodworking, Art, Dance, Music, French, English, Science, Career and Personal Planning, Recreational Leadership, Social Studies, etc.
- To create new programming when necessary for interdisciplinary subject areas like Global Education, Sustainable Development and Health and Wellness.
- To help develop curriculum materials and build artistic props and musical instruments that can be used again in years to come.
- To ensure that the process of integrating our instructors into the classroom is well-organized and linked to curriculum learning outcomes, so that the district school teachers are effectively supported and not burdened with extra work.
- To take all reasonable measures to qualify and provide sufficient orientation for our instructors working with the program, so that they conduct themselves professionally and serve as inspiring role models for the students, with experience and training that enables them to work effectively with the children and teachers.

The specific operational objectives are as follows:

- To develop and evolve the School Residency Program through the engagement of Avalon's faculty and advisors, community leaders in education and partnerships with other like-minded organizations, as part of our New Educators Guild and Earth Education Initiative.
- To collaborate with KADAC, Intercultural Society of the Central Okanagan, Art Starts in Schools and School District representatives in evolving this program to fulfill larger community development objectives while ensuring that it fulfills learning outcomes for the different school grade levels.
- To plan and conduct an orientation program for the artists and educators qualified to work with Avalon in the schools, to ensure they are well-prepared for the classroom.
- To market and coordinate residency bookings and contracts, and provide program planning guidance and feedback to the faculty instructors.
- To integrate into the residency program some performance events and classroom

educational opportunities for Avalon's World Rhythm Ensemble.

- To facilitate multi-source funding for this program, which may include: School District and individual school budgets including the Art Starts in Schools administered funds, parent advisory councils, federal or provincial grants, arts organizations, Avalon community events, corporate sponsorships and student initiatives.

V. Programming Options and Guidelines

By the winter/ spring of 2012, Avalon is willing to integrate a small core group of contract instructors into some individual schools. This first "pilot project" should provide an excellent base of experience and refinement for expanding our faculty participation and developing some new programming tailored to the needs of youth. Assuming that the "pilot project" is successful, Avalon will then make preparations to offer some special Professional Development Day workshops, curriculum enrichment units and educational performances for the school year beginning in September 2012. The first two residency program options are as follows:

OPTION 1 – Booking an individual instructor, or an interdisciplinary team of instructors, for classroom learning sessions in related subject areas.

OPTION 2 - Booking for school event enrichment (eg. World Music Day) involving one or more of Avalon's instructors, or a performance by our World Rhythms Ensemble.

It is important that the classes are designed to provide "hands on" creative activities. For example, an instructor could help the children play and build musical instruments or paint a mural on a school wall. Or an instructor could be invited into the classroom for a series of sessions to work with the children to develop a school performance that the youth would co-create and participate in themselves. Alternatively, the children could collaborate on a project that develops applied skills, which could then be taught by the youth to younger students. Another example could be a multicultural artist who assists the children in producing a video that can be shared with a school in another country, leading to on-going dialogue and cross-cultural friendships.

According to ArtStarts in Schools, most residencies involve a small group of young people, ie. one classroom of up to 30 young people. Some residencies can accommodate more students; however, the recommended maximum is two classrooms of 60 young people. Classroom teachers must be present and involved with the residency instructor and the students. Avalon instructors will consult in advance with the teachers to coordinate curriculum integration, co-creating the lesson plans and learning resource materials for each residency. This planning process can be efficiently accomplished in a preliminary visit with the teacher (ideally during "prep time"), and this is considered part of the residency hours agreed upon. Avalon will also have a Program Coordinator who is an educator by profession, available to assist with program

development and lesson planning.

We will set the costs for residency sessions in accordance with the minimum standard fees for guest instructors and artists working in BC schools (ArtStarts in Schools guidelines). This fee will include consideration of our instructor's preparatory work and travel to and from the school. Avalon will also charge a reasonable management fee to the schools for the service of guiding the program development, providing orientation training and quality assurance, and contracting and booking our instructors.

For the first "pilot project" phase of this residency program, teachers are advised to consult with their school principals for individual school budgets that could fund the sessions or events. Parent Advisory Council or student fundraising and contributions may be helpful as well. Avalon is currently making efforts to access additional funds through consultation with School District #23 representatives and ArtStarts in Schools, government agencies, foundations, corporate sponsorships, community partners and fundraising events.

If a school teacher or principal is interested in booking some residency sessions or an event, they are advised to call our Avalon office at 250-868-8992 to discuss program planning, funding and coordination. A program proposal form will be issued that requests the following information:

- School and contact person
- Name of desired Avalon instructor(s)
- Session grade level(s) and subject area(s)
- Estimated number of students
- Time of year preferred
- Time of day preferred
- Residency program suggestions (desired activities, prescribed learning outcomes, etc) this plan can evolve with input from our Program Coordinator and the faculty instructor(s)
- Funding options and considerations