

APSEA

Issue #1

2007

Reaching the Half Way Mark

As our various spring breaks begin, life at APSEA continues to prove engaging and exciting. The community atmosphere which accompanies our students during their short-term program placements serves to brighten up our days, regardless of the outside weather conditions.

Spring Breaks

NB - March 5 – 9

NS - March 12 – 16

PE - March 19 – 23

NL - April 6 - 15

Contract Negotiations

The past year has seen APSEA engage in the negotiating process with all of our collective bargaining units, since all three contracts had expired in 2005. As noted in the last newsletter, the new NSTU agreement was signed on 30 October 2006 and extends until 31 July 2008. I am pleased to report that a tentative agreement was reached with NSGEU on 15 January 2007 and with NBUPPE on 26 January 2007. The three new agreements are set to expire in 2008.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of the APSEA Executive and Board, to convey our appreciation to all negotiating teams for their professional and respectful approach to the process.

APSEA Review

My previous Message reported on the APSEA Board's meeting of 11 December 2006, which gave final approval to the recommendations coming from the Review process and a copy of an information release from Chair, John Kershaw. Since then, Senior Management has begun designing an implementation plan for the recommendations.

On 14-15 February, a joint meeting of the Program Advisory and Financial Advisory Committees focused on further refining the numerous action items from the Review, as well as giving attention to the report of the Auditor General. The Executive Committee met on 28 February, with the Board of Directors meeting delayed until April.

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Demonstration Project - Newfoundland

One initiative identified by the APSEA Board following the APSEA Review is a “demonstration project” in Newfoundland and Labrador. A key factor for the demonstration project is that it has to be applicable or transferable to the other three provinces. What has evolved can better be described as a series of collaborative efforts on several of the Board initiatives rather than a “project.” These initiatives are: the development of a protocol for the provision of publishers’ disks for all new texts and resources; the establishment of a coordinated approach for the provision of and training in assistive technology; the determination of opportunities for enhanced inter agency cooperation in areas such as assessment. The successful completion of these initiatives should provide a template for similar actions in the other three provinces and, ultimately lead to increased collaboration and cooperation between APSEA and the four provinces it serves.

The first step of this process was accomplished through a video conference between Evelyn Lundrigan, Acting Director, Student Services for Newfoundland and Labrador, and John McConnell and Richard Thompson representing APSEA. The early result is a commitment for APSEA participation in the annual inservice for Newfoundland teachers of students who are blind or visually impaired. Issues around on-site student assessments and training in assistive technology will be addressed. Discussion will be ongoing over the rest of the school term.

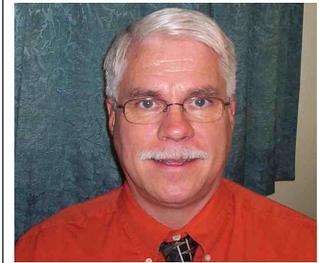
APSEA Audiologist Elected Provincial Chair

Reg Dunphy has been elected Provincial

Chairperson of the Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians (SDHHNS). The SDHHNS is a non-profit organization, serving the approximately 58,000 deaf, hard of hearing and late-deafened people in Nova Scotia. The Society, through affiliates in Sydney and Halifax and its Community Resource Library, provides services in sign language and oral interpreting, computerized note taking, and provides information and referral to members, as well as self help support groups for Deaf individuals who are isolated. The assistive devices program has been growing steadily and the Society is the main source in Nova Scotia for telephone devices for persons who are Deaf and is also the main source for amplified telephones for persons who are hard of hearing.

Reg Dunphy

APSEA Audiologist



The APSEA audiologist, who is currently the Chairperson for the Halifax Affiliate, was elected to the provincial office on 7 February 2007. Congratulations Reg!

APSEA on “Live at Five”

APSEA took to the airwaves recently, being featured on ATV/CTV’s “Live at 5” on Thursday past. The segment provided for the general public (and ourselves) a glimpse of the services and programs provided by APSEA. The students and staff who made this story possible certainly shone brightly ... you exhibited the very best in representing the essence of what makes APSEA such a special place. Congratulations and thank you!

Snow Day on Prince Edward Island

While a “snow day” is sometimes welcome, this was especially the case on 1 February at Brookvale Ski Hill. Dozens of BVI students, families and APSEA staff enjoyed a day of skiing and snowboarding.



Middle School Students Present About Hearing and Hearing Loss

(by Lori Moore, APSEA Itinerant Teacher)

I am an itinerant teacher of students who are deaf and hard of hearing working in the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia. I was recently asked by a teacher in my district to come and speak to her grade three class about hearing and hearing loss. I accepted the invitation and then proposed to two of my direct service students, both in grade eight at the same middle/high school, that they would be better choices to offer the presentation. While hesitant initially, they both eventually agreed to what turned out to be a tremendously rewarding and insightful experience for all of us.

The two students, fourteen year old Colby Joyce and thirteen year old Kristy Edwards, came together for an hour each day of the week prior to the presentation to outline their ideas, complete research and divide the topics to be shared with the students during their one hour presentation. The students needed very little direction as they determined relevant and appropriate information for eight and nine year old children. They provided me with clear guidelines for my roles in the process as well: I was to contact APSEA’s educational audiologist to borrow assistive listening devices for the demonstration; gather cochlear implant coloring books from my office for the children; make a word search puzzle with the words Kristy and Colby determined were new and important words; bring them a copy of the Sound Hearing CD to demonstrate simulated hearing loss; and I was to videotape the presentation so Colby and Kristy would have the opportunity to critique their presentation.



Colby Joyce, Lori Moore and Kristy Edwards

After much brainstorming, Colby and Kristy decided how they would proceed: they would introduce themselves and begin with autobiographies. This was followed by an explanation of an audiogram and definition of mild, moderate, severe and profound hearing losses. After Colby completed the explanation of an audiogram, Kristy explained the difference between a conductive and a sensorineural hearing loss, then described her hearing loss, hearing and

amplification history, and explained how her Nucleus 3G for N22 cochlear implant works. Colby followed with an explanation of his bilateral moderate to severe sensorineural loss and demonstrated how his hearing aids work. They explained the benefits of personal FM systems as well as their challenges, described how much they have improved over the years from wired to wireless systems, then they did a demonstration in which Kristy left the room while Colby had one student say her name followed by a list of four numbers. Kristy returned to the room to repeat the student's name and the four numbers. The kids were impressed!

Assistive technology was the final topic of the presentation and included explanations and demonstrations of the following: TTY; electric vibrating alarm clock with optional rooster sound for people who are hard of hearing; Sonic Shaker (a travel alarm); door knocker; silent call display system and a pocket telephone amplifier.

The day after the presentation, watching the video offered an opportunity for reflections and self-evaluation. The students wrote the following:

Kristy:

"This was the coolest experience I've ever had, but I was worried at first that I might mess up. I was very enthusiastic on the day of the presentation. When I walked into the classroom the kids were excited. As we started my mind went blank and I didn't know what to say because I was so anxious, but the words just came out of my mouth and I was prepared for the speech and I relaxed a bit. Then suddenly I had this awesome feeling and I had power so that my explanation was amazing.

After, I saw the video, and I was great! I didn't even know how mature I was and I understood completely from my speech."

Colby:

"It was a good experience for me because I tried to explain as best as I could and people thought I was funny sometimes. I knew a little bit before but I learned a lot more while I was preparing, especially about the Silent Call and TTYs. It was a lot of fun while I was doing it but in the back of my mind I was a little scared.

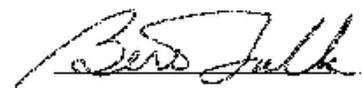
It was a little hard to hear people at the back of the room, but I could tell people to speak up when they were talking so I could hear them better.

Speaking in front of little kids was a bit difficult because I realized I had to wait until Kristy was finished passing around some equipment. Little kids can only concentrate on one thing. Going to Subway for lunch so we could talk about the experience was exciting!"

The feedback we received from the grade three teacher was tremendous. She even had parents of her students commenting about how much their children talked about the guest speakers and all they had learned. Students teaching students: a wonderful learning experience for everyone.

Leave of Absence

I regret that I will be away from APSEA for the next few weeks. I will be officially on leave from now through 27 April. Although I will maintain close contact with APSEA through Angie and the Directors during this period, my focus will be on a special assignment with the Newfoundland and Labrador ISSP/Pathways Commission. I look forward to "re-joining" you in late April.



Bertram Tulk, EdD
Superintendent