

TRACKS!

...**BREAKING TRAILS IN YUKON COMMUNITY HEALTH**
VOL. 9 • NO. 2 • SPRING 2006

Tackling the Big One!

Yukon disadvantaged youth learn self-confidence and healthy lifestyle skills through the RCMP's youth programs

by Brigitte Parker

A popular RCMP whitewater rafting program is making waves with the Yukon's disadvantaged youth.

For the past four summers, RCMP officers have volunteered their time to teach at-risk youth rafting and kayaking skills - with great success.

Cst. Eyvi Smith helped pilot the Crew Whitewater Program in 2002 which provides disadvantaged youth with employable life skills, healthy lifestyle choices and confidence-building experiences through fun water sports.

Each year an average of 20 participated, aged 12 to 18 years, learn swift water rescue and how to be a guide with the Tatshenshini Expediting. Three former participants successfully found employment as paid rafting guides - a testament to the program's positive influence and broad effects.

In 2005, the RCMP partnered with Kwanlin Dun First Nation Health Centre and offered basic wilderness camping and whitewater rafting training to about a dozen KDFN youth. In August, the crew did a 10-day trip on the Coal River. Tatshenshini Expediting's Bob Daffe edited raw footage taken during the trip to produce a fun-filled and poignant short film. The film premiered at Health Canada's national youth conference to great applause and may be entered into the annual Waterwalker film festival.



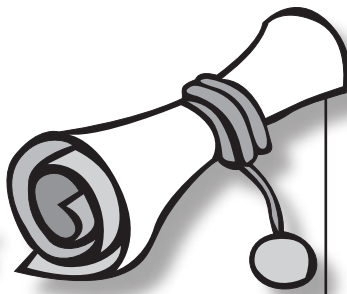
Photo Courtesy of RCMP - "M" Division

Constable Jeff Monkman ensure local youth enjoy the full rafting experience including getting dunked in the Tatshenshini River.

Important! Check the back page for May events!

You can now read **TRACKS** online:
Yukon College Website – www1.yukoncollege.yk.ca/documents/
(under the Public Health and Safety heading) or at
www.hss.gov.yk.ca/programs/health_promotion/newsletter/

Safe Grad, Safe Futures



As part of the Yukon Liquor Corp.'s commitment to promote the responsible use of alcohol, it annually provides funding for high school graduating classes throughout Yukon to promote and support alcohol-free activities. This initiative is supported by a "Party Tips" brochure suggesting ideas for both parents and students to help ensure students get home safe from parties and other graduation festivities.

Last year, the Department of Health & Social Services, Health Promotion Unit provided every Yukon graduate with a GradPack – a congratulatory kit with the messaging "Live well, stay safe, protect your future", and accompanying goodies.

This year, The Health Promotion Unit, Yukon Liquor Corp. and the Youth Directorate have teamed up to provide not only prom activity funding but also a collection of useful stuff packed into a refillable water bottle featuring the "Plan Ahead to Stay Safe" reminder. Health Promotion has included health information and related tools, with each kit featuring a keepsake luggage tag for graduates heading out into the world. The Youth Directorate has included a handy LED pocket flashlight prompting graduates to "Light Up Your Dreams". The kits will be distributed to more than 400 Yukon graduates on Prom Night.

More information and educational materials for students, parents and teachers from the Liquor Control Board of Ontario's "Safe Prom", initiative can be accessed at <http://www.lcbo.com/prom>.

The Health Promotion Branch provides health promotion and illness prevention services. This includes public awareness campaigns, school and community workshops, supporting development of health-promoting environments, and conducting quality reviews of health programming. Information on Birth Control and STI testing and reproductive health can also be obtained from 1-877-YK STYLE. For more information, log on to http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/programs/health_promotion/

The Youth Directorate leads efforts to advance youth representation in Yukon's social, economic, cultural and political arenas by identifying and addressing the needs and concerns of all Yukon youth and developing processes to maintain a network of youth and youth service providers. Find out more about the Youth Directorate at <http://www.gov.yk.ca/depts/eco/youth.html>.

Safe Community Whitehorse

will be hosting the

Concussion Road Show

and an

Injury Prevention Conference

October 20 – 21, 2006

The Concussion Road Show, from the ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada, will introduce the public, sports trainers, health care providers, and coaches to recognition and management of concussions. The Road Show will follow a one-day conference on local issues in safety and injury prevention, such as workplace safety, youth and recreational safety, and falls prevention across the ages.

Planned Keynote speakers for the conference are Dr. Louis Francescutti, Director, Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research, and Mr. Paul Kells, President, National Safe Communities Foundation.

For further information and updates please contact Dan Anton danton@yukoncollege.yk.ca, Rob McClure skywalker@northwestel.net, or Brendan Hanley bhanley@northwestel.net

"Jeopardy Answers"

Yes;
Yes, and
Yes.

(See page 7 for the questions!)

Spring into Action: Get healthy while you commute!

The City of Whitehorse is creating an environment that inspires healthy choices. Whitehorse has been hard at work to make commuting by bike or by foot a more pleasant experience. New trails, bridges and stairs that improve commuting to and from the downtown core include:

- paved off-road trails beside Hamilton Boulevard, Two Mile Hill and around the airport
- on-road dedicated bike lanes on Copper Road, Quartz Road, and 4th Avenue
- bike-friendly Puckett's Gulch staircase (end of Black Street up to the airport trail)
- Rotary Centennial bridge for pedestrians and cyclists coming in and out of Riverdale (links to the other side of the river, just below the dam)

Maintaining an active lifestyle is a key to staying healthy. Regular cycling or walking reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, strokes and high blood pressure; and improves weight control, stamina and energy levels.

By exercising while commuting to work, you enjoy even greater benefits to your health and the environment. Less driving means fewer greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change and pollution. Cycling or walking relieves stress, helping you feel good when you arrive at work or home. And don't forget that you reduce gas and parking costs, and vehicle wear and tear: leaving the car at home saves you money!

This spring, pick up a Commuter Cycling Map, have fun exploring the improved commuting routes, and get healthy while you commute. For more information, please contact the City of Whitehorse Environmental Coordinator at 668-8312 or environment@whitehorse.ca.

FASSY has received funding from YTG for the next three years to do diagnostic assessments for youth and adults who think they may have been prenatally exposed to alcohol. If you or someone you know is interested in finding out about this process, please call Lilliam at FASSY 867-393-4948.

FASD: Mitigating a Permanent Condition With Support and Understanding

People living with properly diagnosed FASD's (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD's) (also known as FAS/FAE / ARBD / ARND)) need a lifetime of relevant supports in order to thrive. With the right support systems and understanding, individuals living with FASD's do remarkably well. Without the right support, these people can end up in cycles of homelessness, jail, or social services.

In Yukon, many individuals living with FASD, but misdiagnosed or not diagnosed, resurface again and again, across the health, social services and justice networks. Part of this cycle is due to the fact that FASD's are not understood by society, and unreasonable expectations are placed on people living with them to act and react "normally". This lack of understanding is the greatest obstacle that those living with FASD's have to overcome.

People living with FASD's have unpredictable wellness. Sometimes they can do and repeat a task; sometimes they can't. They cannot be expected to act or react "normally" in terms of handling time, money, food, cooking, relationships with landlords, etc. They often have difficulty with memory, predicting, abstract reasoning, cause and effect reasoning, generalization, judgment, and have a slower cognitive pace. They may respond differently to stimuli such as light, sounds, smells, temperature, taste, touch, etc. and have difficulties with socialization and independence skills. As well, the disability often includes difficulty with sensory overload, dealing with free time, depression, volatility, ability to concentrate and panic attacks. Therefore, imposing "normal" expectations on these individuals, such as paying rent on time, can result in homelessness or worse situations.

The primary disability (FAS/FAE) gets compounded when understanding and supports aren't available, or when the individual is exposed to violence, excessive drinking, trauma, or abuse. This in turn can lead to secondary disabilities, including mental health problems, criminal behaviors, homelessness, inappropriate sexual behaviors, and alcohol and drug problems.

FASD's are the direct result of damage to the developing brain cells from exposure to alcohol before birth. This process

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RUN MOM

This is a critical year for the Run for Mom. With the acquisition of a digital mammography machine in sight, fundraising efforts have ramped up.

“Word is out that we are close to our target and the community is responding,” said Val Pike, Chair of the Run for Mom Committee. “Sponsorships have been coming in earlier and in greater amounts than in previous years.”

Hopes are that the \$600,000 machine will be serving Whitehorse in the very near future. And, with close to half a million dollars raised to date, the near future is just around the corner.

“The new machine will provide simultaneous reading of mammograms. This translates to faster diagnosis and less time spent waiting for results,” said Pike.

Mother’s Day events have taken place throughout Yukon in Carmacks, Haines Junction, Watson Lake and Atlin, B.C. All monies raised across the territory stay in Yukon.

“This event is so much bigger than just the Mother’s Day run,” said Pike. “Local businesses, schools and individuals are holding events on their own to raise money. We often don’t hear about them until the cheque is received. Garage sales, hair cut-a-thons, raffles and donation challenges are all happening throughout the year.”

Ken Anderson’s *“Spirit of the Moon”* will grace the 2006 event t-shirt. Through different perspectives of the moon, the piece represents the fight of what it is to be a woman and the courage that it takes to overcome the struggles we face, in this case, breast cancer. The spirit of the moon is also meant to represent the people who are no longer with us and to remember their courage.

Olga Anderson, Ken’s mother, was diagnosed with breast cancer and passed away last summer. “I consider it a great honor to have been able to create this piece for such a noble and courageous cause.”

Previous artists who contributed their work to Run for Mom include Karen Rhebergen, Lynn Blaikie, Ava Cristl, Philomena Carrol, Nathalie Parenteau and the Pine Tree Quilters from Haines Junction.



T-shirts can be purchased for \$25 at CIBC, Whitehorse General Hospital, Season’s Fashions in the Hougen Centre and at the event.

The run has historically attracted more than 1,000 participants each year. In recent years, Run for Mom has organized “Learn to Walk / Learn to Run” clinics to prepare people for the route. The 6-week course meets once a week and is wholly run by volunteers. Nearly 80 people are participating in this year’s clinics.

Platinum sponsors to date are CIBC, Tim Horton’s, Health and Social Services (YTG) and Whitehorse General Hospital. For more information, visit our website at www.runformom.com

While the run is a one-day annual event, fundraising goes on throughout the year. Donations can be made at Whitehorse General Hospital.

**The Run for Mom
takes place on
Sunday, May 14 at 1:00 pm
at Rotary Park with registration
starting at 11:00 am.**

New Adult Protection in Yukon

Many agencies and individuals provide important services to Yukon's older adults or those with a physical or intellectual disability. In some cases, a disability may be as a result of a recent illness/injury or sometimes it is a result of a long-term progressive condition. Supporting these clients is often a challenging task and in September, 2005 the Yukon government enacted legislation to provide additional options.

Part 4 of the Adult Protection and Decision Making Act (APDM) provides authority to specially designated social workers employed by the territorial government to "inquire" into reports of adults (over age 19) who may be abused. In Whitehorse these designated social workers are assigned to the Seniors' Services/Adult Protection Unit and in the communities, the government's Regional Social Workers have this authority. The designated social workers are not to replace the important role of natural responders in the community, rather they will work closely with them to ensure that an intervention is not intrusive and is guided by the adult's values and beliefs. The APDM has also created regulations which allow First Nations or other agencies to apply to receive designate status.

The designated social worker's role is to assess need and risk, provide supports, establish safety plans and, as a last resort, pursue court orders to help protect the client. The APDM recognizes that an adult can choose to live at risk and decline support services. However, at times the adult's ability to make valid decisions is adversely impacted by stress, coercion or a health condition.

Abuse can be financial, physical or emotional, but only in circumstances where it appears the adult is not capable of obtaining help will a more formal "Inquiry" proceed under APDM. Inquiries can also occur where there may be instances of neglect and/or self neglect. In addition, the designated social workers can liaise closely with the Yukon Public Guardian and Trustees Office to ensure financial abuse is averted or mitigated.

The APDM is comprehensive and some key highlights are as follows:

- The identity of the person making a report which leads to an inquiry is protected and no discipline can occur by an employer or regulatory body when reports are made in good faith.
- The designated social worker has the duty to act on reports and to attempt to interview the adult at risk of abuse or neglect. The designated social worker can obtain information without consent of the adult or their guardian to fulfill this duty. All service providers must disclose relevant information requested by a designated social worker.
- The designated social worker can apply to the Territorial Court for an access order to interview an adult, or for an Adult Protection Order if necessary for the adult's safety. Also, in urgent circumstances, a designated social worker may enter a residence without a court order or warrant and provide support or remove the adult to a safe place.
- In cases where the alleged abuser is a family member residing in the adult's home and is currently or previously in an intimate relationship with the adult, the Family Violence Prevention Act will take precedence.

Our Unit would be pleased to provide you with further information on adult protection, education or services for seniors.

Please contact us at:

**Seniors' Services/Adult Protection Unit
– Whitehorse
456-3946
or toll free from the communities:
1-800-661-0408
(ext. 3946)**

New Legislation Supports People with Disabilities

The **Decision Making, Support and Protection to Adults Act** is now law in the Yukon.

The new legislation provides tools to assist people who have difficulty making decisions due to some degree of mental incapability. This includes people with intellectual disabilities, brain injuries, mental illnesses or individuals with dementia and other degenerative diseases.

The decision-making legislation is actually three separate but related pieces of legislation:

- **Adult Protection and Decision-Making Act**
- **Care Consent Act**
- **Public Guardian and Trustee Act**

The legislation responds to many of the needs of people in the Yukon. Some of the features of the new legislation include:

- Supported Decision-Making Agreements for adults who want to formalize the role of their support person in assisting them to make decisions.
- Representation Agreements for adults who want to have someone else make daily life decisions in limited areas related to their personal life or finances.
- Court-appointed guardianship as a last resort for those who need a more long-term decision-maker in their lives.
- A mandate to respond to allegations of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to offer support and assistance to abused and neglected adults (see related article in this issue of *Tracks* on Adult Protection).
- Advance health care directives and other tools for health care decisions.
- A Public Guardian and Trustee (Department of Justice) to be the last resort guardian for people who have no family or friends able to be their guardian. The Public Guardian and Trustee will also investigate financial abuse.

For more information on the new legislation, look on the Health and Social Services website at www.hss.gov.yk.ca or contact your local Health and Social Services staff person.

Did you know that the type of neighbourhood you live in can influence your health?

The Canadian Institute for Health Information has linked obesity rates with commuting habits in Canadian neighbourhoods. The location and style of neighbourhood is related to how often residents use their cars instead of other forms of transportation. You are more likely to bike or walk to destinations that are within five kilometres of your home.

Are residents in your neighbourhood more likely to commute by bike or public transit?

If so, you are less likely to be obese. However, if most of your neighbours drive to work, you are more likely to be overweight.

It makes sense: the environment you live in can make it easier – or harder – to make healthy choices.

If you see your neighbour donning a bike helmet and pedalling off to work each morning, that image might be enough incentive to start your own active commute. After all, it's always easier to make a change if you have a friend to do it with. So team up with a neighbour and start a healthy commuting trend in your neighbourhood.

submitted by Pippa McNeil of Whitehorse

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produces structural, electrical and chemical disruptions in the brain. The 'wiring' in the brain's message system malfunctions and causes message receptors to be faulty. This permanent brain damage cannot be fixed. It can, however, be ameliorated through the provision of appropriate, adequate supports.

For most individuals with FASD's, support involves some type of contact every day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Each person with prenatal alcohol exposure is affected differently. There is no standard formula for the degree and types of support needed for people living with FASD's. Providing support appropriate to each individual is the key to assuring that they have an acceptable quality of life, and can move beyond survival, to thriving.

People living with FASD's have developed great strength, resiliency and day to day survival skills to cope with a world that doesn't understand them. Imagine how well they could do *with* that understanding and support.

by Judy Pakozdy Executive Director, FASSY



"DROP THE POP" AND LET'S DRINK TO OUR HEALTH!



To celebrate Nutrition Month in March and Dental Health Month in April, the Health Promotion Unit launched two special projects to encourage people to make healthier drink choices.

Parents, teachers and community members have expressed concern that children are drinking a lot of pop and other drinks that provide little nutritional value. Pop, iced tea, fruit drinks or cocktails, sports drinks and energy drinks are all high in sugar and often caffeine. The "empty calories" in these drinks can replace the healthier drinks and foods that young bodies need for overall health.

Recognizing this, the Yukon *Drop the Pop Challenge* recently took place in 24 elementary schools. From March 27-31 students were encouraged to "drop pop" and make healthier drink selections such as water, milk and 100% fruit juice.

Drop the Pop included great prizes for students, teachers and schools and initial feedback indicates that the challenge was most welcome and quite effective at raising awareness of healthier drink choices. One teacher even reported that because her class was participating in the challenge and she wanted to set a good example, she herself gave up a seven to 10 pop a day habit!

Of course, teachers generally aren't the ones who pack their students' lunch boxes. The new *Drink to your health* campaign has been launched so the general public can also benefit from messages about healthier drink choices. The *Drink to your health* packages consist of a brochure and three fridge magnets. The brochure explains the strengths and limitations of various drink choices and has the same central message as *Drop the Pop*: drink more water, milk and 100% juice and less pop and other sugary, "empty calorie" drinks. The fridge magnets are reminders to help families

make healthier drink choices. One compares the amount of nutrients and sugar in various drink choices, another provides an easy and nutritious smoothie recipe, and the third reminds people that water is always a good choice.

The packages were sent home with elementary students throughout the Yukon. They are now being distributed on a request basis and are being used in some pretty creative ways. Debbie Mauch, supervisor of the Healthy Families home visiting program thinks *Drink to your health* provides excellent information for prenatal and new moms and is making the packages available to the approximately 150 families involved in the program. The Health Centre in Ross River will be using *Drink to your Health* in a special promotion where information packages will be distributed to clients along with a glass of vegetable juice.

If you would like to order copies of the *Drink to your health* materials or if you have questions about either of these healthy projects please contact: Ian Parker, Health Promotion Coordinator, 867-667-8978 or ian.parker@gov.yk.ca

"Jeopardy Questions"

Want a free lunch?

Hear the Deputy Minister of Health & Social Services speak about injury prevention?

Find out more about a dynamic organization committed to the public health of Yukoners?

Attend Yukon Public Health Association's AGM

Tuesday, May 9th • 11:45 – 1:00

Whitehorse General Hospital's Boardroom

Please contact Ron Pearson at 667-4401 for more info



Minister of Education, John Edzerza cuts the ribbon at the opening of the Yukon Food For Learning office new location, Whitehorse Elementary School, with Jean Kapala and Sheila Rose, fall 2005



409 Jarvis Street, Whitehorse
 Open Monday – Friday 11:30 – 3:00 • 667-7429
www.hospiceyukon.net

Hospice Yukon's Vision:

To offer quality end of life care and bereavement support to all.

LIVING WITH LOSS – INTRODUCTION TO GRIEF

Wednesday, May 24

6:00 pm – 8:30 pm at Whitehorse Public Library

This is a free educational workshop for anyone who is living with personal loss or supporting friends, neighbours or co-workers who are grieving. This is a 2½ hour introduction to the grieving process. At the end of this workshop you will have a better understanding of healthy grieving and will feel more comfortable in supporting others who are experiencing a loss. After the presentation those who are interested can stay and learn about the many Hospice volunteer opportunities within our organization. This Introduction to Grief is a pre-requisite for anyone wishing to volunteer at Hospice Yukon.

To register call Hospice Yukon at 667-7429 or email administrator@hospiceyukon.net

FYI! Something NEW to Whitehorse Health Centre!

We have added a 'chat' time to our Wednesday Drop-in for new parents. Every month there will be a new calendar of topics and those interested in coming with their little one(s) on these popular Wednesdays are welcome to come and share in the discussion. **MOMS, DADS** and extended family most **WELCOME**. These are informal information sharing opportunities and the topics will rotate. Popular topics such as breastfeeding will pop up more frequently. We will still have nurses available for one-to-one clinic consultations as well as the **BABY TALK SERIES!!!**

Weight & Measure

Baby Talk Series 1:30 pm – 2:15 pm • May 2006

Wednesday May 3rd • "Baby Blues and Beyond"
 COPING – Joan Turner, Yukon Family Services Association

Wednesday May 10th – CANCELLED
 due to 3 year old Health Fair

Wednesday May 17th • "Play and your baby"
 INFANT DEVELOPMENT
 Marie-Stephanie Gasse, Healthy Family Support Worker

Wednesday May 24th • "Is my baby getting enough"
 BREASTFEEDING – Lisa Wiebe, C.H.N.

Wednesday May 31st • "Hot Stuff!"
 DEALING WITH FEVER – Norma Renwick, C.H.N.

Whitehorse Health Centre

The Whitehorse Health Centre will be hosting the **Annual Pre-Kindergarten 5 Year Old Health Fair** on **Thursday, May 11, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** and **Friday, May 12, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** All children who are turning five years old in 2006 are invited! This is your opportunity to have a general wellness checkup for your child (height, weight, vision and hearing screening) and to update their immunizations. Health and safety information will also be available. Please bring your immunization books to be updated.

NEW THIS YEAR! A 3 Year Old Health Fair will be held May 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Children turning three in 2006 are invited on that day.

The location is at **9010 Quartz Road** in the Whitehorse Health Centre (next to the Feed Store). For more information, call the Whitehorse Health Centre at **667-8864**.



DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- FALL EDITION – SEPTEMBER 15
- WINTER EDITION – JANUARY 12
- SPRING EDITION – APRIL 7

Submit articles on disc (in Word) or e-mail to:
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 Yukon College, Public Health and Safety
 500 College Drive, Box 2799
 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5K4
 YTG internal mail – H2C • Phone (867) 668-5200

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