



Atlantic Summer
Institute on
Healthy and Safe
Communities
l'Institut d'été
sur les collectivités
sûres et en santé au
Canada atlantique

Atlantic Canada Showcase Presentation

Enhancing Social and Emotional Literacy

Description of Presentation

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based classroom program which has shown dramatic effect in reducing levels of aggression and violence among schoolchildren while raising social emotional competence and increasing empathy. This program focuses on the affective side of learning not traditionally addressed in the school curriculum. How children feel is directly related to how they learn. Studies show that as much as half of a student's academic achievement can be attributed to social/emotional competency.

Roots of Empathy's mission is to build caring, peaceful and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults. The program focuses on raising levels of empathy, resulting in more respectful and caring relationships and reduced levels of bullying and aggression. The heart of the program is a neighbourhood infant and parent who visit the program once a month for a full school year. A certified Instructor works with a specialized curriculum to coach students in observing baby's development, celebrating milestones, interacting with baby and learning about infant needs and temperament. Part of Roots of Empathy's success is due to the universal nature of the program: all students are positively engaged instead of the targeted approach to bullies taken by some other programs.

- There are over 2,200 programs being facilitated in Canada this year including 203 in the Atlantic area. Our aim is to expand participation throughout the Atlantic area.
- This program was one of three winners in the international Changemakers Competition: Young Men at Risk, Transforming the Next Generation.
- Developed as a parenting program, the program also results

Presenters

Hazel Clarke and Frances
Cole



Hazel Clarke and Frances Cole, retired teachers, were inspired by native Newfoundland's Mary Dyer Gordon who is the Founder and President of Roots of Empathy. They began their affiliation with this organization as Community Developers in the St. John's region. They have since taken on the role of Coordinators for the Atlantic Provinces as well as continuing to instruct, mentor and carry out local



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in a decrease in aggressive behaviours and an increase in helping behaviours.

- The program has been called “Crime Prevention on a Green Blanket”.
- Issues – development of social and emotional literacy, knowledge of child development and safety issues, bullying, issues addressed such as Shaken Baby Syndrome, SIDS, FASD, alcohol and drugs’ effects on a developing fetus.
- This program is backed up by evidence from a number of studies.

coordination for the Eastern School District.

Hazel and Frances have presented many information sessions on Roots of Empathy including two recent presentations at Citizens' Crime Prevention conferences in the Atlantic provinces.

How you will benefit

- Participants will learn about the Roots of Empathy program and its benefits.
- Participants will learn how they can get involved individually and as communities.
- Through our sample session with a real baby, they can participate as “children” in a demonstration Roots of Empathy family visit. This will help them to understand the power that a real live baby can have on observers and participants.

Handouts

Program "Root of Empathy"

Resources

Available during the presentation

Contact Information

For contact and to receive information about Roots of Empathy Key Point People near you:

Hazel Clarke and Frances Cole

Coordinators, Roots of Empathy, Atlantic Provinces

66 Smithville Crescent, St. John's, NL, A1B 2V2

hclarke@rootsofempathy.org

Tel: (709) 722-4805 (office), 722-4469(H) Fax: (709) 722-4805

fcollection@rootsofempathy.org

Tel: (709) 722-4805 (office), 754-2123(H) (709) 746-3601(cell)

www.rootsofempathy.org

