



BOARD REPORT

Friday January 15, 2010

PROGRAM REPORT

JANUARY 2010



101 17th Street East, Owen Sound, ON N4K 0A5
OWEN SOUND
519-376-9420

30 Park Street, P.O. Box 248, Walkerton, ON N0G 2V0
WALKERTON
519-881-1920

WEBSITE: www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

Program Report is issued on a monthly basis to inform our board and community partners of our activities.

The highlighted programs are featured in this issue...

DIRECTOR, HEALTH PROMOTION: Maureen Handley

Lynda Bumstead

Chronic Disease Prevention
Early Detection of Cancer

Sarah Ellis

Healthy Babies
Healthy Children

Carrie Griffith

Reproductive Health
Child Health
Oral Health Services

Denna Leach

Sexual Health
Injury Prevention
Substance Misuse Prevention

Linda Davies

Tobacco Projects
Tobacco Control Act
Tobacco By-law Enforcement

Inclusion '09.....	Page 2
FOCUS	Page 4

DIRECTOR, HEALTH PROTECTION: Chris Munn

Karen Sweiger

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Andrew Barton

Food Safety
Health Hazard Investigation
Emergency Planning

Lou D'Alessandro

Safe Water
Environment
Rabies Control

Susan Shular

Control of Infectious Diseases
Pandemic Planning
Vector Borne Diseases
Tuberculosis Control

New School Absenteeism Reporting System	Page 1
Food Safety and Training.....	Page 3
Rabies Update.....	Page 4

NEW SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM REPORTING SYSTEM

The electronic School Absenteeism Tracking System (SATS), initiated by the health unit this past fall with both the Bluewater and Catholic District school boards, has proven to be very valuable for all involved. The daily reporting by both elementary and secondary schools, along with the daily information received regarding emergency room visits to area hospitals, provides enhanced surveillance of illness occurring throughout Grey Bruce.

Infectious diseases investigators from the health unit contact the schools experiencing high absenteeism rates and consult with regard to infection control measures and precautions. The health unit also provided information for families; this was distributed by individual schools through newsletters and announcements, as appropriate.

The school boards received regular reports from the health unit on absenteeism rates and trends which they, in turn, were able to use to fulfill their reporting requirements with the Ministry of Education.

INCLUSION '09



On November 20 and 21, 2009, the Saugeen Youth Coalition, in partnership with the Grey Bruce Health Unit, hosted the 3rd Annual Youth Summit at the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Center. The summit brought together local youth and adults to learn from each other and to share how they can collectively make Grey and Bruce a better place for youth. Attached is a Letter to the Editor of The Sun Times written by Matthew Blackshaw, a student at Westhill Secondary and former Peer Leader with public health. This letter, written from a youth perspective, best sums up the summit.



Caring can go a long way to making a difference

This past Saturday, I woke up in a place few teenagers would be at 7:30 on a weekend morning: a museum. The odd thing was a surprising number of teenagers were doing the exact same thing, all of us attending the third Annual Grey Bruce Youth Summit.

The two-day conference was held by the Saugeen Youth Coalition and the very accommodating Bruce County Museum, which gave their space during the day, and, equally important, put us up for the night. This conference invited youth from all over Grey-Bruce to discuss, learn and have fun around the theme of inclusion.

Now, I've been to other youth conferences before that are based around a broad noun, like "co-operation" or "the future" but I've never seen a theme being followed before the conference even starts. You could see inclusion just by looking at who showed up. There were youth from nearly every high school in Grey-Bruce, with even distribution among all grades. We even let adults join in the fun. All together, about 60 youth and 40 adults attended the summit, all of whom came from diverse backgrounds and interests, from drama majors to self-described rednecks.

The one thing that we all shared was, as keynote speaker Andy Thibodeau put it, we all cared. Not exactly in the classic kindergarten sense of caring, but the fact that we cared enough about our community to try to make it better by exploring something new, like a youth summit. Essentially, leadership is just caring in action. Andy -- we were all on a first name basis by the end of the summit -- added that leadership doesn't necessarily mean joining a council or being in charge, it depends on making positive changes in your own life. This resonated with us the audience, particularly because he told his message through a combination of hilarious life stories and original dance moves. His presentation is best described as part stand-up routine, part dance party, with a practical message too, of course.

The rest of the workshops were run by an entirely local cast of speakers, who put their own spin on the idea of

inclusion. The Saugeen First Nation Youth Coalition gave us an introduction to their culture, its strengths and of some of the challenges they face outside of it. The message I carried away from their presentation is that in order to truly include someone, you must understand their differences, not just ignore them. We learned about the importance of accepting and encouraging diversity from both Alana Bochure and Gerry Call, albeit in different ways. Alana showed us the ignorance behind stereotypes while also highlighting similarities between seemingly opposite strangers. Gerry, on the other hand, approached inclusion by demonstrating different personality types and how being able to understand and accommodate these differences is needed in any team.

As the weekend drew to a close, I found that people seemed to have gotten the message. Whether directly because of the workshops, or simply because it seemed natural at this point, people were mixing it up, venturing outside of their normal social group. Grade 9s were walking up to the organizers to chat, the quiet girl approached the big group having the exciting conversation, Raiders and Falcons got along. We learned that inclusion isn't really that hard, you just have to care.

This year's summit was free for all who attended thanks to the following sponsors who combined to donate in excess of \$8,500:

- Bruce Power
- Legault's Independent Grocer
- Partners in Health
- Saugeen Youth Coalition
- Sun Life Financial
- Town of Saugeen Shores
- Bruce County Museum and Cultural Center
- Brian Shular
- FOCUS
- Saugeen First Nation
- First Student Bus Lines
- Meridian Credit Union



FOOD SAFETY AND TRAINING

Food handler training has long been recognized as an important aspect of food safety. There have been calls for Ontario to join the many jurisdictions that require a basic minimum standard of training. So far, this hasn't happened but a few municipalities have taken the lead with by-laws that require basic minimum standards. Toronto was one of the first, although others have or are considering implementing similar by-laws.

The Grey Bruce Health Unit and many of our local businesses recognize the benefits of food safety training. Although not regulated, we continue to offer the provincially recognized *Certified Food Handler* course. We also support and proctor for the *In Good Hands* on-line course operated by Thunder Bay District Health Unit. Locally in 2009, 161 candidates enrolled for the two day *Food Certification* course and an additional 79 with the *In Good Hands* course. The total of 240 candidates is similar to previous years, although we are noticing a trend favouring the on-line course.

Whether regulated or not, it can only be good for local business, the local economy, the health unit and the residents and visitors of Grey Bruce to have a substantial pool of trained food handlers working for local businesses.



FOCUS

The goal of the FOCUS project was to prevent and reduce problems, including injuries and chronic diseases, associated with alcohol and other drug use. Since its inception in 1998, this program has delivered over 200 community education and skill development projects for children and youth; education and awareness initiatives for parents and professionals; policy development initiatives; and awareness and skill development for seniors. A full report on the projects will be available spring 2010.

Originally the funding supported the Owen Sound and Brockton communities, but was later expanded to cover all of Grey Bruce. Our area was one of 11 sites across the province chosen for this program due to: 1) higher rates of alcohol related motor vehicle crashes, injuries and deaths as compared to most of Ontario; 2) higher rates of binge drinking rates (defined as five or more drinks on one occasion) among youth and many adults; and 3) and alcohol rated as the number one drug abuse problem.

The FOCUS project was very successful in mobilizing the community. Community volunteer time tripled over the ten years. Through the Ministry of Health Promotion's Healthy Communities initiative, we hope to further this momentum and expand our efforts as a community to reduce the impact of alcohol on the health and well being of our youth and to reduce chronic disease.

RABIES UPDATE

There were ten rabid animal reports for Grey Bruce in 2009: six skunks, two foxes, one bat and one cow. In 2008, there were six confirmed rabid animal cases in Grey Bruce: three skunks, two cattle and one bat.

Province-wide January to September 2009, there were 40 rabid animal reports; down significantly from 2008, with 66 cases reported in the same period. This is the fewest number of cases in Ontario to the end of the third quarter since rabies recording was established over 50 years ago. The previous record low was in 2006, with 65 cases reported January to September.

Two of the three rabid fox reports provincially, January to September 2009, were located in Bruce County where the arctic rabies strain persists. Control efforts include Ministry of Natural Resources field staff hand-baiting inside a five kilometre perimeter where a rabid fox is found.

Four of the seven rabid skunks reported provincially, January to September 2009, were located in South Western Ontario; Grey (2); Perth (1); and Wellington (1). In 2008, there were 21 rabid skunks reported in the same period. This significant reduction may reflect the success of the new ONRAB, skunk rabies vaccine. First field tested in 2006, ONRAB has been widely distributed across the majority of the baiting area in South Western Ontario since 2008.

Provincially January to September 2009, there were 23 rabid bat reports; 18 from July to September. This is down slightly from 2008 when 31 cases were reported to the end of the third quarter. Bat cases were scattered throughout Ontario with one positive little brown bat in Bruce. The major concern is spread of the rabies strain to other wildlife, however rabies control within the suspect bat population is very difficult to effectively initiate.

Working with you to Protect and Promote Health and Prevent Disease



Medical Officer of Health

REPORT TO THE BOARD

Friday, January 15, 2010

Welcome to all Board of Health members. Thank you for your commitment to serve this year on the Board of Health for the Grey Bruce Health Unit. A special thanks to those who are returning; we have enjoyed working with you in the past and continuity of the relationship makes work easier. You will be receiving a disk with the orientation materials for this year. Included on the disk will be the Initial Report on Public Health for the province. This is a useful report to see how we are doing when compared to other “mainly rural” health units. The report also has a section on governance indicators. The CD will also include the new mandated programs and services regulation. If you would prefer the material in hard copy please let us know and we will print it for you.

The section entitled “A Review of Board of Health Liability” in the 2010 “Orientation Binder”, deals with the legislation governing the Board of Health and the Health Unit as well as roles and responsibilities and liabilities for directors. This is an important section for you to read. I would be pleased to meet with any of the new board members if they would like a personal tour of the business of public health and our programs and services. Similarly if you would like to spend some time with any of the program managers, directors, or administration we would be pleased to answer your questions and show you what we do.

The Board of Health and the Grey Bruce Health Unit are members of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA). This organization works for all the health units to help us be consistent and innovative. ALPHA sponsors two conferences each year for the Boards of Health and MOH/senior managers. The Ministry of Health will also sponsor several workshops throughout the year for public health units and the boards. There is planned a MOH workshop regarding some of the legal issues in the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) on Feb 24th in Toronto and this is followed by the ALPHA Winter Symposium Feb 25th and 26th also in Toronto. The symposium will deal with H1N1 activities of the past few months and focus on the way ahead. The GBHU also has a corporate membership in the Ontario Public Health Association and Canadian Public Health Association.

Most board meetings will include a staff report regarding aspects of our programs/services and how we are meeting the requirements in the new standards.

I look forward to working with you this next year as we work towards healthier communities.

“Public Health is the foundation for the happiness of the people and the power of the country. The care of the public health is the first duty of a statesman.” Benjamin Disraeli 1875

Hazel Lynn