

Inside Education

September 2011

26th Annual ACEA Conference in Banff

Once again, the ACEA is working toward arranging a stellar conference for all those lucky enough to work in the correctional education field. As in times past, we will descend on Banff, specifically the Banff Park Lodge, in early March, 2012 for a few days of socializing, presentations, education and entertainment.



The theme of the upcoming conference will be Prevention and Intervention. We feel that this is a huge topic that will open us to a wide range of high-quality speakers. It should also be of personal significance to all those involved in correctional education. Although not all of us may not be officially involved in the prevention and intervention aspect of corrections, we all can play a part in our daily interactions with our clients.

The conference will be held March 7, 8, and 9 at the Banff Park Lodge. Make sure to include it in your PD/holiday planning as it is shaping up to be an experience you won't want to miss. Keep your eyes peeled for registration information and speaker updates via email, Twitter and Facebook.

We hope to see you all there.

Inside Education is the newsletter of the Alberta Correctional Education Association.

The newsletter is published two or three times a year, and submissions are always welcome.

The ACEA is a professional organization facilitating the educational needs of the incarcerated;

The ACEA strives to broaden professional horizons and interdisciplinary interaction of all personnel involved with correctional education;

Texts published in Inside Education express the views of their authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the ACEA, its executive, or the editor.

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Get to Know the ACEA Board

Do you ever wonder who arranges those awesome Banff conference?

Are you itching to write something related to the field of education or corrections and want it published in the ACEA newsletter?

Are you lonely and just want to chat?

Do you desperately want to be one of us?

Here's the current ACEA Executive. If you have any questions regarding the upcoming conference or anything related to the ACEA, please don't hesitate to contact us. Remember, we are also often looking for people to join the board at our yearly AGM. Maybe now is the time to get involved!

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Message from the Editor

Welcome back!

It's hard to believe it's September already, and I'm back in classes again. Although I'm not quite sure I can say that I'm happy summer is ending, I can honestly say I missed the characters I work with. I don't know anyone who works outside of corrections who comes home with better stories than I do. This is truly a unique work environment.

This school year is already shaping up to be a good one. Last year, I sat in on a series of meetings with the John Howard Society and our DDP regarding running a literacy project here at Calgary Correctional Centre. Now that they have secured the needed funding, they are almost ready to move forward and launch the program. I think this literacy program, along with Bow Valley College's existing Basic Education, GED and High School Upgrading programs will go a long way toward providing the CCC population with a full spectrum of educational options.

I'm interested in learning what is available to the populations at your centres. I feel that it is important to have a clear picture at what we offer on a province wide population because we often share the same clients. If we can ease our students' transitions between centres and programs, they'll enjoy greater success with their courses. I'd appreciate receiving a brief outline of what is offered at your centres, so I can feature them in upcoming newsletters. If you'd like to participate, please fax or email them to the contacts below!

Once again, the annual conference is shaping up to be a gooder. Your ACEA board members are working hard to line up a solid line of speakers and presenters, and we'll be keeping you updated via Facebook and Twitter as they are secured. At the moment, I'm not sure if karaoke is going to make a comeback; however, if it does, I've been told that Janis Joplin may have to be banned from the playlist...

Anyway, good luck in the coming year! If you have contributions for the newsletter, you can fax them to (403)662-3713 or email me an electronic copy at cwhitehead@bowvalleycollege.ca

Cobern Whitehead

Message from the ACEA President

Greetings to all our members!

Back to school for many; back from vacation for most. This is a busy time for all and one where we find ourselves planning for the year ahead.

The annual ACEA conference will be March 7, 8 & 9, 2012. Wow, did I just type "2012"? Contrary to the predictions of a few, I anticipate 2012 will not only arrive safe and sound, but will offer up a fantastic conference!

Our 2012 theme is "Prevention and Intervention". This great group of volunteers is now contacting and confirming an array of presenters who will be ready to share their knowledge and ideas.

Cobern is keeping us alive on Twitter and Facebook...follow and like us please! These sites will be where we post information about the speakers and details!

We recognize that many, rightly so, are tenuous about putting an identity "out there". Some people choose an alias to create an account, allowing them to continue accessing ACEA information, as well as detailed speaker information. Whichever you choose, real or alias, we welcome you to keep informed using social media. (There may even be a picture or two of some Karaoke fun, had at the 2011 conference).

You can also read more about the 2012 conference at:

<http://www.nald.ca/acea/conference.htm>

On a personal note: I have pursued a career opportunity in the world of "Learning and Development" (corporate training development and delivery). While my clients are a little more "mainstream", my interests still very much cross over to "marginalized" populations. I am pleased to continue with MRU, facilitating Pre-Release Planning, which keeps me connected and serving a population whose need for intentional and meaningful programs is great.

If you have any suggestions, ideas or questions, send them along to coreymacpherson@yahoo.com. However, all your ideas and suggestions can come through any of our elected members, including our esteemed editor, Cobern @ cwhitehead@bowvalleycollege.ca.

Regards,
Corey Macpherson
ACEA President



Education is a progressive
discovery of our own
ignorance.

-Will Durant

Experience is a good
school, but the fees are
high.

-Heinrich Heine

Education is not the
answer to the question.
Education is the means to
the answer to all ques-
tions.

-William Allin

A Brief Introduction to Social Return on Investment

Cobern Whitehead
Bow Valley College, CCC

All too often, social programs for the incarcerated are seen as black holes for money. Every year, the government and tax payers pour millions of dollars into the correctional system. While everyone can see the logic and value behind additional programming, standard accounting methods only show these expenditures as a loss because social programs tend not to turn a profit in the traditional sense. Unfortunately, profit/loss accounting is incapable of accounting for the added and social and environmental value created by these types of programs. For obvious reasons, this can cause considerable problems when examining the value behind social programs.

Social Return on Investment or SROI, an emerging blended accounting methodology, gives organizations the ability to measure and account for the extra-financial value they create. In other words, SROI doesn't solely focus on the monetary return from an investment; instead, it assigns a monetary value to the social and environmental benefits produced by the project. For example, addiction counseling might cost a few thousand dollars per client but yield several thousands of dollars in social value in return if the client completes the program and remains clean for a certain amount of time. The resulting increase of social value, or profit if you will, comes from examining the societal benefits created by the client staying clean. For example, if being clean means he or she stays out of the court system, society is actually saving money because it eliminates the cost of arrest, trial, and, possibly, incarceration, all of which would be funded through tax dollars. The total social value is then compared to the investment value. The resulting ratio is known as the SROI ratio and gives organizations, investors, and stakeholders an idea of how much of an impact the program is really having on society.

Of course, dollar figures and ratios present only a partial view of how effective a social program is. A Social Return on Investment study must also present an accurate story that explains the impact a program has on its stakeholders, the people who are actually affected. This story must provide both quantitative and qualitative account of outcomes for everyone involved. By doing this, a SROI can tell a story of progress and change – if, of course, there actually is measurable progress and change. This allows an SROI to show how an investment in a program can create an increase in the quality of life an individual or group because some factors that determine quality of life cannot be translated into dollars and cents.

Over the past several years, SROI practitioners have banded together in order to provide standardized guidelines for those wishing to conduct such a study. This organization, The SROI Network, outlines seven principles that are essential to each case:

- Involve stakeholders
- Understand what changes, both positive and negative
- Value the things that matter
- Only include what is material
- Do not over claim
- Be transparent
- Verify the result through independent evaluation

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A Brief Introduction to SROI (Continued)

Cobern Whitehead
Bow Valley College, CCC

If these principles are followed, an SROI should present an accurate, balanced examination of the effectiveness of a program and the actual impact it has on both the individuals directly involved and surrounding society.

In a time where social programs for the incarcerated are constantly threatened by cutbacks, Social Return on Investment seems like a promising tool that can be used to show the actual value of our programs. Since our system has such a high rate of recidivism, it is highly possible that the average person who goes through the correctional system will reoffend if he or she is released without proper programming and support. This means that society will, once again, shoulder the high cost of arrest, detainment, trial and, possibly, incarceration. It would be interesting to see how these expenses would compare to the costs of programs aimed at educating, rehabilitating and reintegrating people back into regular society. It will be interesting to see if there is more of a shift to this type of accounting in the future for social programs. Perhaps it could even change the public perception of correctional programs being a black hole for public money.

Time is a great
teacher, but,
unfortunately,
it kills all its
pupils
-Hector Berlioz

Resources

www.thesroinetwork.org
<http://sroilondon.edu>
www.proveandimprove.com

SROI in Your Community

<http://calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Pages/FCSS/Social-Return-on-Investment-%28SROI%29.aspx>
http://socialenterprisefund.ca/?page_id=299

The Small Window in My Cell

M.L.
Former C.C.C. Inmate

As these days fall through
The small window in my cell,
I'm left with only a clue
of a lifetime spent in the concrete hell.
A mind that ponders on sanity,
A heart that never cries,
This seems to be my everyday reality.
Until I face my violent demise,
Hope is constantly being given
By the will I conquer each-n-everyday.
Another night locked down in prison,
Another friend seems to walk away,
Who is Real? Who is True?
I never can tell...
As my life falls through
The small window in my cell

