



Weekly E-Newsletter
Stay Connected @ BCSS
Friday, November 23, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Week 12 ended on a P.D. Day and Thursday was our Fall Semi-Formal. Can you believe we are entering the final week of November 2018?! Time is speeding up - I am sure of it.

I would like to wish the Bear Creek members of the Sikh community a blessed Birth of the Guru Nanak, on Friday, November 23rd. This day honours the birthday of Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith, and is one of the biggest celebrations in Sikhism. Followers read the Sikh holy book from start to finish continuously for 48 hours (this is done in teams of men and women who each read for a few hours); the readings end in the early morning of the Guru Nanak’s birthday. Flowers, flags, and posters are displayed for decoration, and followers sing, pray and eat special foods.



I am always open to suggestions and comments, so please contact me at twilkinson@scdsb.on.ca if you have something on your mind.

E-newsletters are available on the Bear Creek website: <http://bss.scdsb.on.ca/>

Please follow me on Twitter: @VPWilkinson

Please follow me on Instagram: sfx8691

If you see a topic you want to learn more about, you go to the item and press the “Ctrl” button while you click your cursor and you will be “magically” transported to the topic you chose. To “magically” transport back to the table of contents, go to the “Back to the Table of Contents” words at the end of each article, and press the “Ctrl” button while you click your cursor and you will be “magically” transported back to the table of contents.

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What’s Happening at BCSS?

Movember – heading into the last week

The Mo, slang for moustache, and November come together each year, for Movember.

Movember challenges men to change their appearance and the face of men’s health by growing a moustache. The rules are simple, start Movember 1st clean-shaven and then grow a moustache for the entire month. The moustache becomes the ribbon for men’s health, the means by which awareness and funds are raised for prostate cancer. Much like the commitment to run or walk for charity, the men of Movember commit to growing a moustache for 30 days.

The idea for Movember was sparked in 2003 over a few “wobbly pops” in Melbourne, Australia. The plan was simple – to bring the moustache back as a bit of a joke and do something for men’s health. No money was raised in 2003, but the guys behind the Mo realized the potential a moustache had in generating conversations about men’s health. Inspired by the women around them and all they had done for breast cancer, the Mo Bros set themselves on a course to create a global men’s health movement.

In 2004, the campaign evolved and focused on raising awareness and funds for the number one cancer affecting men – prostate cancer. 432 Mo Bros joined the movement that year, raising \$55,000 for the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia - representing the single largest donation they had ever received.

The Movember moustache has continued to grow year after year, expanding to Canada, the US, UK, New Zealand, Ireland, Spain, South Africa, the Netherlands and Finland.

In 2009, global participation of Mo Participants climbed to 255,755, with over one million donors raising \$47 Million for Movember’s global beneficiary partners. We are proud to announce that last year’s Canadian campaign was the second largest in the world behind Australia, with 35,156 Mo Participants coming together to raise \$7.8 million for Prostate Cancer Canada.

The funds raised through Movember’s Canadian campaign go directly to Prostate Cancer Canada which enables them to fund vital research that will led to better screening tests and treatment options and to run support services for men surviving prostate cancer.

The other significant outcome of the Movember campaign is the awareness of prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and our men's mental health messages we are collectively generating. Men of all ages are not only listening, they are acting on this messaging and taking positive action with their own health, diet, exercise and lifestyle. We recently surveyed the Movember community and found that because of their involvement in Movember, 39% of the Mo Bros sought medical advice, whilst a further 36% encouraged someone else to seek medical advice.

The success of Movember can be directly attributed to the more than 627,000 Mo Participants who have supported our cause since 2003. Movember is sincerely grateful for their efforts and appreciate all they do.

For detailed information about the Movember Foundation, financial and annual reports, men's health, the programs being funded and the social impact Movember is having, please visit: <https://ca.movember.com/>

I am taking part in the Movember campaign this year. If you would like to support me (and I'd greatly appreciate it), please go to <https://mobro.co/vp-wilkinson> to donate

I have two funny stories about facial hair.

1. Canadian comedian, television and movie actor, Howie Mandel, in his book "Here's the Deal – Don't Touch me" – a revealing book about his life with OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) - has a picture in it of one of his mustaches that he has grown. It was in the middle of his right cheek. "Who says it has to be under your nose?" he writes in his book. How true!

2. When I was in university, in my 4th year, my quantum mechanics professor was a brilliant, little lady named Dr. Friedhoff. She taught my dad, knew this, and I think had a level of familiarity that you wouldn't find in most Canadian universities. Of course, in 4th year physics, there aren't a lot of people in the class (4, actually), so it is pretty easy to be familiar with your students. She was teaching about some sort of wave function in the nth dimension when she stops, looks at me and says: "Terry Wilkinson, what is wrong with your face?" {You can insert your own joke here}

"Um,..., what do you mean?"

"You have something on your face! What is it? Is it dirt?"

"I'm trying to grow a beard," I said a little sheepishly.

She continued, "Well, go and shave it off – it looks horrible!"

She stood there and looked at me. She obviously was not going to teach any more until I left. My three other physics colleagues looked at me with pained expressions on their faces, so I packed up and left.

Needless to say, the next class I went clean-shaven.

Based on the last story, I really need your support. So does Prostate Cancer Canada, Testicular Cancer Canada, and Men's Mental Health through CMHA. So, if you feel like donating to a worthy cause, please consider a tax-deductible Movember donation via <https://ca.movember.com/mospace/>.

Thank you!

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Green Team - The Climate Action Plan Ontario Needs

The Bear Creek Green Team organized a petition to the Provincial Assembly for a better climate plan with strong climate action and delivered the more than 860 signatures to MPP Andrea Khanjin on October 26th, 2018 with the following presentation highlights. The new Ont. Climate action plan must be driven by the far more urgent climate reality than previous plans. The latest U.N. IPCC Report released October 9th, 2018 was

prepared by the world's best climate scientists. They wrote that we are facing a greater climate emergency and by 2030 must have reduced emissions significantly more to hold climate change to a maximum of 1.5 degrees C. or be affected by far greater climate disruption than ever imagined. This means our first priority has to be to protect the environment especially the climate to have any chance for a more prosperous economy.

Besides the recommendation of the IPCC, the 2018 Nobel Prize winners for economics also say that a key solution is clearly shown by the evidence to be carbon pricing. Canada's Ecofiscal Commission adds that there are 45 working examples of carbon pricing around the world which show that we can design carbon pricing to be progressive and revenue-neutral, sensitive to everyone's needs and able to protect business competitiveness while reducing emissions over time. We know that carbon pricing works and it is an efficient and cost effective policy originally developed by conservative political thought to be a capitalistic, free market practice and powerful economic stimulant. So a made-in-Ontario carbon pricing system would efficiently reduce greenhouse gas emissions and unlock the private sector to finance and drive innovative climate solutions. It must also promote green energy to replace fossil fuel energy that is the biggest source of climate emissions and support Ontario to benefit economically from the low carbon economies of the green future.

In order to put people first, young people and future generations must be remembered, which means Ontario needs a Climate Action Plan that takes the science of climate change seriously and takes strong actions to efficiently reduce emissions enough to avoid dangerous climate disruption so that youth also have a reasonable chance for a decent future. The government must also take good measures to educate the public about the dangers of climate change and how everyone can do their part. This is the time for major government investments along with incentives to help families and business do more to reach our necessary higher emission reduction targets.

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Explore Your Future in Medicine

Considering a career in medicine? Join us, on Tuesday, November 27th at 6 p.m. to learn about what to expect in regards to schooling, finance, standardized tests and more! You will hear from current medical residents and medical students too. High school students, parents and guardians welcome! Registration is not required however, in order to better inform event coordinators about what you'd like to hear most about, please complete this survey: <http://bit.ly/MedSchoolQuestionnaire> This event is a partnership with RVH/University of Toronto Family Medicine Teaching Unit.

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Parents/Guardians Invited To Learn About Special Education In The SCDSB At Upcoming Information Sessions

The SCDSB will host a series of information sessions for parents and guardians to learn more about special education in the SCDSB, and how to support students with special education needs.

The following sessions will be offered:

- ✿ Dec. 10, 2018 – Accessing Community Supports
- ✿ Jan. 17, 2019 – Supporting Learning Disabilities: What does the SCDSB offer? How can I support my child at home?
- ✿ Feb. 25, 2019 – Understanding Special Education Amount (SEA)
- ✿ Mar. 25, 2019 – Building a Plan for the Summer: What is available? How do I access programs?
- ✿ Apr. 25, 2019 – Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA): What is it? What can I do at home?

The information sessions take place from 6 to 7 p.m. at the SCDSB Education Centre, located at 1170 Highway 26 in Midhurst. Interested attendees may also access the meetings virtually.

More information, including the link to register and join the meeting virtually, can be found here:
https://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/special_education

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November 26 – December 2 – National Addiction Awareness Week

All Walks of Life

Sadly, one in 10 Canadians suffers from some type of substance use disorder. That could mean your colleague, your neighbour or someone in your own family. Addiction does not discriminate—it affects all walks of life.

This year during National Addictions Awareness Week, **we (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction)** will be trying to dispel some deeply held stereotypes about substance use disorders. Through our Faces and Voices video campaign, individuals will share their experience with substance use, both personally and through others. The videos show how substance use disorders can affect any social level.

We are holding our Stigma Workshop: Breaking down the Barriers on Thursday, November 29, 2018. The purpose of the workshop is to increase awareness of stigma and to identify strategies to address it in our communities and workplaces. Our aim is to build meaningful partnerships with others committed to addressing stigma. We are conducting a Facebook Live event to bring you the panel from the workshop and will provide more information about this event soon.

We are also preparing a toolkit with infographics, videos and social media products for you and your organization to share and help raise awareness of this issue that affects #AllWalksofLife.

Your efforts to promote National Addictions Awareness Week 2018 will help reduce the stigmas and stereotypes associated with addiction and recovery. We need to reduce those stigmas because addiction does not discriminate.

Go to <http://www.ccdus.ca/Eng/newsevents/national-addictions-awareness-week/Pages/default.aspx> for more information.

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Scholarship Report

When searching for scholarships, you have to know where to look! While many scholarships are listed in *The Scholarship Report*, it is not an exhaustive list. There are other places to consider! Begin thinking of scholarships that are specific to you and your interests. I have attached the November 2018 – January 2019 Scholarship Report.

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Scholarships

ScholarTree is still committed to helping reduce student debt in Canada by making scholarship more accessible. Most people don't realize how many scholarships are awarded early in the school year. ScholarTree.ca has

\$997,500 worth of scholarships that are currently accepting applications. Students can find which scholarships are best fit for them by signing up at ScholarTree.ca.

To help with students prepare and transition to post-secondary life we have launched the [ScholarTree Blog](#). University students write the blog because we want the information to be as relevant to current student life as possible. The main areas of focus for the blog are:

1. Student Life: general advice and hacks
2. Scholarship Tips
3. Entrepreneurial Spotlight: stories about students starting their startup or not for profit
4. How to: tips for applying and getting into prestigious programs

Make sure to subscribe, so you don't miss the weekly updates.

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Prime Minister's Youth Council – next week

The Prime Minister's Youth Council (PMYC) is [accepting applications](#) for the next cohort of members.

Canadian youth, permanent residents and protected persons aged 16-24 years can apply. This means that your students could be the next members of the PMYC!

The application deadline is **November 30, 2018**.

How can you help?

We need your help in ensuring that youth from diverse backgrounds are aware of the process, and that they could find themselves on the council if they apply.

Young people often undervalue their contributions and lived experiences. Let them know that their voices matter, and that they really can advocate for their communities in a meaningful way. Follow [@LeadersToday](#) on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) and [hear directly from current members of the PMYC](#). You can share these posts on your own social media channels to reach as many young people as possible with these inspiring messages, with the hashtag #PMYouthCouncil.

Visit Canada.ca/Youth, and review the application requirements.

We are looking for a breadth of youth from diverse backgrounds and interests – a group that truly represents Canadian values.

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2019 Prime Minister's Awards

As part of the Prime Minister's World Teacher's Day [statement](#), the 2019 Prime Minister's Awards competition is now open!

Teachers play an important role helping to build the next generation of successful, caring, and creative Canadians. We all remember a teacher that changed our lives. The Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching



Excellence, Teaching Excellence in STEM, and Excellence in Early Childhood Education honour exemplary teachers and early childhood educators who are preparing our youth for the innovation economy.

Prime Minister's Awards recipients can receive:

- Cash awards worth up to \$5,000
- A certificate from the Prime Minister
- National recognition and promotion of their best teaching practices

The Prime Minister's Award program would like to thank the RBC Foundation for their generous support towards the recipient's monetary awards.

Consider nominating an educator for a 2019 Prime Minister's Award! Download your nomination package and a poster today by clicking on the web button below, or visiting our website at www.pma.gc.ca. Submit your nomination electronically or by mail before **January 14, 2019**.

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A&E's Lives That Make a Difference 2018 Essay Competition

Tell us about the heroes that make a difference in and out of your classroom and win \$3,000!

Welcome to the 2018 Lives That Make a Difference Essay Contest

Here you can learn more about this year's essay contest and [Official Rules](#), check out last year's essay winners, and submit your own essay into the competition!

Teachers, be sure to check out our [Teacher Resources](#) section to learn how to bring free A&E educational programming weekly into your classroom.

Here's How to Enter and Win

Students in 5th – 12th grades may enter by writing an essay based on someone they think made the biggest impact on Canadian society in 2018.

Prizes are awarded in two grade levels: 5th – 8th grade, and 9th – 12th grade.

Two winners will be selected in each level.

GRAND PRIZE

\$3,000 for student

\$1,000 for Department/ Classroom of Teacher

FIRST PRIZE

\$2,000 for student

\$1,000 for Department/ Classroom of Teacher

Contest begins September 17, 2018 and ends December 31, 2018. Entries must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2018.

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Grad Photos

Grad photos will be taken starting Thursday, December 6, 2018. If you have a first period spare, you can pick up your grad photo information form from the main office.

You may book your graduation photo sitting by going online to www.edgeimaging.ca/graduation Use your school code BCK to book your appointment. Please see attached flyer.

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University Visits

Ryerson University
Queen's University

November 26
November 28

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A Visit to Lakehead – Orillia

Are you a grade 11 or 12 student planning on attending University after high school? Lakehead in Orillia is offering an “explore university day” on December 4th at their Orillia Campus. Students will get a chance to tour the campus and sit in on real University Lectures. Lunch is provided and the transportation is free. Permission forms available in Guidance. Only 36 spots are available, so don't delay!

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Schulich Leader Scholarships of 2018-2019 Academic Year

Launched in 2012, this \$100 million program funds 50 undergraduate scholarships each year, across top Canadian universities. *Schulich Leader* Scholarships are the largest and most prestigious undergraduate Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) scholarships in Canada, with a value of up to \$100,000 each. Fifty students receive this celebrated award each year – 25 for Engineering at \$100,000 each, and 25 for Science, Technology, and Mathematics at \$80,000 each.

In order to become a Schulich Leader and receive the scholarship, students must first be selected by their high school as a Schulich Leader Nominee. High schools may select one Nominee each. Only Canadian schools are eligible to participate.

To be eligible, students need to demonstrate:

- 2 of 3 of: Academic, Leadership (entrepreneurial, business, community), or financial need
- AND be entrepreneurial minded in: Technology, Engineering, Innovation, or Research (Research into questions posed by scientific theories and hypotheses)
- AND be: A Canadian citizen, graduating in 2018-2019, and enrolling in partnering universities
- AND MUST NOT be: heading into medicine or medical research

For more information on the Schulich Leader Scholarships including nomination process please visit:

<http://www.schulichleaders.com/>

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Badminton Club

Something new this year is the Badminton Club. It is on Thursday nights from 8 p.m. until 10 p.m. Students can come and play for fun or to be competitive. There will be coaching available. Come for fun! Come for training! Come for exercise!

We are opening this opportunity for the family of schools for Bear Creek. Grades 7 and 8 students are welcome to participate as well, from 8 p.m. until 9 p.m.

See Mr. Wilkinson for more information.

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Volunteer Opportunities

**VOLUNTEER!
GET INVOLVED!
BE A PART OF YOUR COMMUNITY!**

Do you want to volunteer or get a summer job? Not sure where to start? Check out Bear Creek's volunteer and student job opportunity board located outside of the Guidance office. It is updated weekly with fantastic opportunities! Still not sure what to do? Make an appointment with your Guidance Counsellor for some further suggestions.

**Remember, EVERY student must complete a minimum 40 hours
of volunteer work to graduate.**

Please submit your "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" sheet (this sheet can be found either on-line or at the Guidance office) to the Guidance office as soon as it is signed by both you and a parent.

1. Do you like sports? Are you in need of community service hours? Do you want to get a jump on community service hours? Well the home game crew might be for you! We are in need of capable and trustworthy students to help with sports scorekeeping for the year. Basketball and volleyball are the main sports in which we require help.
2. Mr. Wilkinson is looking for students to be part of the Grounds Crew. Please see him in his office (upstairs admin tower) on Thursday for more information.
3. Mr. Wilkinson is looking for students to be part of the Breakfast Club. Please see him at the Breakfast Club table any day for more information and to sign up.
4. For those students in need of community service hours.....volunteers are needed for various positions by the Salvation Army. They include volunteers for the Christmas Kettles and for the Santa Shuffle. Please stop by guidance for more information.
5. Are you a grade 12 University bound student currently taking advanced functions? If you are interested in tutoring mathematics to a younger Bear Creek student for either cash or community involvement hours, then come see Mr. Gunson, in Guidance, to learn what's available.

6. Rock 95/Kool FM have officially launched their 28th year of the Toy Drive and which will be “wrapping” up December 21st, 2018.

They are looking for volunteers!! Perhaps you are a student in need of community service hours. Their warehouse is 30 North Village Way, Park Place (back of the old Target). Volunteers right now would just need to help sort toys (girls/boy & age groups). Please come to guidance if you are interested.

7. Dress for Success is looking for individuals or groups to wrap gifts for our 1ST Annual Fundraiser to be held at the Bayfield Mall.

WHEN:

Saturday Dec 1st through Monday Dec 24th (mall hours)

Shifts are 3 hours long each:

- Duties include wrapping and tagging presents.
- Collection of monetary payment.
- Students can receive Community Service Hours.

CONTACT US TO SIGN UP FOR A SHIFT!

Kim Davis, Volunteer Coordinator

kim@dfsorilliabarrie.org

705-252-9200

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Sports News

The scores and schedules across the County are on www.hometeamsonline.com; type “scaa ‘your sport’” in for league (i.e. scaa football).

Next week’s sporting events look like:

Monday 26 th	Tuesday 27 th	Wednesday 28 th	Thursday 29 th	Friday 30 th
	Boys’ Curling vs. Innisdale	Jr./Sr. Boys’ Basketball @ Bradford	Boys’ Hockey @ Bradford	
		Girls’ Hockey vs. Banting		

If you see “vs.”, that means it is a home game; if you see “@”, that means it is an away game.

Are you a new student to Bear Creek in grade 10, 11, or 12 and are interested in playing sports? Did you transfer from another high school? Please come to see Mr. Wilkey in Student Success, room 110, to fill out the necessary forms so you can play sports this year.

Why not try **WRESTLING (Or as Mr. Chestnut calls it - “competitive hugging”)**? The sport where people of all shapes and sizes, find success. Practices are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, after school, in the forum. See Olympic trained coaches Chestnut or Cryer for more detail, in room 128 or 111, respectively.

Why should I **Wrestle**?

Because Canada is the second best Wrestling Country in the world. Canadian Wrestlers have won more Olympic medals than any other sport since 1980.

Why should I **Wrestle**?

Because Simcoe County has the best wrestlers in all of Canada winning more OFSAA and National gold medals than any other region in Canada!

Why should I **Wrestle**?

Because there are more scholarship opportunities for wrestlers than any other sport!

Why should I **Wrestle**?

Because it's an amazing way to see the world. Simcoe County High school students have travelled to more than 30 different countries in the last 10 years. Most of this paid for by the Canadian Government

Why should I **Wrestle**?

Because wrestling is an amazing way to improve your strength, agility, cardio, flexibility and overall fitness.

Why should I **Wrestle**?

Because no matter what your #1 sport is (Basketball, Football, Rugby or Hockey) at some point you are going to face off one-on-one with an opponent. And wrestling gives you that edge to succeed!

The real question is, why aren't you going out for Bear Creek's **Wrestling** team?

Now, if you don't want to touch anyone who is hot, sweaty, and gross, (or hugging), try **Badminton** – Thursday nights, from 8 - 10. See Mr. Wilkinson for more information.

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Important Dates

Sunday, November 25

International Day for the Elimination
of Violence Against Women

Tuesday, November 27

Explore Medical Career evening

Wednesday, December 12

Kempenfelt Kup

Wednesday, December 12

School Council meeting, 7 p.m.

Friday, December 21

End of classes for calendar year of
2018

Monday, December 24 – Friday, January 4, 2019

Christmas/Holiday Break

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Positively Speaking

At least twice a week, I spend time with students who feel “bullied” via social media. They get attacked from their “friends”/ “followers”, with some sort of written sludge, usually full of profanity, and more often than not, a “just kidding” emoji shows up {or even more ironic, “good night”}.

I have had many conversations with parents who are at a loss of how to help their children, because, in the past, parents have always been able to help. As their children seek independence, they try to take on more of the self-protective (I got this) role.

Parents, your teens need you more than ever but you have to be careful not to appear controlling or meddling. You are needed for support.

I hope you find something in this article that may help your support your teen.

Five Ways to Help Teens Feel Good about Themselves

As teens struggle with anxiety and perfectionism, how can we help them like who they are?

No one wants to hang out with me. I'm a failure at school. All my other friends seem happy. What's wrong with me?

These kinds of negative thoughts are becoming more common in our homes and schools. Teens are experiencing [increased anxiety](#), and [studies](#) indicate that college students in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States are becoming more perfectionistic over time, measuring themselves against unrealistic standards.

Why is this happening? We can't say for sure—but we do know there are steps teens can take to improve their mental health.

A [2018 study](#) of early adolescents suggests that self-concept (your perception of self) plays a central role in emotional well-being. According to the study, a supportive classroom environment and positive social relationships also affect teen well-being—but the impact is indirect. Positive self-concept seems to be the key variable in the well-being equation. If a student feels good about herself, then she may be more likely to connect with others and benefit from the supports provided at school.

So, how can we influence how students think about themselves? This may feel like a very tall order; yet there is a lot of research out there that provides some clues for supporting the teens in your life. Here are five ways to help tweens and teens move toward a more positive self-concept.

1. Get physical

Although you may have heard this before, kids really can benefit from regular exercise (especially when their tendency is to sit in front of a screen). A recent [review](#) of 38 international studies indicates that physical activity alone can improve self-esteem and self-concept in children and adolescents.

Apparently, the exercise setting also matters. Students who participated in supervised activities in schools or gymnasiums reported more significant growth in self-esteem than those who exercised at home and in other settings.

Adolescents' self-concept is most strongly linked to their sense of [physical attractiveness](#) and body image, an area where many people struggle. So, encourage more regular exercise programs during and after school, and support team sports, strength training, running, yoga, and swimming—not just for their effects on the body but on the mind, as well. Getting out and engaging in some form of [exercise](#) can make us feel stronger, healthier, and more empowered.

2. Focus on self-compassion (not self-esteem)

Because self-esteem is a global evaluation of your overall worth, it has its dangers. What am I achieving? Am I good enough? How do I compare with my peers?

What would happen if we could stop judging ourselves? Researcher [Kristen Neff](#) claims that self-compassion—treating yourself with kindness, openness, and acceptance—is a healthy alternative to the incessant striving and performance orientation often tied up with self-esteem.

In her [study](#) of adolescents and young adults, she found that participants with higher self-compassion demonstrated greater well-being. Why? They were okay with their flaws, acknowledged that they struggled just

like those around them (“Everybody makes mistakes; you are not alone”), and treated themselves with the same kindness they would extend to a friend (“It’s okay; you did your best”).

If you are interested in specific techniques and strategies for enhancing self-compassion in teens, take a look at the work of psychologist [Karen Bluth](#). She recently developed a program called [Making Friends with Yourself](#). Youth participating in this [eight-week program](#) reported greater resilience, less depression, and less stress at the end of it. However, if there isn’t a program near you, consider sharing this self-compassion [workbook](#) with the teens in your life.

3. Avoid social comparison

When we focus on [self-esteem](#), we tend to get caught up in comparing ourselves to others. Teens, in particular, often sense an “[imaginary audience](#)” (i.e., “Everyone is looking at me!”) and can become highly sensitized to who they are relative to everyone around them.

Instagram and other [social media](#) platforms don’t necessarily help. Some research suggests an association between social media and depression, anxiety, loneliness, and FoMO (fear of missing out) among teens. Their posts may not rack up the number of “likes” that their friends’ posts do, or they may feel excluded when they see pictures of classmates happily spending time together without them.

A new app for teen girls called [Maverick](#) may be a healthier option than Snapchat or Instagram. On this social media platform, teens can connect with role models (called “Catalysts”) and explore their creativity (such as designing their own superhero or choosing a personal mantra). Of course, there is always the option of taking a break from social media, as well.

Regardless of what teens choose to do online, many of our schools are also structured for social comparison. Grading, labeling, and tracking practices (grouping students based on their academic performance) don’t necessarily honor the stops, starts, and inevitable mistakes that are a natural part of the learning process. Here are some [school-based alternatives](#) designed to reduce social comparison:

- Don’t make grades public.
- Provide opportunities to revise and redo assignments.
- Avoid ability grouping as much as possible.
- Focus on individual growth and improvement.
- Acknowledge students’ small successes.

4. Capitalize on specific skills

If you keep your eye out for teens’ talents and interests, you can support them in cultivating their strengths. Your son may think he is a terrible athlete, but he lights up when he works on school science projects. Then there’s that quiet, disheveled ninth-grade girl who sits in the back of your class. She may feel socially awkward, but she wows you with her poetry.

Researcher [Susan Harter](#) has studied adolescent self-esteem and self-concept for years. She claims that self-concept is domain-specific. Our overall self-esteem or sense of worth tends to be rooted in eight distinct areas: athletic competence, scholastic competence, behavioral conduct, social acceptance, close friendship, romantic appeal, job satisfaction, and physical attractiveness.

Talk to the teens in your life. What are their personal values and priorities? Share surveys with them like the [VIA](#) (which identifies character strengths like bravery, honesty, and leadership) or have them take

a [multiple intelligences quiz](#). Celebrate their talents and tailor activities and instruction around their abilities as much as possible.

It may not be easy to shift teens' global sense of self-worth, but we can certainly highlight and encourage areas of interest and particular skill sets so that they feel more confident, capable, and inspired.

5. Help others (especially strangers)

Finally, when teens reach out to others, they are more likely to feel better about themselves. A [2017 study](#) of 681 U.S. adolescents (ages 11-14) examined their kind and helpful behavior over a four-year period. Researchers found that adolescents who were kind and helpful in general had higher self-esteem, but those who directed their generosity toward strangers (not friends and family) tended to grow in self-esteem.

Last Friday, I joined my daughter and her peers during the “action” phase of their [“Change the World” project](#). Their social studies teacher, [Tim Owens](#), tasked the eighth graders with choosing a sustainability issue, researching the problem and possible solutions, planning action, and implementing the action.

These middle schoolers spent a full day canvassing their neighborhoods to advocate for policies that protected people they don't know, like local refugees and homeless youth—as well as animals used for product testing. I've never seen my daughter and her friends more energized, confident, and engaged with their community.

As adults, we can actively support [service learning](#) projects in our schools and our teens' interests in advocacy and [civil engagement](#). Adolescents around the world can also work remotely with non-profit organizations like [DoSomething](#), “a digital platform promoting offline action” in 131 countries. On this site, young people can choose a cause, the amount of time they want to commit to it, and the type of help they would like to provide (e.g., face-to-face, improving a space, making something, sharing something, etc.)

When teens regularly contribute to a larger cause, they learn to [think beyond themselves](#), which may ultimately help them to be more positive, empowered, and purposeful.

As many teens struggle with anxiety and perfectionism, our urge may be to jump in and fix their problems, whatever we perceive them to be. But a better approach, one that will hopefully help reverse these worrying trends, is to cheer them on as they develop the mental habits and strengths that will support them throughout their lives.

Source: “Five Ways to Help Teens Feel Good About Themselves”, by Amy Liu, May 21, 2018,
https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_ways_to_help_teens_feel_good_about_themselves

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Parent's Corner

I was out driving on Friday and was stopped by a RIDE patrol, which I am always happy to see. I have had too many friends and family killed by drunk drivers. I, myself, was hit by a drunk driver, which altered my physical health for the last 27 years. On a side note, this experience provided a fantastic, real-life experience of a total inelastic collision, which I taught in the grade 12 University Physics course.

I was a member of the OSAID Board of Directors and am still with the association. OSAID – Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving. I really enjoyed that experience and am looking to get involved again, especially after the legalization of marijuana in October.

I thought this article was a good one to discuss with your teen, especially as the holiday season approaches.

Discuss The Dangers of Drinking and Driving With Your Teenager

Your teen is excited to go to the holiday party—especially because some of his friends are home from college for the winter break. But there’s one thing you must do before he heads out the door: Talk to him about how he will get home.

Today, car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens. Roughly a quarter of those crashes involve an underage drinker.

Would your teen get in the car with someone who has been drinking? The answer may be yes. One in three high school students report riding with a driver who has been drinking.

Alcohol isn’t the only thing for parents to worry about. Nearly one in five teens report getting into a car where the driver had used marijuana.

These statistics are concerning for other reasons, too. Underage drinkers are more likely to binge drink. They are much less likely to wear seat belts or to encourage their riders to buckle up. So a teen in a car with an underage driver who has been drinking or using marijuana is at great risk.

What should you do?

- ☞ **Talk with your teen.** Discuss the risks of riding with a driver who has been drinking or using drugs.
- ☞ **Be a role model.** If your teen knows you sometimes get into vehicles with drivers who have been drinking, he may do the same.
- ☞ **Ask if there is a designated driver.** If the answer is no, offer to take and pick up your teen yourself.
- ☞ Establish a code that means, “Come get me now.”

Sources: “Designated Drivers: You Are Not Alone,” National Institute on Drug Abuse, nisdw.com/high_drive;
“A third of high school students ride with drivers who have been drinking,” Science Daily, nisdw.com/high_ride.

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Parent Pointer Calendar for the following week (Nov. 26 – Nov. 30)

Monday 26 th	Tuesday 27 th	Wednesday 28 th	Thursday 29 th	Friday 30 th
Tell your teen you love her/him today. And tomorrow. And the day after that.	Talk to your teen about using social media responsibly. Review what he/she posts.	Help your teen set priorities when he’s/she’s doing homework. Which assignment is the most important? Due first?	Encourage your teen to tutor a younger student. Teaching someone else will strengthen her/his own grasp of the subject.	Ask your teen to brainstorm ways your family can do something for others this month.

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Have a great weekend and a great upcoming week!

106th Grey Cup on Sunday. Go Ottawa! Go Calgary! It doesn't matter; it is great to celebrate something so uniquely Canadian! {I do however, have a small Tim's card wager with my friend out West – go Ottawa!}

Be well!

Terry Wilkinson

Vice-Principal
Bear Creek Secondary School

P.S. (Positive Statement):

“Spring passes and one remembers one's innocence. Summer passes and one remembers one's exuberance. Autumn passes and one remembers one's reverence. Winter passes and one remembers one's perseverance.”

- Yoko Ono

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P.P.S.: If you like what you have read so far, please tell another parent/guardian, get them to e-mail me, and I'll add them to the e-mail list.

Put up the Christmas lights this weekend. My electric meter is smoking!



