

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

July - September 2018

Back to School
Edition





MESSAGE FROM TARA

SchoolsPlus Provincial Coordinator

Welcome to our latest quarterly newsletter, which begins with the start of summer and transitions us into the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year.

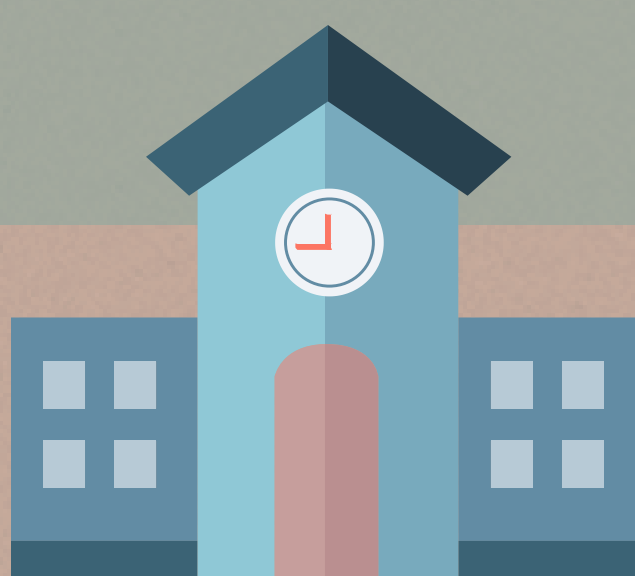
During those summer months, SchoolsPlus and their partners, were out and about with numerous fun-filled activities and camps for students ranging from outdoor activities, entrepreneurship, to yoga and bracelet making!! SchoolsPlus loves to keep the community and school connected!

As the summer days wind down, SchoolsPlus staff are thinking about the transition back to school. This quarter we are featuring the many thoughtful and intentional activities undertaken to help students with those transitions. From the great amazing races, to schools' supplies, to support for our youngest students entering primary, these activities rally around supporting transitions for all students. We can never do this work alone, SchoolsPlus is all about partners, and we are so pleased to feature our Justice colleagues, Lorri Bower and Janice Cosser, and our thanks for the ongoing support.

This year, SchoolsPlus has expanded to include 55 schools, and I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to the new staff joining the SchoolsPlus team. Also, I congratulate all staff on your hard work over the summer and as we transitioned into fall. I am sure I do not need to tell you how much of a difference all your efforts have made to the students, families, and communities we serve.

To all our staff and partners, students and families, best wishes for a great school year.

Tara Moore



New Year, New School

Who: Students starting at new junior high and high schools across the province

What: New school orientation activities

When: The last days of Summer 2018

Partners: Caper Base Outreach, CBVRCE Police Liaison Officers, & Sackville Arena

Where: West Hants Middle School, Glace Bay High School, Sydney Academy, Riverview High School, Dalbrae Academy, & Sackville Arena

Why: To provide an opportunity for incoming students to gather and prepare for starting junior high school.

Although many students have siblings, neighbors, or friends who have gone off to junior high and high school, there can still be a fair amount of nervousness and apprehension about this transition. At the same time, there are important developmental changes related to adolescence occurring, as well as social and social media influences at play.

This summer, students across the province with concerns about the transition into their new schools were invited to participate in fun events at their school or in their neighbourhood designed to acclimate them to their new environment over the week prior to classes starting in September.

AMAZING RACES

In Annapolis Valley, Cape Breton-Victoria, and Strait regions, SchoolsPlus staff and volunteers facilitated the Amazing Race: a day-long event where students were divided into teams and participated in a series of challenges throughout the schools. The first team at each school to complete all the challenges won the Amazing Race!

Some schools also used the opportunity to supply students with their new schedules and offered a tour of the school in efforts to familiarize students with their new environment, as well as to ensure each would know what to expect their first day.

West Hants Middle School reported that all students who attended the race showed up the following day, feeling much more comfortable with their new school!

Hello Junior High – Transition to a New School Mini Camp

In Sackville, students were invited to two half-days of activities and healthy snacks. The Grade 6 students transitioning to their new schools took part in icebreakers, cooperative games, and guided discussions on topics catered toward teenagerdom.

Feedback from youth and parents was very positive. Many parents voiced their own worries about how their child would adjust to a new and often bigger school. Parents and youth shared that having a space and opportunity to interact, explore, and validate these concerns was beneficial. SchoolsPlus staff also discussed the idea of expanding this program with a possibility of having youth mentors help facilitate for future programming.





OUR STAFF

STAFF FEATURE MENTAL HEALTH CLINICIANS



Natalie Steele Quinn has worked as a SchoolsPlus Mental Health Clinician at the IWK for the central region within the CSAP and the HRCE since 2016. Natalie has been working in her profession for almost 10 years in many different settings, including adult mental health, social housing, community development, and medical social work. She also regularly volunteers in youth drop-ins, facilitated school groups for young children, and has been a Big Sister for over 12 years now!

Working with youth to support their struggles with mental health has always been an aspiration of Natalie's, and she is thrilled that she gets to pursue her dream job with SchoolsPlus. She firmly believes that youth are amazing and fabulously intelligent people who teach her something new everyday. Her role as a MentalHealth Clinician grants her the opportunity to offer a

compassionate and open space for those youth to learn and grow around their struggles with mental health, so that they are able to continue to live a full and meaningful life.

Natalie is always on the lookout for details of how and when advocacy can take place, and partners with the SchoolsPlus Assistant Leads, School-Based Social Workers, Community Liaison Officers, Community Outreach Workers, and Child and Youth Care Practitioners to ensure meaningful changes can occur for the youth. She makes efforts to offer the best care possible to the youth she works with, which includes communicating regularly with her Assistant Lead and Community Outreach Workers and making sure each team member has a thorough understanding of work that is being carried out with youth. From Natalie's point of view, any piece of information, big or small, can facilitate change in someone's life.



Kerri Gibson is a SchoolsPlus Mental Health Clinician with the NS Health Authority who has worked for the SRCE since May 2017. Hailing from Lennoxville in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, Kerri started her career in clinical work during her graduate school program in 2004. Since then, she has worked at the Child and Adolescent Services Clinic.

Kerri was drawn to SchoolsPlus by her desire to support children with their mental health and realizes the importance of working with families and schools to do so effectively. She enjoys working collaboratively with families to address the challenges they face and celebrate their successes, as well as working with schools and staff invested in the well-being of their students, particularly in the rural communities she calls home.

In her role as a Mental Health Clinician, Kerri works in collaboration with the SRCE SchoolsPlus Facilitator, the Community Outreach Worker, the parent navigator, the school psychologists, public health nurses, community organizations, and school administration and staff to devise comprehensive case planning and support students and families. She also provides mental health assessment and treatment for children and adolescents on a wide range of mental health disorders, as well as psycho-education and information sessions to families.

Outside of SchoolsPlus, Kerri describes herself as a mom, and loves nature. She often visits the beautiful Inverness County beaches in the summer and takes scenic drives in the Highlands throughout the winter. In fact, she thinks her drive to work on the Cabot Trail each day is the most beautiful drive in the world!



ANNAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

SUPPLIES DRIVE

Who: Staples and Central/West Kings SchoolsPlus Staff

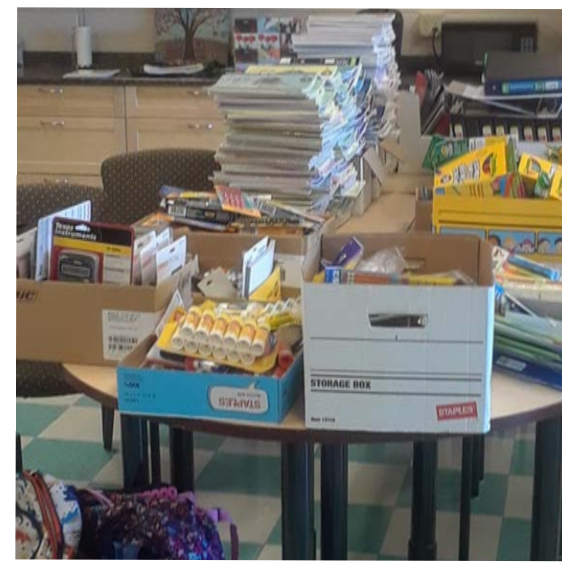
What: School Supplies Drive

When: August 2018

Where: Staples, New Minas location

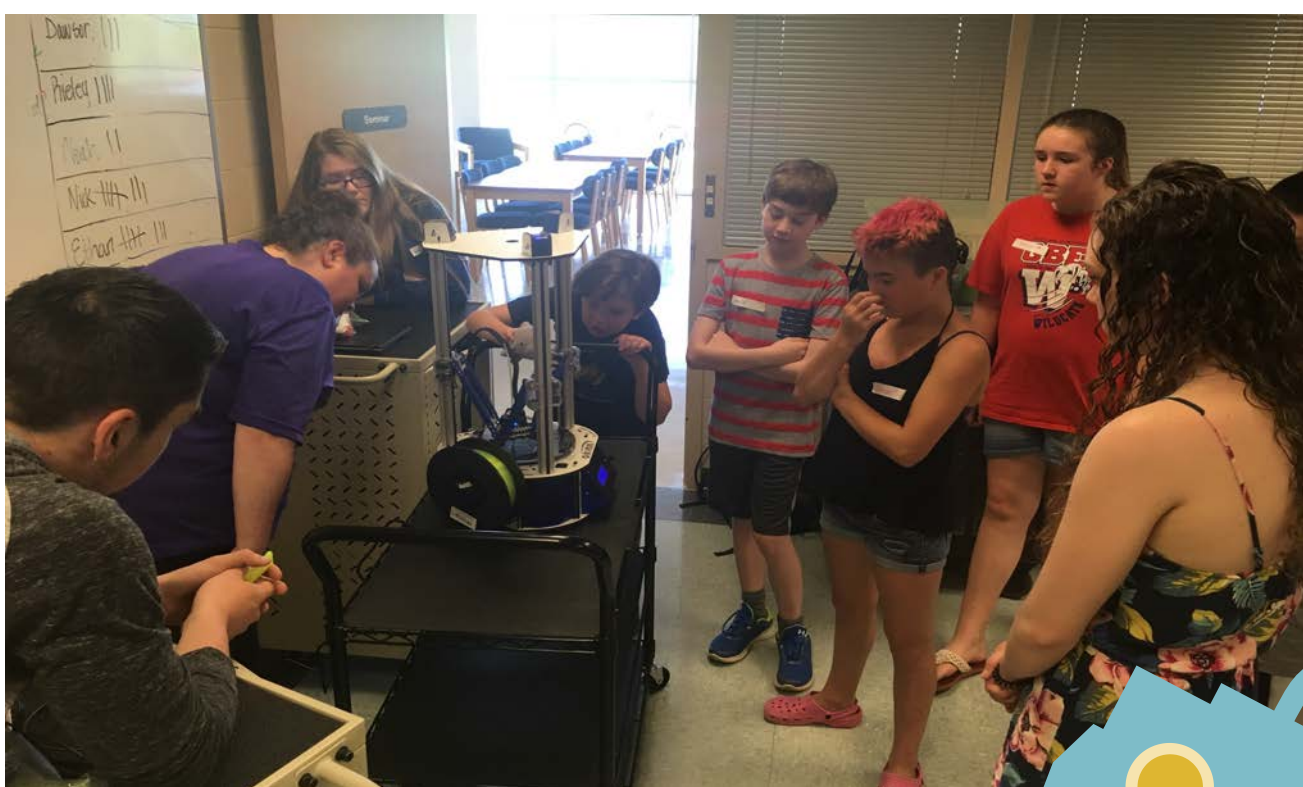
Why: Staples has been providing the Central/West Kings area with school supplies for the last couple of years. Employees raised money through customer donations, which was then used to buy supplies requested by SchoolsPlus staff according to the needs of neighbouring schools. This year, Stock Transportation also joined in the drive, collecting donations of supplies in the parking lot of the Staples location. Community Outreach Workers then distributed the supplies to the various SchoolsPlus sites and families living in the district.

Partners: Staples & Stock Transportation



CAPE BRETON-VICTORIA REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

BRILLIANT LABS



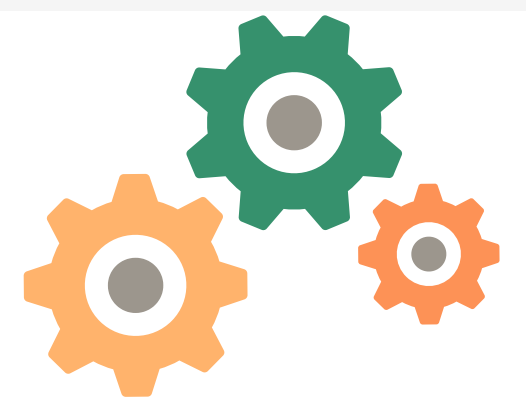
Who: Students grades 6-12

What: Brilliant Labs Camp

When: July 3-5, 2018

Where: Oceanview Education Centre School, Glace Bay

Why: Brilliant Labs is a non-profit organization that uses hands-on technology and provides experiential learning opportunities for youth across Atlantic Canada. During this 3-day camp, students designed and created their own 3D art pieces, learned to build and program a robot, and created stop-motion animation videos as well as short films using a green screen!



Partners:





CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

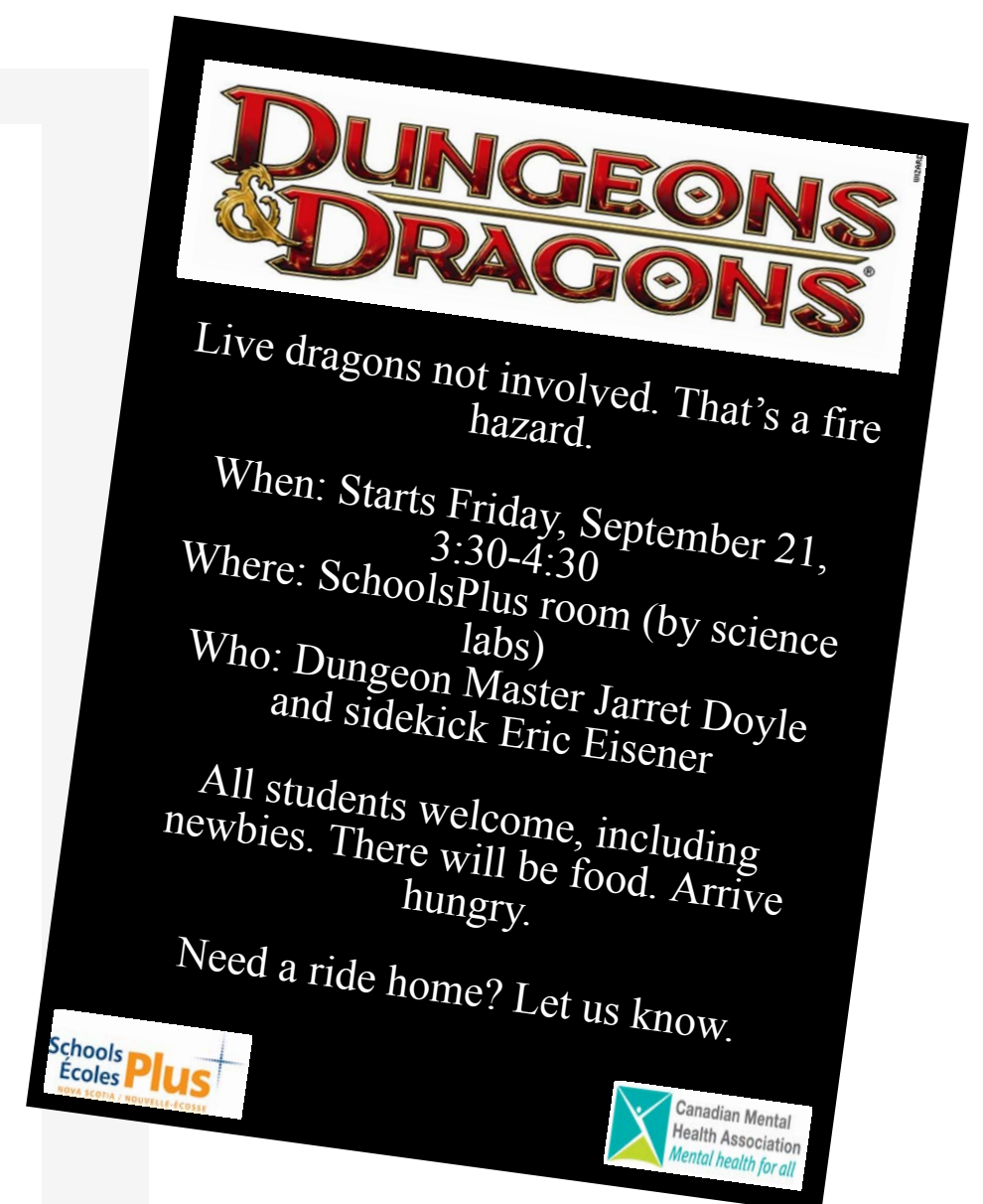
Who: Students grades 9-12, CMHA Youth Outreach Worker, SchoolsPlus Community Outreach Worker

What: After-school Dungeons and Dragons campaigns

When: Friday afternoons, 3:30pm-4:30pm

Where: East Hants Rural High School

Why: Students are looking for fun activities to do after school or on weekends. This gives them something to do on Friday afternoons while making connections with other students, and also familiarizes them with the CMHA outreach program and SchoolsPlus.



Partners: Canadian Mental Health Association
Youth Outreach Worker, Jarret Doyle
(Colchester-East Hants branch)

CONSEIL SCOLAIRE ACADIEN PROVINCIAL

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM



Who: Students 9-12 years of age

What: Entrepreneur program

When: July 16th - 19th, selling their final products at the Truro Farmers Market on July 21st, 2018

Where: École acadienne de Truro, Truro Farmers Market

Why: While many students understand the importance of managing money, a large portion of them do not know how to do it. Teaching younger students the basics of money management ensures their capacity to build on those skills as they get older, rather than having to start from the beginning later in life.





HALIFAX REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION FOOD ACTION NETWORK OF SPRYFIELD (FANS)

Who: Community leaders, agencies, and stakeholders concerned about food security in the Spryfield area

What: Food Action Network of Spryfield

When: Monthly meetings, ongoing programming

Where: YWCA Halifax

Why: FANS identified the reoccurring issue of food insecurity within the community. As a result, SchoolsPlus Community Outreach takes an active role as the liaison between the school and the community, improving food source access, providing information about the various FANS initiatives such as the Mobile Food Market, and reducing the stigma around using supports and services.

Moreover, SchoolsPlus is collaborating with Feed Nova Scotia on the “Food First Strategy,” a pilot program that offers service in providing home-delivered, supplementary groceries to participating families. Typically, referrals would be made by principals or school staff on behalf of families who may benefit from the project, but since its launch, SchoolsPlus has even begun to receive self-referrals from those who have heard about the program!

PARTNERS: FANS, YWCA, Chebucto Connections, Mobile Food Market, Feed Nova Scotia



STRAIT REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION SUMMER FUN DAYS



Who: Students out of school for the summer

What: Summer Fun Days

Where: Richmond Education Centre/Academy, Felix Marchand Education Centre, and East Richmond Education Centre

When: August 9th, 14th, and 16th from 9:00am-12:00pm

Why: Indoor/outdoor activities were designed to get students moving and use their creativity over the summer!

Partners: Louisdale Volunteer Fire Department, and St. Peter's Volunteer Fire Department



SOUTH SHORE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

KIDS ON THE GROW

Who: South Shore Kids on the Grow interagency group & SchoolsPlus Facilitator

What: This group developed and distributed resources and information for parents of children entering Primary, supported a "Transition to School Program" for Primary students over the preceding summer months, and advocated for the need of paediatricians in the region.

When: 2017-Present (ongoing)

Where: South Shore Region

Why: SchoolsPlus Facilitators noted that some Primary grade children required some extra social and emotional support as they entered school. In the 2018-2019 school year, the group plans to increase the number of parent meetings offered and to provide information to Early Childhood Educators on available services and how to make referrals.



Partners: Public Health, Early Intervention, School Psychologists, SSRCE Consultants, Speech and Language Practitioners, and the Pre-Primary Coordinator

TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

GIRLS' CAMP



Who: Youth in grades 7 & 8

What: Girls' Camp

When: Summer 2018

Where: Barrington Municipal High School

Why: This was created based on a specific need identified among female youth with attendance challenges related to anxiety. Each week there was a different activity, all with the goal of helping the youth feel more comfortable in the school and to work on coping strategies. The group's favourite activity was led by a trained yoga teacher, offering a yoga class, meditation strategies, and creation of gemstone bracelets. Each girl made a bracelet she was able to take home!

Partners: Kate Giglio of Supernova Power Yoga, Certified Baptiste Yoga Teacher and jewelry maker



PARTNERS SUPPORT SCHOOLSPLUS DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



Nova Scotia's Department of Justice has been a long-term partner to SchoolsPlus and the programming we provide across the province. Much of this support has come in the form of training for SchoolsPlus staff for various programs that can help students make positive changes in their own lives, and sitting on SchoolsPlus Advisory Committees.

Lorri Bower, Manager of Offender Programs and Principal of Education Programs and **Janice Cossar**, Provincial Program Officer have been and continue to be invaluable partners to SchoolsPlus staff. Lorri works to provide SchoolsPlus staff with the training necessary to effectively facilitate programs like VOICES, LifeLessons, and skills such as motivational interviewing. Janice has been involved with facilitating Options to Anger (O2A) since its conception, and has worked consistently with SchoolsPlus since 2011, ensuring our staff is always equipped to provide O2A programming where needed.



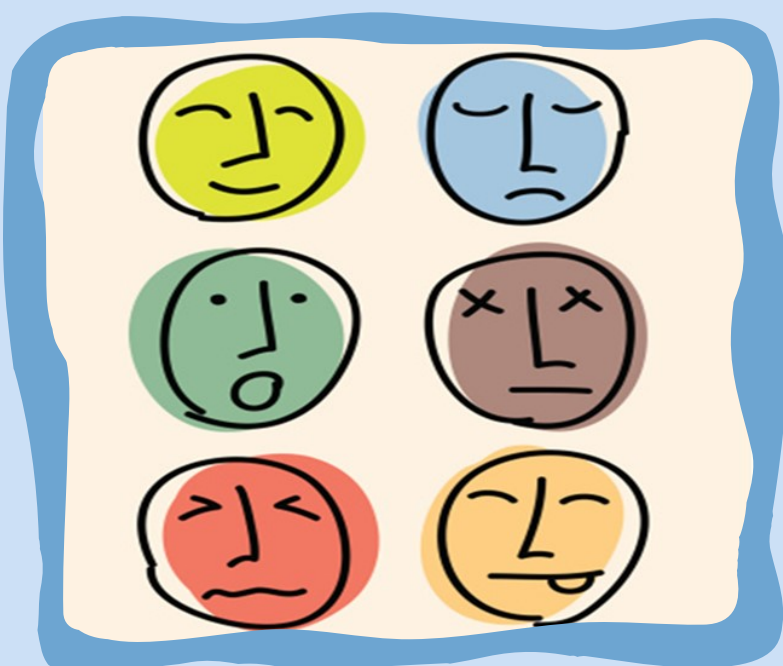
Pictured: Janice Cossar
& Brodie



O2A was originally conceptualized to fill the need for programs that address anger for youth and adults who find themselves involved with the Justice system. Thus, it is designed to aid students who may have experienced concerns with anger. O2A uses an interactive approach to teach participants about the early warning signs to anger that manifest both physically and mentally. By developing and practicing skills that interrupt and diffuse anger, students are equipped to pursue different emotional reactions to situations that may otherwise cause them significant distress.

Life-Lessons dispels the notion that "inappropriate behaviour" is a choice made by the student. Rather, the program frames different behaviours as evidence that, throughout a lifetime, individuals use the skills and tools they learn from their various environments. Life-Lessons tries to empower students with skills to reflect on their actions and create an awareness of how their choices impact on others.

Much like O2A, Life-Lessons focuses on providing students with new, alternative ways of acting and interacting with the world. The goal is to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to use positive behaviour strategies to negotiate their world. This is delivered through a realistic, hands-on approach, encouraging students to make positive changes that will benefit both themselves and their communities



Members of the Department of Justice like Lorri and Janice are motivated to get involved with SchoolsPlus because both follow the philosophy of wrap-around service delivery. Providing a consistent message of support across agencies and departments makes the navigation of these services easier and more beneficial to children, youth, and families being served.

When children and youth are able to take part in programs like these, they recognize that the support they're being provided is genuine, establishing trusting relationships and making it all the more likely that they will continue to engage with available services in the future.

Moreover, through this partnership, SchoolsPlus and Justice staff develop relationships that support one another, making referrals, answering questions, and providing better access to programs and services the children, youth, and families who need them.

QUALITATIVE DATA

PROGRAMMING

Data from the Monthly Reports were analysed and numerous groups and programs SchoolsPlus offered this quarter were found. The visual depicts the makeup of groups mentioned in the Monthly Reports in each category.



school
transition



health
promotion



information
sessions



physical
activity



parent
support
groups



money
management

[illegible]

supplies
drives

