

FEATURE STORY

Headstrong Summit

Who: Five junior high schools from HRCE and CSAP

What: Headstrong Summit

When: March 27, 2018

Where: HRCE central office

Why: To gather youth in a fun and educational setting to learn about combatting stigma surrounding mental illness and mental health.

Partners: SchoolsPlus/EcolesPlus of HRCE/CSAP, Nova Scotia Health Authority, IWK, and the Mental Health Commission of Canada

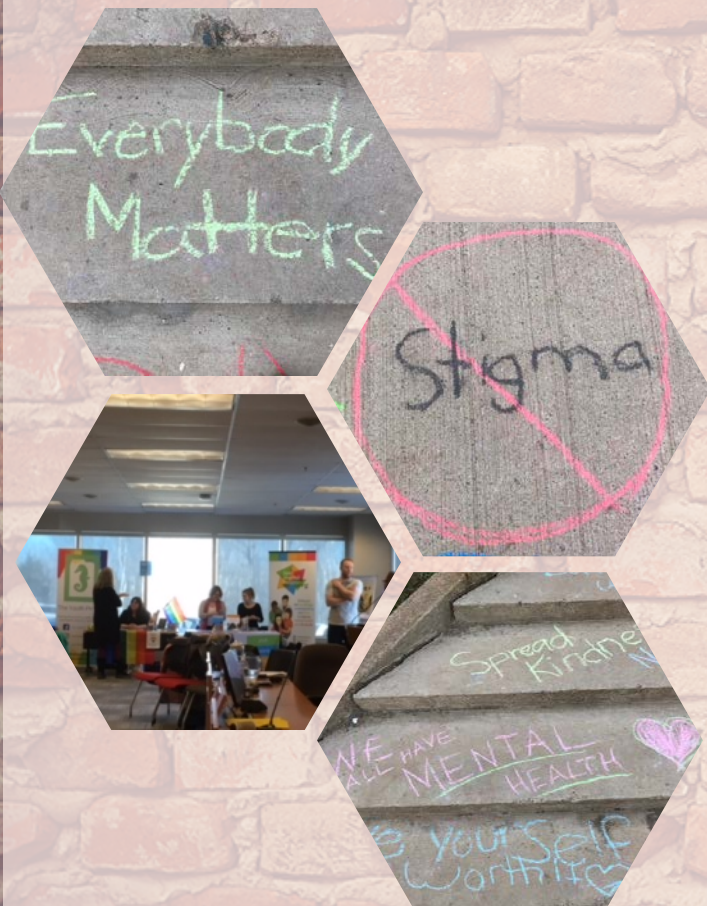
In March, SchoolsPlus/ÉcolesPlus, HRCE/CSAP, NSHA, and the IWK hosted the first Headstrong Summit in Halifax. The Headstrong initiative is modeled after the Mental Health Commission of Canada's *Opening Minds* program. The summit included a full day of interactive learning with more than 50 junior high students in attendance from A.J. Smeltzer, Leslie Thomas, Sackville Heights Junior High, École secondaire du Sommet, and École du Carrefour. Also in attendance were SchoolsPlus staff, School Guidance Counselors, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Clinicians, and Youth Health Centre Coordinators.

Summit Agenda Overview

- First-voice presentations from young adults who experienced difficulties and distress related to mental illness and stigma.
- "Passport" activities sponsored by community-based agencies. Students made stress balls and anti-stigma buttons, played trivia games, received promos, and learned about various resources.
- Brainstorm and planning sessions about how to promote mental health awareness, and discourage stereotypes and stigma associated with mental illness.

While the Headstrong Summit was a huge success, an equally important aspect of Headstrong is the work that comes out of this time together. Students were encouraged and supported to carry out activities in their individual school communities. Here are some examples of the projects that got off the ground this school year:

- Anti-stigma skits were developed to present to incoming students when they tour their new school.
- Posters were made and displayed in schools with slogans about acceptance, support, stomping out stigma, and understanding mental health.
- Positive, affirming, and supportive messages were colorfully chalked onto the front steps of one school.
- Facts about mental health and mental illness were shared as part of morning announcements.
- A headstrong leadership group was formed at one school, inviting new participants and looking towards the next school year.





ANNAPOLIS VALLEY REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

LUNCH AND LEARN

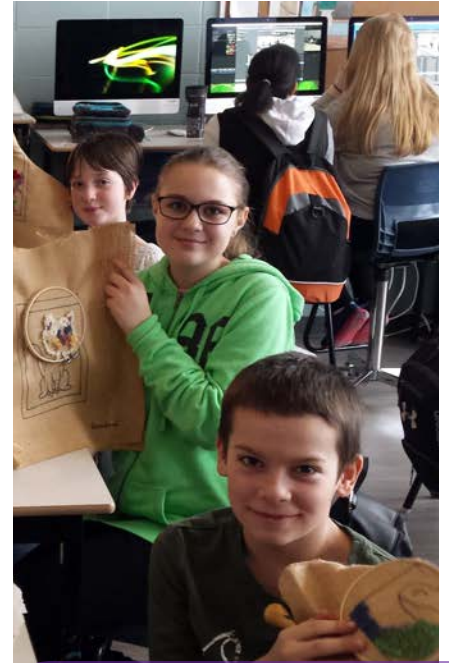
Who: Junior/senior high students at Bridgetown Regional Community School (BRCS)

What: A Lunch and Learn series (4 weeks) on Rug Hooking. Students enjoyed their lunch together and each worked on a small rug hooking project they designed themselves, with the support of the BRCS art teacher. During the final session, the group celebrated with pizza and reflected on the pieces of art they created together.

When: February 2018

Where: Bridgetown Regional Community School

Why: Students developed supportive peer relationships while learning a new art-form and practice of self-expression. The SchoolsPlus Mental Health Clinician was available to chat and shared information about "Beating the Winter Blues" with the group.



Partner: Lori Whitman Price,
Bridgetown Regional Community
School, Art Teacher

CAPE BRETON-VICTORIA REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

CHILDREN AND TEENS TOGETHER



Who: 19 students from Sydney Academy's Co-op program were matched with 19 grade primary students from Cusack Elementary

What: Children and Teens Together Mentoring Program (CATT)

When: February 13 until June 12, 2018

Where: Cusack Elementary and Sydney Academy

Why: CATT was created to foster relationships between children and teens. The program focuses on short lessons that apply to the needs of the children and teens such as: emotional literacy, emotional regulation, literacy skills/development, and positive relationships.

Partners: Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia, Sydney Academy's Co-Op Program and Cusack Elementary.



CHIGNECTO-CENTRAL REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

STUDENTS GET ACTIVE

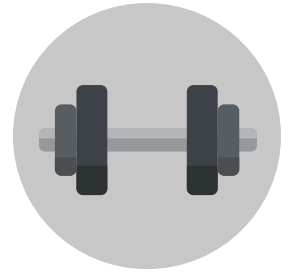
Who: Grade 9 to 12 students from Northumberland Regional High School

What: YMCA LaunchPad is a program to assist students on their journey to a more physically active lifestyle. SchoolsPlus partnered with the YMCA and the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to provide one year YMCA passes and active wear to six students. The students also received individual instruction and support from YMCA staff on how to use the exercise equipment.

Where: Pictou County YMCA

When: 2017-2018

Why: Going to a gym can be intimidating and costly. Offering students what they need to be more active benefits not only their physical health, but their mental health as well!



Partners: Pictou County YMCA, Department of Communities Culture and Heritage

CONSEIL SCOLAIRE ACADIEN PROVINCIAL

MINI-ENTREPRENEUR CAMP



Who: Students in Grades 4, 5, and 6

What: Mini-camps are offered throughout the year to get the students excited for the entrepreneur camp in the summer at École secondaire de Clare. The mini-entrepreneur camps take place once a week for three weeks and finish with the students selling their products during 'la vente de produit'.

Where: École Jean-Marie Gay in Saulnierville

When: March 2018

Why: The goal of the mini-entrepreneur camps is to support students becoming entrepreneurs. Parents, teachers and students from the other grades come to see what the student entrepreneurs are selling at 'la vente de mini-camp d'entreprenariat'. It really brings the community together!



Partners:
Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNÉ),
Community Business Development Corporations (CBDC)



HALIFAX REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION SPORTS AND RECREATION FOR NEWCOMERS

Who: Newcomer children, youth, adults, and families

What: A Sport and Recreation Information Event for Newcomers. More than 50 newcomers attended to gather information, and many registered for programs on the spot.

When: March 22, 2018

Where: Clayton Park Junior High School

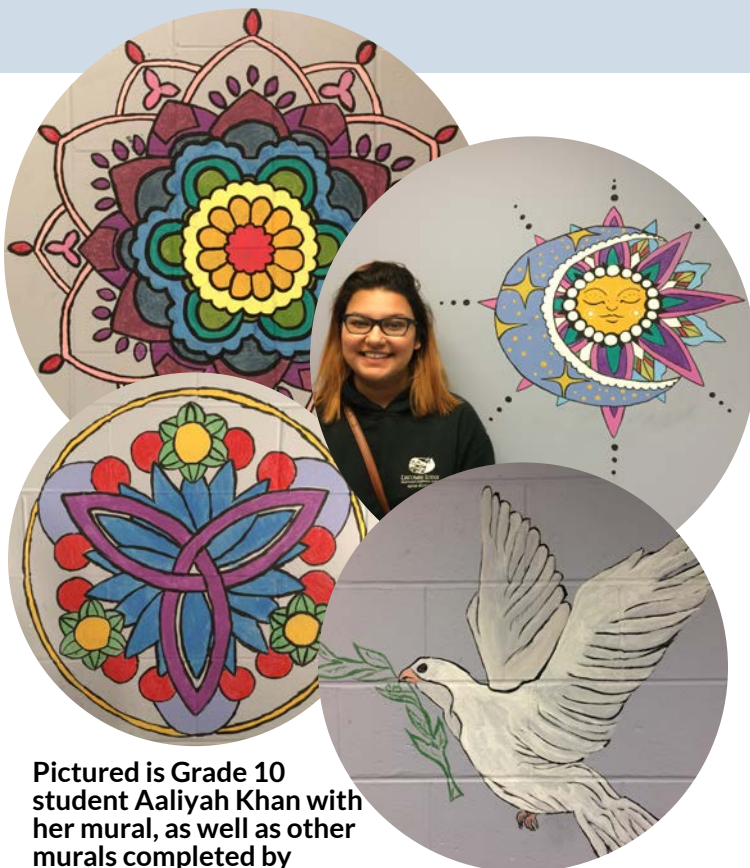
Why: To include families and individuals who have newly arrived in Canada, and introduce them to the recreation opportunities available to their families and how they can get involved.



Partners

Halifax Recreation;
Nova Scotia
Communities, Culture
and Heritage;
ISANS;
Sport Nova Scotia;
YMCA;
Lifesaving Society;
Canada Games Centre

STRAIT REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STUDENT MURALS



Pictured is Grade 10 student Aaliyah Khan with her mural, as well as other murals completed by several students.

Who: Students at Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional High School

What: Students painted murals to decorate SchoolsPlus' new community room at Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional High School

When: January and February 2018

Where: Dr. J.H. Gillis Regional High School SchoolsPlus Community Room

Why: Renovations were completed to create a new SchoolsPlus space at Dr. JH Gillis Regional High School in Antigonish in November. During January and February students created several murals to decorate the space and add to its welcoming atmosphere.



SOUTH SHORE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

OPEN AIR: AFTER SCHOOL GROUP

Who: Students from Forest Heights Community School

What: Open Air, an outdoor after school group

When: Tuesdays after school

Where: Chester Grant area

Why: To connect youth with the outdoors, build their self-confidence, help them build friendships, and teach life and survival skills.

Partner:
Chester
Recreation



TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

STUDENT COOKING CLASSES



Who: Digby SchoolsPlus, grades primary to six

What: Cooking classes

When: February 15 and 27, 2018

Where: Digby Superstore

Why: To teach food skills and show that healthy food is delicious and fun to make! Aside from the nutritional benefits, cooking promotes math, literacy, fine motor skills, and enhances self-esteem through the preparation and enjoyment of a meal with their peers. Students also took home recipes to share and enjoy with their families.

Partners: Digby Superstore, with Loblaw's in-store dietitian, Stephanie Gagnon



PARTNERS SUPPORT SCHOOLSPLUS STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

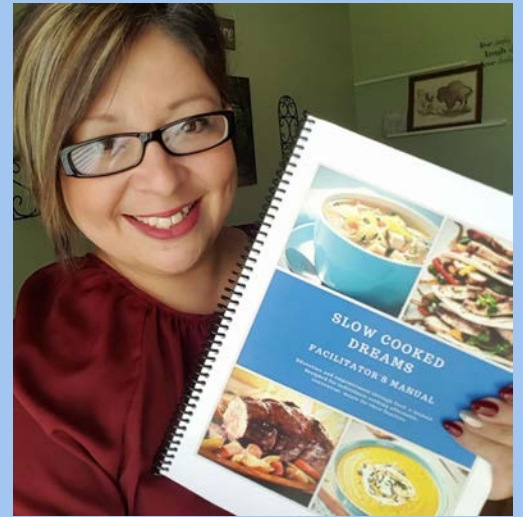


SchoolsPlus Facilitators and Community Outreach Workers enjoyed attending the Slow Cooked Dreams workshop in March, in Dartmouth and Sydney, delivered by Nadine Bernard.

In addition, SchoolPlus staff also benefited from food safety courses to support the delivery of food skills and food access programming for youth and families. Hsin-Ying Chou, Food Safety Specialist, with the Department of Environment, delivered training in Sydney; and Colin van Vulpen, Public Health Officer, delivered training in Halifax.



This professional development enables SchoolsPlus staff to better support families and communities in their journey toward food security and healthy living. Aside from the nutritional benefits, cooking promotes math, family literacy, and fine motor skills, as well as enhanced self-esteem gained through preparing and enjoying a meal with family and peers.



Nadine Bernard is a Family Support Worker and a mother. She recognized the food insecurity many families face and realized a crockpot was key to planning nutritious meals linked to budgeting and planning. Incorporating many planning tips as well as a spiritual component based on the Indigenous Medicine Wheel, Nadine developed "Slow Cooked Dreams".



Candice Norcott, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist and an assistant professor at the University of Chicago's School of Medicine. She was formerly the Director of Behavioral Science at the Cook County-Loyola Family Residency Program. Prior to that, she spent three years developing and implementing services for girls in the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center.

In mid-March, SchoolsPlus staff attended training to deliver the Voices program developed by Dr. Stephanie Covington. Dr. Candice Norcott delivered the training.

Voices is focused on facilitating self-discovery and empowerment in girls and young women, and helping them navigate an increasingly complex world.

The training addressed challenges in girls' lives such as

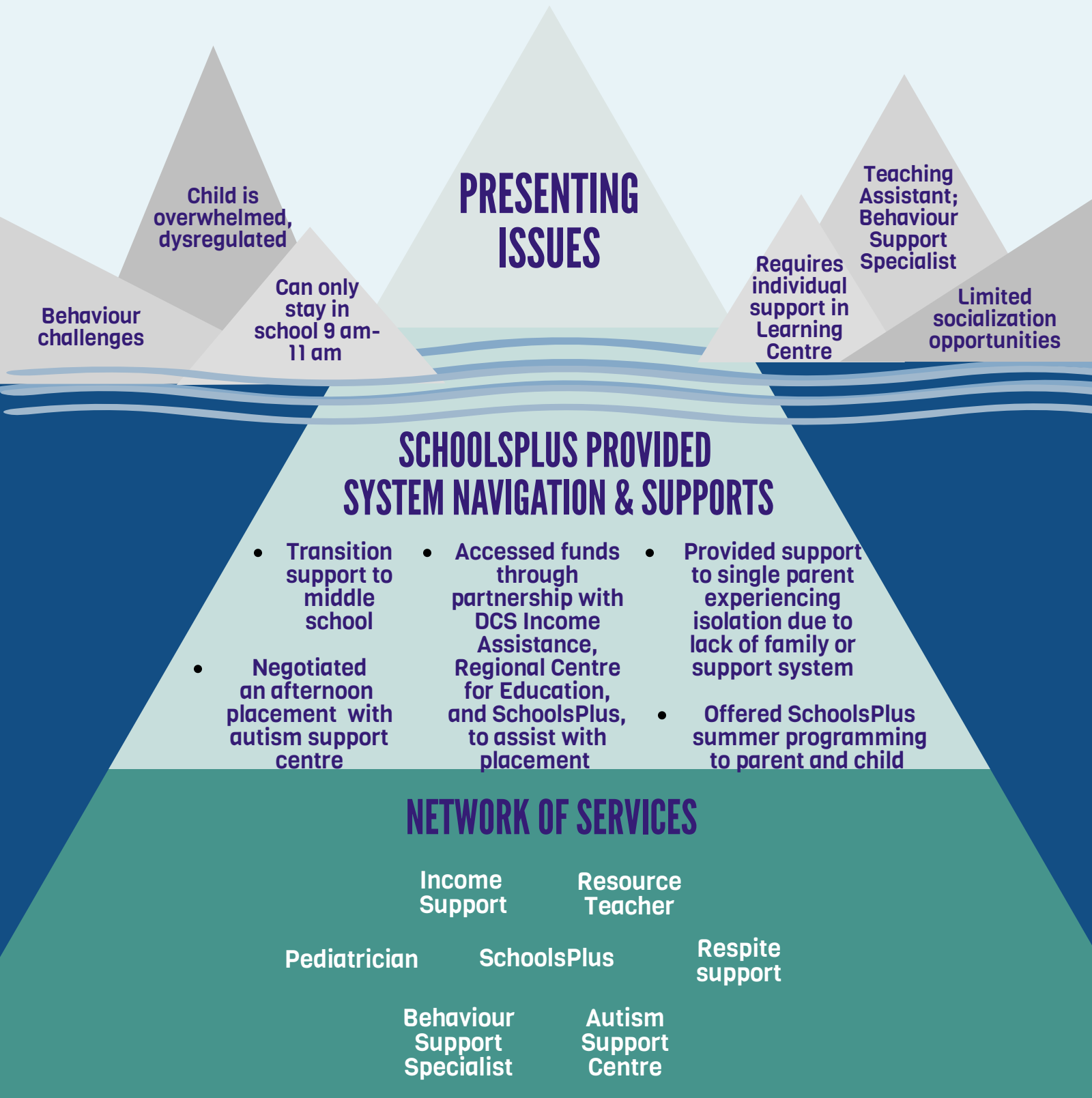
- bullying
- social media
- early puberty
- gender exploration
- human sex trafficking
- binge drinking

And provided additional information on:

- adverse childhood experiences (ACE)
- process of trauma and its effects on the mind and body
- developmental trauma disorder
- Trauma-Informed Effective Reinforcement System for Girls (TIER)
- trauma-sensitive yoga exercises

CASE SYNOPSIS

Supporting a young child, in the fifth grade.



- Supporting the whole child means working with parents & community to establish a responsive system of supports.
- SchoolsPlus offers navigation to immediate supports for respite, alternate settings for interim periods, and year-round support for families.
- Assisting a child with behavioral challenges requires multiple strategies, and work through a continuum of specialized and community-based supports.