



News From a Tiny Seed

All Geared Up and Ready to Go

Twenty-four childcare centres in Alberta and 24 in British Columbia (including 11 Aboriginal centres) have received training to deliver Seeds of Empathy (SOE) in the 2008-09 program year. In regional trainings held across the two provinces from mid-September to early November, approximately 200 Early Childhood Educators learned about SOE values, curriculum and implementation of the program.

“The energy and dedication of the educators I met was an inspiration,” says Donna Letchford, SOE’s Director of Curriculum, who with SOE Provincial Coordinators and SOE Trainers delivered the trainings. “It’s great to be around people who are so clearly committed to the well-being of children and their social/emotional needs.”

When asked, “How do you feel about bringing Seeds of Empathy to your Centre?” Megan Mackenzie, from Shawnessy YMCA Childcare, Calgary, Alberta, wrote, “I feel incredibly lucky and honoured to be a part of this program. I truly believe it’s an amazing thing, especially in this day and age. It is a gift, one that needs to be shared.”

When asked, “What impact do you see Seeds of Empathy having on your children, their families and your community?” Dianne Wilson from Seabird Island Preschool, Agassiz, British Columbia, wrote, “I can see all the children with more passion, taking this home with them and planting the seeds there, thus sprouting into the community.”

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) endorses Seeds of Empathy



From left to right: Monique Gray Smith, SOE Aboriginal Advisor, National Chief Phil Fontaine and Mary Gordon, Creator of SOE



Seeds of Empathy had its first Aboriginal-specific training in Richmond, BC. Visitors included the Honourable Minister Linda Reid, Minister of State for Child Care, and Lyle Viereck, Director, Aboriginal Relations & Negotiations, BC Hydro. Seeds of Empathy has been funded through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). BC Hydro is our newest partner in supporting Seeds of Empathy and Roots of Empathy in Aboriginal communities.

Seeds of Empathy is proud to report that the Assembly of First Nations, the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada, has recently passed a resolution (<http://www.afn.ca/article.asp?id=4301>) to support and endorse both Seeds of Empathy and Roots of Empathy, SOE’s older sibling.

On July 17, 2008, at the invitation of National Chief Phil Fontaine, Seeds of Empathy Founder and President Mary Gordon spoke to chiefs at the AFN’s 29th Annual General Assembly in Quebec City. The Assembly then passed the resolution, calling both programs “compatible with traditional First Nations teachings and worldviews” because they address aggression and foster empathy and social and emotional competence.

Sharing Circle

Year End Reflections

As part of the year end feedback process, we invite the children to reflect and express through art their happiest moment around the lavender blankets (e.g. interacting with their SOE baby or engaging in literacy circles).



The happiest thing that happened in the Seeds of Empathy program is:

touching her tummy, & toes & hands.
 watching her roll over AND HER LOOKING at ME.
 Zachary 4 yrs.

Four-year-old Zachary, from Child Enrichment Centre, in Calgary, has spent a lot of time drawing baby Amelia. When finished he chose a lavender marker and coloured all over his picture. His friend told him to stop scribbling. He confidently explained that he was not scribbling, he was covering the baby with the lavender blanket.

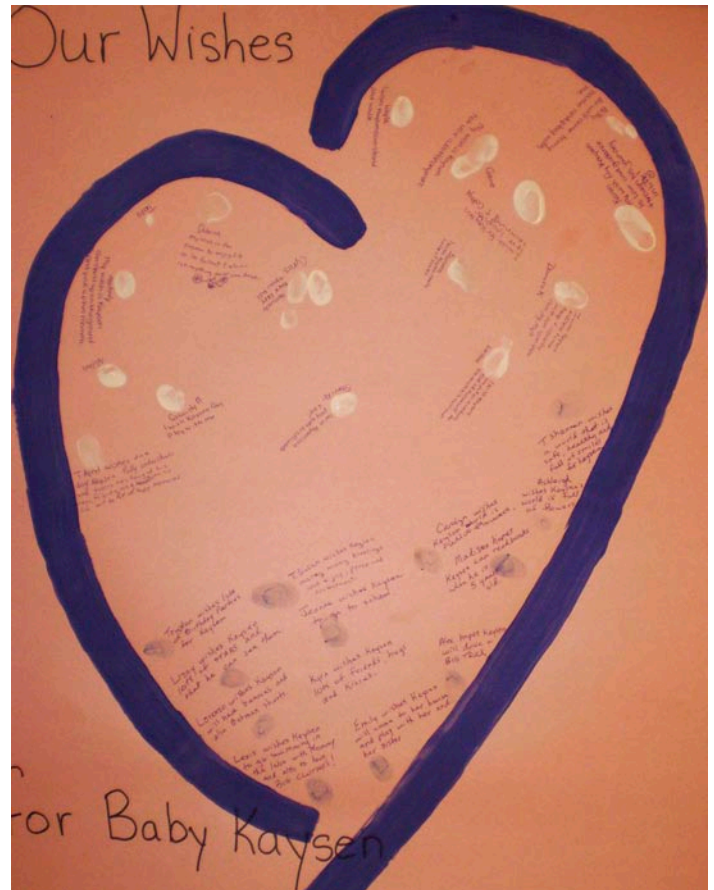
In preparation for the baby's last visit the children prepare a gift of a collection of their wishes for the baby. "Think of our baby one day turning *your* age," the Family Guide will say. "What would you wish for our baby then?" The children reflect carefully about this.

The wishes are always tender and a wonderful reflection on some of the most important things in life—enjoying time with family, appreciating nature and animals, achieving milestones, engaging in activities that build self-esteem,

Have You Heard?

Seeds of Empathy, Learning to Relate and Learning to Read

There is an in-depth invitational article on Seeds of Empathy in the Fall 2008 issue of *Canadian Children*, The Journal of the Canadian Association for Young Children (Vol. 33, No. 2). Mary Gordon, Creator of Seeds



Wishes for SOE Baby Kaysen from the children at Inkameep Preschool Daycare in Oliver, B.C., June 2008:

Lizzy wishes Kaysen lots of STARS and that he can see them.
 Damien wishes Kaysen reads lots of books.
 Lorenzo wishes Kaysen will have bunnies and also Batman shorts reading and learning, having fun with friends—these are the things that children wish for. By taking the perspective of the baby they have come to know, and coming up with the most loving and positive aspiration they can for that child's future, they show the ultimate expression of empathy. ✨

"When a society invests in the development of social and emotional competencies of its youngest citizen, it can expect to reap the benefits of a more empathic society as that generation ages."

~ Mary Gordon, Founder/President of Roots of Empathy and Creator of Seeds of Empathy

Why is our newsletter called Lavender Blanket?

In Seeds of Empathy Centres, children gather around a lavender blanket where the loving relationship between a parent and baby is the lever for learning. The blanket is where learning and sharing takes place—and that's what we want this newsletter to be, too! Lavender Blanket is a bi-monthly update on what's happening with Seeds of Empathy. If you would like to be added to our distribution list, or to unsubscribe, please e-mail lavenderblanket@seedsofempathy.org

215 Spadina Ave. Suite 160, Toronto, ON M5T 2C7 t: 416-944-3001 f: 416-944-9295 mail@seedsofempathy.org www.seedsofempathy.org

Seeds of Empathy is a Registered Trade Mark

Charitable Number 89643 4818 RR001

Copyright © 2009 Seeds of Empathy