

## 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Healthy Schools Leadership Symposium

*Let's get lost together*

On May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014, DASH hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Healthy Schools Leadership Symposium. This event brought together educators, health professionals, parents, community organizations, and students to collaborate on topics related to creating healthy schools. We were pleased by the number of registrations that we received, and by how engaged all the attendees were.

It was a great day. This year's theme was *Collective Impact: An Approach to Improving Student Achievement and Wellbeing*. We were lucky to have Paul Born with us to share his experience, stories and ideas on this approach as our keynote speaker. Paul is the President and cofounder of the Tamarack Institute which, since 2001, has provided leadership in Canada on issues of citizen engagement.

*"His inspiring words, experience, sense of humour- all his content was all highly relevant and really set the tone for the day."* – Symposium attendee

During the Data and Assessment session, the symposium brought together three different organizations that are collecting data in BC schools, enabling them to collaborate with each other while sharing information with attendees. Participants walked away with a deeper understanding of how data on child and youth health indicators can be used to support decision making and to inform healthy school initiatives. The students from the Healthy Living Youth Council also led an informative and interactive session showcasing posters of the inquiry projects that they have been working on which allowed participants to connect with them and to learn more about topics that are relevant to youth. Many attendees loved having the opportunity to chat with the students, as it sparked some amazing ideas and allowed them to engage and to discuss ways to collaborate and work together.

*"The youth are so inspiring. It is so awesome to see the youth engaged and they sparked some amazing ideas for my school and for me! It is great learning from them."* – Symposium attendee

Overall, it was a lively day filled with great conversation, networking and learning, and participants left feeling motivated and inspired to take action towards creating healthy schools in their communities. There is a lot of work that still needs to be done to get us to where we want to go, but, as Paul said in his closing speech, "we may not have all the solutions and answers right now, but its ok to get lost while finding our way.

*"It was a great opportunity to meet with, and to touch base with, existing and new colleagues. I look forward to this event each year."* – Symposium attendee

We look forward to seeing you all again next year at our 9<sup>th</sup> annual Healthy Schools Leadership Symposium. Thank you to all who attended for sharing your stories, your knowledge and your enthusiasm for healthy schools with us. See you next year.

*“Thank you. Evolving knowledge is exciting!” – Symposium attendee*