

Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES !!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers:

What do mothers want? From the first minutes of a child's life when a mother counts the fingers and toes of her newborn baby, a mother seeks moments of thankfulness.



A baby's first step, first word and lively responsiveness are all reassuring signs of healthy growth and development. In the first five years, a mother's spirit soars with every smile, hug, and peaceful

night of sleep, and conversely plummets with every tear, scrape and worrisome fever.

Mother's Day is special in that it celebrates the **role of caring for children** and the life-long **relationship** between a woman and her children. What do mothers want? — safety, security, health, and happiness for her children. These are the gifts that bring mothers joy.

There is a great scene in **Michael Palin's** travel documentary **Sahara**, where he is the guest of a family of displaced Moroccans who have had to abandon their home in a once-vibrant-ancient-city-turned-ghost-town due to decades of drought. The family now lives in a tent made of cloth and cardboard which barely keeps out the wind and sand. Palin observes that the mother works busily with a light-hearted demeanour, caring for the children while keeping a watchful eye on a large pot of stew. He remarks on her apparent happiness and asks why she smiles so often. Seated on a dirt floor, she grins and spreads her arms out in an open embrace and responds, "My beautiful home". Family, food, safety, shelter — this is **bounty** indeed!

Taking care of the world's children is a responsibility we all share. This week's issue contains information about resources that promote child rights and help build self-esteem in young people. CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at 4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[Let us know what you think.](#)

Mary Kovack

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Plan Canada — Caring for Children

Plan is one of the world's largest international, child-centred development organizations, working in more than 45 developing countries providing long-term community programs that benefit 1.3 million children and impact the lives of 13 million people.



Plan believes that every child has great potential if they're given the right chances in life. Its vision is of a world in which all children realize their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity. Plan aims to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries, through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives by:



A classroom in Guatemala
— Plan Canada

- enabling deprived children, their families and their communities to meet their basic needs and to increase their ability to participate in and benefit from their societies
- building relationships to increase understanding and unity among peoples of different cultures and countries
- promoting the rights and interests of the world's children

Plan is an international, humanitarian, child-centred development organization without religious, political or governmental affiliations. [Child sponsorship](#) is the basic foundation of the organization.



Kids Who Care

Plan Canada's website offers educators a variety of classroom resources, "[Kids Who Care](#)", that deal with children's rights as human beings as well as related environmental factors. Through learning about the rights all children share, students will develop an understanding of how rights connect with the global and environmental issues. To find out more about Plan Canada's "**Kids Who Care**" program, video, teachers' guide and student action guide, go to www.plancanada.ca.



Plan Canada — "**Children are at the heart of what we do**"

You never realize how much your mother loves you till you explore the attic and find every letter you ever sent her, every finger painting, clay pot, bead necklace, Easter chicken, cardboard Santa Claus, paperlace Mother's Day card and school report since day one.

— Pam Brown, Australian Author, Poet, Filmmaker

Becoming a mother makes you the mother of all children. From now on each wounded, abandoned, frightened child is yours. You live in the suffering mothers of every race and creed and weep with them. You long to comfort all who are desolate.

— Charlotte Gray, English/Canadian Historian and Author



True You! Mentorship Program — Activity Guide for Girls and their Mentors

The **Dove** Self-Esteem Fund's "Campaign for Real Beauty" offers an activity guide designed to foster self-esteem in young people. The activities in "**true you!**" are a fun way to explore how ideas and perceptions of body image and self-worth are developed and reflected in the media and popular culture.

A mom is one of the most important influences in the life of a daughter. Whether you are a step-mom, and auntie, a grandmother, a big sister, a loving friend, or special teacher, the role of a "mother" is important and necessary in a girl's development. The guide encourages mothers and other mentors to take inventory of their own feelings surrounding beauty and to discuss these feelings with their daughters and other girls. Opening the lines of communication early will help girls to develop the strength and courage she will need to feel beautiful in a world that may challenge her values.

The **true you!** workbook is designed to help facilitate conversation, develop foundations and strengthen relationships as these girls grow into women. It comes at a challenging time – adolescence – when girls are questioning the world of beauty around them.

Now more than ever, girls need positive role models and mentors to help them rise to the challenge! To view and download the **true you!** booklet, mothers, educators and mentors are invited to visit www.campaignforrealbeauty.ca.



Teaching Child Rights

Canada has ratified the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**. In agreeing to this Convention, we as Canadians are obligated "to make the rights contained in this Convention widely known to both adults and children" (Article 42). The Convention also requires that children's education be directed to "the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Article 29).



- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) lays out the fundamental human rights of children. It was adopted by the United Nations more than 15 years ago.
- 192 countries [except the USA and Somalia] have agreed to make the CRC part of their laws, making it the most widely supported international agreement in history.
- In the three days leading up to the United Nations' Special Session on Children in 2002, just over 400 children from a total of 154 countries attended The Children's Forum at the United Nations, exploring ways to improve the rights of children and young people worldwide.

Human rights are essential to building and maintaining healthy, democratic communities where all human beings are respected. Child Rights are the human rights of people under the age of 18. They recognize children's inherent worth and dignity and ensure that ALL children, without discrimination, get what's best for their survival and development and are free to participate in society. You can find a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at <http://www.unhcr.ch/udhr/index.htm>.

Understanding child rights helps young people to respect the rights of other children and adults, appreciate people with lives and experiences different from their own, encourages a stronger sense of self, and helps young people to differentiate between rights and privileges. As children develop their skills, knowledge and a sense of their own individuality, their capacity to participate in society grows. We can't expect children to just "become" effective leaders who are responsible for the planet and the future without giving them tools and opportunities to share in decision-making *while* they are developing. In other words, children need to *experience* their rights by being given opportunities to take responsibility and stick up for these rights. For more information and to download teachers' resources, go to www.plancanada.ca.

[Source: [Plan Canada, Kids Who Care — Child Rights](http://www.plancanada.ca)]

In the News

[New research programs focus on the Canadian student experience](#) — Moira Farr, University Affairs, March 2007

“A new centre at the University of Calgary and a graduate program to train student-affairs specialists at the University of Toronto are set to fill a gap in research on postsecondary students in Canada. The Canadian Centre for Studies in Higher Education, headed by Peggy Patterson in U of C’s faculty of education, will bring together a multidisciplinary team to form research partnerships with institutions across Canada and in other countries, including the U.S. and Australia, to study and enhance the learning experience of Canadian postsecondary students. Dr. Patterson – formerly U of C’s associate vice-president, student affairs, from 1995 to 2005 – says that in the past Canadian institutions have relied on U.S. instruments, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (known as NSSE), to gain insights on how to improve university education from the student perspective. With a research centre ready to coordinate and produce new and specifically Canadian data, universities will be in a better position to review their mission statements and tailor both curricular and extracurricular programs to students’ real needs.”

[Dwight Wilson, 106: WWI veteran](#) — John Goddard, Staff Reporter TheStar.com, May 10, 2007

“A private funeral with military honours is being arranged for World War I veteran Dwight Wilson, who died at Sunnybrook hospital yesterday at 106. His passing all but eliminates the possibility of a state funeral for the last surviving Canadian veteran of the conflict, a proposal the House of Commons endorsed unanimously in November. With Wilson’s death, the distinction of being Canada’s last living veteran of the Great War belongs to John Babcock of Spokane, Wash. “That means that I’m it,” Babcock told Canadian Press from his home, after expressing his regret at Wilson’s death. Babcock became a U.S. citizen 60 years ago and has made it clear he doesn’t want a state funeral in Canada, an honour usually extended only to prime ministers and governors general. Lloyd Clemett was the most recent World War I veteran to die. He passed away at Sunnybrook in February at the age of 107. Rudyard Griffiths, executive director of the **Dominion Institute**, called on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to personally offer Babcock a state funeral in light of yesterday’s development. “The important thing is for that offer to be extended,” said Griffiths, whose organization pushed for the state funeral idea last fall with a petition of 90,000 signatures.”

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