



EVALUATION-II

**Gaspé-Percé Community Learning Centre
- The Tri-School CLC -**

Presented to the Project Resource Team and all stakeholders of the CLC

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Executive Summary

The present report discusses the supplementary evaluation of the Gaspé-Perce Community Learning Centre (evaluation II). It provides an overview of the past school year (2010 – 2011, annex 1 “The Journal” Volumes 1, 2, 3 & 4) the present climate in our CLC (“A look ahead” potential plans for the future) and the methodology and findings from an evaluation conducted during the past year. The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the effectiveness and impact of one specific activity of the CLC, namely: “Friday Night - Just for Fun”. The methodology for the evaluation consisted of a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, collected over the last year. The aim was to take an in-depth look at the quality of implementation and assess the impact of this activity on students and the school community. Some of the key findings from this evaluation are:

- Developing partnerships within the community can help support school activities and programs.
- Circus activities promote the development of fine motor skills and body toning exercises while stimulating an artistic dimension in our youth.
- The activity draws students and parents to the school to play, walk or just watch the fun!
- Students receive instruction in English and French. They learn teamwork skills and how to follow instructions, always with a respect for themselves (self-esteem) and others.

Overall, the evaluation has shown that this activity has addressed a specific need within our community; a place for students to go in the evening and have fun, in a safe and healthy environment. From a health standpoint, with the increase in child obesity and diabetes, this is an excellent alternative to TV, video games, computers etc... It allows our students to meet in a social atmosphere which does not require a ‘screen’ to ‘hook-up’ or ‘log-on’.

The report begins with an introduction to the CLC and the school and community population. This is followed by a description of the findings from the evaluation and recommendations for the future. The report ends with reflections on the successes and challenges of the CLC, a conclusion to the report and some final thoughts.

1. Introduction

The 2010-11 school year for the Gaspé-Perce Community Learning Centre came in like a lion and went out like a lamb. Unfortunately, my arm was injured in late April 2011 and required surgery. This took me out of the picture for a while (but not necessarily out of the game) as I finished the school year on the sidelines. I did manage to attend all the sessions of the “Friday night – Just for Fun!” however and I was also able to meet certain ‘paperwork deadlines’ that are always so crucial at the end of the school year.

This evaluation is based on the Friday night activities held at the Gaspé Elementary School. I will use data collected during the 10 activity sessions. I will include notes and comments from parents, students, hired staff (including Circus School personnel) and the GES principal. I will touch briefly on the partnership with Québec en forme (Santé Jeunesse, Côte-de-Gaspé) and the Circus School forged over a two year period, 2008-2010. This partnership continues to develop with a new activity for this year – a Community Greenhouse, which will be next years evaluation focus.

1.1 The school and community population

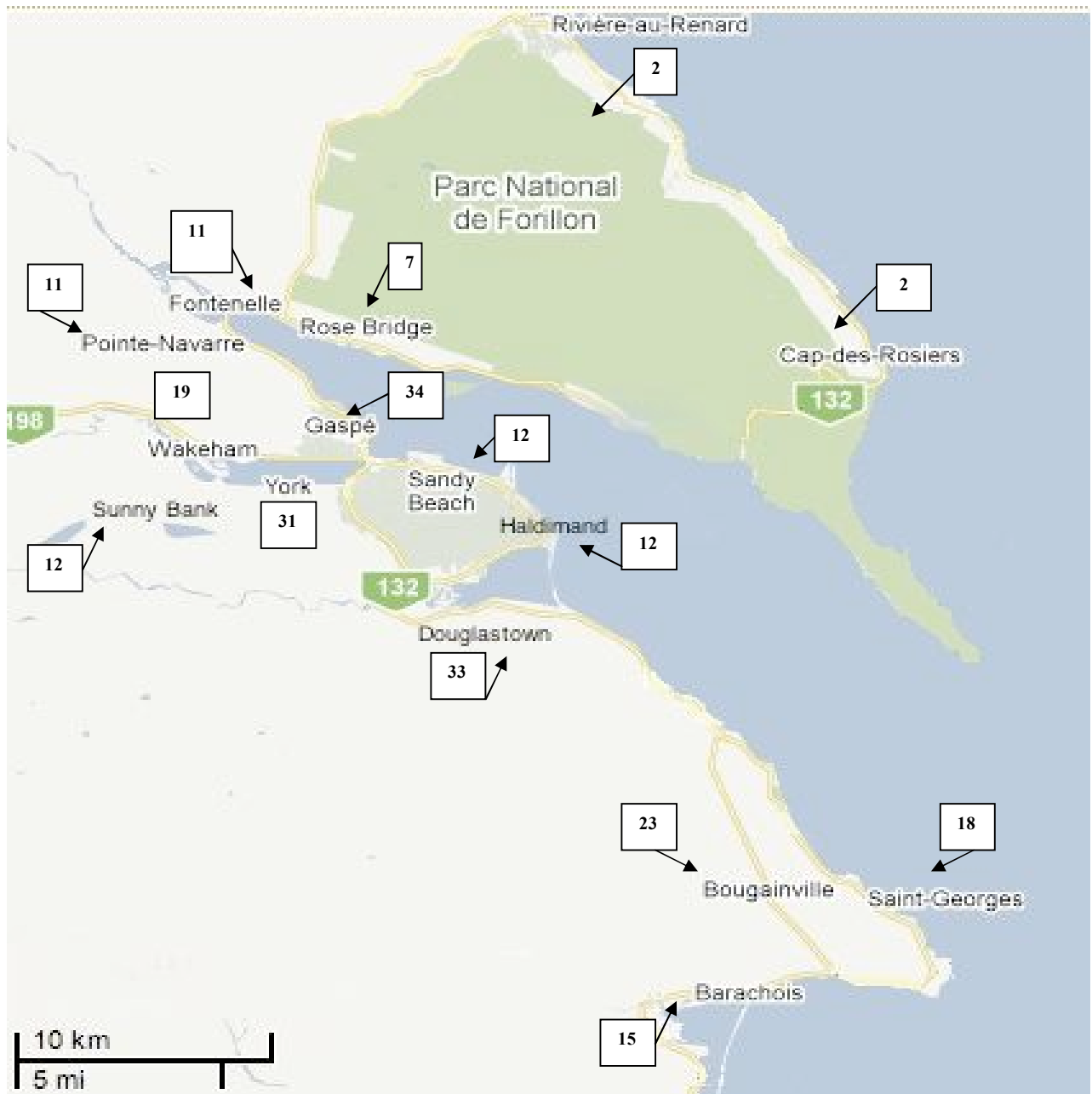
The English-speaking population of the region is fragmented in small pockets, which are scattered along considerable distances. To better understand the specific context of the region, we can turn to a graphical representation of the residential patterns of students at the schools. These facts highlight the phenomenon of fragmentation mentioned above. It is also important to remember the distances that separate each of these sectors.

The following table and graph indicate where the existing population of students from the three schools live: Gaspé Polyvalent school (GPS), Gaspé Elementary school (GES) and Belle Anse school (BAS) according to records for 2010-2011 and for the present school year 2011-2012.

Table 1: Residential patterns of students (updated October 2011)

	2010-2011	2011-2012
Downtown Gaspé	37	34
Douglstown	33	33
York	28	31
St-George	23	18
Bougainville	20	23
Barachois	18	15
Wakeham	18	19
Sunny Bank	12	12
Haldimand	12	12
Sandy Beach	11	12
Point Navarre	11	11
Fontenelle/St. Majorique	9	11
Rosebridge	7	8
Fox River	2	2
Cap-des-Rosiers	2	2

Figure 1: Residential patterns of students (updated October 2011)



2. Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to analyze one successful activity; what's working/what's not working, and use this information as a model for future activities. The report was written for the stakeholders in the CLC: the CLC project and the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sports (MELS), the school board, and most importantly the students, families and the staff of the English-speaking schools in the Gaspé-Perce region.

3. Methodology

The evaluation methodology is broken down in the following manner:

- Quantitative data displayed in table form.
- Qualitative data reported as comments from students, parents, staff and personnel, Quebec en forme and Circus School administration and instructors.

4. Findings

Circus activities fill a gap and a demonstrable need. Circus activities can promote positive youth development.

Comments from parents about the activities revealed the fact that the circus school activities had a positive impact on their children and their family life.

Comments from students during the evenings expressed the idea that circus school activities can help students to interrupt the 'screen' trend (TV, computer, video games) and enhance their learning and development.

Comments from the Circus School indicate that the partnership is working and has developed a win-win atmosphere.

Comments from the Gaspé Elementary school principal underlines the questions we had at the beginning of this project, and the positive answers that we drew from them.

Comments from parents have been positive and supportive to date.

“My kids love the Friday night activities with the Circus School. When they get home they are so tired they'll have a snack and go straight to bed. Usually they even sleep in a little bit on Saturday morning, which is a real bonus!”

“After the first couple of activities when I was convinced that my children were safe and having a great time, my husband and I would drop them off at the door and go and do our weekly groceries. We had enough time to do our groceries, go home and put them away and get back to watch the last 20 minutes or so. This activity is a real winner for us!”

“Although we receive memos from the school and are kept well informed about the activities, we almost don't need them. My kids never let me forget.”

In the quotations below, students describe how circus school activities allow them to fill their leisure time with positive and constructive activities.

“What would I be doing if I wasn’t here tonight? I would probably be hanging out with my cousin playing video games!”

“I never thought I would be able to juggle...ever!”

“I can’t, I can’t, I can’t...MOM...I DID IT!”

“I like the activity room because I never knew how to play pool or ping pong and now I’m really good at both games!”

“I like the games we do at the beginning, they are really fun, and the instructors are soooooo...nice!”

Comments from the Circus School tell us that what we’re doing is important for our community.

“All the instructors and animators that come to the CLC Friday Nights Just for Fun, love what they do and really care about the children that participate. We find the kids well behaved and eager to join in. We can see that in general, the students are less agile and find some of the activities we do a bit more difficult than some of their francophone counterparts. That’s okay. This is a question of practice, practice and more practice. Some of the students really excelled at the end of the year and we now have several who participate individually at our Circus School. We really enjoy getting to know the students by name and are looking forward to next years activities.”

Comments from our partner ‘Quebec en Forme’, Santé jeunesse - Côte-de-Gaspé

The Community Learning Centre’s activity “Friday Night Just for Fun” is exactly the kind of program that Quebec en Forme set out to establish with our partners, especially in the regions where after school activities are not as accessible to our youth. We are proud to be associated with the CLC and have already approved funding for this years activity. Bravo!”

Comments from the Gaspé Elementary School Principal reveal that the necessary school support is in place.

On the first Friday “Activity Night” with L’ecole de Cirque de Gaspé, we were all somewhat apprehensive. Were the students and parents going to be interested in coming back to Gaspé Elementary School on a Friday night from 7:00-9:00 pm? This was a partnership that fit so nicely with our school mission, “We believe that a healthy body equals a healthy mind.” We were so fortunate that this opportunity became available to us, since the actual circus school classes are quite expensive and few of our students actually enroll in the program. The gymnasium was prepared, the animators had the fire sticks and spinning plates waiting, all that was left was to wait for the children and their families to arrive. Then, just as we had hoped, the families began to pour into the school. That first night we hosted approximately 50 children and 30 adults, all fully engaged in learning new and challenging circus routines. It was clear that our new partnership was a huge success. During the weeks that followed we included sessions for the high school students only and we even found that our students were bringing along friends from the neighbouring francophone schools. Our activity nights were becoming exactly what we had intended, a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere for the entire community. With the success of this program and partnership established, we look forward to continuing the program this year and the future.

Comments from one of our partners and ‘Vision’ employee Laura Paul

“I was really impressed with the activities last year; they were well planned and organized. The students really enjoyed all of the options. Participation was higher than in any other activity that I’ve been a part of. I was also very impressed to see that parents came out to participate with their children. I don’t have any negative feedback whatsoever to report and I am looking forward to working with the circus school again this year. Good job to all of the organizers, coordinators and participants.”

5. Participant profile and attendance

Attendance for the activity reveals the following about student/parent participation in the “Friday Night – Just for Fun”.



Tri-school CLC – Table 2 Activity attendance
(Revised October 1, 2011)

Dates, number of students/adults attending for the 10 evening sessions in the Gaspé Elementary gym and activity room.				CLC Friday night Activity with the Gaspé Circus School (Sponsored by Québec en forme)
	Date 2010-11	# of Students	# of Adults	
1	Oct. 15	49	32*	Attendance for the 10 week session was 334 for an average of over 33 (24+ students, 8+ adults) people per evening. It can be said that close to 20 of the same students participated in the majority of evenings while several older students (high school) dropped in occasionally. The student drop off between the 1 st and 2 nd session confirms this. A total of 87 adults dropped in during these evenings with an average of over 8 per session. Most of the parents who attended participated in some way (active within the gym/activity room or walking the indoor track). After discussions with many of the parents on the 1 st evening, most were visiting to make sure things were safe and secure for their child. Many parents would take advantage of these sessions after dropping off their child to shop, do groceries etc... which is an added benefit/service to the community.
2	Nov. 19	26	6	
3	Dec. 3	24	4	
4	Jan. 21	16	5	
5	Feb. 25	31	11	
6	March 11	25	7	
7	April 15	15	5	
8	April 29	19	4	
9	May 20	20	7	
10	May 27	22	6	
Total		247	87	

* includes GES principal and hired personnel

6. Key Successes and Challenges

Overall, both of the evaluations results indicate that the CLC has implemented several programs to date that are helping to fill gaps in available services and enhancing the lives of students and their success in school (partnerships with the Carrefour Jeunesse, the Circus School and Quebec en Forme as examples). This particular evaluation has also shown that there is great potential to improve upon and expand the existing activity, Friday Nights Just for Fun, and to explore new opportunities for developing programs that support students and the local English-speaking community (sports clinics and the community green house garden project as examples).

The original concept of the CLC in Gaspé-Perce was based on collaboration between three schools. This was a fairly challenging strategy to develop in the beginning for many reasons (e.g., the part-time status of the CLC coordinator, the demands on principals' time at the three schools, and the challenge of combining the missions, structures, and schedules of three separate institutions). In spite of these challenges, the CLC has succeeded in creating synergy in terms of networking and collaboration between the three schools. The reality of having the same lead principal (starting our third year) helps to create stability within the structure and the continued support of the other two principals is invaluable in terms of communication and efficiency. The new principal in Belle Anse was able to land in the tri-school CLC running, as she was aware of its mission, vision and goals when she arrived. The present structure and operations are running like a well oiled machine.

7. Potential Plans for the Future

Here is a brief list of things we're working on.

- Community Green House Garden Project
 - This project has the potential to implicate students at all levels, their families and the community at large.
- Cruise ship visits
 - Introduce the exciting world of Cruise Ships to our students and the impact they are having on tourism and the economy of our region.
- Drumming clinics for students
 - Present drum clinics to high school students (target: teenage boys) to give them a taste of rhythm which could help them with sports and self-esteem and may have an impact on drop-out rate.
- Sports clinics and intra-mural sports leagues, possibly inter-school with mix of Anglo/Franco students.

- A follow up to Friday Nights Just for Fun – demonstrations and training clinics in 2 or possibly 3 sports that would be offered outside school hours (Friday evenings or Saturday mornings). A sports league could develop with possible participation with our neighbouring Francophone schools.

8. Conclusions

As mentioned in the executive summary the following points sum up the positive impact of our Friday Night Just for Fun activities.

- Developing partnerships within the community can help support school activities and programs.
- Circus activities promote the development of fine motor skills and body toning exercises while stimulating an artistic dimension in our youth.
- The activity draws students and parents to the school to play, walk or just watch the fun!
- Students receive instruction in English and French. They learn teamwork skills and how to follow instructions, always with a respect for themselves (self-esteem) and others.

It seems only fair to balance these points with some constructive criticisms.
(Please see recommendations below for responses to these points)

- 1) One parent mentioned that these activities should take place during regular school hours as the evening activities can sometimes disrupt family time.
- 2) In a recent survey, two parents feel that there should be better announcements and communication from the school.
- 3) During the first several activities students were running back and forth between the gym and the activity room. This was difficult for the Circus School team to control and posed a problem for the students (not present to receive information for their particular activity).
- 4) One parent suggested we provide a bus.
- 5) Several students decided that they would prefer to go outside during the circus activity and ‘hang-out’ in the playground. They wanted to know if this was alright and could we turn the lights on for them.
- 6) Two parents commented through a recent survey that there are too many things going on; **“Between piano lessons and swimming lessons, art classes and karate, we are constantly on the run. There just isn’t enough time in the day to do all the activities that are offered to us. On Friday nights we just want to sit back and relax.”**

9. Recommendations:

- 1) My suggestion was that the parent could come more often and participate in the activity with their child. Everyone is invited to walk the indoor track or participate in the fun.
- 2) Comments that I received from other parents would seem to indicate that this is not a big problem. We do not want to miss anyone for these activities however so the following steps have or will be taken:
 - With our recent survey I have begun collecting email addresses from parents with the goal of eventually having a list-serve for all parents.
 - The Gaspé elementary school maintains a website and up to date information is available there.
 - The tri-school CLC website, GoGaspé.com and Vision's community calendar have up to date information on school and local activities.
 - Using a school newsletter or flyer format – links to these and other sites could be distributed through hard copy and via email.
- 3) We were able to solve this situation by creating 4 teams (when numbers were high enough, at least 20). The 4 teams would rotate between the activity room and 3 'events' that were happening in the gym.
- 4) We did try that last year but the cost for transporting a few children was too high. Evidently the majority of parents do not feel this to be essential.
- 5) The purpose of these evenings was to participate in circus activities. The students were asked to kindly remain in the gym or activity room during these events. We could possibly structure outdoor activities if enough students/parents were interested.
- 6) This is certainly the reality for many families. Personally, I feel the same way most Friday evenings and empathize with parents on this one. However, when I arrive at the school for these activities I get caught up in the fun and it energizes me for the weekend.

Finally...

We have recently started a volunteer program recruiting Cegep students as mentors, helpers, coaches and library assistants. This program has brought former Poly students who also attended either Gaspé elementary or Belle Anse schools to give something back to their community. We have also managed to attract several students who come from outside our region. With perseverance, continued support from our partners and through the efforts of our volunteers, we are in a better position to demonstrate the concept of a "Tri-School CLC".

10. Annex 1: A look back at 2010 – 2011

Here is a link to the Learn CLC website where you will find “The Journal”, Volumes 1, 2, 3 & 4 which will give you a better idea of what was happening in our tri-school CLC during the 2010-11 school year. These newsletters represent the coordinators efforts in documenting events as they transpired and distributing to partners and potential partners to help paint a picture of our world.

http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/clc/CLC_Newsletters/index.html

Several interesting websites to visit:

<http://www.cirquegaspe.com/index.php?id=477&titre=ACCUEIL&em=52>

http://jeunesse.cotedegaspe.ca/?id=24&titre=a_propos_de_nous&em=30

<http://www.gaspe-perceclc.com/index.php>