As I share these words for ‘Lizzie’s Corner’, I fondly remember Marie Clipperton, the person who coined the term and carved out this space for me in the newsletter. Marie suffered a stroke last year. She is currently in Saskatoon making great strides along the road to recovery with her sights set on returning to UVic to complete her degree. Marie visited recently. As I chatted with her, I was struck by her strong ability to harness her powers of determination, humour, and optimism to propel her forward in recovering her cognitive and physical abilities. Marie is working hard to gain what she wants in life. And she is succeeding beautifully. She gracefully accepts the help of others when she needs assistance or support. Marie stands out against the widespread “intervention culture” enveloping us. Television programs with an intervention theme perpetuate the idea that we should look outward-find someone else to remedy situations for us, be it a wardrobe “disaster”, clutter gone wild, home renovations, or misbehaving pets. Closer to home, as Department Chair, I receive all sorts of requests to intervene. I continue to be surprised at requests that essentially boil down to a sense of “I’m not happy. You need to make me happy” ... e.g., requests to intervene and re-schedule our early morning classes to later in the day or to outlaw boring lectures or exams on Mondays. When I get what I perceive as a legitimate request for help, I do my best to constructively remedy the situation. But I don’t intervene in situations that seem to be more about perception or preference (half-full/half empty?) than actual problem. And when I need a reminder of the power of positive perception and self-empowered action to work through difficult circumstances, I think of Marie.
As of October 2012, there are more than 1 billion Facebook users. Of the active users, around 50% check in daily, and 28% of the 18-34 year old users check in before they get out of bed! It seems Facebook may be replacing email as the most popular means of online communication. Facebook remains especially popular with young people, particularly those in college or university. We use social networking sites a lot. But how about your parents? And your grandparents? If not yet, they might be the next to join. People 75 and older comprise the fastest growing sector on Facebook.

In the past several years, there has been an increasing wealth of research coming out about how, why, when and by whom Facebook is used. A recent review published by Anderson, Fagan, Woodnutt and Chamorro-Premuzic covers some of the basics: It suggests that as a Facebook user, I am not likely to be drastically different on most personality traits from my brother, a nonuser. However, you might expect me to be slightly higher on extroversion and slightly lower on conscientiousness than he is, and if you found that I scored higher on narcissistic characteristics, you could certainly predict that I spend more time on Facebook, especially on my own profile page!

One question that has been frequently asked is: do online social networking sites like Facebook compensate for a lack of real world social interaction, or do they merely strengthen existing real world ties? It appears to be largely the latter. People’s profiles are generally based on reality (albeit usually with a little exaggeration), and their social activity seems to do the same. Although you may not have 250 friends in the real world sense of the word, it does suggest that you have a larger social network than my dad, who has 7 friends, and a smaller social circle than Jamie Biggar who has 2,295. In fact, people can evaluate your level of extroversion fairly accurately based on the number of Facebook friends you have up until the 302nd friend. Beyond that, (which was the average number of friends in the study,) people attribute your large social network to some other characteristic.

Now, about those 250 friends: Would you share as much information with most of them offline as you post on your Facebook page? Research predicts no, especially not the sensitive, personal content. Indeed, there appears to be a shift in social norms towards an acceptance of less privacy. At the same time, awareness about the risks of low privacy is increasing. Interestingly, those with low self-esteem are less concerned about their information sharing, and women seem to be more concerned than men. Facebook is very rewarding; it does not require much effort, and it provides instant gratification. Users claim it is psychologically beneficial for them. However, it is not without its drawbacks. Along with bullying problems and addiction issues, its more readily available information has produced a new problem in romantic relationships: Checking Facebook allows a person to easily access information about his/her partner which can turn into what the researchers call “surveillance behaviour”. Because this information is not available elsewhere, the monitoring reinforces itself, producing a vicious cycle. It appears there is a little bit of truth in the phrase “Facebook creeping”.

These impacts are not limited to the social sphere. Despite user’s claims of multi-tasking, workplaces where employees had access to Facebook lost 1.5% of total office productivity, and Facebook use predicted lower academic success in a recent study of middle school, high school and university students. So, perhaps I’ll hold off on the Facebooking until midterms are over – or at least until I get out of bed tomorrow!

- Alice Wilson

Further Reading:
MY VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: VICTORIA YOUTH AND CUSTODY SERVICES

Volunteering is often time consuming and, at times, difficult to maintain, especially when faced with university and other time-conflicting events. When it comes to future jobs, graduate school and overall work experience, volunteering can be one of the greatest things you can do to improve your chances for success. However, the question of how and what kind of volunteering to do can be a bit of a problem when considering where to go and what to do. Any kind of volunteering improves the resume and personal skills you possess, however some volunteering placements may be better suited towards future careers that you desire. From working in Elementary education, to being part of a Help Hotline, there are many great qualities shared among all different aspects of volunteering experiences.

However, one that remains to be a profoundly life-shaping experience that has made a difference for myself was working among the youth at the Victoria Youth in Custody Services (VYCS). I have been working with the adolescents at VYCS for about six months, and while it would take a much longer time to understand the workings of the institution inside and out, it took a very short period of time to understand that everything about VYCS is absolutely fantastic as a volunteering placement.

Firstly, it can be difficult to find an ideal placement at times, whether due to worries concerning time commitment, supervisors, or even accessibility to the volunteering location. In all of these cases, VYCS has succeeded by making the volunteers feel part of a larger working family. When it comes to time commitment, they take into consideration your schedule and customize volunteer time accordingly. As for working with the youths in custody, engaging in activities with them is an especially valuable experience. Not only are the programs well put together, but new and innovative ideas are welcome. If you create an idea for a program or group activity which they do not have and suggest it to a supervisor you may have just designed a new program which can be put into use!

From my own personal experience of working with them in Arts, assembling rap music, and running my own program of card and board games, the youth often show another side of themselves that makes the volunteer feel genuinely appreciated. From the time they begin spending with the adolescents to leaving at the end of the day, volunteering leaves me with a sense of invigoration and new found competency. Seeing a smile from the youth, all the way to a simple thank you at the program's end can be all one needs to feel that you made a difference in someone's life.

The volunteering placement typically entails a minimal application of a least an hour and a half a week, and when managed alongside one's preferred and ideal time slots, it makes for a very manageable and rewarding experience. To further that point, a lot of the staff (including supervisors and guards) have started off as volunteers that fell in love with the service and took it to a greater level.

Recommending VYCS as a volunteer placement would be done with both ease and positivity. The remarkable interactions and developments in the youth that can be seen over a month, week, or even within an hour and a half are both spectacular and rewarding. The feelings that arise from helping the youth by being there for them can help not only their well being, but your own as well, even if only an hour and a half a week is spent there. Finding a volunteer opportunity such as the one I have found not only helps to build skills that can be found on your resume, but it also gives a new sense of fulfillment and a chance at becoming a stronger character in general and for the future.

- Jeremy Hunter
THE FACE OF A SCHOOL SHOOTING: STIGMA AND THE AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Since December 14, 2012 the dangers of autism has been on the forefront of everyone’s mind. On this terrifying day, a human being walked into an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut and shot and killed 26 students and adults. In the days following the incident, a human being no longer committed the horrifying act, but in trying to identify a motivation for the killing spree, the main identification piece became “Autism did it”.

With the speed a natural disaster hits the front page of a newspaper, the Autism Spectrum Disorder became the face of this shooting. The newspaper articles no longer read, “man shoots and kills 26 people,” but now read, “Is Asperger’s syndrome behind the Sandy Hook Massacre?”. And like a tidal wave has more implication than just water damage, the ramifications of pinning Autism to this school shooting has serious social repercussions. The stigmas of the Autism Spectrum Disorder became prominent and acceptable ways in which people could engage in conversations about Autism. The media began to promote the rarities of Autism, as the norm. And the media utilized every description of the man who killed 26 people as common symptoms and features of the Autism Spectrum Disorder.

A person who has been diagnosed with Autism was quoted from the New York Times in an address of these social repercussions. She stated “our emotions don’t naturally show on our faces [and] this is perhaps the most frustrating part of the Asperger experience because people think you’re not feeling when you may be feeling even more strongly than they are.” Current research, by Dr. Catherine Lord, shows that childhood aggression towards non-family members is prevalent in only about two percent of children diagnosed with Autism, a percentage that is below the average found in the control group. However, comments like this one and current research are no match to the flurry of articles and comments made about the depictions that the man associated with this school shooting was “cold” and “emotionless”. These depictions may have been accurate descriptions of this man; I think it is safe to say that we will never truly know anymore, but these depictions are ones that can hardly claim to be associated with Autism, never mind encompass the face of Autism as the media so thoughtlessly promoted.

I do not like to pass off blame when it comes to issues that have a plethora of dimensions, but in this particular media frenzy, blame needs to be issued. Blame needs to be issued because actions need to be taken. The media needs to be aware of the negative consequences of their actions. It can easily be claimed the media was just in search of a story, but the reality is, this one “story” has terrifying implications in the form of social stigma for the increased number of children diagnosed with Autism in North America. But I don’t think the blame should end there. We, as the upcoming and current psychologists, need to do our best to ensure the media, and general public, knows these consequences. I believe changing the social stigma associated with the Autism Spectrum Disorder can start in the University of Victoria’s psychology department and it can start now. Check out YAM Magazine’s annual Autism Walk on April 14th for an immediate action you can take!

- Colin Featherston & Cecilia Rose
UPCOMING AND PAST EVENTS

Last fall semester we ended on a stellar note with the TAUGHT talks. We had amazing speakers talking about their unconventional career pathways with psychology. This new 2013 year we kicked started the year with the Psychology Volunteer fair with a great turn out from organizations and about 300 hundred students we were sure to set some people up with new great opportunities to try out different career pathways. Shortly after that Psychos and Psi-chi hosted a Sci-fi Pub crawl, with a lot of silver pants and a Spock like Freud T-shirt we visited sticky wicket, boutique and then upstairs. It was a success as usual! This semester we have started a new tradition of Thursday night karaoke at Felicitas, although there has been no significant improvement in our voices we hope to continue this tradition in the upcoming semesters. PsychOS also won a hard fought battle at capture the Freud against SOGS. We continued the semester with the UVic psychology honours and grad school info sessions, giving potential psychology grad students some tips on applying. The psychology senior instructor teaching demonstrations gave students an opportunity to evaluate instructors that are being considered for a teaching position at UVic. Keep an eye out in upcoming months because we have some more exciting events coming up, like an end of semester bar night! Towards the end of the semester PsychOS will once again get a Team Niehaus together to participate in the Victoria Autism Awareness Walk! Stay posted for more fun and exciting activities in the upcoming semesters by coming to our meetings on Tuesday at 2:30 in Cornett A129 (this semester only) or emailing psychos@uvic.ca!

- Daniela Pico

TEN YEARS OLD AND COMING INTO OUR OWN - PSI CHI UPDATE

Greetings to all of you psychology people out there, it has been a busy semester for Psi Chi thus far, one marked by wonderful collaboration with PsychOS. Back in January we co-hosted the 3rd annual Psychology Volunteer Fair in the SUB. Attendance was up from last year as was the number of organizations, and the facilitators (Derek Vroom and Kris Harder) were able to apprentice two fantastic replacements (Dani Pico and Sinead Neary) so this event can continue to grow and thrive in years to come. In February we were pleased to induct another 20 new students into our chapter adding their ideas and enthusiasm to our existing membership. This April marks our 10th anniversary here at UVic and our induction keynote speaker, and chapter founder, Dr. Steve Lindsay, spun regaling tales of the people and events the chapter has seen over the last decade.

As we look forward to the next month, year, and decade we hope to continue to be a positive force for students in the psychology department, whether it is highlighting student research through our TAUGHT Jr. event coming up in March and our PSOVIPS poster session in April; facilitating experiential learning through our continually evolving RA placement program; or endeavouring to create an informed community of students with regards to professors and classes through an upcoming website. We are also participating in Ideafest 2013 with both video and theatrical presentations of historic psychology experiments.

We are currently looking for individuals to serve on our executive next year. If you want have leadership, logistical, and creative talents, or if you simply have enthusiasm for psychology please contact us. We’d love to hear from you. Additionally, if you have ideas for an event or are just curious about Psi Chi, who we are, and what we do, email us at psichi@uvic.ca. As with Hyrule, the internet is big and lonely and it is dangerous for our secretary to go alone.

- Meredith Hughes & Kris Harder
BANDURA'S BOBO BERRY BOOSTER

This simple smoothie recipe will leave you energized and ready to master any difficult task!

Ingredients:
- 1/2 cup strawberries
- 1/2 cup blueberries
- 1/2 cup raspberries
- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup yogurt
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup ice cubes

Directions:
Blend all ingredients together until a smooth mix is formed. Serving size is for one person only.

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This comic strip was created at MakeBeliefsComix.com. Go there to make one yourself!