

Media Release

Local Students win International Award for Compassion

Award to be presented in conjunction with visit from International peacemaker

VICTORIA – A group of students at Victoria High School are the recipients of the International *Seva Compassion in Action Award* for their efforts in mentoring young students with the messages of communicating compassionately.

The purpose of the Seva award is to encourage students, with school support, to engage in social action projects for the betterment of society and alleviate human suffering. More than 2 million people have benefited directly from Seva's locally run programs in developing countries where services are either too costly or non-existent.

Youth and Family Counsellors Martha Henry and Al Reid run Nonviolent Communication (NVC) discussion groups for Vic High kids that have been labeled at risk. Their plan is to have all the senior secondary students develop the skills and tools to teach NVC to younger kids in other schools as well as at the community centre - integrating the initiative throughout the community.

This year, the group has already done at least seven presentations to other middle and elementary schools, and they're having trouble keeping up with the requests. Their program leaves students with feelings of inclusion and belonging, helping to get rid of old patterns and judgments typically used in communication with other students.

"Now, I overhear my students in the hall working through their differences. They're trying to translate others' words and actions into feelings and needs – and the outcome is usually much better," says Henry. "Before they tended to use sarcasm, blame and loud aggressive voices. They didn't have the basic communications skills they needed to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence."

Henry adopted the "language of the heart" after her first encounter with Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D., in 1999. It seemed only fitting to have Seva present the award at Dr. Rosenberg's workshop, *Investing in our Children and our Future*, on September 25 at Royal Roads University.

More...

Compassionate Award Cont'd...

Dr. Rosenberg is an internationally acclaimed peacemaker and educator. He founded the International Center for Nonviolent Communication, and is the author of *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion* and *Life-Enriching Education*.

“I use Nonviolent Communication as Gandhi used it — referring to our natural state when all violence has subsided from our heart,” says Dr. Rosenberg. “While we may not believe we are “violent” our words and thoughts often lead to pain for others and ourselves.”

Sponsored by BCNCC, Dr. Rosenberg will present several workshops to interested members of the public from September 21 - 27. Topics include: Preventing Workplace Violence, Difficult Conversations, Transforming Anger, Conflict Resolution/Mediation, Sustaining Intimacy, Parenting & Education, Stress, Caregiver Burn-out, and Bully Prevention. **Visit www.bcncc.org for details.**

Dr. Rosenberg is Founder and Director of Educational Services for the Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC). CNVC is a global organization whose vision is a world where everyone's needs are met peacefully. For more information visit www.cnvc.org.

The BC Network for Compassionate Communication is a British Columbia non-profit society that supports the mission of CNVC. BCNCC coordinates trainings and workshops for groups, individuals and families, prison inmates and employees, business and government organizations across Canada. For more information visit www.BCNCC.org.

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For more information visit www.BCNCC.org and www.CNVC.org

“I believe the principles and techniques of Nonviolent Communication can literally change the world, but more importantly, they can change the quality of your life with your spouse, your children, your neighbors, your co-workers and everyone else you interact with. I cannot recommend it highly enough.”

JACK CANFIELD, *Chicken Soup for the Soul Series*