



*Helping build inclusive, caring and safe communities*

**LCCJ Community Animator Report – December 18, 2018**

**Submitted by** Andrew Lynch, Community Animator

**School News** - Schools and Youth Centres have been notified that the Be Strong program concludes at the end of January 2019 and that Andrew’s role ends effective December 31, 2018.

Weekly circles are being conducted by or with the support of *Be Strong* volunteers and staff at the following schools: (Note that Be Strong volunteers may elect to continue as school volunteers – independent of LCCJ in the new year. They will make appropriate arrangements with schools and youth centres.)

- Arklan Community Public School - Grades K, 1/2 and 3/4
- Caldwell Street Public School – Gr. 5
- Lombardy Public School - Grade 7/8 (Grade 3/4 intermittent. Teacher is running circles)
- Almonte District High School – Grade 8
- PPDCI - Grade 11
- Smiths Falls District Collegiate Institute – Grade 9 Art (Occasional rather than weekly)

**Youth Centres:**

Regular circle activities continue at WAK (Smiths Falls Youth Program)

**Capacity Building and Training:**

Arklan Community Public School – December 4 – Staff workshop – Responsive and proactive restorative practices.

Dear Members of the LCCJ Board of Directors:

I want to thank you and your predecessors for your unwavering support of *Be Strong*. The last thirty four months have provided me with a dream opportunity to sow the seeds of restorative practices in the schools and youth centres of Lanark County. I will extend the gardening metaphor a bit and add that the quality of soil necessary to germinate the seeds let alone produce plants that bear fruit has varied. It will take the efforts of many dedicated people at all levels of the respective organizations to effect meaningful, sustainable change.

In carrying out my duties, I have been truly blessed to work with many dedicated, creative and insightful people. Among them have been school administrators, teachers and youth centre staff who are constantly striving to be their best for the children they serve. Children and youth whose insights motivated us and constantly reminded us of the importance of listening to understand. However, I am most grateful for the dedicated corps of Be Strong volunteers who breathed life into the program through their ever-deepening understanding of restorative practices and their creative adaptations to accommodate needs of students and youth.

One of the special gifts of doing restorative work is that it can lead not just to a deeper understanding of a powerful practice – it can result, as it has for me, in a shift to intentionally being restorative. That is something I will continue to bring to all my encounters – the small personal ones and those with members of various segments of the community as I continue to support the expansion of restorative practices.

With sincere thanks and wishes for a happy Christmas and a new year rich with joy possibilities.

Andrew

**A revised version of this report with final numbers of student contacts will be generated by December 21, 2018.**