



UBC Learning Exchange **TREK PROGRAM**

School Partnerships Report: May 2005



About the Learning Exchange



UBC's Learning Exchange is a community outreach initiative based in the Downtown Eastside area of Vancouver. It was developed as a result of the commitment to community engagement contained in TREK 2000, a strategic plan adopted by UBC in 1998. The goal of the Learning Exchange is to strengthen the social fabric of the Vancouver region by bringing together students, faculty, and staff from UBC and people who live and work in inner city areas in settings where people can work together and learn from each other. These "learning exchanges" can be the catalyst for new understandings of community issues and new solutions to challenging problems.

The Learning Exchange Trek Program provides opportunities for UBC students, staff, faculty, and alumni to do community service in a variety of schools, non-profit organizations, and community centres in inner-city neighborhoods of Vancouver. The program gives participants real-life experience in the community while raising their awareness of health, social, and economic issues. By having students, staff, faculty and alumni engage in community initiatives, the Trek Program offers UBC's human resources to community organizations so they can enhance existing programs, as well as work towards developing new ones.

"I learned more about sustainability and global citizenship. This greatly changed my perceptions about the interconnectedness of the world."

Community Service-Learning

The Learning Exchange is working with faculties and departments at UBC to expand the extent to which students' volunteer activities in the community are integrated into their academic courses. This approach—called "Community Service-Learning" or "Service-Learning"—refers to a model of experiential learning that combines voluntary community service with classroom learning. Real-life experiences in the community are linked to academic content through processes of critical reflection such as journal writing, small group discussion, and the writing of analytical papers.

This experiential learning model aims to enhance students' capacity to think critically about social issues, to value diversity, and to work collaboratively with others for positive change. Approximately 22% of the 800 students involved in the Trek Program in the 2004/05 academic year did course-based Community Service-Learning where they received course credit for achieving learning outcomes made possible by the integration of community service with academic content.

In addition to helping advance Community Service-Learning at UBC, the Learning Exchange has been working with our community partners to learn how we can most effectively collaborate in developing this new learning model. The Learning Exchange has also played a key role nationally in the development of the Canadian Association for Community Service-Learning (CACSL), a national network of faculty and professional staff mandated to provide support in the design, implementation, and evaluation of Community Service-Learning programs at post-secondary institutions across Canada.



Learning Exchange Trek Program Partner Schools

The Trek Program works with a variety of Vancouver School Board (VSB) elementary and secondary schools in East Vancouver. Our activities in schools vary depending on the goals established between the Trek Program and the particular school each year and the length of time the Trek Program has worked with the school. In 2004/05, approximately 400 students from the Trek Program volunteered in Vancouver schools where they engaged with children in a variety of activities, including tutoring, painting murals, gardening activities, after-school programs, and special projects during spring break.

"The values that I learned are simply priceless – friendship, teamwork, solidarity, service, community..."



Our Partner Schools:

Admiral Seymour Elementary
Beaconsfield Elementary
Britannia Secondary
Carleton Elementary
Charles Dickens Elementary
Chief Maquinna Elementary
Grandview/?Uuqinak'uuh Elementary
Hastings Elementary
Laura Secord Elementary
Lord Nelson Elementary
Lord Strathcona Elementary
Mount Pleasant Elementary
Queen Alexandra Elementary
Sir William Macdonald Elementary
Templeton Secondary
Tillicum Annex Elementary
Tye Elementary

Learning Exchange Trek Program Initiatives in Schools



Reading Week Community Service Projects:

During Reading Week (spring break) each year, the Trek Program collaborates with Student Development and other units across campus to do Community Service Projects. These projects provide 200 students with the opportunity to participate in short-term community projects where educational workshops are combined with hands-on service.

2005 Reading Week Projects Quick Facts:

- 14 Community Projects: 13 in elementary schools and 1 at UBC Farm
- 900 children in Vancouver schools involved
- 25 Educational Workshops: facilitated by community professionals, VSB teachers and staff and UBC faculty and staff
- 202 UBC Student Participants (34% from Arts, 36% from Science, 15% from Agricultural Science and 15% from other faculties)
- 20 UBC Student Leaders
- 16 UBC Staff Project Leaders from units across campus
- 25% of students were involved as part of an academic course



Trek Leadership Network:

The Trek Leadership Network (TLN) provides UBC undergraduate students the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and values necessary to become effective leaders. The TLN expanded from 12 students in 2003/04 to 28 students in 2004/05. The students come from various faculties, including Arts, Science, Applied Science and the Sauder School of Business.

Trek Leaders work in project teams to enhance programs at Trek Program partner organizations and schools, while also participating in weekly training sessions on topics such as project coordination, effective communication and global citizenship. In 2004/05, five projects were completed at schools, including the development of the Britannia Homework Club and expansion of the Passion Clubs at TillicumElementary.



School Athletic Initiatives in Partnership with UBC Athletics and Recreation:

In partnership with UBC Athletics and Recreation, the Trek Program has varsity student athletes participate in two initiatives, *I'm Going to UBC* and *UBC T-Birds in Schools*. *I'm Going to UBC* brings groups of children from schools to UBC where they participate in a campus tour and sports skills clinic and then attend a varsity game. Varsity student athletes also take part in the *T-Birds in Schools* initiative, where both teams and individual athletes spend time at schools doing sports clinics and one-to-one reading.

2005 Athletic Initiatives Quick Facts:

- 400 children from 8 schools came to I'm Going to UBC events
- 57 varsity student athletes, 5 alumni and 5 coaches led the I'm Going to UBC events
- 37 varsity student athletes participated in T-Birds in Schools

Chapman Summer Project Awards:

Each year, students in the Trek Program are invited to submit proposals for Chapman Summer Project Awards. These awards give students grants of up to \$10,000 to work in partnership with a Trek Program community partner organization or school to undertake a short-term summer project that will result in demonstrable benefits for the community. 2004 summer projects at schools included a courtyard and garden beautification project at Strathcona Elementary, an arts project for teens in the Kidsafe Program, and a music appreciation project at Grandview/ʔuqinak'uuu Elementary.

Trek Program Pilot Projects in Schools



Passion Clubs

Passions Clubs takes place at Tillicum Elementary School, a K-4 inner city school located in East Vancouver. Every second Friday afternoon, Tillicum school becomes a focus of “passion” where UBC students work in pairs to lead lessons in their passion area, including arts and crafts, science, cooperative games, and cooking. Last year, this program was led by two Trek Leaders who were responsible for organizing and liaising with Tillicum School, recruiting UBC students to lead passion lessons, and leading sessions for UBC students to reflect about what they learning from their experiences. The Trek Leaders also worked to develop the Passion Clubs format so this initiative can be a model for other schools partnering with the Learning Exchange Trek Program.

Let’s Talk About Science Partnership Program

The Trek Program has worked with the Let’s Talk About Science Partnership Program, a graduate student program, to have teams of undergraduate students work with teachers at Laura Secord to deliver dynamic lessons on topics such as scientific methods, water quality testing, and DNA analysis. The UBC student teams also assisted Secord students with the development of their Science Fair experiments.

UBC Staff Community Service

In the fall of 2004, The UBC Learning Exchange Trek Program implemented a pilot initiative to engage UBC staff and faculty as well as students in community service. In December, 2004 Grandview/ʔUuqinak’uuh Elementary School held their first annual Christmas dinner for children and their families. Almost 15 UBC staff members took on a variety of task, including helping to decorate the gym for the event, sorting donated gifts, serving food at the event and helping to welcome the families who attended. Another project took place on May 13, 2005 at Laura Secord School where 30 staff from the UBC VP Finance and Administration portfolio participated in a half day of school clean-up activities with all the students and teachers in the school and several parents.

UBC Alumni Community Service

The Learning Exchange is working in partnership with Alumni Relations engage alumni in community service. In 2004 the Learning Exchange and the Young Alumni Network organized two community service projects, including a project at Grandview School where UBC Alumni created tile mosaic stepping stones to enhance the school’s garden.

Preparing Exceptional Global Citizens

UBC's new strategic plan, *Trek 2010*, promises that UBC will prepare students to become "exceptional global citizens" and will promote the values of a civil and sustainable society.

Comments from participants in the Trek Program demonstrate that meaningful and reflective community engagement contributes powerfully to the fulfillment of this promise.



"I learned that I have the potential to change. I discovered some skills that I hadn't had before and realized how unaware I was or apathetic towards my community. I also realized how self-centred I was or still am and I really want to re-examine myself before I do anything more as a Trek Leader."

"I have really learned the value of empathy and the importance of having passion and purpose for what I do. I think I have definitely learned a lot of people skills and through interacting with others, my attitude towards others and life in general has become more positive."

"I have learned to break down many of the stereotypes I had about the Downtown Eastside. I have learned to think outside the box in terms of global citizenship and awareness. Most of all, I have learned to embrace challenges and develop solutions to problems."