

February 29, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

SCREAM was a wonderful experience for the students as well as for us. Not only was Gary Brucker a fantastic facilitator, but the program was excellent and the lessons/insights the students were left with were invaluable.

A great program and a great facilitator! Gary was very easy to work with. He was well planned, organized, and clear with what he needed from us. He took the time to reflect with us on how things were going and to hear our thoughts. The students immediately connected with Gary as he radiated kindness and respect. He created an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding which allowed the students to feel safe to take risks. It was very obvious that Gary structured the activities and lessons taking into consideration his audience. The balance of quiet/introspective and cooperative movement activities had a natural flow and was timed well so students were always engaged.

Activities and videos were age appropriate and appealed to students' interests. Not only were the students enjoying themselves and having fun, they were also learning about themselves and how to work more efficiently and respectfully with others. Students learned to rely on and feel confident about their own strengths as well to be respectful of the different strengths of their peers. The activities allowed for the opportunity for students to problem solve, take risks, trust their strengths, be successful, and to be reflective. One of our favourite activities began with the students viewing a video on how negative words can affect a person and concluding with the students writing (with washable markers) positive adjectives on each other as well as on us. It was powerful to see our students proudly walking around with words such as loveable, worthy, beautiful, thoughtful written all over them by their peers. The looks on their faces as they read and reflected on what their peers thought about them moved us to tears. The Sherpa Walk was another awesome activity in which the "walk" took the students from the concrete to the abstract. A group of blindfolded students were led through an obstacle course by one sighted person. All of the activities, discussions, and reflections left students with an understanding of themselves and their peers and the tools and confidence to deal with difficult situations.

Our students benefited so much from their SCREAM week with Gary. They gained an awareness of their strengths and the strengths of their peers. Students had opportunities to use their strengths and be proud of them. Also, they learned to work with, support, and respect each other's thoughts, ideas, and input. We have seen the number of positive interactions between students increase and a decrease in altercations. Lessons learned and activities have been springboards for future discussions and learning. Students are more confident and are taking more risks in their learning. On a daily basis we see a lesson learned, idea or experience from SCREAM show up in our classrooms.

We felt the SCREAM program was extremely valuable for our students. The memories they made, the things they realized about themselves, and the tools and strategies they learned will stay with them for a long time. Gary's charismatic nature and genuine passion for SCREAM are evident and made the well-thought out activities powerful for our students. The benefits of SCREAM are clearly evident when you see the confident, aware, and happy faces of our students.

Sincerely,



Melissa Matwychuk and Christina Hoover

Teachers, Grade 6

Three Hills School