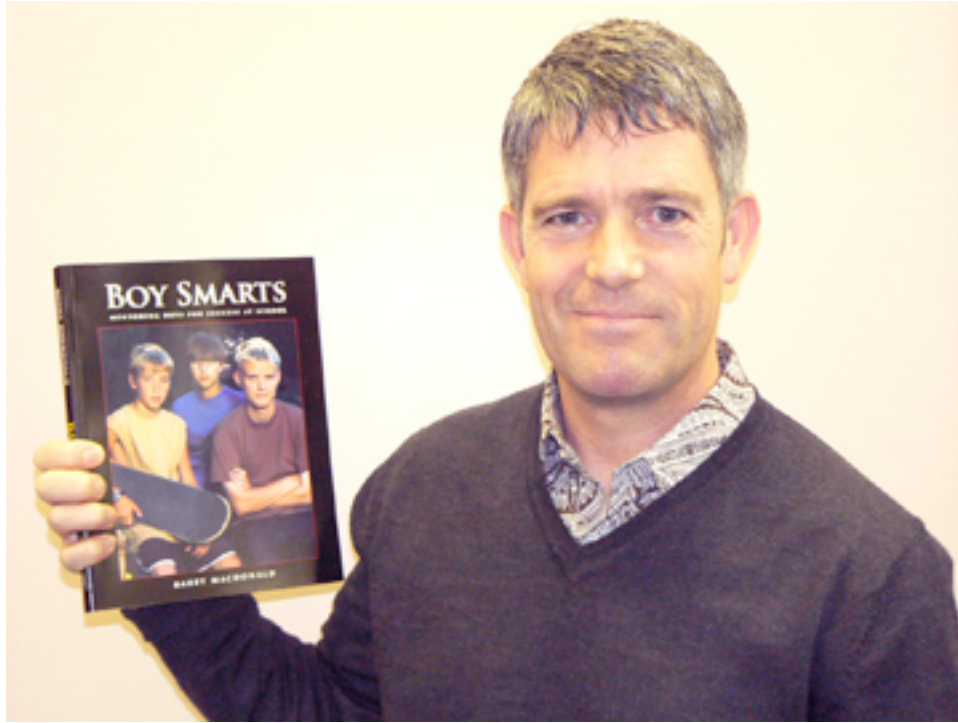


Mentoring Boys-

Author enlightens locals at sold-out presentation



Siobhan Dobler, Alberni Valley Times, Monday, April 30, 2007

Boys do cry and that's okay. This is one of many beliefs Barry MacDonald has when it comes to mentoring boys. Long-time teacher and author of *Boy Smarts: Mentoring Boys for Success at School* visited Port Alberni Wednesday.

"In a nut shell, the presentation will balance brain science with cultural molding and individual meaning-making," said MacDonald. "The truth is there's a huge overlap between genders and behaviour and it is not as simple as *boys will be boys*." Parents, guardians, teachers and child care providers filled the Cedar Room at Echo Centre for a sold out presentation. "The other central focus this

evening is that we best support boys by focussing on their gifts and talents," he said.

MacDonald is passionate about supporting families and schools. In addition to his own parenting of teenage boys, he is also a Registered Clinical Counsellor and educator who serves families and couples in White Rock and Surrey, B.C.

"We need to be positive and our boys will respond," he said. In an interview with the Times, MacDonald said he mainly focuses on boys because he feels there is a need to reach out to boys who are floundering.

According to DPAC Chair Melody Burton, the presentation was a huge success. "I thought he was just excellent. I really wanted to go see him, but I also really wanted my boys to see him," said Nancy Hines, mother of three boys and foster parent to two boys. "He's very informative. One of my boys didn't want to go, but he really enjoyed it," said Hines, who has previously attended one of MacDonald's presentations.

Hines shared the messages she felt MacDonald was sharing with the 240 attendees. "Some boys, in general, learn differently than girls and what is often interpreted as a negative trait, can actually be positive if you are willing to accept the boy for who he is. Like stubborn versus determined," she explained. Hines believes that if we can change our way of thinking and give these traits a positive term rather than a negative one, it can help boys to be more positive.

While Hines has five boys living in her home -- ages seven months, 20 months, 13, 15 and 16 -- she found the presentation to be both inspiring and helpful. "It's really hard to retain all that information, which is why I am glad I got to see him a second time."

Stepping Stones Too child-care provider Mike Paquette also found the presentation inspiring and helpful. "It was really good. I think his views of how things should go are bang on," said Paquette. "Within the first three minutes I knew I would be staying."

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Paquette said there were several topics discussed at the presentation that would be helpful to him while he's working.

For example, MacDonald said that parents and caregivers often tell kids to sit down and stop moving. He then explained that many children need to move to stimulate their brains. "He spoke a lot about movement and how it helps learning," Paquette added.

If you missed the presentation but are interested in hearing Barry MacDonald speak, contact Melody Burton at 724-6115.

For more information on Barry MacDonald visit his website at mentoringboys.com.

You can purchase his book online as well as subscribe to his monthly newsletter by emailing newsletter@mentoringboys.com.