

Kirkland Scouts host boys mentoring expert

Fundraiser to focus on strategies for parenting boys

By Kevin Woodhouse
The Suburban

Before the members of the Kirkland Northwest Scouting troop enjoy canoe camping in such diverse parks as Rollins Pond in the U.S. and Parc La Verendrye or Gatineau Park, they will first be hosting a fundraising event that will focus on effective parenting strategies when raising boys.

Barry MacDonald, founder of Mentoringboys.com and the author of *Boy Smarts*, will be traveling from Vancouver and giving the lecture free of charge. Tim English of Kirkland Scouting moved from Vancouver four years ago and recently heard MacDonald give a speech when he visited Dorval last April.

The lecture will focus on such topics as understanding the “different-ness of many boys from girls as assets rather than liabilities” and

“What role does competition and cooperation play in a boy’s world?”

MacDonald released some statistics concerning the lack of success boys face in school. According to his research, “Boys account for 90 percent of juvenile alcohol and drug violations, boys make up about 80 percent of school suspensions and ADHD is approximately five times more frequently diagnosed in boys than in girls.”

Via e-mail, *The Suburban* asked MacDonald why boys are more prone to ADHD than girls. His answer said, “given the pressures on the school systems to improve mandated services for students struggling with behavioural and learning difficulties, it is not surprising that ADHD is being overly diagnosed in places. It is unfortunate that the psychiatrists who design the research, shape the diagnostic categories, develop question-

naires and rating scales, and prescribe the drugs, rarely question what kind of attitudes adults hold toward boisterous kids — boys in particular. I suspect that some teachers and parents who find fewer hyperactive children in their classrooms and homes may work hard to design appropriate tasks for children who might otherwise squirm, and may be more tolerant of what is loosely considered off-task behaviour by others.

“Many parents are concerned that spontaneity, inquisitiveness, imagination, boundless enthusiasm, and emotionality are being discouraged to create calmer, quieter, more controlled learning environments. Many are troubled about where we draw the line between seeing the expression of boys’ high spirits as natural and healthy and seeing this energy as excessive or even abnormal. Ultimately, many are dis-

turbed that active boys are being written off as unteachable,” the author said.

Barry MacDonald will speak on Saturday, May 29 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Pierrefonds Comprehensive High School Auditorium, 13800 Pierrefonds Boulevard, Pierrefonds. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchase online at www.knwscouting.com. ■

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