

Brooks Mental Health Resource Fair

By Gerry Brach, Brooks Secondary School Counsellor



On May 4, Brooks Secondary School hosted a Community Mental Health Resource Fair in which 17 different community organizations participated. The purpose of this event was to raise student awareness of mental health resources in our community. All students were encouraged to come to the library with their classes to complete a “passport” by visiting tables of the various organizations that share the ways in which they support mental health and the resources they provide. Students who completed a “passport” were eligible to win a variety of donated prizes for this event.

Brooks Mental Health Advocacy Group sponsored by school counsellor Gerry Brach, had the opportunity to raise awareness of the schools Vape Buy Back Program and conducted a Mental Health Student Survey. The survey was intended to help the student group get a better sense of what is needed to make Brooks a more supportive place for students, and what the group can do to improve student’s mental health.

Brooks students in the Pop Up Café Program contributed by providing hot drinks and snacks for the event.

One of the event organizers, school counsellor Jocelyn Williams was pleased with how the event went. *“I was excited that so many community organizations were happy to be involved and came to Brooks to support our students.”*

Brooks Principal, Bill Rounis commented on what a positive impact it was to have these community organizations come to our school. *“It is important for our students when they need services to know where to go and events such as this help to inform our students.”*

Erica Dolson from Child and Youth Mental Health said, *“It was heartening to see the supports for Youth Mental Health and to be able to connect youth in a meaningful way.”*

Powell River Board of Education Chairperson, Dale Lawson attended the event and was very impressed. *“It was fantastic to have this opportunity to see the variety of community groups working together to normalize and destigmatize mental health for our students. It was inspiring to see so many young people truly engaged in learning about the many supports and activities available to them throughout our community. The passports seemed like a hit, students were clearly interested in making sure they made stops at each station and it was an absolute pleasure to see them take it all in so eagerly.”*

With schools facing extraordinary challenges with mental health including those brought on by the ongoing, global COVID crisis, events such as this highlight the many community agencies and how they can come together to provide the much-needed support to our students.