

# MASTARS

## SAG 2009

The executive of M.A.S.T.A.R.S. is excited about the 2009 SAG moving back to its original location in October.

We have jammed packed another full day session. The theme of this year's SAG will be mental health. We have assembled an arsenal of top notch professionals, along with a very talented local comedian and we start the day of with

the **Rt. Hon. Edward Richard Schreyer as our keynote speaker.** We have also changed our location for this year's event.

We look forward to hosting a relaxing information filled session at the Sun Centre (formerly the Blue and Gold room) Watch for us the SAG 2009 brochure.

**MASTAR'S SAG** will be held at the **Sun Centre**

Located at 1465 Maroons Road  
On Friday October 23rd, 2009

"There are no difficult students - just students who don't want to do it your way"

Jane Revell &  
Susan NormanJ

"Learning is finding out what you already know. Doing is demonstrating that you know it. Teaching is reminding others that they know it just as well as you. You are all learners, doers, teachers"

Richard Bach

### Better Grades

Little Johnny wasn't getting good marks in school. One day he surprised the teacher with an announcement.

He tapped her on the shoulder and said, "I don't want to scare you, but my daddy says if I don't start getting better grades...somebody is going to get a spanking!"

### Where is your homework?

Teacher: Where is your homework?

Pupil: I lost it fighting this kid who said you weren't the best teacher in the school .

<http://www.basicjokes.com/djoke.php>

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## Victor P. Thiessen Memorial Award

*The Victor P. Thiessen Memorial Award for \$500.00 is for a graduating student from a Manitoba High School who has exhibited significant personal and academic improvement over the course of their Senior Years enrollment.*

*The award is granted in honour of Vic Thiessen, a founding member of M.A.S.T.A.R.S., who passed away while serving as its first Treasurer. Vic was a dedicated educator for over 30 years, in Saskatchewan, northern and south-western Manitoba. He willingly gave his time and energy to not only M.A.S.T.A.R.S., but also to a number of other organizations locally (Prairie Spirit School Division Executive), provincially (Manitoba Teacher's Society Leadership Team) and internationally in the Caribbean (Organization for Cooperation in Overseas Development – Board of Directors).*

### Eligibility?

- Resident of Manitoba.
- Proof of graduation (with transcript of marks) from a Manitoba secondary school during the 2008-2009 academic year.
- In need of financial assistance to pursue your goals.

### Application Requirements

- Completion of the Award Application Form.
- A 500 words (maximum) typed letter of nomination from a current M.A.S.T.A.R.S. member that outlines the student's improvement and growth.
- A 500 words (maximum) typed essay from the applicant explaining how the award will support their future goals and dreams.
- Copy of the applicant's latest official transcript that demonstrates potential graduation in the 2008-2009 academic year.

### Selection Criteria

- Significant educational improvement that culminated with graduation.
- School and community involvement.
- Extra-curricular activities.

### Deadline

Applications must be received no later than June 19, 2009.

### Award Payment

The financial award will be paid directly to the recipient after the Manitoba Association of Secondary Teachers of At-Risk Students has received official confirmation of graduation.

For more information regarding the award contact:

Dino Busceti  
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## Why must we learn this?

One day our professor was discussing a particularly complicated concept. A pre-med student rudely interrupted to ask, "Why do we have to learn this pointless information"

"To save lives." the professor responded quickly and continued the lecture.

A few minutes later, the same student spoke up again. "So how does physics save lives?" he persisted.

"It keeps the ignoramuses like you out of medical school," replied the professor.

# **Resiliency & Capacity Building in Inner-City Learning Communities**

## **-A Book Review-**

Edited by Dawn Sutherland & Laura Sokal

This book is a collection of works from the education department at the University of Winnipeg. It examines the "ways in which various forms of education can contribute to building positive learning communities in inner-city contexts". (2003, p ix). A sort of historical approach is used examining classrooms, programs and/ or thoughts from many different rungs on the educational ladder. Each chapter provides a window to exploring a variety of issues connected with high risk youth. From early childhood initiatives to the role of parents and grandparents, the authors present a broad examination of inner city supports.

In order to provide a more detailed examination, I will focus on one chapter chosen because of it's high interest and local connections . Chapter 10 by Philip Baker, Ken McCluskey

and Andrea McCluskey takes an evaluative look at youth gangs. They note that gangs are continuously changing in structure, but have found three basic types; organized, hard-core and fringe gangs. (2003, p.148) Organized gangs resemble biker gangs with an older membership. Hard-core gangs are formed due to unfortunate social conditions such as poverty. Fringe gangs have a looser membership and are found mainly in the suburbs. (2003 p. 148) The authors examine the crime statistics and gang formation in Manitoba. They point out that Winnipeg based youth-gangs follow their American "role models" and are mainly an adult male population. Reasons noted for gang involvement include needs for belonging and protection. When faced with the question of what to do about it all, the authors suggest a "three-pronged approach – featuring liberal doses of suppression, intervention and

prevention" (2003, p. 158). Many practical possibilities are discussed with options for the parent, the school and the universities training the teachers. This suggests a collaborative approach with all levels of people associated with our inner-city students.

Due to the fact that this book is divided into separate subjects per chapter makes it an easy read. The topics chosen are relevant to inner-city learning communities and in my opinion are successfully packaged. Too often I feel bombarded with content from other countries that leave me struggling to find relevance to my world. The local content in this book is much appreciated. This could be an empowering read for any educator.

By Tracey Smith

### **Why are you late?**

Teacher: Why are you late for class?

Student: Sorry, I overslept.

Teacher: You mean need to sleep at home too!

MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY  
TEACHERS OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

[http://ca.geocities.com/mastars\\_mtssag/](http://ca.geocities.com/mastars_mtssag/)



**M.A.S.T.A.R.S. - Who We Are**

*M.A.S.T.A.R.S. has been affiliated with the Manitoba Teachers Society as a Special Area Group ('SAG') since 1999. This association evolved out of the former "Teachers of 04 Classes and Work Experience Programs" ('TOCWEP'). M.A.S.T.A.R.S. defines students at-risk as "Young people who have little hope for capturing their personal power, either due to lack of natural supports, failure in school, ridicule by peers, social deprivation, or lack of connection to society." (Else, 1997)*

*M.A.S.T.A.R.S. provides relevant professional development that focuses on current achievement and safety issues in Manitoba schools. We focus on topics that include: Justice and safety issues, vulnerable/fragile natural supports, significant and persistent performance difficulties in school and lack of access opportunities that lead to a meaningful livelihood. Joining MASTARS puts you in contact with other dedicated professionals working with this very demanding population.*

*Presently, there are almost 200 members in MASTARS. We have representation from all over the province of Manitoba. At last year's conference, we had more than 300 participants attend from all over Manitoba and Northwest Ontario.*



**2008-2009 M.A.S.T.A.R.S. Executive**

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