

SPRING

April 3, 2012

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Team X Begins!

We're starting a new initiative at VCS! Called Team X (X is for eXcellent!). We're hoping to use it to encourage students to be the best they can be; not only academically, but in all areas.

We want students to strive to meet the potential of their own personal character; to become leaders, to make good choices, to choose the best way over the easiest!

Periodically through the school year, VCS will have scheduled events and activities that we hope students will find really fun and want to participate in. To get to be involved, they will have to be nominated by their teachers.

Nominations will be based not on best marks, but on effort demonstrated, good attendance, good character and citizenship contributions to school life.

The first Team X event is set for April 5, 2012, and will be a movie afternoon for nominated students. Other events next year could include things like ski trips, camping outings, field trips to the multiplex in GP. Our goal is to do things students want to do! Our goal is to give students a positive motivation to strive for their highest!



Do You Have a Computer Headset Your Child Could Use at School?

We're working toward having each student from grade 3 - 9 assigned a headset for their exclusive use. At this time we don't have enough sets, so students have to share sets between them. If you have a headset with microphone that your child/ren could use at school, they could have the benefit of exclusive use of a set sooner!



Community News

Valhalla Community Library:

The Valhalla Community Library is looking for an enthusiastic and energetic person to run our summer reading program. The theme this year is "Imagine".

The program runs over the summer months.

Anyone interested in the position please send a resume to "The Valhalla Community Library" If you have any questions regarding the position please contact Gail Perry @ (780) 356-3834

Valhalla Community Library:

Anyone with library memberships at the Beaverlodge Public Library, must renew their memberships as they are up for renewal. If you would like a membership for the Valhalla Community Library please contact the librarian Gail Perry @ (780) 356-3834



Picture by Nadine

Hot Lunch to Go Weekly!

Parent Council has been hosting hot lunch at the school weekly for the last several weeks.

REMINDER: The hot lunch form that was sent home on March 27 for Taco in a Bag will be used for hot lunch on April 5 (this Thursday).

The hot lunch forms for March 29 will be carried forward for April 19th.

Thanks for your **support** of this program!

Badminton Update

Miss Steuernagel

Parents:

Practices will be on Tuesday now from 3:45pm-4:30pm.

Districts will be taking place at Harry Belfour and PWA on April 25th.

Zones will follow on May 5th in High Prairie.

Thank you for your support!

Upcoming Events

April 5, 2012
Afternoon, VCS
Team X Celebration

April 6 – 15
Spring Break!

April 16, 2012
Classes Resume

April 21, 2012, 7:30pm
Valhalla Viking Centre,
(gymnasium)
VHS Gary Fjellgaard Concert

April 23, 2012, 9:00 am
Valhalla Room
VSF Board Meeting

CHILDHOOD PRISON

By Kailey

I walked home from the store after the weekly grocery run, mom always made me wear long sleeves. It was July in Kelowna and my shirt became soaked within minutes. The sweat beaded down my face, it stung because the cuts were not quite healed. When I arrived home I put away the groceries and went up to my room. I didn't take a snack because after last week I was not willing to take the chance.

My room was the only place I felt somewhat safe, it was very small and dusty, but it was home. It contained all the things a ten year old boy in my predicament could have which was little, but enough to get by.

story continues on next page

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I walked home from the store after the weekly grocery run, mom always made me wear long sleeves. It was July in Kelowna and my shirt became soaked within minutes. The sweat beaded down my face, it stung because the cuts were not quite healed. When I arrived home I put away the groceries and went up to my room. I didn't take a snack because after last week I was not willing to take the chance.

My room was the only place I felt somewhat safe, it was very small and dusty, but it was home. It contained all the things a ten year old boy in my predicament could have which was little, but enough to get by.

I noticed the front door creak open and heard my mother stumble over the shoes in the entry way, she swore, I tried to ignore it. I could tell she was now in the kitchen because the fridge door slammed with force. Obviously she could not find what she needed because she screamed my name, "Billy if you're not down here in thirty seconds I'm going to kill you!"

I quickly wandered down the steps to her call. She blamed me for Dad leaving her and she threatened me all the time. She was really disappointed in me and now I was starting to believe the awful things she said. I know she has another son John I had no idea if she abused him. He left at thirteen. I doubt he knows about me, but right now he's my only hope of getting out of this awful prison.

Once I was face to face with my mother she did her daily inspection. If I was sweaty or dirty in any way she forced me to have an ice cold shower. Today it wouldn't be so bad, but in the winter when the weather is cold I can hardly stand it. She decided I did not reach her standards like usual, so off to the shower I went.

When I was done I threw on the same raggedy clothes I was wearing earlier and headed for my room. I suspected because of how "dirty" I was I would not receive supper; I decided not to care even though my tummy rumbled fiercely.

I flopped down on my bed and read the only book I had. It was called *The Cay*, I read the book over and over not because it was the only book I had, but because I could relate to the main character Phillip. He is stranded on an island blind and alone. He has to fend for himself and survive even though he faced great danger and hardships, I know I have a roof over my head and many things he did not, but I would take a lonely island any day over the abuse and hurt I face.

I finished up the book two days ago and was already burying my nose into it again. Then she called, "Billy come down to wash the dishes now!"

I gently yelled back "Ok mom, I'm coming." When I arrived I knew what was ahead, she already had the sink filled with boiling hot water for me to wash the dishes bare handed. She always watched me and if I didn't do a good enough job it usually meant a few lashings or even a mouthful of soap, hot sauce, toilet cleaner or whatever she could find toxic or not.

This time when I was done I noticed one of the plates had a little food left on it. I never did that, I was screaming inside kicking myself for missing the spot. Before I could even breathe she had spotted it. I had no words for what would happen to me this time.

She held the plate in the air and chuckled. Her bony fingers slid along the rim. She screamed, "You are such a mess! I cannot believe you could do this, you filthy child." She usually never called me by name it made me so mad. Just as I was about to step away she smashed the plate over my head. I fell to the floor blood dribbled down my cheeks, she never ever showed concern, I was left to clean the wound and wait for it to heal.

After she attacked me she usually left me alone until morning, so I went up to the bathroom to wash up. My head hurt excruciatingly, I bandaged it up and trudged along to my room where I fell asleep.

When I woke my head still hurt but I tried my best to push past the pain. I knew more was to come. I had to be strong and brace myself to survive another day. I assumed she must be sleeping so I crept downstairs to possibly retrieve a little snack; I hadn't eaten in three days. I snuck into the kitchen grabbed a granola bar from the pantry and gobbled it down.

When she finally hobbled down the stairs I was trying to look busy by changing the garbage. She walked past me and didn't even acknowledge my presence instead she buried her head into a bag of chips.

I tried to walk away slowly, but I tripped over the garbage bag and she flipped, "What do you think you're doing? Come here so I can look at you!" I timidly walked up to her enormous figure; she spat in my face, grabbed my arm and threw me to the floor. She began kicking me in the gut and legs, then she moved onto my head. After she knew I was too weak to fight back she flipped me onto my stomach and started twisting my arms, I felt the crack in my left arm. I knew it must have broken because I passed out.

When I woke I could hardly breathe, she had brought me upstairs to my bed and flopped me face first into my pillow. My arm was out of its socket and twisted the wrong way. I knew she would be up soon so I tried my best to sit up. I looked up to the doorway, she was

standing there. She rushed to my bedside and began to apologize; I knew she didn't mean it. She explained that she would take me to the hospital and we would tell them that I fell down the stairs. I agreed because I knew if I didn't I would be back in the hospital as soon as she could get her hands on me.

When I finally brought myself to stand, mom helped me down the stairs and into the van. It seemed like such a long time to get there because I was in so much pain. When we arrived they took me in right away because my case was very serious. Mom explained what had happened just how we discussed and then went down to the cafeteria to get some coffee.

The doctor was very nice and gentle. She fixed up my arm and cuts, but I had the feeling she knew I didn't just fall down the stairs'. I wanted to tell her so bad so I could just get out, but what if she didn't believe me or couldn't do anything about it? Then mom would hurt me for sure. Before we came I noticed a number on the fridge, it was my brother John's. I had no idea why mom had it or if it was even the right one, but I memorized it so maybe one day I could call him.

When the nurse called me out, she said she would bring me down to my mother. I couldn't stand the thought of going back to her. I had to do something to save myself from her. I snatched a piece of note paper from beside the bed and wrote the number and John's name. I included a brief summary of who he was and hoped that someone anyone would get the message and call.

Now I was back downstairs in the unreliable hands of my mother. I hoped and prayed she would leave me alone for a few days at least so I could somewhat heal. When we arrived home she told me she was disappointed that I made her go to the hospital. She said I had three days to heal then she would have to punish me for the inconvenience I had caused her. I was relieved by the thought of having three days to myself.

I couldn't stop thinking about the note and John. I was on day two and I was getting so anxious. I daydreamed about being free and away from harm, but I had to face the harsh reality that would probably not happen.

Day three, I was bracing myself for the punishment. I didn't know when or how, but I knew it would be bad. She hollered for me to come downstairs, I obeyed and hesitantly wandered her way.

"Laura!" John screamed worriedly, "My mom has another child! We have to get him out of that place now!" John paced back and forth. He could never forget the horrible abuse he faced as a child after his dad left. He got out as soon as he could, but never knew of another child. He had two precious kids of his own and loved them so much. John piled his kids in the

vehicle and helped his wife Laura into the passenger side. He jumped into the driver's seat and floored it.

Mom looked me in the eyes with anger, she told me to stand still while she went to get my punishment. I waited silently, when she returned she had extra strong hold duct tape in her hand. I was terrified, I tried to squirm but she had me. She loosened the grip on my arm and thrust me against the wall. Then she grabbed a kitchen stool and told me to stand on it, I did as she said only to endure the next step of the punishment. She taped my arms and legs to the wall first; soon my whole body was covered in tape up to my chin. I could barely breathe because the tape was so tight around my neck.

I was about to give up, then a tall man accompanied by several large police officers burst through the door. I finally realized the tall man was my brother John, he had got the call! The police officers arrested my mom and charged her with multiple counts of child abuse and fifteen years in prison. They took the pressure off my neck and I could breathe. For so long I wanted my happy ending to come true just like in *The Cay*. Phillip got rescued from his desert prison, and now the same was happening for me. I no longer had to be afraid of life; I could start new because I was saved from the pain I endured for so long.