



# The Bark

Winter 2017

## Teaching Justice Oriented Citizenship by Cathryn van Kessel

### Events for Winter 2017

February – [Black History Month](#)

February 4 – [World Cancer Day](#)

February 20 – [World Day of Social Justice](#)

February 24 – [Pink Shirt Day](#)

March 1 – [Zero Discrimination Day](#)

March 3 – [World Wildlife Day](#)

March 8 – [International Women's Day](#)

March 20 – [International Day of Happiness](#)

March 21 – [International Day for the Elimination of Racial discrimination](#)

March 22 – [World Water Day](#)

March 25 – [International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade](#)

April 2 – [World Autism Awareness Day](#)

April 21 – [Earth Day](#)

Conducting social justice projects with students is an opportunity to get students engaged—in school, in their own lives, and in the community. Such projects can empower students, and us all. Many of us feel helpless in the face of seemingly insurmountable problems, whether that be international humanitarian tragedies like the Syrian crisis or local issues like the horrors for those without shelter here in Edmonton when the temperature drops.

Teachers, however, can have students work on projects that address the complexities of these issues, and through this process provide an example for future action in other areas.

Key to addressing the complexities of social justice projects is to find ways to sit in the tension between individual and collective responsibility. If we simply blame “society” for the problem (and thus for coming up with a solution), then it can all too easily become no one’s responsibility. Conversely, if people feel that they alone are responsible, then they can easily feel disheartened and give up because individuals cannot solve a large issue by themselves.

So, how might we make change as *interconnected* individuals in society?

There is no one way to do this task, but here are some suggestions:

- **Identify the broad, societal problem.** Why does the problem exist? What are the repercussions of the status quo? (i.e., think about why things can’t stay the same). Talk with your students about how to research the topic: How do we find reliable information from sources including the Internet? How can we connect with those affected so that their voices are heard and respected?
- **Brainstorm with your students about possible ways to help.** What resources do these solutions require, and what do we have available to us? These resources are not only financial, but also our time, connections with people and groups, available skills, etc.
- **Research groups that are already working on that problem** (or a similar one) and learn from them, help them., or even partner with them.
- **Find out how to contact government representatives** as applicable (local, provincial, federal, and perhaps even foreign government officials for certain issues). How can we mobilize so that our chosen issue is visible to those in power? Consider emails, letters, meetings, demonstrations, etc.
- **Reflect on what the class has (and has not) accomplished**, and what still needs to be done (by you, by others, etc.). How do we celebrate what has been achieved? How do we tell the story?

The end goal can be to raise awareness or obtain help and support—or both! Social justice projects provide a wonderful opportunity for students (and teachers) to see the power they can have if they choose to organize for it.



# Aspen Foundation for Labour Education



## Winter 2017 Convention Presentations

**Calgary**, February 17

Check your schedule to find time and location of presentations

**Central East**, Friday, March 10 (Salon 17/18)

9:00-10:30am

*Bye, Bye Blues: The stories of Canada's Great Western Garment Co.*

10:45-12:00pm *Forever in Blue Jeans: Teaching ideas for industrialization, globalization, and collectivism*

## Aspen Foundation Social Justice Grants

Like the [Aspen Foundation for Labour Education page on Facebook](#) for frequent updates and stories about our 2016-17 Social Justice Grant recipients. Twice a month, we'll feature one of the recipient's projects with photos and updates on their work!

Here's a recent story from Strathcona High School's Founding Cultures about their first ever Family Night. Check out the photos on our Facebook page and stay tuned for more stories like this one!

"Over 130 people came together for our very first Family Night on December 13 at Strathcona High School where we shared an incredible feast prepared by Scona's Culinary Program with delicious jam provided by our wonderful new community partner Fruits of Sherbrooke, enjoyed door prizes donated by over 20 community partners, were able to browse opportunities available at local educational, vocational and recreational vocations, shared in a prayer..." and participated in a round dance!

You can view all of the 2016-17 grant recipients on [our website](#).

## Ad space for Aspen Foundation

Have you got space in a publication for an Aspen Foundation ad? We'd love to hear from you! Contact [aspenfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:aspenfoundation@gmail.com)

## Feedback and Participation

We value your comments and suggestions. If you would like to write an article regarding social justice work in the classroom or if you'd like to get involved with our work, contact Gary Hansen at [afle@telus.net](mailto:afle@telus.net)



We believe that it is important that schools teach about building new, fairer, kinder, and more just workplaces and communities.

Friends like you make our work possible.

Aspen Foundation is a registered charity and provides **income tax receipts** for donations over \$10

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## Resources and Links

- ✓ [Aspen Teaching Units](#)
- ✓ VIDEO: [FairVote Canada voting systems](#)
- ✓ [Access4All grants](#)
- ✓ VIDEO: [Stand by Me, Playing for Change](#)
- ✓ VIDEO: [What Have the Unions Ever Done for Us?](#)
- ✓ [ATA Social Studies Council](#)
- ✓ [ATA Global, Environmental, Outdoor Education Council](#)
- ✓ VIDEO: [The Trump Effect](#)
- ✓ [Reconciliation in the classroom](#)
- ✓ [beautifultrouble.org](#)
- ✓ [Teaching Tolerance](#)
- ✓ [#IndigenousReads](#)

\*Always review resources before using them in class.

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