

# NEWS

## Queen Elizabeth students learn about abuse

**Steve Feeney**  
STAFF WRITER

**F**OR the first time, Grade 9 male students from the QEDHS physical education class participated in lessons about relationships and abuse offered by Assault Care and Treatment Program.

The Assault Care and Treatment Program is provided through the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre. The program has nurses on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week who are specially trained to respond to sexual assault and intimate partner abuse. They also spread awareness about this subject.

The program has been offered only to Grade 9 female students for the last five years. This year Assault Care and Treatment Program coordinator Lisa Bailey decided to spread awareness to the male students. Bailey asked New Vision Unlimited creator / coordinator Graham Thompson to help facilitate the program to the male gym class students.

"The best way to do it is for the guys to receive the same (information)," Bailey said. The boys went to the Cedar Bay stable for two assignments on November 11. The first assignment was to learn how to approach a horse, how to respect a horse, and eventually how to earn trust from a horse.

Friends of Cedar Bay member Kathy Masotti demonstrated to the students how to treat the horses. She emphasized her lesson was about respect, boundaries, personal space and approaching people in a calm matter.

"The horses are really good learning tools that way because they give you immediate feedback. They live in the here and now and they're prey animals. They're not going to come and form a relationship with you if you're being an idiot," Masotti said.

For their second assignment, the boys went up in the stable loft where Thompson talked about the requirements for a healthy dating relationship.

"The boys learned some statistics and facts about sexual assault, date rape and maximum sentences for abusers," Thompson said.

He identified eight different characteristics to a healthy relationship, including open communication, positive intimacy, positive physical affection, fairness and negotiation, shared responsibility, respect, trust and support, and honesty and responsibility.

To conclude the lesson, the boys were challenged to create a variety of ways to show how to ask for a date and describe what they would do on a date.

"The boys had to use ideas that promoted respect and trust," Thompson said.

The ideas the boys came up with were presented to the girls during a pizza lunch the next day as part of the co-ed experience.

The girls also presented what they think a healthy relationship looks like and the desirable and undesirable traits of dating.

"It was done in a very fun way and we received excellent feedback from the Phys Ed teachers," Bailey said. "It really enhances the phys ed curriculum on personal health and safety for grade nines."

The Grade 9 girls also received self-defense lessons from Tori Irwin, Tae Kwan Do black belt.

Bailey concluded by saying she felt the students learned a lot and that it was a positive experience for all.

The Grade 9 male Physical Education students learned to respect a horse while they attended a class at Cedar Bay November 11.

