

Healthy Eating Alliance and provincial school boards take educated stance against energy drinks

By Ryan Conway

The Healthy Eating Alliance is quite concerned about the selling of energy drinks to children, says Charmaine Campbell, provincial school nutritional coordinator for the alliance.

The alliance is a multi-sectoral organization dedicated to working together with the community to encourage children and youth to indulge in healthier eating habits.

Campbell said energy drinks are displacing healthier drinks such as 100 per cent fruit juice, water and milk.

"This is one of the reasons why we think energy drinks should be kept away from schools."

She said another reason is because of the high caffeine content.

"These energy drinks have up to 160 milligrams of caffeine. Health Canada says the average recommended amount of caffeine for an adult is 400 milligrams a day, which is about three cups of coffee.

"The daily recommended amount of caffeine for kids and teens is less than 100 milligrams."

Campbell said these drinks also have negative side effects that could be a risk to a child's health.

"Energy drinks can [cause] children to have panic attacks, stomach pains, irregularity, and an increased heart

rate. Energy drinks can also cause children to have trouble sleeping.

"These problems tend to happen because students tend to abuse the drinks and they do not know the dangers of doing so."

Campbell said the alliance has been talking to both teachers and principals throughout the province about their stance on energy drinks.

"Both the Eastern School District and the Western School Board have policies prohibiting energy drinks on school property."

Donna Dawkins, the man-

ager of policy and planning for the Eastern School District, said there isn't actually a ban on energy drinks in the district but rather a referendum to ask students not to take the drinks onto school property.

"We are asking students for their compliance and there will not be any penalty for bringing the drinks onto school property. This is more of an educational focus rather than a disciplinary one."

Dawkins said schools in the district will provide students with information about the dangerous effects these energy drinks can have when

"These methods seem to have worked so far. The students have been compliant for the most part, with the schools saying they haven't had any problems."

She said the school district did receive a letter of support from the provincial health officer.

"In the letter he commended us for warning the students about the dangers of these energy drinks."

The issue was brought to the district's attention when the principal of Souris High School voiced her concerns, said Dawkins.

"She had noticed strange

behavior from the students who were consuming energy drinks. It was one school that brought it forward. All schools polled agreed that the energy drink problem should be issued."

On Oct. 13, 2008, a board meeting made the new policy regarding energy drinks on school property was made official.

The superintendent released his directive regarding the issue, saying all schools in the district will prohibit the consumption of energy drinks on school property.

Conway is a journalism student at Holland College

Are you voting in the upcoming election?

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I guess I'll vote but I don't know who for. I still need to get to know the candidates.

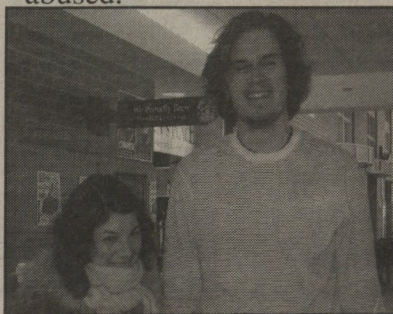


*Megan Rowley
2nd year Business*

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- Definitely!



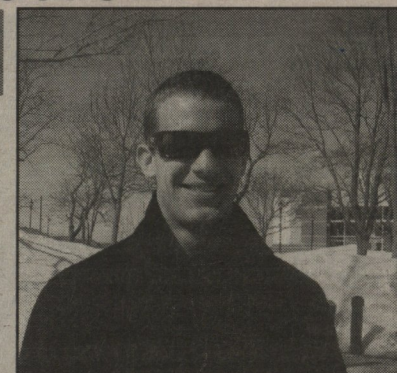
*Kailee Joudrie - 2nd year
Nursing
Matt Morrison- Exec VP*

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- Totally!

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Yeah, I have a friend running so yes.

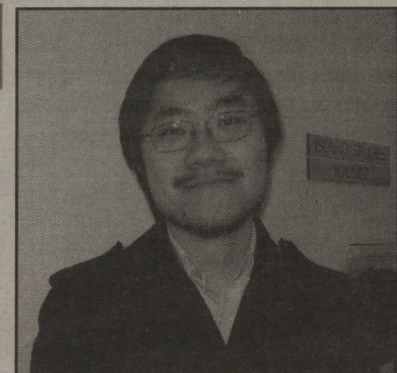


*Dan McAleer.
2nd year Business*

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I don't really want to get involved as an exchange student, I'm kinda cool towards it, but I did nominate someone.



*Christopher Shi
International Student*

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