

RSS Grad Committee

Every year a group of students in Revelstoke prepares to leave high school and make their way in the world. For most parents and kids alike, it's a big deal. What most people in the community may not know is that the events surrounding graduation represent a full year of preparation and activities. Thousands of hours of volunteer time by a small group of dedicated students and parents go toward making grad a meaningful, and above all, *fun* experience.

Our hats go off to this year's committee: Clara Maltby, who has a long history of volunteerism in Revelstoke, was both the staff sponsor and parent chair of the committee; Kathryn Tompkins, secretary; Sharon Lowe, Treasurer; Diana Graham, Communications; and Jane Morris, Dry Grad Activity Coordinator. A core group of about 10 other parents worked hard to support the executive. As well, each year Brad Binnington takes time off work to voluntarily complete the entire stage setup, from curtains to lights. Four grade 12 students kept the enthusiasm going at school: Rochelle Alm, Courtney Jones, Amanda Maki, and Alison Morris. For each event many other students and parents pitched in to make it happen.



**ROCHELLE ALM & AMANDA MAKI
CLARA MALTBY, KATHRYN TOMPKINS & CATHY BURKE**

The grad committee first met last June to begin planning. The entire grad, from the banquet to the all-night dry grad celebration, cost about \$10,000. Each grad had a goal to raise \$100. Throughout the year, fundraising activities included a car wash, massive sale of Poinsettia plants, gift basket raffle, and ski ticket sales. The grads organized and decorated a float for the Christmas parade, and a talent show called 'The Follies'. There was a logo contest for grad clothing, and the clothing itself to be ordered, organized, paid for, and handed-out. There were grad photos, videos, and a DVD. A week before grad, a banquet was held at the Rec Centre with speeches and a memorable 'roasting' of principal Mike Hooker who, in turn, roasted the students. After the ceremony an outdoor tea was held.

The dry grad itself included a multitude of activities like giant tricycles, jousting, laser tag, sumo wrestling, rock band, guitar hero, dance revolution and karaoke. Then there was a 3 a.m. movie at the Roxy, followed by breakfast at the Powder Springs. A fresh shift of parents came in a 2:30 am to help supervise the kids.

The meetings started out monthly, but in June became weekly. Venues had to be booked, events had to be set-up and taken down, programs designed and printed, tickets sold - the list goes on. A newsletter kept everyone up to date on what was happening as well as regular email communications.

For Clara Maltby, it was one of the best committees she has ever worked with, "When someone said they would do something, it was done. Everyone worked really well together". Tompkins adds, "We all had a common goal – to have a nice grad for the kids". For Tompkins, being involved in her kids' activities has always been a priority, "You get to know the kids, you get to know the teachers – my kids are used to having me around for school trips. When you are involved in your kids' lives, you know what they are experiencing!"

For Amanda Maki and Rochelle Alm, the experience was full of learning – how to be adaptable and work with others, organizing and pulling everything together. Even though sometimes it was a challenge to juggle school commitments, exams and grad committee work, it was worth it. Maki says, "I would just remember *this is my grad!*" For everyone, the dry grad was a night to remember. Maki laughs, "We just played! It was like we knew it was our last time to be all together."

For parents and kids alike, all the volunteer hours paid off in the end. Tompkins says, "I know it's a cliché, but when you think of how many people were involved, you realize it really *does* take a whole community to raise a child."

Submitted by Jill Zacharias, Photo courtesy of Cathy Burke, CFDC Volunteer Committee members