

NEW CLASS SWEEPS TORONTO

The Regesh Reconnecting Youth Program is Here

February 2011 has provoked a buzz among student populations. “What class is this?” and “How can I join?” has been on everybody’s lips. The wait is over and the new RY course is here! Students round each other up and head to their respective classrooms to discuss what only they know behind a closed door. “Even if I don’t make it to my first class, I’ll come to RY. It’s cool” explains one of the students. “She helps find ways to get me there in the morning (Henry, Gr.11).” But what is it all about? Well, you could stop by the main office at *G.S. Henry Academy, N.A. Boylen Collegiate* or *R.H. King Academy* and ask about the Facilitators, Christina Eni, Brianne Murray and Lindsey Tomlinson. The general answer is that it’s a skills class. One that you have to be INVITED to join! The subjects include decision making, personal control, self-esteem and interpersonal communication, all of which apply to every student, in every grade, across every ethnicity. ‘Lots of kids in the school want to be in this class, but I was chosen! (King, Gr. 12)’ RY is going good and blessed. It feels like a family (Boylen, Gr. 11).’ Let’s find out what this program is all about!



Orlando Bowen, former football player and now Executive Director of *One Voice One Team*, pals around with RY students at Nelson A. Boylen Collegiate

WHAT THE STUDENTS ARE SAYING

Don’t take it from us, listen to what students at Boylen, Henry and King, are saying about the accredited class: “My favourite part is *Shared Agenda* because you can say what’s on your mind, it’s fun.” says one tenth grade Henry teen. Those at Boylen and King agree. “RY is alright! *Shared Agenda* is my favorite part...its live!! It’s a fun place where I can vent my feelings. My favorite part is *Mood Management, Shared Agenda* and Brianne”. (Boylen, Gr. 9 & 10). “RY is a great learning experience, it teaches us the fundamentals of properly monitoring and developing ways to cut down on potential lifestyle choices that would negatively affect our future. In this class we learn to accept our strengths and weaknesses as well as develop strategies to promote a positive, healthy and active lifestyle. Two thumbs up (King, Gr. 11)!!” Students also ‘learn about self-esteem and how it affects my drug use (King, Gr.11).’ Young scholars are responding well to the format of the class. “I now go to all my classes more often and I do work in my classes (Henry, Gr. 11).” Students are open and willing to give and get advice, and feel confident.

FOR INFORMATION ON THE RY PROGRAM

Telephone Regesh: (416)495-8832
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I like RY because I can feel secure in it. I trust everybody, it’s great. My teacher is great and she really knows how to make the students participate in class. 4 stars out of 4!
-King Student Grade 11

From the Facilitators

The facilitators of RY share thoughts on the class thus far...

Christina Eni: I am excited to become a part of the community at *G.S. Henry Academy*. The students' enthusiasm, creativity and strength is an inspiration and in five short weeks achievements are being made in areas of attendance, mood control and initiative in accessing educational resources. Several of our students performed in the Black and Red Talent Revue and we are looking forward to developing further in areas of sports, health and music production. This school shows great spirit with many resources and clubs! I look forward to RY's success. A special thanks to Ms. G, Mrs. Williams and Mr. Lewis for their support.

Brianne Murray: RY is honored to partner with *Nelson A Boylen*, a small school with a huge heart. Since beginning this February, great achievements have already happened. Skipping, and office referrals have decreased while group bonding and mood management has increased. Interest in the after school program is huge, with over seventy percent attending. Several students acted in a play during the African Heritage Assembly. I couldn't be more amazed and proud of the progress the students are making. Thank you Miss Maharaj and Mr. Easton.

Lindsey Tomlinson: As an alumnus of *RH King Academy*, it is an honor to come back and assist. It's a terrific school where students can take pride in where they are and more importantly where they want to go. We are all beginning to respect and appreciate each other and those who were strangers now sit side by side, each supporting each other and speaking openly about obstacles in their lives. I have felt so much support from the teachers and administration at King, especially Ms. Cole, for all of her hard work in setting up this program. I look forward to watching students grow between now and June.

Photo (left to right): Lindsey Tomlinson, Brianne Murray and Christina Eni.



"I want to take this opportunity to welcome all our first semester RY students to this most exciting and rewarding program. Together with your Facilitators, teachers and peers, I hope you are finding this unique program worthy and fulfilling. The RY Program has so much to offer students and their schools. I have already met some of the students and have heard exciting stories of your progress, even this early into the semester. I look forward to hearing more testimonials of the good, exciting and fun things being done both in the classroom and in the after school programs."



Ed Schild, B.A., M.Sc.
Regesh Ex. Director

BEHIND THE SCENES

The classroom and After School Programs are made possible through the assistance of three dedicated volunteers. This is Ariella's experience:

Being a volunteer with RY has had a very positive impact on my life. Just five weeks into our program I'm seeing what these students are capable of. They have set goals for themselves that would have been unimaginable in previous semesters, i.e. showing up for class, managing their moods, and most importantly creating close bonds with their peers.

For all the parents whose children are in RY, I can testify that your kids are learning valuable life skills. For all the teachers whose pupils attend RY, you may be pleasantly surprised by their involvement in courses this semester. Volunteering in RY has been a truly rewarding experience for me and I am grateful to be part of this endeavour.

Regesh would like to thank Graham, Karen and Ariella for their involvement in the RY.

RY AFTER SCHOOL***About the After School Program***

- Runs every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- By the students, for the students.
- Often partnered with guest speakers and other school programs.
- Delicious snacks and hot food are provided.
- Sports and recreation, movies, music development, game shows with prizes, health info, guest speakers and MUCH MORE!

RY students are taking full advantage of the After School Programs (ASP for short). It's a place where we can grab some food, hang out and have fun. We play sports (can't get enough basketball), YouTube videos, watch movies, access tutoring and job skills or listen to guest speakers. Favorite parts of the ASP are food, chilling and sports (Boylen, Gr. 9). *RY* at Henry partnered with Boys2Men and Girls2Women to host a February carnival in celebration of Black History Month, fashion designer Dianne Debarros showcased her collection alongside photographer Moses Kofi, while Boylen's amazing African Heritage Assembly recognized those African Americans that have shaped our world for the better.

Below: George S. Henry students enjoying their class time

**UPCOMING ASP EVENTS**

It seems all *RY* teens have another thing in common: they 'definitely want to meet *RY* students from other schools (Gr.11, Henry).' The phrase 'I would like to meet other *RY* students' (Gr. 10, Boylen) is heard across the schools weekly. Because the ASP incorporates student input this request will hopefully become reality. An inter-school multi sport tournament will be held between *Nelson A. Boylen Collegiate, George S. Henry Academy and Richard H. King Academy*. Here students will have a chance to showcase skills alongside school spirit and meet others enrolled in *RY*. The event is being planned to have lots of music, dancing and food. Upcoming speakers for the *RY* after school program will also include designer Diane Debarros (of Seneca College), photographer Moses Kofi (Ontario College of Art and Design), Black-CAP sexual health, Metalworks sound technicians, DJ's song writers, workshops on resume writing, job fairs, access to tutoring and lots of field trips. Let's keep the ideas coming!

✦ ***RY is an amazing class that can change lives for the future! RY also shows us another part of our classmates we've never seen. But my favourite part of the after school program is sports.***

-Boylen Student, Grade 12

PLAYING FAVOURITES

STUDENTS SHARE THEIR FAVE PART OF CLASS

There's so much going on in the program and everyone has their favourite part. It can be sharing with others, getting to know people within the school, playing basketball or food. 'It's nice to see people trust each other' mentions a Henry 10th grader. 'RY is great because I feel able to be myself and more comfortable in school (Boylen, Gr. 12).' A fellow student elaborates: "I like it a lot. It's my favorite class this semester. My favorite part is *shared agenda* because it's the perfect time to vent and get everything off your chest as well as talk to the rest of my peers (Henry, Gr. 11)." Over at King Academy, the feeling is mutual. 'I love my *Reconnecting Youth* class! I can be myself and I'm totally comfortable, everybody listens when I talk (King, Gr. 11). Yet another teen mentions 'my favourite part is when I learn how to control my moods (Boylen, Gr.10).' Whatever the reason they enjoy it, students can definitely look forward to seeing more of the RY program in the GTA.

'My favourite part? I just can't explain it. It's awesome.' –Henry Student, Grade 10.



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