

LIFESTYLES

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Youth ON PURPOSE

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Many young people today are confused with their choices, themselves and society. As a consequence, they may be seem listless and bored or act out in ways that are destructive to themselves and/or their community.

Guiding youth to know and love themselves and realize their dreams is the purpose of a program called Youth on Purpose being launched this summer in Langley.

It is based on a previous program created in Sweden by international seminar leader Sandy Levey-Lundine. The inspiration for it came while Levey-Lundine was teaching a personal marketing program there in the mid-1990s, and heard about a father who was suing his son for refusing to get out of bed. The youth said he wouldn't get up because he didn't know what to do what his life.

Summoning her staff, Levey-Lundine developed "Fri Sikt" meaning "open view" which completely changed the lives of 85 Swedish youths and their families.

That program, now called Youth on Purpose, is coming to Langley this summer.

Its vision is to empower young people to discover their unique talents and gifts so they will realize their true purpose and passion for life.

And it's fun to boot, says Levey-Lundine, speaking from her home in Sarasota, Florida.

"It's fun. Anyone in it will tell you it's the most fun thing they've done in their lives. This is the most exciting thing I've seen in my lifetime and I've been all over the world. It's an incredible project."

Fri Sikt, conducted in 1996-7, was funded by Ingbar Jensen, owner of ELSA Corporation, an electronics firm in Sweden. In an award-winning film chronicling the project, Jensen expresses his faith in Levey-Lundine and credits her workshops for saving his marriage and healing his family.

Jensen invested \$300,000 US for an intensive three-month residential program with one staff member for every two students, followed by 18 months of further coursework for 85 at-risk youth whose problems ranged from anorexia, low self-worth and alienation to gang involvement, drug abuse, crime and violence.

These kids are now assisting others in turning their lives around. Ninety-two per cent of the participants have a clear picture of they want to do with their lives and are either enrolled in a career training program or are in the workforce. All those who were previously involved in gangs or on drugs are out of gangs and off drugs. All now have reconnected in a meaningful way with their parents.

"I expected it to be good, but I never expected such greatness out of it," Levey-Lundine said.

"They're still meeting in support teams. In the original program each of them had a mentor, now they have become the



International seminar leader Sandy Levey-Lundine is coming to Langley to head up a dynamic program that aims at empowering youth to discover their unique talents and gifts so they will realize their true passion and purpose in life.

mentor. These kids are in demand because they know how to help people."

The catalyst for the program was the massacre at Columbine High School.

"When the Columbine Massacre happened, something happened inside of me," said Nadine Simonis, administrative coordinator of the Langley program. "I thought, this isn't a game anymore. We've got to show up a lot stronger here."

"It was an internal decision that I know I made with a lot

of other people at the same time. We just feel totally connected with all these young people. It was like this force coming forward and saying we're going to do it."

Simonis' feelings were shared by Langley residents Miriam Evers and Howard Staples, all acolytes of Levey-Lundine's seminars on The Course in Miracles which have been offered locally at Tara Farms.

It was local developer and businessman Stanley Silverman, owner of Tara Farms, who asked Levey-Lundine to set up a youth program in Langley. He is one of several sponsors.

"I had thought he and I would do this from the time I met with Stanley Silverman. It was the same with Ingbar Jensen. It's an intuition," said Levey-Lundine.

All young people ages 16 to 24 are welcome to participate.

"We're now enrolling a huge cross section of kids who want more in life," said Simonis. "We want to take what's good and make it shine."

Levey-Lundine has a BA in psychology and an MA in special education. Since founding On Purpose in 1980 she has taught workshops to 30,000 people in the U.S., Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany and Sweden.

Levey-Lundine's aim is to clear people of guilt, fear and conflict; take responsibility for themselves and their lives; and develop healthy relationships. Her workshops employ a great variety of tools ranging from leadership training, to yoga, meditation, drama and physical work. Many of the staff instructing the new program were involved in the program in Sweden.

Youth on Purpose will be limited to 60 local youth and 20 international youth aged 16 to 25 and will take place Aug. 7-19 at Xenia Centre on Bowen Island. Students will spend half a day working with Levey-Lundine on core course material and the other half-day with drama/music director, Jack Bernard, working in psychodrama, voice projection, pantomime, song and dance. Other activities will include swimming, hiking, boating and building.

The program will culminate in a musical production to be performed for parents, sponsors and the community on Aug. 19 at 11 a.m. at Colossus in Langley.

Following the 12-day intensive, the 60 local participants will undertake further seminars, meet weekly as a group, be paired with a trained, older mentor and work in one-on-one sessions with support workers.

"By the end of this program, we will have youth that are fully alive, clearly expressive, rejoined with their families, know their vision for their lives, have plans for the future, communicate clearly and take responsibility for their lives," said Levey-Lundine.

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