

# LOCAL News



MONICA LAMB-YORSKI PHOTO

**SHARING A MESSAGE:** Local youths participated in a claymation workshop April 8 at Northwest Community College facilitated by Sherry Simon, front right, of the McCreary Centre Society, and Mark Venesch, back right, of Reel Youth. From the workshop, three short films were produced and shown on April 9 at the Tom Rooney Playhouse. Several of the female participants were part of Rupert Chicks, a group that meets with Treena Decker on Mondays at the Salvation Army.

## Students make moving films

BY MONICA LAMB-YORSKI  
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Fourteen local youths participated in a claymation workshop at Northwest Community College on April 8.

With the help of Vancouver-based workshop facilitators, Sheila Simon of the McCreary Centre Society and Mark Venesch of Reel Youth, the participants produced three 90-second films.

They tackled the issues of substance use and abuse, physical and emotional health and marginalized youths using clay, cameras and creativity.

McCreary Centre Society conducts extensive surveys regularly, publishes findings and through its Aboriginal Next Steps program, offers extensive help for youths to develop and deliver local projects that promote healthy youth development.

Prince Rupert is one of nine communities the McCreary Society is visiting during the next two years.

In the morning segment of the workshop, participants heard from Simon about the current status of youth health and some statistics about aboriginal teens.

They learned that among aboriginal youths, instances of suicide are not

increasing, substance abuse is declining as is the rate of sexual and physical abuse.

"Youth around the province are sick of hearing that we're bad and that we're making bad decisions," Simon told people who gathered at the Tom Rooney Playhouse to see the films on Wednesday evening.

From that discussion, the youths worked together to come up with ideas for a short film and then spent the afternoon with Vanesch's help creating a piece.

Simon said she and Vanesch were impressed with how well the participants worked together and how hard they worked.

"It can be very fidgety," one of the participants said when Simon asked what was the hardest part about creating the films.

Even though the films are each only about 90 seconds long, participants learned how much work goes into creating such films.

Each group took dozens of photographs with the digital camera, painstakingly moving the characters limbs or creating facial expressions from the plasticine.

Tawny Johnson spent time making a younger brother and older sister out of plasticine and collaborated with the rest of her group to create the film, *Tragic Hope*, a piece about drinking and doing drugs.

"I've never done anything like this before," she said.

Lila Jean McKay who worked on the film with Johnson said: "I'm looking forward to seeing our movie with sound. We learned that you can't take too big of a step because it won't look real if there are big gaps."

The other two films *Over the Rainbow*, which addresses the issue of marginalized youth on the streets needing a place to go, and *Pour Out Your Heart*, which deals with physical and emotional health.

A powerful quote came at the end of *Pour Out Your Heart* stating: "If you pour out the booze and pour out the love, the family will rise above."

"Sometimes, there is anonymity in claymation where people can say what they might not say in person," said Venesch after the films had been shown.

The films will be available on *YouTube* and entered in a film festival through [www.reelyouth.ca](http://www.reelyouth.ca).