

The theme of the Ontario School Counsellors' Association Conference this year was Ready for the Future: Developing a Vision and the focus was on youth mental health, curriculum connections, post-secondary education opportunities and career sectors/pathways. Once again, the organization of this conference, the workshops and the keynote speakers were excellent. Dr. Sean Lyons delivered the keynote address on Sunday in which he stressed the importance of leadership and management styles, values and attitudes of the different generations currently in the workforce. Monday's keynote address by Canada's incredible Jan Arden highlighted lessons learned from her struggles with mental illness, her mother's dementia and her angry father's battle with alcoholism. The keynote speaker on Tuesday, Jean-Philippe Michel who founded Sparkpath gave us very useful and inspiring strategies for career counselling.

The networking and workshops were really effective so I am able to share much more details and current information with colleagues and students. I attended workshops on Pathways to Apprenticeships, Plan B – What Every Student Needs to Know, WENTT – Women Entering Non-Traditional Trades - EXCELLENT! - , Student Pathways, When a Plan Fails, Career Studies: New Approaches and Building SHSM Enrollment. I was able to get a lot of information (and swag) from the exhibit booths including some resources for Army Reserve Co-op for high school students in the Toronto area for the past 15+ years. This runs every week day for most of a semester but as a result of these discussions and additional meetings in the north, students may soon be able to earn up to 4 co-op credits while becoming a qualified Reservist in the Canadian Armed Forces.