

College Can Be a “Kaleidoscope” of Fun by Carol Abernathy

Life can be pretty demanding and stressful for college students at Kalamalka Campus of Okanagan College as they struggle to learn new concepts and skills, juggle their schedules to find enough time for study, and maybe fit in a part-time job or two to pay for their hard-won education. So it is a good thing that Kalamalka Campus also offers inexpensive ways for students to have fun with their friends. After all, books and exams are not the only things to look forward to as a college student seeking a well-rounded education.

All students at the Kalamalka Campus belong to the Kalamalka Campus Student Association (KCSA). Over the years, the KCSA has developed an excellent reputation for hosting many special events with nationally-known guest musicians and comedians from out of town. But the KCSA doesn't always need to look very far for impressive performing artists. Since KCSA held their first annual student talent night three years ago, they have uncovered an array of creative abilities in their own members. For example, Justin Sharma, a Business student and member of the KCSA Executive, is a very talented local young musician well worth listening to on any occasion and always ready to generously share his talents with the college community. Other student talent night performers have included dancers, poets, visual artists, and even martial arts masters.

Of course, students are not the only talented performers at Okanagan College. During the week, John Lent is an excellent English professor dedicated to helping his students develop their creative writing skills. On the weekends, he is a member of the very talented well-known local trio of Lent, Fraser, and Wall. Besides providing exquisite and intricate guitar-based melodies and harmonies, the members of this band are always promoting the talents of young musicians and providing opportunities for them to showcase their abilities.

That is an attitude that the current Executive of the KCSA heartily endorses. So, this year, the KCSA is sponsoring a new event for the Kalamalka Campus community as well as the general public. “Kaleidoscope” is an “open mic” event each Thursday evening from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm in the Kalamalka Campus cafeteria, where musicians, poets, story-tellers, dancers, and creative people of all kinds and ages can hone their craft, develop their performance skills, and showcase their creative abilities. The rules for Kaleidoscope are simple: performers can sign up for 15 minutes of fame. After that, they must give up the stage to the next act, so that everyone gets a chance to perform. Admission to Kaleidoscope is free, although donations to the Okanagan College student scholarship fund are gratefully accepted.

Kaleidoscope takes place in an excellent venue overlooking the spectacular Kalamalka Lake. There is plenty of seating and hot food is available for hungry spectators as well as performers. Each Kaleidoscope is unique. The performance is dependent on the artists who show up that night, so it is always unpredictable, and occasionally painful, but sometimes there are moments of pure magic, like the night that Justin Sharma met and performed with John Lent for the first time. This is your invitation to Kaleidoscope at your community college. We hope to see you there.

Kaleidoscope is held at 5:00 – 7:00 pm in the cafeteria of Kalamalka Campus each Thursday evening from January 5 - April 6, 2006. Carol Abernathy is an instructor in the Adult Academic & Career Preparation program at the Kalamalka Campus.