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Educational handicaps Turning on bright kids

by Greg Harris

Gifted children in Alberta are being educationally handicapped because of government funding procedure, says Dr. Charles Norman, Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Education.

The provincial Ministry of Education provides special assistance for emotionally, physically and mentally handicapped students, but not for bright children.

"Essentially the bright child is not considered exceptional in the sense of being physically handicapped, although many people feel they are educationally handicapped. They are handicapped within the educational system because they don't fit," says Norman.

"Every child should be educated to the maximum of his potential," he says.

The Edmonton Chapter of the Association for Bright Children (ABC) has asked education minister Dave King to allocate money specifically to the development of programs for bright children.

King was unavailable for

comment last week, and deputy minister of education, Earl Hawkesworth declined to comment.

Harold Carledge, president of ABC Edmonton chapter, says his group is pushing for programs in which the bright child will be "taken out of the regular classroom and given special attention...challenged."

He says he hopes ABC will

spread to smaller centers in Alberta so more pressure can be brought to bear on the provincial government.

Carledge says it will probably take "a lot of work" to get government action on the matter. The Ontario chapter of ABC pressured the Ontario government for seven years before special provisions were made for gifted children there.



Paul Nicol.
Young artist with a big talent.
How far will he go?

Nowhere

It's only a year since art school, but Paul is already being talked about as a name to watch.

It's heady stuff. With all the adulation, Paul is neglecting his work.

Parties and late hours provide easy distractions. So does too much drinking.

Paul is abusing his health, misusing beverage alcohol and hurting his future. Unless he changes, his talent could be harmed beyond repair.

Without it, he won't go anywhere.

Very far

It's only a year since art school, but Paul is already being talked about as a name to watch.

Paul's excited, but he has things in perspective.

He enjoys a drink when the time is right, with friends and with moderation. But he knows nothing can take the place of hard work to build his reputation.

Gifts like Paul's are fragile and worth protecting. Because Paul understands, he'll go far.

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