

THE CANOE

SCHOOL DISTRICT No.43 (COQUITLAM), MAY 2016
VOL. I NO. 2.



JOURNEYS OF INDIGENEITY

PADDLING IN HARMONY

On Wednesday, April 13, 2016, a very important ceremony took place to celebrate a new partnership between the Surrey, Mission and Coquitlam School Districts. The Aboriginal Education Departments of these districts have decided to come together and to work as one in producing *The Canoe*, an all-Aboriginal newspaper.

The purpose of this ceremony was to ask our Elders for blessing and guidance as we embrace this new challenge. Agnes Giesbrecht, advisory co-chair and Elder for the Mission School District, Dawn Brown, artist in residence and Elder for the Coquitlam School District and Alvin Myrhre representing MNBC (Métis Nation British Columbia) and Elder for the Surrey School District each took the time to speak on the importance and benefits surrounding this new partnership. It was explained that this union will transcend the voice of our youth across the province and work to further engage our young people to embrace their culture and successes.

Aboriginal peoples hold a very special place in British Columbia's history, its landmarks, and in our collective heart. They are a driving force in our province and have a lot of knowledge and teachings to share. The *Canoe* newspaper is an initiative that aims to celebrate Aboriginal successes. It is about embracing the stories, the history, and the cultures. It is about giving our respected Elders and students a voice. As *The Canoe* develops and expands, it seeks to showcase students, teachers and Elders making a difference in our communities. It hopes to be used a resource tool for you to access information on upcoming events and notable stories that are happening around us. The Surrey, Mission and Coquitlam School Districts invite you, as our valued readers, to come with us as we paddle in harmony.



District Principals: Joseph Heslip (Mission), Philippe Brulot (Coquitlam), and Solomon Lee (Surrey)
Elders: Agnes Giesbrecht (Mission), Alvin Myrhre (Surrey), and Dawn Brown (Coquitlam)



MISSION SCHOOL DISTRICT #75



COQUITLAM SCHOOL DISTRICT #43



SURREY SCHOOL DISTRICT #36



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2016

HONOURING OUR ELDERS

KEEPING THE EMBERS BURNING: A STORYTELLING POEM PROJECT CHRISTINE MORRISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Grade 4 students at Christine Morrison Elementary School in Mission, BC, embarked on a storytelling poem project with the help of some local Aboriginal Storytellers. The project, entitled, Keeping the Embers Burning: A Storytelling Poem Project, hopes to illustrate the time-honoured practice of sharing knowledge by way of oral tradition customary to First Nations communities.

We invited local First Nations community members to our classroom to share some good food and some good conversation. We asked them questions about their lives as children and as adults. We shared stories about our lives, too. We laughed and we cried, but most importantly, we came to understand.

We would like to thank Selena Schaffer, Florence Louie, Agnes Giesbrecht, Herman Dan, Karinanne Buckner, Neil Phillips and Phyllis Wright for sharing their life stories with us.

We hope that you enjoy reading our stories and poems as much as we enjoyed our time spent with our First Nations Storytellers.

letsé mot letsé thale



I am Phyllis.
 I wonder why the boys
 and girls were separated
 at the school.
 I hear the horse sleigh ap-
 proaching.
 I see the salmon jumping
 upstream.
 I am Stó:lō.
 I pretend that it is Christ-
 mas and the man would
 arrive with gifts for all the
 children.
 I feel my heart beat quickly
 when I go canoe racing.
 I touch the smooth hide of
 my horse.
 I worry that I will be wo-
 ken up by the nuns.
 I taste the delicious
 smoked salmon.
 I am now 74 years old.
 I understand that life has
 changed.
 I say that I like to be alone
 sometimes.
 I dream that I am running
 through the forest.
 I try to participate in pow-
 wows.
 I hope that my grandchil-
 dren will remember our
 culture.
 I am TaTeYah.

Written by Paul, Aidan,
 Olivia and Luca



I am Neil.
 I wonder if our team will
 win the basketball game.
 I hear people of all ages
 playing slahal.
 I see the gorges stretching
 alongside Lillooet.
 I am from Xa'xsta and was
 born in the winter.
 I pretend to slide down the
 hill on the sleigh.
 I feel curious about the
 story of the black hole.
 I touch the icy lake water
 as I save my friend from
 falling.
 I worry that I will have to
 eat oatmeal every day.
 I taste freedom as I leave
 the residential school.
 I am now 64 years old.
 I understand that stories
 teach children how to live.
 I say words in my tradi-
 tional language to keep my
 culture alive.
 I dream that we will con-
 tinue to hunt and fish.
 I try to participate in fire
 and water ceremonies.
 I hope that my grandchil-
 dren will stay strong.
 I am Xaytlem.

Written by Riley K.,
 Riley P., Sophia and Daisy

I am Agnes.
 I wonder if the children are
 playing "rag ball".
 I hear the chopping of the
 wood.
 I see the salmon being car-
 ried home to be canned.
 I am from Samahquam.
 I pretend that I am climb-
 ing up a tree.
 I feel quiet inside when
 watching silent movies.
 I touch the rope as I try not
 to slip on the icy path.
 I worry about falling off the
 old man's bike.
 I taste the sweetly picked
 berries.
 I am now 67 years old.
 I understand that it is im-
 portant to recognize youth
 for their accomplishments.
 I say that if something
 needs to be done, I will do
 it.
 I dream that I am winning
 the race.
 I try to be a good grand-
 mother.
 I hope to give presents and
 cake to my grandchildren.
 I am Tixten.

Written by Lyssa, Eliza-
 beth, Nikhail and Kiran



I am Florence.
 I wonder why my parents
 named me after a fish.
 I hear the kids at the
 school playing.
 I see black-cloaked nuns
 canning tomatoes.
 I am St'át'imc.
 I pretend that I meet my
 sister all over again.
 I feel like playing slahal
 and sewing buckskin.
 I touch the skin of the
 drum.
 I worry that my culture will
 disappear.
 I taste the salty, canned
 food at the school.
 I am now 80 years old.
 I understand the songs
 from my band.
 I say that I need to speak
 my language.
 I dream that I am still
 a baby wrapped in my
 mother's arms.
 I try to participate in pot-
 latches.
 I hope that people will un-
 derstand about the past.
 I am Awchpineqw.

Written by Jasmine,
 Taylor, Emilie and Alex

AN INTERVIEW WITH ELDER FRAZER MACDONALD

BY: MONIQUE RAMPERSAD

GRADE 9, LA MATHESON SECONDARY

ANNIE OHANA, ABORIGINAL TEACHER ADVOCATE



Monique Rampersad, Annie Ohana, and Frazer MacDonald

Hi! I am Monique, a proud Métis student at LA Matheson Secondary. I enjoy my horseback riding and dance team, and I am having a great school year because I have good teachers. I was happy to interview Frazer because I am interested in knowing more about my culture.

Q: What is special about being an Elder?

A: In my culture, it's the respect given to me by the youth. I teach and pass on to Aboriginal students that respect. It is so important within our culture, and others can learn from us by learning to listen.

Q: How did you find out about your heritage?

A: On my father's side, my first ancestor came over [with] a group of Scottish soldiers recruited for the War of 1812. He moved down to Selkirk and began working for the Hudson's Bay Company. Every male within my family worked with the HBC right up until my father. My father ran a dog team for the HBC. My mother was Métis and is connected to Phillip Turner, a master surveyor, who taught surveying to Simon Fraser. I only found out I was Métis after my brother received a document showing both my mom and dad were Métis. When I asked my mom why we didn't grow up Métis, she said, "When you are living in small-town Saskatchewan/Alberta and you are a 'half-breed,' you are on the bottom rung; you are shamed for who you are." Growing up, I tended to side [with] and support First Nations people. When I found out as an adult who I was as a person, [I] completely changed for the better.

Q: What lessons can you pass on about being resilient?

A: I want students to feel good. I get students registered for their Métis Citizenship Card. It means a great deal and is an accepted government document. I use it as official ID and do so proudly. As I tell students, "Put your head up; be proud of who you are." You can do so much with that and can deflect a lot of negativity. When my parents were isolated by their community, it was their heritage that saw them through tough times.

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

A: For 30 years, I have run a junior lacrosse league with nine teams across the Lower Mainland. Lacrosse is the original game of the First Nations people. It is fun, and I have been able to help young individuals succeed. I also enjoy woodworking and restoration of furniture and cars.

Q: Why is it important for students to be in touch with their Elders?

A: If you don't learn about your heritage, you miss a whole lot, and we miss the chance to learn from you, as well. Keeping in touch means you feel good and have respect about yourself. We have a culture that will survive forever; it is a responsibility for Elders to pass our culture on to young ones through storytelling.

A SHARED VOICE



TLA'AMIN TREATY

BY: TERRI GALLIGOS, ELEMENTARY RESOURCE TEACHER,
AND CHIEF CLINT WILLIAMS

The Tla'amin people are Northern Coast Salish formally known as the Sliammon Indian Band situated in Powell River, British Columbia. Tla'amin formally became a Nation after over 20 years of negotiations.

The treaty process is a 6-stage negotiation between the federal government, the provincial government, and First Nations. A combination of contribution (grant) funding and loans are provided to First Nations on cost-share basis by the federal and provincial governments to support negotiation efforts.

Negotiation Stages:

Stage 1: Statement of intent

Stage 2: Readiness

Stage 3: Framework Agreement

Stage 4: Agreement-In-Principle

Stage 5: Final Agreement

Stage 6: Treaty Implemented

1994

2010

1996

2003/2004

2011/1014

2016

An excerpt from Chief Clint Williams of the Tla'amin Nation Re: Tla'amin Treaty effective date, April 4, 2016

We are now a self-governing nation, free from the Indian Act and we are now operating underneath of our own Tla'amin Nation Laws and Regulations. This is an exciting point in Tla'amin history; however as we begin travelling down this brand new path I want to emphasize that we will always acknowledge and celebrate our history, traditions and knowledge of our ancestors as we are all extremely proud of where, and who we come from. We will continue to grow and celebrate the culture and language that our elders managed to keep alive through some very challenging times. I truly admire their strength and resilience for hanging on to the teachings that were passed on to them from their elders and ancestors. This is truly a gift that we all must share and grow together for many generations to come.

The night that we burned the Indian act was such a powerful event, as we were putting this part of our history behind us. I could feel and see the sense of pride and hope in the faces of our people as they participated in the evening. I hope that we were all able to take something away from that evening. The ceremonial burning can be used as a positive step in anyone's healing process as this symbolically can be a new beginning for many new and positive things for all of us.

As we move forward as the Tla'amin Nation Government, there will be many challenges that we will need to deal with but now have new tools and authorities to deal with our matters internally. No longer will we look to the Department of Indian Affairs to sort out our issues for us. We are once again a self-governing people. Our main goal has been, and will always continue to be, to improve the lives of our people. We will do this by being a transparent and responsible government from now and well into the future....



Photos are courtesy of the Sliammon Treaty Society from the burning of the Indian Act, April, 2016 outside the Tla'amin Governance House.

AN INTERVIEW WITH SUPERINTENDENT PATRICIA GARTLAND BY: DANIEL HERD GRADE 11, SUWA'LKH SCHOOL



Q: Would you care to share a little bit about your family and where you grew up?

A: Yes, I would love to. I was born in Toronto, but I grew up in Coquitlam. My family started in Montreal; we then traveled to Toronto, Regina, Edmonton, and finally we ended up in Coquitlam. Once we got to Coquitlam, we didn't ever want to leave. I went to school in the Coquitlam School District. I went to Parkland Elementary, Winslow Junior Secondary, and then to Centennial Senior Secondary. I then attended the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University and started my career as a French immersion teacher for the Coquitlam School District. I had a variety of roles; one of my most important roles was in [the] International Education Program. I founded the program as a way to bring international students into the Coquitlam School District.

Q: What is your favorite part of the work you do as Superintendent?

A: I like to be able to contribute to our school district while helping to empower people to be all that they can be and realize their full potential. I really want to build people up and enhance the leadership capacity of everyone in the school district. This is so that we can continue to be an outstanding place to learn and live.

Q: As you know, we live in a global world, and technologies are consistently evolving. How can the school system keep up with these changes, understanding that school districts have limited funds?

A: In my work with International Education, I have been able to travel a lot around the world and meet a lot of new people. I find that the more people you meet, the more you find that you have in common, rather than differences. I think that even though we need technology to maintain relationships, the key is relationship building. The key is what is always discussed at Suwa'lkh School: understanding different cultures, different identities, appreciating and taking the time to fully understand people. That is what makes us global citizens. Technology has a role in helping in keeping that communication going. In terms of technology within our district, we really want our students and staff to have access to technology. We are putting money into our infrastructure to ensure access is available to everyone.

Q: What are the skills and abilities a student should acquire to be successful in this changing world?

A: I believe that the skills a student should acquire are a strong cultural identity, confidence, communications skills, understanding their role in society and wanting to make a contribution. Critical thinking is very important; I believe this is being able to take the information that is coming at us all day and create your own centre of understanding. It is also important to have a moral compass that keeps you centred and grounded, and finally creativity.

Q: What specific programs is School District No. 43 putting in place to ensure students are getting opportunities to get an education that meets their needs?

A: We try to have a wide variety of programs and options. Being a large school district, it allows us to have that type of variety and differentiation. We hope to always be able to offer a wide variety of options so that students so can pursue their interests. We also like to offer transition programs into the world of work and post-secondary. We want to find ways to help student have skills that they can use to help them be independent to realize their dreams and capacities.

Q: Aboriginal students have a particular history that enriches our country. How can we make more room for the Aboriginal voice at School District No. 43?

A: We are currently implementing the First Peoples Principles of Learning, the Truth and Reconciliation report and the call[s] to action in our curriculum. Teachers and administrators from across the district are learning to weave those perspectives into their teachings in the classroom. It is a real priority for our school district to make these resources for our teachers available. It is not only about embracing the history of First Nations people with an open heart and desire to learn, but also having those teachings be an essential part of instruction.



Daniel Herd and Patricia Gartland

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT MR. FIN DONNELLY

BY: JADE MROCZKOWSKI

GRADE 10, SUWA'LKH SCHOOL



Jade mroczkowski, Suwa'lkh Student

Even though most of his work happens at Parliament in Ottawa, Member of Parliament Fin Donnelly is doing a lot to support the communities of his Port Moody-Coquitlam constituency. I had the pleasure of interviewing Mr. Donnelly via phone from Ottawa, and he shared with me his opinions, background and views on politics.

Mr. Donnelly grew up in Port Moody and served as a City Council member for seven years before moving into federal politics in 2009 as Member of Parliament for New Westminster-Coquitlam. He served as MP of that riding for six years until its redistribution in the 2015 election, with part of the former riding becoming Port Moody-Coquitlam. He is now the Member of Parliament for Port Moody-Coquitlam. He works on the national level, taking issues from our neighbourhoods to Ottawa, and is focused on supporting affordable housing, health care and child care. His main goal is to make our community sustainable by trying to give back to the local economy.

On a national level, Mr. Donnelly is the New Democratic Party critic for Fisheries, Oceans, and Canadian Coast Guard – a position he feels connected to for many reasons, one of which being his 1995 swim of the Fraser River to bring attention to the need to care for our natural environments. When I asked him about the hunting and killing of ocean life around the world, he spoke of this huge concern and mentioned a national campaign to protect large predators in Canadian waters, hoping to stop the slaughter of sharks in particular. Mr. Donnelly said there is a “long way to go; we are still impacting top predators of fish.”

His job as critic can be frustrating, depending on the responses he gets from the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. There are times when the government makes a promise and doesn't follow through; for example, closing coast guard stations after they promised to keep them open. Even though he deals with all of these stresses, he says the toughest part of his job is the travelling and jumping between time zones, but it has taught him to celebrate the small things.

Mr. Donnelly was welcomed to the Squamish Nation in 1997 and was given the name Iyim yewyews, which means Strength of the Killer Whale. Locally, he works with the Kwikwetlem chief and council, who are trying to build a new community hall, boat ramp and other projects.

Mr. Donnelly gave me some ideas on how we, as youth, can contribute to the community. Most of all, he said we need to get involved with the community, speak out and support the issues that are affecting us and our area. It's important to pay attention to the issues and go beyond the headlines, he said, so you can research what is happening and then take action.

I appreciated speaking with Mr. Donnelly about the issues that matter in our community. Hearing about all of the things he is trying to do made me think more about politics and what I can do to make a difference in my community.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHNNY WILLIAMS, MISSION, BC

BY: SHELBY BRANDY

GRADE 9, ÉCOLE MISSION SENIOR SECONDARY



Q: Do you have an ancestral name?

A: My ancestral name is Qwa-honn, and it comes from the Coquitlam area.

Q: What are your connections to the canoe and canoe pulling?

A: I have a fairly deep connection with this. For a while, there was pretty much nobody in this area doing kids' war canoe racing. What happened was nobody was taking the kids out. They would show up for practice, but no one would take them out. This canoe was used for the men's crews, and I got myself in a little trouble. The men got a little mad at me. I turned around, and I didn't let the men get on right away, and I started taking the kids out in it. It just grew from there every year. When I started off, I had 10 kids, and that was five years ago. Last year I had 68 kids.

Q: How easy is it to keep your tradition alive?

A: For myself, it's very easy because you don't look at it as trying to keep the tradition alive. It's just something you do; it's not something you have to try at.

Q: What is the style of this canoe?

A: This canoe here is what we classify as a war canoe, but it's strictly a racing canoe. Obviously we don't war anymore, so these canoes are made for speed, not for war or for big travelling.

Q: How do you care for and store the canoes?

A: The care itself is actually quite work-intensive. Every year all of our canoes are really well used, and there is always upkeep on them. One of the things I did with this one was starting off by sanding it, re-varnishing it, and then I put a couple of coats of wax on it. But that is not the only time I do that. Just before the racing season starts, I will do it again, and halfway through the season I will do it again. And any of the upkeep – like, things once in a while will break. That is my job and my responsibility to fix it.

Q: What do you do with the canoes when it's not canoe season?

A: They are stored at my house. I am fortunate enough

to have a big shed in the back. The 11-paddle, our two six-paddles, and last year I ended up with eight single-paddles and a double at my house. They are all covered and stored so they are out of the sun. They are not in the rain, but they are out in the open air, which helps them dry.

Q: How do you become a canoe puller?

A: It's actually very simple. You just basically show up for practice and keep an open mind about how to paddle properly – what we view as properly in our techniques.

Q: What do you call the group of people you canoe pull with?

A: This canoe is Ts'esqel (pronounced tuh-scul), which in our language (Halq'emeylem) means golden eagle. So if we say it in English, we are the Golden Eagle Canoe Club.

Q: What do you enjoy most about canoe pulling?

A: Just paddling with the kids and teaching them sportsmanship. We get a lot of kids who might not get to travel otherwise. We have kids who have never been camping before. We camp at most of our races. We take two truckloads of gear. We go to a race on Vancouver Island every year, and we always have kids who have never been on a ferry. So it's great to be there for that first life experience. That has been pretty cool.

Q: How long have you been a canoe puller?

A: I started canoe pulling when I was 14. We pull as Buckskins until we turn 16; then we age out to the men's crews, but I took a break after I aged out from Buckskins. I didn't pull for a while. How I got back into it was that I started off as an official. I think I was in my mid-twenties when I became part of different committees around the Valley. I was one of the boat officials, announcer, starting gunman and stuff like that. Eventually I got my way back onto the canoe again.

Q: What would be something inspiring for people who would like to come back to canoe pulling?

A: One of the biggest things that is really neat with our war canoe races is that there is a very deep cultural background to what goes with this. This is not just a simple, "Oh, hey, look, canoes – let's jump on and let's go." Canoe pulling itself is very sacred, it's very old, and the teachings we have that go around it are quite intensive.

Q: Thank you, Johnny, for showing us this beautiful place and your canoe. Thank you for sharing your story with us today.

ABORIGINAL ARTISANS



LISA SHEPHERD, MÉTIS ARTISAN

BY: MELISSA STEELE

GRADE 9, ÉCOLE HERITAGE PARK MIDDLE

Brief History

Lisa Shepherd is a Métis woman who has spent most of her life learning about her culture. She is an expert beader, an accomplished Métis jig dancer and very knowledgeable about plant medicine and protocol. She loves to share her teachings with everyone. Listen and be respectful; you will learn a lot.

Q: Where are you from, Lisa?

A: Spruce Grove, Alberta. I have lived most of my life in the Fraser Valley.

Q: Did you always know you were Métis?

A: I always knew, but I didn't fully understand what that meant. (Lisa said her family did cultural things, but she didn't know other Métis.)

Lisa told me that she gained her extensive knowledge of beading, plant medicine and culture from other "knowledge keepers." These are people who have had sacred knowledge entrusted to them in order to make sure the knowledge is not lost or misused. "I followed protocol by offering them tobacco and asking them gently if they would share their sacred knowledge with me, and what my intentions were. I also gifted them for sharing their knowledge."

Q: When and why did you decide to become a Cultural Presenter?

A: I decided to become a Presenter when I had a child

and became part of the school system. Some of my Elders told me to tell my entire story in my own words, to teach others.

Q: Are you ever nervous to speak in front of people?

A: Yes. If people are laughing and talking, then I feel disrespected because they aren't listening. When that happens, the room doesn't feel culturally safe to share in. We can usually fix that with open discussions.

Lisa Shepherd has a Facebook page where you can learn more about the work she does and her wonderful workshops. This picture was taken in a class where Lisa was teaching recently at Heritage Park Middle School in Mission.

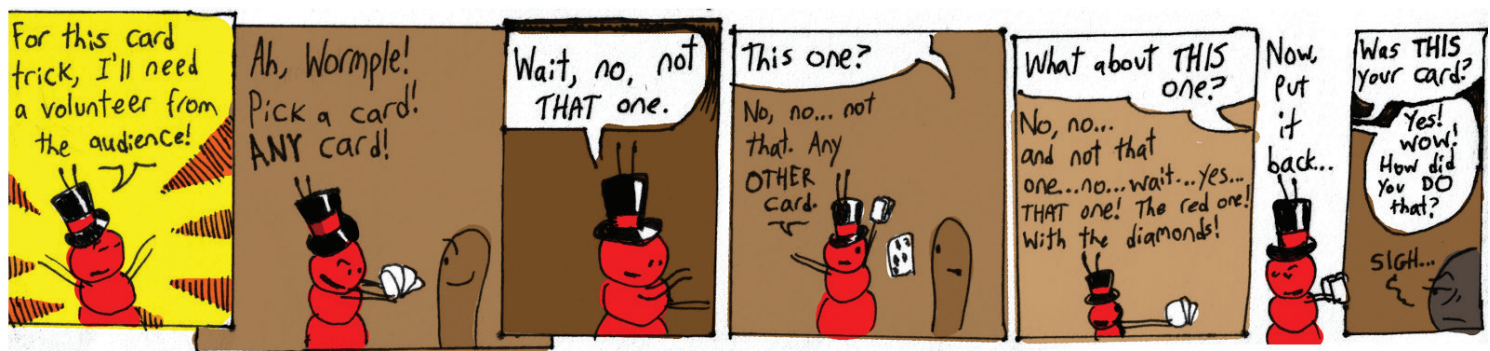


Lisa Shepherd, Métis Artisan

THE BUGS

BY: JUDE FRIESEN

GRADE 8, FRANK HURT SECONDARY



THE ADVENTURES OF PRAIRIE DOG

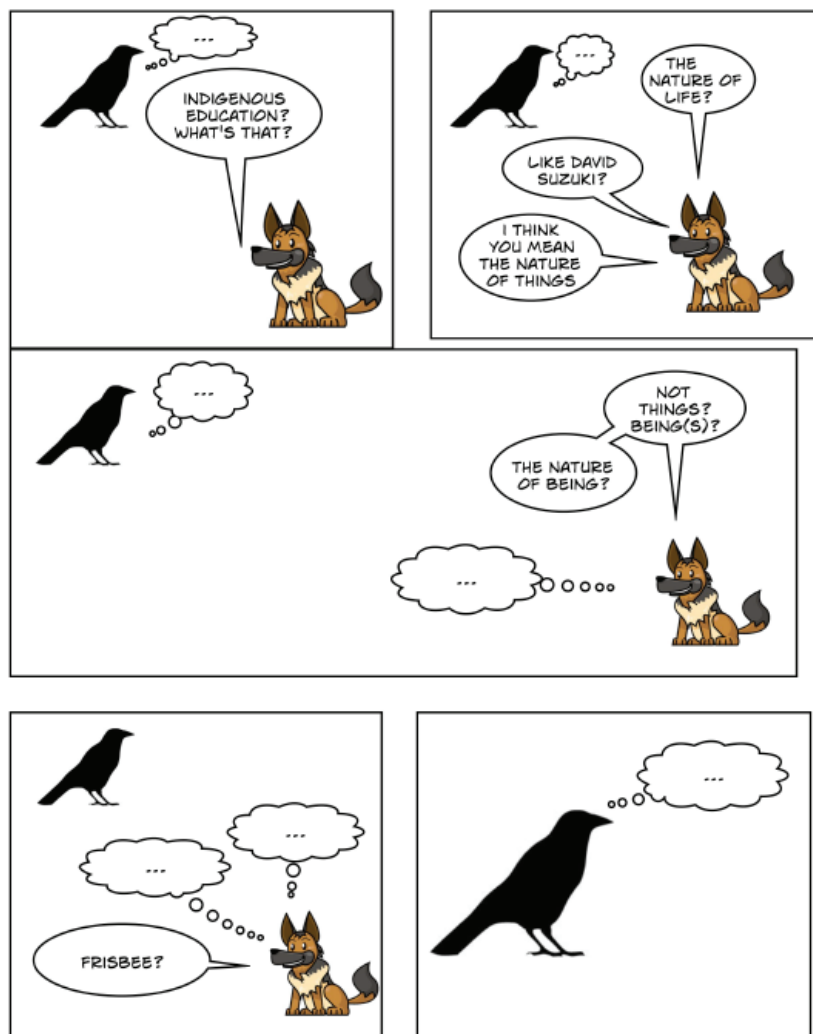
BY: KIRK GUMMOW



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IS A BROAD TERM WITH DIFFERENT MEANINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND IN NO WAY DOES THE PRECEDING COMIC REPRESENT THE TOTALITY OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION. ONE ASPECT OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION FROM THIS AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE IS THAT IT ALLOWS ONE TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES ABOUT LIFE BECAUSE IT PRIVILEGES AN UNDERSTANDING THAT EACH PERSON BRINGS TO THE SPACE VALID AND LEGITIMATE KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTED FROM WITHIN THEIR OWN CONTEXTS. WHICH IS WHY RAVEN MIGHT NOT BE AS CYNICAL AS ONE MIGHT ASSUME. RAVEN MAY FULL WELL KNOW THAT INTERROGATING ONE'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD IS AN INDIVIDUAL ENDEAVOUR AND IS ONLY OF INTEREST TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN POSITIONED AND ENCOURAGED THROUGH AMPLE TIME AND SPACE TO REFLECT UPON IT. ASKING OURSELVES AS WADE DAVIS (2009) PUT IT, 'WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN AND ALIVE' IS A NOTION RARELY EXPLORED, HISTORICALLY ANYWAY, IN CANADIAN SCHOOLING. TO PUT EXISTENTIALISM MORE TOWARDS THE CENTER OF EDUCATION WOULD BE PROVOCATIVE TO BE SURE, BUT MAY SERVE TO EMPOWER STUDENTS TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES IF IT'S EXPLORED ON THEIR OWN TERMS.

"INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IS NOT ONLY ROOTED IN SENSE OF PLACE BUT ALSO IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WHOLE SENSE OF BEING HUMAN"

GREGORY CAJETE



OUR CANOE HAS REACHED ITS DESTINATION

BY: MALCOLM KEY

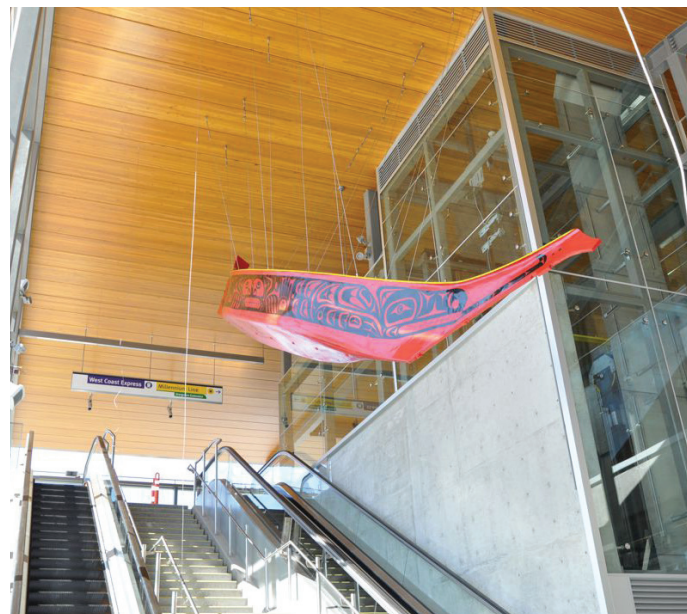
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY COORDINATOR



Our canoe is now on display in the Moody Centre Skytrain station. It is now a permanent piece of public art to be enjoyed for generations to come. Our hope is that it will create a positive impression of Aboriginal culture to all who pass by it.

The canoe has had a remarkable life journey. In the late '90s, students from Centennial High School were involved in carving it. It was utilized in facilitating cultural journeys for students for some years. Unfortunately, it had cracked in dry storage and was deemed not seaworthy. Students from Suwa'lkh School recently restored the canoe so that it could be put on display in a new Skytrain station.

This canoe has been a source of pride to those who crafted it as well as to those who were involved in restoring it. Their effort and commitment to building and restoring the canoe will now be a lasting legacy for all to enjoy this amazing piece of First Nations art.



ACKNOWLEDGING TERRITORY THROUGH ART

BY: COLLINE COE

ABORIGINAL TEACHER ADVOCATE



On February 26, 2016, Guildford Park Secondary unveiled student artwork that recognizes Coast Salish territory. The three paintings were completed by four students: Damon Gray, Brook Colwell, Terrance Koski and Nevada Popadynetz. The paintings are now mounted above the Aboriginal Education office, just across from the main office of the school.

The paintings represent separate pieces of Coast Salish culture, all coming together in a celebration of teachings that are meaningful in our day-to-day lives. The first canvas represents the Bear, Frog, Whale and Raven. The second canvas represents Xals, the transformer. The third canvas shows

the Eagle and the Salmon. The paintings welcome everyone to Coast Salish land in both English and Halkomelem. Students worked with Nelson Leon in the development of the concept and the use of Halkomelem.

The unveiling happened at lunch, led by Nelson Leon. There was an opening song, and the significance of the images was shared with the gathered crowd. Afterwards, everyone was invited to share in some bannock.

The canvases were supplied by the school administration, and the students used the project as part of their senior art class credit.



ABORIGINAL SUCCESS STORIES

ABORIGINAL CONFERENCE DAY

BY: JOCELYN WONG

GRADE 12, NORTH SURREY SECONDARY



As an individual of non-Aboriginal descent, I find learning about other cultures, customs and history fascinating. I am often enamoured by the traditional dances and songs of various First Nations groups throughout Canada, as well as their cultural beliefs and values, cuisine and art.

However, as I walked through the halls of my school, North Surrey Secondary, this past April 6 (Aboriginal Conference Day at our school), I realized that a few students felt differently. This made me question their logic: how can a group that has been so marginalized in the past be still dismissed?

Our conference day offered the gift of amazing performances and eye-opening stories; why people could be disinterested genuinely baffles me. Perhaps it is because Aboriginality is not spoken about often enough or because people think of Aboriginal Day as merely tokenism. Although we recognize the oppression that this minority group has faced in the past, we still need to acknowledge their mistreatment in modern times. If students were to truly immerse themselves in the day that ensued, they would realize that they had the opportunity to both learn and be inspired. Aboriginal Day is not about brooding on the tragedies of the past, although those events must always be acknowledged and remembered.

Learning about the contributions Aboriginal people have made to our country's progress as a whole is paramount to our own survival; celebrating the diverse cultures, outstanding achievements and unique heritages of this extraordinary group gives us insight into doing what needs to be done to live a more sustainable

existence.

Our Aboriginal Conference Day at North Surrey brings in a variety of different presenters every year. This year, Nelson and Ralph Leon captivated a full theatre of students as they proudly shared stories, dances and activities that were inspiring and uplifting. Sylvia Olsen spoke about living as a Caucasian on the Saanich peninsula and how it was truly a “culture-clashing” experience. A Vancouver-based traditional Métis dance company, V’ni Dansi, graciously shared their love of dance, stories and culture of the Métis. Equally amazing presentations ranging from published poets to expert weavers captivated teenage minds. All in all, it was a great day!

My main hope is that Aboriginal culture and history will someday be fully respected by and incorporated into our society. The former Governor-General of Canada, Romeo LeBlanc, observed:

We owe the Aboriginal peoples a debt that is four centuries old. It is their turn to become full partners in developing an even greater Canada. And the reconciliation required may be less a matter of legal texts than of attitudes of the heart.

It's easy to generalize and to be ignorant about what is going on around us, but if we open our minds and hearts, our whole society will benefit. Incorporating Aboriginal values and culture—mindfulness, spirituality, respect for the land and Elders—is necessary for a better Canada. Aboriginal Conference Day provides us with inspiration to move forward.

CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

BY: KAREN GREAX

PRINCIPAL, BEAVER CREEK ELEMENTARY



Many of our Aboriginal families are new to our Beaver Creek community due to the closure, renovation and subsequent reopening of the housing complex in our catchment area. The staff at Beaver Creek Elementary has been working to connect with our Aboriginal families. We have implemented a number of different activities and programs this year with the hope that we can create a warm and welcoming environment for our students and their families.

In January, we received a grant from the Vancouver Sun Adopt-a-School program to provide breakfast to our students. A small but mighty group of volunteers greets our students each morning and serves them a nutritious meal. Several families attend with their school-aged children, and this has been invaluable in creating positive interactions between staff, students and parents. Many of our intermediate students assist with the program. Some students do the shopping, while others help to cook and serve the breakfast.

One staff member has created the Champions Club, which meets every Thursday at lunch. Students are welcomed and supported to complete any assignments that they need help with. Students self-refer and are given encouragement, time and space to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

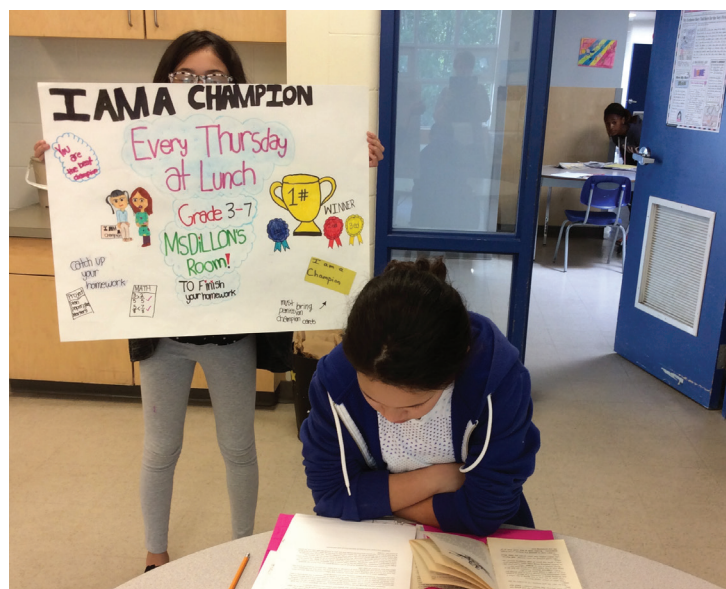
In February, we took our PALS (Parents as Literacy Supporters) session to the housing complex. All of the learning stations supported Aboriginal culture through exploration, storytelling and hands-on learning. Each family received a bag of goodies to take home that contained art supplies and books. Following the session, staff members knocked on doors to meet families and give away the remaining literacy bags. Many connections were made that day, and as a result we saw an increase in participation at the school's other early literacy initiatives, such as "Ready, Set, Learn" and "Welcome to Kindergarten."

Plans for the end of this school year include a "Bannock and Books" program for preschool and school-aged Aboriginal children and their families and an Aboriginal Day assembly. The assembly will feature the Salmon and the connection to the legend of Beaver Creek, which was given to us by a community Elder. We are making slow progress towards our goal of developing more positive relationships with our Aboriginal community.

We are pleased with the number of students (up to

25 some days) who are accessing our breakfast program. The staff reports that attendance and student engagement have improved as a result of our efforts. We have seen that when one walks in to our school; it has a friendly feel. We have worked hard to welcome and appreciate all of our students and their families.

Developing positive relationships with our Aboriginal families takes time. We look forward to continuing this work next year.



LAWRENCE PAUL YUXWELUPTUN: UNCEDDED TERRITORIES



BY: BRY NYBERG & JOEY PLUMMER
GRADE 9 AND 12, SUWA'LK SCHOOL

The Museum of Anthropology at University of British Columbia is currently hosting a solo exhibit by acclaimed artist Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun that is worth much more than a passing glance. Yuxweluptun creates art that is heavily affected by his time in residential school and by his political views. His paintings express strong emotions and give us a glimpse into his understanding of Aboriginal culture and conflicts.

Wandering through this powerful exhibit, at the museum until October 16, 2016, we were struck by his use of highly pigmented colours to express what is often a dark situation or idea. It was impossible not to enjoy the creative use of textures, colours, and the variety of subjects throughout the exhibit, ranging from landscapes to abstracts, to the pop art piece "Haida Hot Dog". Within a single image the observant viewer would find many different animals, each incorporated for its meaning and contribution to the image as a whole.

The Unceded Territories exhibit is not to be missed; this is art that will start conversations and leave you thinking about more than just colour and light, it will make you feel something and is sure to stick with you long after you walk out the doors of the Museum.



Bry Nyberg and Joey Plummer





SOCIALLY JUST, CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE HELPING PRACTITIONERS: DOUGLAS COLLEGE'S ABORIGINAL STREAM

BY: CARYS CRAGG, COORDINATOR & FACULTY,
CFCS ABORIGINAL STREAM, DOUGLAS COLLEGE

"The Aboriginal Stream prepared me to work with Aboriginal children and families by teaching me the effects of residential schools and colonization, but also by teaching me how to use policies and legislation to be a strong advocate for the children and families I will be working with," says Kristina, a recent graduate of our program's courses and practicum, who is taking her new-found and reclaimed knowledge into her work supporting Aboriginal children, youth and families in communities in the Lower Mainland.

The Child, Family and Community Studies' Aboriginal Stream at Douglas College is a program where students gain knowledge, skill and self-awareness to become effective, socially just and culturally competent practitioners in the helping field, to improve the lives of Aboriginal people.

Through four linked courses and a practicum placement – all centred on Indigenous content – our students expand their expertise and knowledge base and gain a deeper awareness and understanding of:

- The diversity of approaches to assessment and intervention with Aboriginal children, youth and families
- The intergenerational effects of colonization on Aboriginal families and concepts, such as reclaiming culture
- Working ethically with diverse communities
- Specific policies and legislation that have led to and support the transformation of Aboriginal services

Our students stream to a program of their choice at the College – Child and Youth Care, Classroom and Community Support or Early Childhood Education – where they finish their diplomas and degrees. We also have students take our courses through our partnership with Native Education College, in their Aboriginal Youth Care Certificate Program.

"Learning how to help Aboriginal people first-hand from Elders was a huge eye-opener for me," says Brittney, a recent graduate of our program's courses and practicum. Brittney says the courses and practicum "helped me create a picture in my mind of how we as a new generation could help encourage children,

youth and families to create a healthy path to their futures." Even more, she says that the program "helped me to become even more proud of my culture and gave me a stronger connection to the Aboriginal community." We love keeping in touch with our graduates as they become leaders in our field!

It's our strong relationships with community agencies and school districts that make the difference, where what's learned in the classroom is explored and applied in the field. Our students complete a practicum where our fantastic community partners host our learners: Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Urban Native Youth Centre, Britannia Youth Centre, PCRS (Pacific Community Resources Society) youth centres, group homes, elementary schools and secondary schools, to name a few. Perhaps one of our longest partnerships has been with Suwa'lkh School (School District No. 43), where our students are immersed in the youth worker role, participating in all parts of the school's goings-on – cultural ceremonies and activities, and social, emotional and academic support – where the school's youth teach our students how to be effective, socially just and culturally responsive practitioners.

Schools and agencies tell us that the Aboriginal Stream is the program they like – one of the few Indigenous collections of courses that prepare practitioners to best support Aboriginal children, youth and families. In our program, our students:

- Increase their competence and confidence in working with Aboriginal clients
- Learn with a diverse group of classmates from diverse cultural backgrounds and age groups
- Experience the classroom differently, with storytelling, ceremonies, guests, healing and sharing circles, interactive discussions and collaboration, experiential learning and community-based assignments
- Learn directly from Aboriginal Elders and instructors working in the field
- Have a flexible (evening) class schedule and increase their hiring potential!

Many of our prospective students ask us common questions:

How old do I have to be to apply to your program? (You must be 18 years old by December of the academic year.) Do I have to be Aboriginal? (We accept both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal allies to our program.) I need to take full-time courses for my Band's funding requirements; can I do that? (Of course. Our students can take our courses and more at the college, and we have an instructional assistant and faculty who can help advise; we can also write letters to applicants' Bands to support funding applications.) Can I get a job? (Yes, we have a high employment rate, where students often get jobs and then continue their diplomas and degrees while working in the field.)

Interested in learning more? Don't hesitate to go online to our College website (<http://www.douglascollege.ca/programs-courses/faculties/child-family-community-studies/aboriginal-child-family-and-community-studies>) to see more detail about our courses, instructors & Elders, and application package. Check out our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/abstream) for community events, job postings and announcements. Contact us anytime at 604-527-5821 or abstream@douglascollege.ca. We'd be happy to host a tour or meet individually to answer any and all of your curious questions. Sure, we have an application deadline of May 15, but we always extend this date and regularly accept students throughout the summer. We look forward to hearing from you!



Left to right: Carys Cragg, Faculty & Coordinator, Melanie Mark, MLA, and Kellie Tennant, Faculty

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



TANYSHA DUTTON

GRADE 12, ÉCOLE MISSION SENIOR SECONDARY

Tanysha has always been highly involved in academics throughout her school career. Her favorite subject in high school was psychology, which led her to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of the Fraser Valley, as well as a Community Support Worker and Educational Assistant Certificate at Riverside College.

Through the CSW/EA course at Riverside, Tanysha has had the opportunity to volunteer her time for a variety of causes that support individuals in her community. She has had the opportunity to volunteer at Mission Connect Events, an event where community resources gather at a central location to provide marginalized and at-risk individuals and families with better access to their services. She has also been able to contribute her time to volunteering with Stone Soup, an initiative that encourages individuals from all walks of life to gather together as a community, share a meal and address homelessness. Recently, Tanysha has volunteered with the Mission Hospice Society at Christine Morrison Hospice, a facility that provides support and comfort for individuals in palliative care.

Being of Gitxsan heritage, Tanysha has also enjoyed being able to participate in Aboriginal ceremonies with her community this year. On her EA practicum, she was able to assist in cultural workshops on Aboriginal Culture Days at a local elementary school. Back at Riverside, she enjoyed the dedication ceremony of the Sun Mask by Tom Patterson; the mask is now on display at Riverside College. Recently, she was able to attend the Aboriginal Student Recognition Dinner and was blanketed. Soon she will be embarking on her CSW practicum at the Mission Friendship Centre, an organization that helps support Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals through various programs, including community wellness, drug and alcohol and youth and elder programs.

Tanysha has a strong interest in working, after she graduates, in the social services field as an Aboriginal Liaison Worker, a Mental Health Worker, a Community Support Worker, an Educational Assistant or an Outreach Worker, among other positions. Tanysha has a high respect and admiration for the many individuals in the community and school district that have helped her on her educational journey, and hopes that she can use her knowledge and talents to give back to her community.



TWEEDSMUIR NATION BY: MEGAN BENOIT GRADE 12, LORD TWEEDSMUIR SECONDARY



MEGAN BENOIT, WINNER, “IMAGINE A CANADA” CONTEST

“OH, MY GOODNESS!!!!!!” was Megan Benoit’s response when she won the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation’s “Imagine a Canada” contest. Megan is a Grade 12 student at Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary School, and her artwork was chosen from entries from across Canada. On March 1, she was at Rideau Hall, the Governor General’s residence in Ottawa, for an honouring ceremony. Megan submitted an abstract multimedia piece entitled Medicinal Healing that reflected the contest’s theme of reconciliation.



LORD TWEEDSMUIR SENIOR BOYS RUGBY TEAM

Cameron Wheeler and Connor Kinsley joined 19 of their teammates on a trip to the United Kingdom. We are so proud of our team, who played a match at Henry VIII Secondary.



LORD TWEEDSMUIR’S CHEER TEAM

A number of our youth are on the Junior and Senior Cheer teams and attended the International Aloha Spirit Championships event at the end of March. They had an amazing time and made Lord Tweedsmuir proud.

LORD TWEEDSMUIR JUNIOR GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM WINS 4TH IN PROVINCE



Madi Johnson plays point guard on our grade 10 junior basketball team. She was excited to represent Tweedsmuir at the Langley Events Centre on the last weekend of February. This junior team had two wins and two losses. Madi has played basketball for five years and plans on playing for our school until grade 12. Madi also plays soccer for the Kingcome Wolverines, an all-Native women’s soccer team, located out of Campbell River. Madi is a proud member of the We Wai Kai Nation.

“WHAT GRASS DANCING MEANS TO ME”

BY: ELSTON TROTTIER

GRADE 11, ÉCOLE MISSION SENIOR SECONDARY



The Grass Dance is one of the oldest styles of pow wow dancing that exists today. The word “pow wow” was derived from western movies, and later coined by Hollywood as a term used to describe First Nations’ celebration of life. The word just stuck around and was later adopted by our people.

The origin of Grass Dancing came from the area known as Omaha. At first it wasn’t called Grass Dance, but the Omaha Dance. Omaha men used to stuff grass in their belts to portray the swaying movement of the grass as they danced. With time, the dance gradually became known as the “Grass Dance” because it represented the connection First Nation dancers had with the grass and the earth.

Another important part of Grass Dancing is our regalia. Regalia is the traditional outfit worn during the Grass Dance. This usually consists of no feathers, only roach feathers, and brightly coloured fringe and patterns. There are also various types of songs that go with the Grass Dance.

Now that you have a brief history of Grass Dancing, I would like to discuss what Grass Dancing means to me, Elston Trottier. I have been Grass Dancing for about 15 years. Ever since I could walk, my parents took me to pow wows. Every summer growing up was filled with pow wows and Grass Dancing, which filled my heart with joy.

The feeling I get when I’m out on the dance floor is always the best feeling in the world. To me, Grass Dancing is exhilarating, fast-paced, and thrilling. I dance to the music, hear the drummers and become one with it all. It is as if I’m transported to a field of sweet grass and moving beside the swaying grass, soaking up the movements. Although there is a crowd watching me, I get lost in my dance. I feel one with the dance and connected to the earth. When I dance, it’s an expression of who I am and where I come from.

I come from Onion Lake Reserve. Grass Dancing shows that my culture is alive and strong, and when I dance, I’m celebrating the life I have been gifted. I am privileged to be given this gift, and every time I dance I try to honour this gift by giving myself to each dance.

As a young man growing up in Aboriginal culture, going to pow wows and participating in Grass Dancing has given me guidance, respect and honour. It guides me to follow a positive path in my life. When I was asked to do this article, I was excited to share the

history and meaning of Grass Dancing and how it has affected my life, bringing pure joy to me each time I dance. My name is Elston Trottier, and I am from Onion Lake Reserve, and I love to Grass Dance.



MALCOLM'S NEW BEGINNING!

BY: SONIA O'NEIL



When asked what Suwa'lkh staff and school means to our family it truly means a new beginning. When we heard the diagnosis of Autism for our son Malcolm we were relieved because finally what we knew instinctively all along was confirmed. We thought finally he will get the help he required and the Education he deserves. The school board approved SEA coverage and all of our fears were put to rest, so we thought. Malcolm struggled even with SEA support, and although he was enrolled in school full time with one to one SEA support, Malcolm did not attend school full time. In fact he often stayed home or was sent home. We spent countless hours and dollars having our behaviour consultant try working with the schools to understand how to teach and support our boy. Nothing worked - all of the funding, support and efforts were going to waste. On a last ditch effort I took the risk of asking if, due to our aboriginal heritage, the school Suwa'lkh would take on my son.

When arriving at Suwa'lkh for our initial meeting and interview, I was blown away by the kindness and welcoming reception. I went in with my list of reasons why they should take our son, I needed none.

The principal understood autism and all its complexities. I finally did not have to explain and beg for understanding. He explained immediately that they understood our sons need to be accepted, and that he would be welcomed. But in order to do so they needed to make a decision as a whole community. I was blown away and went home thinking this is too good to be true. Then we received the word that the students and staff would welcome our son to Suwa'lkh.

He began at Suwa'lkh in January 2016 and although he was nervous and afraid, he began to connect with staff almost immediately particularly with a youth worker name Joan. Malcolm started very slowly at Suwa'lkh - once or twice a week for less than 3 hours and slowly his trust grew. He then went to longer hours three days a week. This week he told me "mom I'm going every day!" He did it! I cannot describe the joy and pride we feel as a family knowing our son is loved and accepted by students and staff.

They have him helping in the kitchen and garden which is a valuable life skill and truly is giving him a sense of independence. The

kitchen is the centre of the community at Suwa'lkh so he has also began to develop friendships. He has built things and painted, goes on nature walks and helps feed the birds and squirrels. Most importantly he no longer hates life or himself. He feels happy and excited for each new day. He does not have violent meltdowns and has learnt to self-regulate. He talks about the future and has gotten to know the teachers and staff at Suwa'lkh and for the very first time told me he wants to learn. He tells me he is so lucky to be there.

The school has also found a way to keep him connected over the summer by having him help with the summer camp doing odd jobs. I cannot tell you the sense of pride my boy feels. We feel! Suwa'lkh means "New Beginning" which is exactly what it was for Malcolm and our whole family. We were given a chance for our son to be a productive part of society. We were lost, angry and feeling hopeless before we found our place in this community. The reason this school is working is because they teach the way a child learns. They build self-esteem through love, kindness and attachment which is healing our family.



Malcolm O'Neil
Suwa'lkh School Student

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY GARDEN BY: SUWA'LKH SCHOOL STAFF

The Suwa'lkh Indigenous Garden is devoted to growing, supporting and connecting students to the community via horticultural, transitional programs and First Nations teachings. Suwa'lkh students and staff worked tirelessly to design a garden that embodies the shape and teachings of the Medicine Wheel. The garden is composed of eight beds that are dialed in to each of the four directions: North, East, South, West. Students built benches for each bed in order for community members, schools and families to partake in outdoor programming and talking circles.

Students gain insight into their cultural traditions with the use of this space. Indigenous fauna were planted and will attract wildlife that are native to this region. In addition, kids will learn about invasive species that are spreading in the surrounding area. Suwa'lkh students will embark on environmental restoration projects, which will include invasive weed removal and planting native fauna. Suwa'lkh School will work in conjunction with our community partners in order to foster relationships in the Tri-City region.

In the process, students have gained valuable vocational skills in the construction of the garden. From their own designs, they have created seating arrangements in the garden. In addition, students assisted with planning of the project and the planting. As a result, a creative, one-of-a-kind outdoor learning space was constructed.



HIGHLIGHTING THE GREAT WORK IN OUR SCHOOLS FROM STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

BY: BRYANNA HEWER

GRADE 10, ÉCOLE MISSION SENIOR SECONDARY



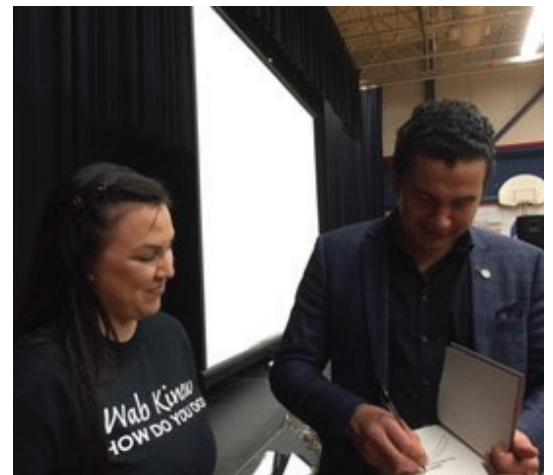
What's the first thing you think of when you hear the words "book club"? Well, for book lovers like us, it's a way to come together and be a part of the "Truth and Reconciliation Movement." As Aboriginal students, we feel it's important to become more knowledgeable about the experiences our Elders went through.

Our 10 members have discussed what to name our book club, and thus far we are simply the "Aboriginal Book Club." Before we discuss the assigned chapters or anything else, we eat lunch. We are following the traditional teaching of having food before we do the work. We usually have pizza, share how we are doing in school and enjoy small talk. We first met before Spring Break, and have agreed to make a commitment to the book club – which means attending our weekly Thursday meetings, reading the book, doing a journal on the assigned chapters and discussing our thoughts. At the end of each book we read, we have decided to have a small celebration.



Prior to starting our novel, Mrs. Shaw, our counsellor and Aboriginal Book Club facilitator, read information to us from the book *They Came for the Children*. We learned how Canada devised the residential school as a means to destroy our Aboriginal culture and our very way of being. It is hard to imagine how a government could put such effort into trying to take the "Indian out of the child" (Duncan Campbell Scott).

Initially, we thought we would read *The Reason You Walk* by Wab Kinew. A number of us had been given the opportunity to attend the keynote address given by Wab Kinew at a Mission Public School District event in February. However, we later discussed the fact that this book was more about the son of an Elder who attended residential school, and we agreed we wanted to start our book club with a story of one of the survivors of residential school. The book we decided upon was *Stoney Creek Woman* by Bridget Moran. This is the biographical story of Mary John, who went through residential school in Vanderhoof, British Columbia.



The first three chapters of the book describe the poverty that existed on Stoney Creek Reserve in the 1950s. It also discusses the racism within the communities of Vanderhoof and Prince George. We had not realized, within Canada, Aboriginal people were not allowed to go into restaurants or public washrooms. We quickly realized that civil rights issues were not only a "Black reality" in the southern states, but also existed for Aboriginal people right here in Canada – right here in British Columbia!

After we finish *Stoney Creek Woman*, we have decided to read *The Reason You Walk* by Wab Kinew, a book we all hope to learn from and enjoy. We intend to keep you posted on our Aboriginal Book Club experience as we go along.



FIELD TRIP: YOUTH TREATY

BY: KELSEA LAQUETTE

GRADE 11, FRASERVIEW LEARNING CENTRE



On April 20, 2016, Mrs. D. and I went to a “Youth Treaty and Government” workshop at S’olh Temexw in Chilliwack, BC. This was a youth forum. The words S’olh Temexw mean “Our Land” – it was on a pen I received at the forum. We arrived at the workshop a bit late, so one of the organizers put us into a random group. In this group, Elder Rita George taught us about Salish wool weaving with a small loom. We used goat’s wool. She had an amazing display of blankets and headbands. She is teaching Salish wool weaving because she feels not enough people know how to make things for themselves.

We had the best lunch: bannock tacos, dessert and a drink. At lunch, the organizers had all the door prize draws. I did not win anything.

After lunch, we went to a different group session to learn about voting and how First Nations people vote for council members. In our next workshop, we learned about leadership and what good leadership should look like. Our final workshop was about language, Halq’eméylem. It was really fun.

With the workshops completed, my teacher, Mrs. D, and I went to the gift shop and looked around. After that, we went “home,” back to our school.



DRUM-MAKING FOR GRADE 12S

AT MISSION SECONDARY



James Grant:

I am a graduating student from Mission Secondary. Through Johnny Williams (Aboriginal Liaison Worker) and the Aboriginal Education Department, I was given the opportunity to make my first Aboriginal drum. Johnny taught me a lot about the techniques and methods, for which I am very thankful. It has been a lot of fun. Had I not been given this great opportunity, I don’t know where I would have found another. I would like to thank Johnny for all of the time he invests in helping the high school students here at Mission Secondary.

Catherine Black:

Through my school’s Aboriginal Education Program, I was given the opportunity to use my creativity and make my first drum. I am very grateful to be given this wonderful opportunity to work with Johnny and other Aboriginal students through this process. I can’t wait to see my final product once it is painted!



Catherine Black and Johnny Williams

A SPECIAL THANK-YOU

BY: KRISTINA JOE



My name is Kristina Joe. I am a member of Kwikwetlem First Nation.

Kwikwetlem was the first reserve established in British Columbia and the first to lose its' heritage. My grandmother attended residential school and because of that she moved her four children all across North America to prevent them from having to go to a residential school. Due to the relocation of my father's generation, he and his siblings were not able to learn about their culture or live on their territory. My sister and I were able to live on the reserve from the age of seven but still had no cultural teachings.

Through a lot of hard work from a lot of determined people came the School District #43 Aboriginal Education Department. In grade 7, my cousin and I were greeted by a large native man with a very large drum and were informed we were able to attend the Aboriginal school program. My generation were the first allowed to embrace our culture. Because of this Aboriginal program, I graduated as a teen mom with pride.

My son Austyn is the first generation of our people to not have to carry shame, guilt and sorrow for being First Nations. This is because of the success of the School District #43 Aboriginal School Program. This year my son Austyn, like many other aboriginal youth, is our first generation to complete 13 years of actual Aboriginal education and is graduating with a full Dog-

wood Diploma in June from Suwa'lkh School. Because of programs like the one at Suwa'lkh, his generation will live like no other - proud, educated and successful.

Thank you for everything.
Kristina Joe



Austyn Joe
Suwa'lkh School Student

LANGUAGE CORNER



DOWNRIVER HALKOMELEM = THE CANOE

Surrey Schools' Aboriginal Education currently has four members from the Katzie First Nation who are employed as District Aboriginal Cultural Facilitators. They do share some of the Downriver Halkomelem (Katzie Dialect) with students through stories, art and games.

Such as:

Our children = s alh ste:xwulh

(singular) How are you? = ee u chxw uw' uy' al'?

(more than one person) How are you? = ee u tse:p uw' el'ee al'?

June! The salmonberries are ripe. = t'an'a! ee nee wulh q'wul tu lila.

We are making a basket. = wulh they' tst tu seetun.

AN INTERVIEW WITH PETER LINDLEY, HALQ'EMÉYLEM INSTRUCTOR BY: MATHIAS SEYMOUR AND KIARRA PHILLIP GRADE 6, ECOLE MISSION CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Halq'eméylem is the traditional language of the upper Stól:o people from Langley to Yale, BC. There are very few fluent speakers of the Halq'eméylem language; however, there are a great number of learners at varying stages. Peter did not start to learn this language until he was 25 years old, and he is the only member of his immediate family that speaks Halq'eméylem. Peter's mentor, support person and biggest influence in learning the language is Siyamiyateliyot. Her English name is Elizabeth Phillips. Currently, Peter is one of two Halq'eméylem instructors that work in the Mission Public School District teaching Halq'eméylem to the primary students in our elementary schools. Peter's Halq'eméylem name is Pipite, and this is how we will refer to him throughout the interview.

Pipite asked Mathias if he knew a song and if he would teach him the song.

Pipite: So, the songs you know are from your family. Who is your family?

Mathias: My stepfather is Jonathon Louis from Chehalis, and we have a drum group.

Pipite: Do you know what we call a drum in Halq'eméylem?

Mathias: I do, but I forget.

Pipite: "Qowet."

Mathias: Oh, yeah, I remember that. And I remember "Hoych'qe."

Pipite: Oh, that sounds like Cowichan. We say, "Hoy chexw," and they say "Hoych'qe." That just shows us the close connection or close ties with our language. The Cowichan language is called "Hul'q'umi'num," and ours is "Halq'eméylem," a very close connection. We are a dialect of the same Halkomelem language group, which is part of the Coast Salish language family. We are very closely related.

Mathias: My name is Mathias Seymour, and I am 11 years old. I am Coast Salish, and my traditional name is Chō:xanem. Today we are interviewing our Halq'eméylem teacher, Pipite.

Pipite: What did you say your traditional name was?

Chō:xanem? Is that from your mom's family or from your dad's family? Do you remember when you got that name?

Mathias: From my dad's family, and I was around five years old. But I don't really know much about that name because I don't ask questions about it.

Pipite: The name has the "N" sound in it, and here we don't have the "N" sound, so I quickly see that as an Island or Cowichan name.

Kiarra: My name is Kiarra Phillip. I am 12 years old and in grade 6. I am Stó:lo and enjoy participating in canoe journeys with my family. My traditional name is "Kusen," which means "Shining Star" in St'at'im.

Pipite: Do any of you know Halq'eméylem at all?

Mathias: Yes, I do but in school we have been focusing on French. I am starting to forget what I knew.

Pipite: But you've learned some while you were in Chehalis?

Mathias: No, I learned while I was on Vancouver Island with my dad. We had an Elder there who taught us while I was in kindergarten.

Pipite: Do you remember how to count from one to five in the language? In Halq'eméylem it is letse, isale, lhiwx, xeothel, lheqatses. But in Hul'q'umi'num it is nuts'a', yuse'lu, lhihw, xu'athun, lhq'etsus. We can really see the connection just in the counting.

Pipte: Kiarra, have you ever been taught any Halq'eméylem?

Kiarra: I was taught when I was younger, but it has been a long time.

Pipte: Do you remember any of it?

Kiarra: No.

Pipte: Not even “Ey Swayel”? Do you remember how the song goes?

Kiarra: Oh, yeah. I remember that, after you have reminded me.

Pipte: What are some of the cultural things you do?

Mathias: Sometimes, when I was on the Island with my dad, we would go out in the canoe. My stepdad teaches me drumming.

Pipte: Did you learn the word for a drum? Our word is “Qowet” for the drum and “Qowetem” for drumming. When you were out in the “Slexwelh” canoe, were you on the “Xotsa,” the lake, or the “Kw’otl’kwa,” the ocean? What about you, Kiarra? I heard you enjoy canoe paddling, too.

Kiarra: I paddled canoes, too, but up at Samahquam, up near Port Douglas way.

Pipte: So, our languages are totally different than the language up that way.

Mathias: I would like to learn how to say, “I love you, Mom.”

Pipte: Our word for mom is “Ta:l,” and our word for mommy is “Tatel,” and to say, “I love you” would be “Tsel tl’ilsome.” So, to say, “I love you, Mom” would be

“Tsel tl’ilsome, Ta:l.” (Pipte used the Echo Song to get them to try saying it more easily.)

Pipte: “Si:le” is for grandfather, and “Sisele” is for grandmother, and “Selsile” is grandparents.

Mathias: My favourite colour is red, and my favourite animal is the grizzly bear. How would I say that?

Pipte: “Tskwi:m” is our word for red, and “kwitsel” is our word for the grizzly bear. “Spath” is a more common way of saying bear, but when we are referring to the grizzly bear, we must use his proper name, and that is “kwitsel.” A black bear or a brown bear is just “spath,” and a baby bear or a cub is called “spipath.” Kiarra, what is your favourite colour?

Kiarra: My favourite colour is purple, and my favourite animal is the wolf.

Pipte: I knew you were going to say that. “Pipeqwels” is how we say purple, and “steqoye” is our word for the wolf.

Pipte demonstrated how to use the animals’ names in a song, and asked Mathias and Kiarra, “How do you think that the grizzly bear and wolf would dance?”

Kwitsel, Kwitsel Mitl’ qwoyilex Xwe hey ye he Xwe hey ye he	Grizzly, Grizzly Come out and dance Xwe hey ye he Xwe hey ye he
Steqoye, steqoye Mitl’ qxoyilex Xwe hey ye he Xwe hey ye he	Wolf, wolf Come out and dance Xwe hey ye he Xwe hey ye he



COMMUNITY EVENTS

2016 HONOURING CEREMONY AND DINNER

BY: MONA LACROIX



School District No. 43 (Coquitlam)'s Aboriginal Education Honouring Ceremony and Dinner takes place this year on Thursday, June 16 at the Hard Rock Casino Theatre, Coquitlam, from 58 p.m.

This event is open to graduating grade 12 students and two guests and to grade 9-12 award-winners and two guests, as well as invited honoured guests. The names of graduating and award-winning students are submitted to the Aboriginal Education Department by the student's home school counsellors.

This year, tickets will be ordered and distributed through Ticketmaster at no charge. As with all Ticketmaster events, every person entering the theatre must have a ticket in hand, or entrance will be denied.

Presale will open for grade 12 students at 6 a.m. on May 20, and a presale code will be provided ahead of time via email. All other tickets will be released to award-winners and guests on May 27. Tickets will not be available after midnight, June 9, and there will be no tickets available at the door.

We look forward to recognizing the achievements of all Coquitlam School District Aboriginal students. If you have any questions, please contact the Aboriginal Education Department at 604-945-7386, or email abedinfo@sd43.bc.ca.

SEMIAHMOO FIRST NATION/EARL MARRIOTT POW WOW 2016

BY: MICHAEL MACKAY-DUNN



Through song, drumming and dancing, we celebrated our rich culture and traditions at our annual Semiahmoo First Nation/Earl Marriott Pow Wow. Going into our third decade, we were proud to welcome well over 1,000 visitors to the pow wow over this three-day event.

With a focus on youth and talent, on the Friday morning we welcomed elementary schools to the pow wow to witness and learn from this valuable educational celebration. This was a first for our pow wow. With direction from Nelson Leon, the students learned the meaning and symbolism behind each dance, each song and Grand Entry, with emphasis on protocol, tradition and respect. Important life lessons on balance and connection to nature and our environment were both explained and shown by example. Our guest students were able to actively participate in dance and competitions throughout the day. With this year's focus on inclusion and education at the pow wow, both Friday sessions were live-streamed on the World Wide Web, another first for our pow wow.

The pow wow continued throughout the weekend, with both Saturday and Sunday welcoming a throng of guests and dignitaries who not only enjoyed the program but also feasted on the scrumptious bannock and salmon dinner prepared by Joanne Charles, councillor from the Semiahmoo people. On the Saturday during the dinner break, Constable Troy Derrick presented his youth group with a skateboard demonstration, showcasing both skill and agility to an amazed audience.

Looking back, it is remarkable that this celebration continues to hold such an important part of our fabric here at Marriott. It wasn't long ago potlatches and pow wows were banned and illegal in British Columbia, where participants and organizers were charged and imprisoned. With our collective emphasis on healing, reconciliation and place in society of Aboriginal people and culture, our pow wow continues to serve its purpose by bringing people together to celebrate and embrace a culture that was endangered by government attempts to extinguish it.

It is uplifting to hear the language of the different nations spoken along with the vital cultural traditions of song, dance, drumming and cuisine. It is our mandate to continue to embrace these traditions and customs, and continue to integrate more First Nations content into our curriculum. We learn by doing, by example and by experience. This year's celebration allowed more of our school communities to experience our pow wow, many for the first time. Through this event, Semiahmoo First Nation and Earl Marriott continue to support the process of reconciliation and work to meet the needs of our school and community.

Save the dates for next year's pow wow: 2017 Semiahmoo First Nation/Earl Marriott Pow Wow – March 31, April 1 & April 2

Photo Credit: Trisha Bunn





THIS NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.43
(COQUITLAM)



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO.36
(SURREY)



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