



# The Talking Stick

## A Message from the Principal, Laurie Ebenal

Greetings and Salutations

The weather indicates the change of season. The lower mainland's change in seasons may not be as significant as Saskatchewan's but we all know it is occurring. Arriving and leaving school enveloped in darkness with a side of rain, indicates the sun is playing peek a boo with us all.

Although, winter solstice is less than a month away, we are well aware of his presence knocking on the door. The solstice, known as a time of celebration of the sun, reminds us to honour the time within. The longer nights offer us more time to spend with our families, friends and loved ones, whether we curl up in front of the fire to watch a movie or play a rousing game of crib. This time is meant to be cherished not cursed.



Members of the department have been working tirelessly to leave the gloominess at the door. Our partnership with all of you has grown, it is nurtured by the care, empathy and understanding you have all embraced. This new beginning has allowed all members of the SD43 community to embrace the Aboriginal teachings. The model of inclusion offers a sense of belonging and pride for our Aboriginal children and youth. Inclusive teachings also invite school staffs to become a part of the process not a bystander. As we all witness the teachings we become in essence a fabric of the story.

The talking circle is one of our teachings being incorporated across the curriculum (K-12). The circle teaches self regulation as well as many other skills. The circle is a place of honouring within my culture and easily translates into 'teacher like' scenarios. Monica Bonk from Central elementary school sums it up:

### Important Dates

- Dec 24 - Jan 4 Winter Vacation
- Jan 28 Aboriginal Education Pro D Day
- Feb 11 Family Day
- Feb 22 Pro D Day (District)
- Mar 18 - Apr 1 Spring Vacation
- April 19 Pro D Day (District)

*My Kindergarten students and I were blown away when we had the Talking Stick presentation. I have since used the beautiful white talking stick gift almost every day. I had children who were afraid to speak up and we could not even have show and tell all year. Through the Ab Ed teachings showing gentleness and patience, they have now blossomed and are opening up. They totally get it. I think all the classes should have this opportunity in our Elementary Schools as it created magic!!! Very Special-I'm serious*

All my Relations,  
Laurie Ebenal



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*This term, students had the opportunity to learn about something different. I've had wonderful experiences teaching about talking circles, talking sticks, bentwood boxes, button blankets, drumming, Sla hal and learning about our traditional uses of plants and looking at our local resources in our forests. It's been very exciting to visit the different schools and share the culture with the students. I look forward to the up and coming New Year! Happy Holidays to you and your family.*

All my relations  
Dawn Marks—  
Support Worker



*It has been an exciting start to the year in our cultural teachings groups. In the elementary groups, we have been busy working on the Seven Sacred Teachings and finding out how these teachings apply to our day to day lives. In the middle schools, our youth have participated in Talking Circles, focusing on finding the power of their own voice and the power of empathy. They have also begun the Medicine Wheel Teachings and its application. Two very memorable highlights of this term have been our Nature Walk to Hoy Creek and the opportunity to have our Talking Circles facilitated by Elder Dawn Brown. We are all looking forward to another term together as we further explore these teachings and the lessons we learn from each other.*

Sweeter Minhas -  
Support Worker





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### Welcome Boomer

Talking Circles have been a creative force for the Aboriginal Education Department and they continue to shine with a willingness of the gift of communication. With the softness of voice, the gift of patience and the understanding of trust, the Talking Circles are a gift for all to share.

I have teamed up with a new partner this year and I would like to take time introduce him to you. His name is Boomer and he is two years old. He has an inner fire that is brilliant and he has a message to share. If you keep your eyes open you can see the lightening in his eyes. If your ears are keen you can hear his powerful message of transformation. He can and tends to be witty so consequently makes friends very easily. He sometimes speaks before he should, but is always respectful. Although he is only two, he has the gift of ancient wisdom and the willingness to share. He is playful and about family. Therefore, I asked him to join me in the circles; I asked him of his vision and what he wanted to bring to the circles. He sat and thought about it and said "I want to help children find the courage to speak." He reminded me what the circle is about: Respect, Honour, Patience, Change and Trust. I hope you will all enjoy his company as much as I do in the Talking Circles. Thank you for welcoming my new little friend Boomer the two year old Thunderbird.



### Talking Circle at Hampton Park Elementary

Ms. Brech and her students at Hampton Park sat in a Talking Circle the first part of November. The circle is one of nature's natural shapes of life. The circle encompasses everything in the Universe from the entirety of the universe itself. The Talking Circle is a gift of greater harmony with all life, it increases unity. The Circle helps in viewing the world in a new way by looking at the old ways of the teachings of our Elders. The Talking Circle is a good way for a shy person to feel safe and to speak with a clear voice. The Talking Circle is also a good activity for talkative ones to learn the gift of actively listening to others.

Dawn Brown—Teacher Assistant



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## Community Programming

Our efforts to expand our program platform across our school district, has started to produce some good results. Through the Miskwaa Maengun (Red Wolf) Spirit Adventures program plan concept, we have adapted a seven-week after school version. This program promotes team building and Leadership development through interactive learning exercises and cultural based teachings. Maillard, Kwayhquitlum and Maple Creek Middle Schools now host this program from 3-5pm and they are being well attended. We look forward to hosting these programs for three cycles at each school throughout the year with further expansion into new schools.

Spirit of the Children Society (SOTCS), based in New Westminster provides a variety of programs and support services to Aboriginal youth and families. We have created a partnership with SOTCS that allows their staff to host a weekly youth program at the Suwa'lkh Learning Center. Youth are actively engaged in learning traditional arts and crafts and other cultural based teachings. SOTCS will begin to facilitate their boys and girls mentorship programs at Suwa'lkh in the upcoming New Year.

Upcoming plans for the New Year include a community dinner in January; this will be our opportunity to bring our community together, share food and meet new people. Also, we have received a donation to assist in the building of a learning garden at the Suwa'lkh Learning Center. The creation of this project will have tremendous learning opportunities for our youth.

We look forward to continued building of new community partnerships and developing new programs that are engaging and relevant for our youth.

Malcolm Key

Aboriginal Community Program Coordinator





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### Summit Stream Walk



Friday, November 19, Team Tigers from Summit Middle School went on a walk to Hoy Creek where the students were met by teachers from the Aboriginal Education Department. The students broke into groups and were provided with teachings on the plant life around the creek, the structure of the creek, and how it supports the salmon run. The students visited the hatchery and saw the final few chum salmon struggling to reach their spawning area. It was a

pleasure to work with the 120 students and teachers from Summit and we look forward to many future such events.

Darcy Ellis—Teaching Staff



### Math and Science Field Trip at SFU

On October 23, 2012 the Aboriginal Education Department had the pleasure of being invited to SFU's "Aboriginal Students in Math and Science Workshop". Miss Fuller and two students from Terry Fox Secondary attended the day long workshop where they learned from some of the top mathematicians in BC. Such activities included solving the 15 puzzle, crafting with polyhedrals and learning how to "cut the cake" (practicing the art of "fair" division amongst three people). SFU were gracious hosts, providing lunch to all the attendees and included a tour of the campus for all the students through their student mentoring program. Our thanks to Dr. Veselin Jungic, organizer of the Math Catcher Outreach Program and Senior Lecturer in the Math Department at SFU, for inviting us to this event.



Trista Fuller—Teaching Staff





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## Recipes with Ryk: Cooking with the Cree man : p

Part of my programming this term has focused on quality time in the kitchen with a few of my students from Central Elementary and Pitt River Middle Schools. These boys and myself, with the help of Ms. Fuller (Aboriginal Teacher in our department) have been practicing our cooking skills and creating some really great treats for students and staff. Some of our dishes have included pizza, oatmeal cookies and we have even made bannock for our older Aboriginal students at Riverside Secondary School. The boys and I have included one of our recipes for you and your family to try at home. Stay tuned to our newsletters, as we will include a few more of our recipes, Bon Appétit!

### Hot Salmon-Spinach Dip

#### Ingredients

- 4 oz. or more salmon
  - 3 jars (7-1/2 ounces each) artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
  - 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
  - 3/4 cup mayonnaise
  - 3 green onions, sliced
  - 2 garlic cloves, minced
  - 1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
  - 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Swiss cheese
  - Fresh dill, minced
  - Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 round loaf (1 pound) rye, pumpernickel or sourdough bread

#### Directions

- In a large bowl, combine the first 9 ingredients. Cut a thin slice off the top of bread. Hollow out the bottom half, leaving a 1/2-in. shell. Cut removed bread into 1-in. cubes.
  - Place cubes on an ungreased baking sheet. Broil 6 in. from the heat for 2-3 minutes or until golden, stirring once.
- Place bread shell on an ungreased baking sheet. Spoon dip into bread shell. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until heated through. Serve with bread cubes.

**Yield:** 4 cups.



Ryk Piche—Youth Worker



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### Team Building at Kwayhquitlum

November 7<sup>th</sup> was the first session in a seven week after school program at Kwayhquitlum Middle School. This program provides Aboriginal based teachings on team building and leadership. The focus is to promote positive personal development opportunities for the youth. Malcolm Key and I have been working together with this group of students which are of both Aboriginal and non- aboriginal ancestry.



One of the activities the students really enjoyed was having them form a human caterpillar then blindfolding all but the leader. The leader had to get the others safely through an obstacle course. Another favorite activity was going outside to cook a meal without leaving any imprints on the environment. While having fun, the students are learning to work together to achieve common goals

*Jackie Toombs—Youth Worker*



*I have been having fun sharing Talking Circle presentations in classes in Elementary schools . It's a tool to get to know students in a meaningful way, integrate culture , and create a new model for class communication. So far I have been presenting in 3 schools and look forward to sharing with more.*

*I truly value connecting with students in my Elementary ,Middle and Secondary schools in order to support a deeper understanding of their individual strengths, and in doing so helping them to find a way to reach their goals.*

*Spirit Adventures Afterschool program started last Thursday at Maple Creek Middle School. Malcolm Key and myself are excited to have 8 students join us for outdoor leadership opportunities. We started out getting to know one another with name games then moved to cooking a snack on the outdoor stoves together. Talking about the Leave No Trace Principles and respecting Mother Earth were the first themes for our group. As we have room for 20 students in our group, we are hoping to have more students join us! We have more fun to come :)*

*Lori Halcro—Youth Worker*



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### Aboriginal Youth Leadership:

Aboriginal Youth leadership has begun a new year. In October, both AYLC (High School) and ME2WE (Middle School) leadership students participated in a two-day Leadership Camp held at Sasamat Outdoor Centre in Port Moody. The students engaged in a variety of leadership focused sessions and activities, such as, canoeing, hiking, ropes course, and archery. The highlight of the night activities was the campfire, where students were expected to perform a skit and a song, which they did with much laughter accompanying their efforts. Many new friendships were made and it was a great start to the new year. This year we will be focusing on 'Helping Others and Hosting.' The ME2WE students will be raising money and equipment to support the 'Aboriginal Play It Forward Foundation' who collect sports equipment for our smaller Aboriginal Communities in need of sporting equipment. The AYLC will be hosting a 24 Hour Drumming at Riverside Secondary. They are learning new drum songs and will be inviting the public and other Aboriginal Communities to join in their event. The event will hope to bring a community awareness of our Aboriginal Community and the event will be supporting the Aboriginal Play It Forward Foundation, by asking for donations.



### 'Cultural Teaching' Handbook:

The Aboriginal Department has worked hard to put together a handbook for classroom teachers of all grades that describe the different inclusive 'Cultural Teachings' we can provide for their grade level. These 'Teachings' are consistent with the BC curriculum and highlight the relevant PLOs for the teachers' class. Teacher's can usually find the handbook in their schools Aboriginal Education Mailbox in a red folder. The Aboriginal Department offers many different 'Cultural Teachings' such as, Storytelling, Medicine Wheel Teachings, Guided Drawing, and a Plant Walk. To book a 'Cultural Teaching' all the teachers have to do is; log on to My43 and under departments, click Aboriginal Education. There they will find the 'Request For Service' button. Once the button is clicked, select a 'New' file and fill out the online request. If your school's copy has been misplaced, please contact the Aboriginal Education Department for a new copy.

Rob Cowie—Teaching Staff





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*Iłché, my name is Andrea Hotomanie and I am Cree, Assiniboine, Sioux, Lakota, Saulteaux, and Coast Salish. During my time here I have worked with many of schools in the district. I have had numerous amounts of Cultural classes with our Aboriginal youth; I have delivered many of Inclusive Presentations to classrooms; and have attended a handful of Cultural assemblies in schools. However, this past Remembrance Day was the first time I was honoured to be a part of this assembly. This year I am proud to say that I represented the First Nations People on Aboriginal Veterans Day!*

*Picture the moment... being led into an assembly by a bagpiper that was followed by 6 Cadets and then a Mountie. There I was hair braided, with a Button Blanket on, walking proudly into a room full of students, parents, and staff members. We were marched around the gym and quietly sat in the front of the audience while the principal introduced us. She started to introduce me to the audience about who I was and what I did for the school. When she was done introducing me she started to talk about the importance of Aboriginal people in the war. She gave recognition of the Aboriginal War Veterans! After all was said and done we were marched out and as everyone filed out, one parent stood and waited. When the gym was completely empty she then caught up with me to enlighten me on how this was the first time she has seen her ancestors honoured at such an event. She spoke about how her family members were in the war and how her family would have been so proud to attend this assembly. I would also like to thank the schools, families, staff members and administrations for being so open minded to accept our culture into their hearts.*

Andrea Hotomanie—Support Worker

### Inclusive Teaching via Our Request for Services

In the Aboriginal Education department, we are excited to see the number of requests for services that have been sent to our department in the first term. We have had **167 requests for service and we have had the pleasure of being in over 200 different classes sharing our cultural teachings.** With our cultural teachings having their basis in the provincial curricula, the opportunities for us to be a part of your classroom community are endless. We thank the schools and teachers that have welcomed us into their communities and we are enthusiastic to work with more schools in the district in the next term.

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### Why Are These Students Holding TOBACCO?

Aaron, Aidan, Breanna, Dakota, Elias, Jada, Leland, Nikko, Savanna and Tyler from **Mundy Road Elementary** can answer that question!

Tansi (Greetings in Cree), my name is Shelley Saje Ricci, Aboriginal Youth Worker and I am grateful for the opportunity to spend time with students interested in learning more about Aboriginal culture. Although I have been in our school district for more than 5 years, this is my first year at Mundy Road Elementary. There are 10 students who attend our group and are learning basic cultural teachings including the ceremonies and rituals around the four sacred medicines (Tobacco, Cedar, Sweetgrass and Sage). Experiential learning creates a strong impact with our students, so we regularly begin with sharing knowledge in our 'Talking Circle', where everyone contributes. When appropriate, we head outside and make a connection to the land (Mother

Earth). The following quotes are some comments from the students about a 7 minute "Creative Visualization Journey" to spend time with an Elder, and ask for specific knowledge or have a meaningful question answered.



So if you're wondering why the students are holding sacred tobacco, read ahead for the answers!

"We are holding it because it is an offering medicine and it is used for ceremonies. Some are called Pipe Ceremonies. We are giving it to Mother Earth, we went outside and we asked a question into the tobacco and gave it to the Creator."

"We use tobacco as an offering to the Creator for answers. I placed it in a private place so no one could find it."

"We have held tobacco 3 times and learned about it. The part I liked best was talking to the Elder!"

The imaginary journey involved walking through a forest, climbing a small mountain and sitting with an Elder. Then the students were invited to ask a question that has been on their minds or in their hearts. The students sit quietly, relax, listen to a chime then the slow 'lub-dub' of the drum, and smell "liquid smudge" which reminds them of "leaves and pine trees."

"This smell makes me feel calm and relaxed. I like it!"

"Relaxing made me feel better. I enjoyed saying a prayer and putting tobacco down. When I put the tobacco on 'Grandfather Rock,' I felt good about myself because I did something good for Mother Earth and Grandfather Rock. I made a wish that no one can answer but God."

"The part I liked best was putting the tobacco down by the tree. It made me feel happy. I was thinking about the question I had for the Elder."



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“We are doing this because we’re asking a question to an Elder!! We are asking and waiting for an answer. Maybe it is teaching us patience. We went outside to Grandfather Rock, I felt tired but I thought it was really cool.”

Shelley Saje Ricci—Youth Worker



### **From the Desk of Terri Mae Galligos, Sliammon Nation**

With respect and mindfulness, I would like to acknowledge the uncededed, ancestral, traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples in which Coquitlam School District resides. As a Sliammon visitor, on this respected territory, I am grateful to be a part of the Aboriginal Education Department as District Aboriginal Resource Teacher.

This term has been a busy one: networking and collaborating with Aboriginal Education staff and fulfilling Teacher Request Services. Please see heading on ‘Cultural Teaching’ Handbook submitted by Mr. Rob Cowie for further information on how teachers apply for cultural teachings offered through the Aboriginal Education Department. Reciprocity is a teaching and belief of mine. To offer a cultural teaching and to work with teachers and classrooms demonstrates reciprocity for the following reasons:

- Firstly, it is honorable to share with the classroom “traditional protocol” of acknowledging traditional territory;
- Secondly, having teachers show an interest in seeking cultural awareness to enrich their carefully planned lessons is awesome; and,
- Lastly, it is a beautiful experience to witness teachers and classrooms connect with the Aboriginal Education Department in a meaningful and holistic way.

I wish you all Seasons Greetings. May the beauty of nature and the spirit of this holiday season remain with you today and always....

Please be reminded to visit [www.firstvoices.com](http://www.firstvoices.com) should you be interested in finding out further about language archiving, language teaching and cultural revitalization. In my Sliammon language, I would like to say Cheh cheh ha thetch – I thank you for your time.

Terri Mae Galligos—Teaching Staff





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Miskwaa Maengun Spirit Adventures is an afterschool program that is based out of Maillard, Maple Creek, and Kwayhquitlum Middle Schools. The program offers a variety of activities for the students to participate in and focuses on team building and leadership skills. On October 29th the students participated in the program's first ever pumpkin carving Halloween celebration! In this photo the students are shown with each of their creations! For more information on Miskwaa Maengun Spirit Adventures please contact Aboriginal Education at 604-945-7386.

Greg Hallifax—Youth Worker



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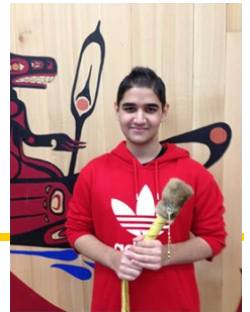
### The Talking Circle

*Every Monday and Friday morning, Suwa'lkh holds a talking circle. Before we start out talking circles, we close the door, assemble the chairs in a circle and then we all sit down. Once the circle has started there's certain rules we need to follow. No one should enter the room, no one should get up from the circle, and we are to be quiet and listen and talk only when the talking stick is handed to us. Anything that has been said in the circle stays in the circle. Usually we go around the circle four times, and the reason we go around the circle four times is to honour the medicine wheel.*

*During the first round everyone says how they are doing on a scale of 1 to 10. The next three rounds we can talk about anything we want, or you can stay quiet. Once we've gone around four times we close the circle by saying some last words or not saying anything, it's up to the individual. I enjoy the circle because of its positive energy.*

*In the circle, I feel like we are one big ol' family. No one is judged and we are all treated as equals and that is what I really like. There is usually some pretty funny and interesting stories when people decide to share. When Shawn, Natashia or Carrie decide to share a story you know it is going to be good. Overall, the talking circle is a good way to catch up after the weekend and after a long week of school.*

David Kolompar  
Student of Suwa'lkh



### Minnekhada Regional Park

*On Thursday November 15, 2012 we went on a field trip to Minnekhada Regional Park. When we got to the park it was pretty cold and really wet. Just my luck right? Anyway, while we were hiking there was a lot of mud and very dangerous slippery rocks, which you might want to be careful with if you have a weak ankle (cough, O'Brien, cough). Even though it was wet, cold, and did I mention it was foggy? It was a beautiful place to be. The park was filled with really intensely huge tall trees, but the best part was when we reached the top of the mountain, there was a beautiful view up there. I've never been on a mountain that high before so it was a pretty big deal. I loved it, even when Shawn made his famous "slightly" burnt popcorn. Overall, it was a really fun field trip. Everyone else, including myself, really enjoyed it, and I'm glad my best friend Kayla was there to enjoy it with me; it wouldn't have been the same without her. I can't wait until our next field trip. In the meantime, here are some of the pictures we took. Enjoy!*

David Kolompar





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**The Suwa'ikh Learning Centre** has been a buzz of activity since our last newsletter. Students have been settling into the routine of the building and have been busy working in their core classes and in various electives. Each Monday and Friday morning, students participate in a traditional talking circle that is led by either one of the students or by one of the department's resident elder.



Halloween at Suwa'ikh saw many creative student costumes along with an Avenger theme for the staff. Students and staff participated in several fun "minute to win it" activities that saw many smiles and tears from so much laughing. Special props go out to Tanya Walton and her Incredible Hulk costume, along with all the students who participated in the day's activities.

The Thursday excursions continue to evolve and define themselves. Students and staff members have been super lucky with the weather and have taken

advantage by getting out and doing hikes at: Buntzen Lake, Gold Creek trail, Belcarra Regional Park, Rocky Point, Minnekhada Regional Park, Colony Farms, and Sasamat lake. While on these hikes students have been learning about the *Leave No Trace* principles and about local and indigenous species of plants and animals. Students have also harvested Willow branches and pine needles for a later date so that they can create pine baskets and dream catchers. Finally, as students gain more confidence in the field, it is hoped that they will be able to develop and implement day hikes of their own as well as some overnight trips.

Suwa'ikh also had the opportunity to open its doors to the community and did a one day visit with 16 teacher candidates from the University of British Columbia. As part of the new requirements for the Faculty of Education, student teachers must participate in an alternate school setting and do an inquiry assignment on Aboriginal culture. Teacher Rob Cowie and Elder Dawn Brown facilitated a lesson on traditional west coast paddle carving. Students, staff, and teacher candidates were taught how to make handcrafted, traditional cedar carved paddles. Students selected a paddle design and began the





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journey of hand sanding their paddles. Students continue to eagerly work on their cedar paddles every Monday afternoon and will eventually carve and/or paint their creations.

On Thursday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, The Suwa'ikh Learning Centre played host to Elders, Carole Pierce, Laura Talbot, and Claudia Savage. Students and staff basked in the healing energy of stories and wisdom shared with them by their Elders. Elders play a prominent, spirited, and essential role in Aboriginal culture and are deeply committed to sharing their knowledge, as well as providing guidance to younger generations. Beginning November 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Elders will help to create a sense of community and harmony in the framework of Suwa'ikh, by engaging with its students every Friday afternoon.

Love from Suwa'ikh,

Malcolm Key, Tanya Walton, Shawn O'Brien, Natashaia Pellatt, Carrie Clark, Kari Turpin and Ramya Liyanage

