

- February was Black History Month, and many classes and schools took advantage of the many resources available to explore Black History in Canada. To learn more, the online [Canadian Encyclopedia](#) is a great place to start. It has a [collection dedicated to Black History](#) that includes numerous articles about outstanding Canadians.



- Real Acts of Caring (RAC) Week is. February 14-20, 2021. RAC was created by grades 4 and 5 students in SD43 back in 2005 and since then the provincial government has passed 6 yearly proclamations recognizing Real Acts of Caring Week. The RAC student initiative is popular in schools because:
 - RAC can help students feel more connected to one another and to their communities.
 - RAC empowers and encourages students to be caring and kind and can promote a positive school climate.
 - RAC can reduce bullying, decrease depression, and help students lower their stress. See this great article about the benefits of promoting kindness in schools: <http://edarticle.com/8-important-reasons-for-teaching-kindness-in-schools/>.
 - RAC supports the BC curriculum in numerous ways.

This year's RAC theme is focused on Random Acts of "COVID" Kindness.



- Several families have successfully completed the registration process for our Programs of Choice and Kindergarten in September 2021. The online registration has allowed families to conveniently apply from home, minimizing foot traffic at schools and helping SD43 students and staff stay safe. Applications for Cross Catchment were made available on the website on February 5th, 2021 and applications will be accepted until February 10th, 2021.



- Pink Shirt Day is being celebrated this year on February 24, 2021. This year's focus is showing the importance of "lifting each other up", helping one another and advocating for those who need it. There have been more than 59,000 youth impacted by Pink Shirt Day funded programs in 2020. Learn more about Pink Shirt Day [here](#).



- Maranda Cherry, a Dr. Charles Best Secondary School alumna, is a third-year Engineering Physics student recognized for her leadership role in the Queen's University Chapter of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society's participation in First Nations Launch, an annual multistep competition organized by NASA for Indigenous students. In 2019, the Queen's team was the first team to have been invited to participate outside the United States. All eligible teams who had successfully presented their rocket designs last fall and winter were invited to travel to Wisconsin this spring to



launch their rockets. The Queen's team lead over other teams and are well on its way to win the entire competition this year despite it only being it's first year participating at this event. Maranda shares "this isn't just a hobby, but stepping stones to a career in aerospace engineering. After I graduate, I plan on going into post-graduate study," she said. "I'd like to get a Master's of Aerospace Engineering, and even a PhD. Then I'd like to work in the private aerospace sector. Maybe somewhere like Rocket Lab in New Zealand or something like SpaceX."

- School District No. 43 was honoured to receive two Kwikwetlem First Nation flags for Como Lake Middle School and Cape Horn Elementary School during a virtual flag ceremony on January 27, 2021.

The flag ceremony was led by Kristina Joe, a former student of Principal Darren Stewart, who started the event by sharing fond memories of her time at school then asking a few individuals to be witnesses with honour blankets and coins. Some students from the Nation, namely Antonio Acosta-Joe, Grade 7 student from Como Lake Middle School and Joaquin Cunningham, Grade 3 student from Cape Horn Elementary School, were also asked to be witnesses to this momentous occasion.



Following the acknowledgement of the witnesses, Kristina introduced Chief Ed Hall and Kwikwetlem First Nation Councilor John Peters to unveil the flag and hold it for the blessing she would provide. This blessing was to ensure that all negative spirits had been cleansed from the flag. Cedar branches were used as the tool to remove this negative energy. Once the blessing was complete, the ceremony continued with Kristina and Zak Myers drumming and singing "The Cost Salish Anthem", by Chief Dan George.

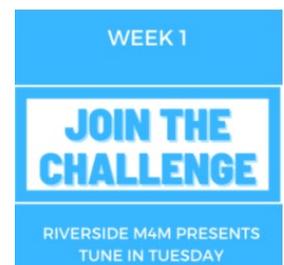
It was a touching moment for all in attendance and when the music came to an end the flag was folded and offered to the principal at each school site. The flag at Como Lake Middle School now hangs in the front entrance staircase of the school and the flag at Cape Horn Elementary School hangs in the gym.

- Jia Xin, English language learner and Grade 10 Pinetree Secondary School student, has been recognized for her creative park scene art by the UBC ESL Assessment Consortium.



- Despite COVID-19, Riverside Secondary School students are continuing the fight to help malnourished kids in Somalia through this year's Move 4 Mana campaign.

Move 4 Mana was first introduced at Heritage Woods Secondary School and has now encouraged Riverside Secondary School and many more schools in the district to participate. Riverside's Move 4 Mana team is excited to bring the initiative to the school for the second year! Move 4 Mana is launching on February 12th. The students have also created a *Tune-in Tuesday's Podcast* where they invite special guests and explore different topics. Learn more about the Move 4 Mana event [here](#).





- A virtual tour of the new addition at Dr. Charles Best Secondary School was presented to the Board of Education on February 9th. This project was approved by the Ministry of Education in May 2019 and opened ahead of schedule in February 2021.

In alignment with School District No. 43's Directions 2025, the addition is an innovative and sustainable facility that meets the emerging learning needs of students. The virtual tour showed the bright and spacious addition of 6 new classrooms, a teacher work room and washrooms.

The new facility was designed with accessibility in mind and includes an automated door opener as well as a universal washroom. It also recognizes that different learners have different sensitivities to sensory outputs within the buildings. This is accomplished through the incorporation of muted colours and lots of natural wood. A few words were also shared by first impressions of Dr. Charles Best Secondary School Principal Heather Murphy and teacher Krista Dragan. View the video on the [SD43 Youtube Channel](#).

- Superintendent Patricia Gartland provides welcoming remarks for the upcoming Professional Development Day on February 26, 2021. Via video, she will acknowledge the collaboration and spirit of cooperation between the Coquitlam Teachers' Association and Coquitlam Principal's and Vice Principal's Association and the Burnaby Teachers' Association and the Burnaby Principal's and Vice Principal's Association as both communities work together in sharing knowledge and insight to continue meeting the needs of students through social-emotional learning, trauma informed practice, mindfulness, and support for indigenous learners, children and youth in care and children with diverse abilities and disabilities.
- School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) promoted Bell Let's Talk Day on January 28th by sharing tips on how to practice good mental health habits to the community on social media. Dr. Charles Best Secondary School community also shared why mental health is important to them as well as how they practice maintaining mental health.

