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ENERGY WIRE

SD43 Sustainability and Energy Management Newsletter

An initiative from SD43's Facilities Department - Energy Management and Sustainability

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About Us

We are the District's Sustainability and Energy Management Team.

We work with BC Hydro, Clean BC, and Fortis BC in finding ways to make our schools run more efficiently to reduce our carbon footprint and operating costs. New LED lights at your school? That was us. New efficient heating system? We were there too. Holiday Shut Down competitions, us too, and so much more.

This newsletter is designed to let everyone know about SD43 sustainability initiatives. All through the District great things are going on to make our students, our community, and our world more sustainable. We want to know what you are doing and how you are doing it.



Here's what is going on in our District:

SUPER Team

RAC (Real Acts of Caring) began in Port Coquitlam and is about promoting caring and kindness and not expecting anything back. Each year, RAC Week takes place in February as a means of highlighting this concept. Over the years, RAC has spread throughout the Coquitlam School District and to many other districts all over BC. To date, 66 municipal and six provincial proclamations have been passed which recognized RAC Week. The RAC umbrella includes the SUPER Team (Single-Use Plastic Elimination Reinforcement), Intergenerational Integrities, and the Fabric Bag Solution. In 2019, a group of students in the Coquitlam School District (43) aged 9-18 decided to create the SUPER Team. The students' goal was to promote the elimination of single-use plastics through lobbying for policy change and encouraging the use of sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics.

Plastic pollution is threatening the earth's biodiversity. As the plastic decomposes, toxic substances, including methane and carbon dioxide gases are released into the oceans, air, and soil contributing to climate change. In addition to threatening plant prosperity, many animals perish as they become entangled or mistake plastics for food.

Since 2019 the SUPER Team has gone through the process of presenting their concerns around single-use plastics and imposed the responsibility on local governments and organizations to address. The first step in their process was to engage our local municipalities who responded that they could not pass bans on single-use plastics without provincial approval. Not discouraged, the SUPER Team arranged and met with Hon. George Heyman, Environment Minister of BC, on April 8th, 2021, and relayed the municipalities' message.

In July 2021, the policy was changed, allowing BC municipalities to pass bans on single-use plastics without provincial approval. However, this power shift is also causing frustrations amongst municipalities searching for direction to pass such bans. The SUPER Team is now in the process of meeting with the federal environment minister to share these concerns. In addition, the SUPER Team is also actively involved at a grassroots level working collaboratively with local volunteers to encourage the use of reusable cloth bags in SD43 and other communities in BC.



Written by:



Janine Hu, Grade 11 International Baccalaureate student, Port Moody Secondary School. Janine has been a part of the SUPER Team since 2019. She is passionate about the environment and is actively involved in making policy change to address single-use plastic waste and climate change.



Taryn Chang, Graduate from Dr. Charles Best Secondary (2018) and presently, Sustainable Energy Engineering student, Simon Fraser University. Taryn has been a member and youth mentor for the SUPER Team since 2019. She is especially interested in the renewable energy industry sector and hopes to continue to inspire and share her growing knowledge base in this area with youth in the Coquitlam School District.

We are very proud of the passion and commitment of our SD43 SUPER Team students. Their sensible approach to making a real lasting change should be a lesson and an inspiration to all of us looking for ways to better our global community. Schools represented in the SUPER Team include Mundy Rd, Heritage Mountain, Eagle Mountain, Montgomery Middle, Port Moody Secondary, Gleneagle Mountain and Charles Best Secondary Schools. For more information or to join the SUPER Team initiative contact Harriette Chang – hchang@sd43.bc.ca and see www.realactsofcaring.org

Project Salamander

Project Salamander at RC MacDonald Elementary School

Supported by Tree Canada grants

By: Emerson Plouffe and Jonah Hong, Grade 5 students



Our names are Emerson and Jonah and we're in Grade 5 at RC MacDonald Elementary. It's a small but cozy school with lots of outside space. Our school has a big forest. We all love it because one, it's a great play space and two, it's good for outdoor learning, counting, and building.

We started Project Salamander three years ago when we were in Grade 2. It started as thirty potted clippings donated from neighbors. Three years later it was a truckload of 222 plants. First, kids around the school helped remove invasive plants like holly, and English ivy.

Next, we dug holes and planted the trees. Then, we spread bark mulch around the base of the trees. Last, we watered with a hose or let the rain do the work.

Project Salamander is an important part of our school because it lets a wide variety of different animals have a bigger home. It also helps the forest keep growing and not shrinking. Our favorite memory is having a hole digging and dirt stealing competition with our friends. Our wishes for the future of the RC McDonald forest are that the next generations of kids keep planting trees. When we are older, we plan to come back and see the trees that we planted and how big they grow over time.





Calendar of Sustainable Events:

November- Tree Planting - 22 schools will be planting trees and learning about the importance of them.

- **Sustainability Survey**- District wide survey, sustainability going forward. We need your support.

December – Participate in the District’s **Energy Shut Down**. We will be running a competition to shut down our schools for the holiday break.

January / February – Participate in our **Eco Challenge**. The Eco-challenge is a 1-week competition challenging all schools to take part in 5 separate daily initiatives. Schools will be provided with a number of initiatives to choose from, such as Lights out Lunch (all lights off over lunch), Zero Waste Day (what you bring to school leaves with you after school), Walk/Bike/Bus to School Day (no cars), Write a short essay or Draw a picture on how humans can do a better job looking after the Earth. The final list of initiatives will be pre-selected by the individual school's Sustainability Leaders. At the end of the week, we will score the participation and give away certificates to all the winners and participants.



March – Time to get planting! We will develop a garden show and competition for schools with gardens to compete in a flower show, the tallest sunflower, best tomatoes etc.

April – Ideas?

What is going on at your school?

If you or your school is doing something that will help sustain our worlds environment, we want to hear about it and let everyone else know. Please contact us so we can help get the word out.

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