

## News Release

# Club G at Highlands Elementary to receive a 2015 National Inclusive Education Award



NORTH VANCOUVER, May 6, 2015—Inclusion BC announced today that Club G at Highlands Elementary will receive a National Inclusive Education Award from the Canadian Association for Community Living and Inclusion BC.

Club G began as a Grade 4 friendship group at Highlands Elementary in North Vancouver that adapted and created activities to include “Ges” a student with learning, communication and mobility challenges. Since its inception in 2011, Club G has become a compelling model of what inclusive education can be for all students. It not only enriches the student members’ day-to-day school experience, it helps them prepare for the future as citizens of the world.

“Club G is a remarkable social and friendship group that fosters understanding, compassion and improved learning outcomes for all its participants” says John Lewis, Superintendent of the North Vancouver School District. “We are grateful to Inclusion BC and the Canadian Association for Community Living for recognizing the Club with this award. We believe it is proof of what is possible when children think beyond themselves.”

Through the Social Emotional Empathy Development (SEED) Society, the Club G model is helping to inspire similar friendship groups in other schools. Students need to be able to communicate their thoughts, respect the ideas of others and appreciate diverse perspectives. Club G succeeds because it engages all of these values in children, enriching their development as considerate, collaborative learners.

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"I believe that Club G thrives because the social connections between the students are based on mutual enjoyment and creativity," says NVSD Director of Instruction Julie Parker. "Club G members share a common appreciation for what makes them unique as individuals and all that they have in common."



"Club G not only creates sincere friendships through play and interaction, it also infuses a spirit of cooperation and compassion throughout the entire school," says Todd Henderson, Principal of Highlands Elementary. "Teachers and administrators can set the standards of respect for their school. But if a school community is to be deeply welcoming and inclusive, at some point, its students must take the lead."

Created by the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), the National Inclusive Education Awards bring attention to the many positive examples of inclusive classrooms and schools across the country. Through the program, a national certificate of recognition is bestowed upon recipients who have made positive contributions to inclusive education in their province or territory. BC award recipients will be recognized at Inclusion BC's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference in Vancouver on May 28, 2015.



Photos by Jessica Johannesen, courtesy of the North Vancouver School District © 2015

Learn more at:

<http://www.inclusionbc.org/inclusive-education/whats-new/empathy-project-north-vancouver-receiving-national-inclusive-education>

Social Emotional Empathy Development Society <http://www.seedsociety.ca/clubg.html>

Club G on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FwuMHnR9BU>

For further information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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