

community report 2024

Summer Learning students from across the school district are all smiles as they collaborate and learn together at Argyle Secondary School over the month of July.





District Student Leadership Council members provide leadership, voice and student perspective on education in North Vancouver.



Sutherland Secondary takes 3rd place at the Ethics Bowl Canada National Finals.



Brooksbank Elementary students jump for joy with their new playground.

VISION

We provide world-class instruction and a rich diversity of engaging programs to inspire success for every student and bring communities together to learn, share and grow.

VALUES

TRUST We act with integrity. We are open and honest in our communication with one another.

RESPECT We relate to each other with care and appreciation. We honour diversity and recognize the exceptional in everyone.

RESPONSIBILITY We are accountable for our actions. We support positive change, continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence.

COLLABORATION We develop relationships and affiliations to achieve shared goals and consider each other in our decisions and actions.

STRATEGIC GOALS

- Student-Centred Education:** Provide equity-based education that supports the learning needs of all students.
- Innovative Instruction:** Enhance innovative and effective approaches and curriculum to develop educated citizens.
- Welcoming and Inclusive Culture:** Enhance our welcoming, safe and inclusive culture and learning environment.
- Mental Health and Well-Being:** Promote mental health and well-being through social emotional learning and trauma-informed practices.
- Truth, Healing and Reconciliation:** Champion truth, healing and reconciliation, and embed Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Environmental Stewardship:** Lead on sustainable practices and nature-based learning to address environmental challenges.



Students ages 9 to 12 participate in a Discovery Trades Summer Camp.



(L to R): Blueridge Elementary's Heather Dewling (teacher), Courtney Johnstone (Vice Principal) and Susan Teegen (former Principal, current Lynn Valley Principal) on Pink Shirt Day.

Message from the Chair and Superintendent



LINDA MUNRO



DR. PIUS RYAN

The North Vancouver School District would like to thank the Coast Salish people, specifically the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation, upon whose unceded traditional territory the school district resides. We value the opportunity to learn, share and grow on this traditional territory.

North Vancouver Board of Education

Dear Community Members,

On behalf of the North Vancouver School District and Board of Education, we are proud to share this year's Community Report. Published each spring, the Community Report provides snapshots of the outstanding work happening across the school district.

The 2023-2024 school year has focused on fostering a shared understanding of the relationships that are pivotal to learning in a time marked by distinct local and global changes. In an era where modern technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), is rapidly changing the rules of engagement, students and educators alike see opportunities to leverage their creativity and curiosity. Understanding one's relationship with the Earth, and what environmental stewardship entails, ensures students are equipped to mitigate and respond to environmental challenges. Centring these external relationships is the relationship with self and others. Every day, students engage in their learning and develop skills, interests and capacity for achieving great things.

The stories highlighted in this report exemplify how these themes complement our commitment to creating vibrant learning communities. We invite you to visit the Learn, Share & Grow blog, where you will find more learning stories as they are added throughout the year on www.sd44.ca. We also encourage you to become an active member of our learning communities, and this issue provides examples of what opportunities exist for continued engagement and participation.

Thank you for your interest in the teaching and learning across the school district and for your ongoing support of the K-12 public education system in North Vancouver.

LINDA MUNRO
CHAIR
NORTH VANCOUVER
BOARD OF EDUCATION

DR. PIUS RYAN
SUPERINTENDENT
NORTH VANCOUVER
SCHOOL DISTRICT



BACK ROW (L TO R): George Tsiakos, Daniel Anderson, Antje Wilson
FRONT ROW (L TO R): Linda Munro, Leilani Tumaneng,
Cyndi Gerlach, Kulvir Mann



National Indigenous Peoples Day is celebrated at the Education Services Centre.

Argyle's Free Little Library

BY LISA DALLA VECCHIA
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

During the pandemic, Argyle staff, including Youth Support Worker Cindy Dobbe and Teacher Librarian Katie Black, would get together to walk the neighbouring streets, for fresh air, exercise and a much needed feeling of connection.

On one of their walks, staff came across a little library. They instantly loved it and brainstormed how to bring the concept to life for the Argyle community.

Staff first needed to determine whose skills they could tap into. While Teacher Graham Robertson used his woodworking skills to design a structure that resembled a mini Argyle, it was Brooke N., student,

who built the actual structure. With Education Assistant Barb Rowland's support, Brooke took care and attention to build the library.

Teacher Murray Bulger enlisted additional students, some of whom were cross-enrolled from Handsworth Secondary, to design the lettering, which he then painted onto the brightly painted library.

Student Council President Lucas Robson shared the little library expanded his idea of where libraries are located, adding students and staff could now "take from and also give back to the library."

The Argyle community is encouraged to borrow and/or donate a book. To date, Argyle's Free Little Library has done a lot to create a sense of community. ■



Reflections on Elementary Summer Learning

BY SANDRA SINGH
DISTRICT PRINCIPAL

The North Vancouver School District offers Summer Learning opportunities to elementary and secondary students.

Elementary Summer Learning provides students the opportunity to make new friends, build positive relationships with adults, and learn in a welcoming and inclusive student-centred environment that is focused on building confidence with core skills.

Teachers use pre-assessment strategies to gauge where learners are at and to guide instructional practice. They also use various approaches to meet the needs of each learner, such as platooning, stations, and small-group instruction.

Goal setting and student self-reflection are used as assessment tools to engage students in understanding their learning profile. An interim report is sent to families mid-way through the program, with a final report sent home on the last day of school.

In 2023, Elementary Summer Learning took place at Queen Mary



Students and staff attend the Welcome to Summer Learning assembly.

Community School during July, with over 160 Grade 4 to 7 students from across the school district in attendance.

Programs offered included a Literacy/Numeracy course for Grades 4-6, a Social Connections course for Grades 5-7 and a new pilot offering, ELL Newcomers. English Language Learners (ELL) in Grades 4-6 from

Ridgeway Elementary were invited to participate in a program designed to support connection with their peers as well as language acquisition.

A focus at Elementary Summer Learning is having students get to know one another so that they genuinely feel they belong in their new learning environment. Connections are created with

many opportunities for students to interact and socialize with one another, including two school-wide Community Days.

A celebration of learning took place on the last day. Students shared their accomplishments and learning journey with their families in a student-led open house format.

In September, students shared their learning milestones with their classroom teacher at their respective home school. As their culminating project, each student created a "Myself as a Learner" book, which spoke to a student's strengths, stretches, and strategies they worked on during the program.

It is amazing how quickly the program drew to a close. The lasting friendships students made are a highlight of the program. Many students who attended look forward to returning next year.

Staff also look forward to another successful session of Elementary Summer Learning in July 2024! Look for Summer Learning registration information in the spring. www.sd44.ca/school/summer ■

Indigenous button art project

BY ANNE LAWSON
PRINCIPAL

In June of 2023, Carisbrooke Elementary welcomed Indigenous Elder Maxine Matilpi to the school as a guest teacher.

Maxine was born in Alert Bay and spent her early life in Kalugwis (Turnour Island) in the centre of Kwakwaka'wakw territory in northern Vancouver Island.



Growing up in Kalugwis, Maxine learned her first language, Kwakwala, and was educated in many aspects of traditional culture, including the creation of button blankets and regalia.

Maxine was introduced to Carisbrooke's Indigenous Education Team by her niece, Education Assistant Carla Matilpi.

Earlier in the fall, Carla had shared a proposal with the team that would see students from Kindergarten to Grade 7 and staff learn about Indigenous culture, including how to make a button wall hanging. Carla's proposal was enthusiastically embraced.

During the weeklong lesson, Maxine shared her stories, knowledge and love of button blankets. Students gave her their full attention, and worked diligently to create their own button wall hanging. The artwork was displayed in the school to mark National Indigenous Peoples Day.

I would like to thank Maxine, Carla, the many teachers who helped to make this Indigenous learning opportunity possible, and the Carisbrooke PAC and school district for funding this important work. ■

Magical Math Makers: Math Festival



BY CYNTHIA ZHU
NUMERACY TEACHER FACILITATOR

With the goal of bringing joy, excitement, and engagement to the learning of mathematics, the North Vancouver School District collaborated with Annette Rouleau from the Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival (JRFM) to host a math festival for teachers in November of 2023.

Using a play-based approach, a math festival allows learners to explore math challenges using their creativity and perseverance.

The math festival puzzles are designed to be low floor-high ceiling, providing learners with

multiple entry points to engage with related mathematics content. The puzzles encourage players to use mathematical language to communicate their strategies with each other as they work as a team. Each problem/game is neatly scaffolded, providing learners agency over their own path of discovery.

Throughout the event, we heard from multiple teachers that they were eager to bring these games back to their school to integrate into their own practice. Going forward, we hope to bring math festivals to schools across the school district so students, families, and teachers can celebrate math and create magical math moments with each other. ■

Cuteness overload! Experiential learning with ducklings

BY SARAH NAFREY AND
JASMINE TAYLOR
TEACHERS

During the spring of 2023, Lynnmour/Xá7elcha Elementary Grade 1 and 2 students were very excited to welcome duck eggs into their classrooms.

Over a four-week period, students watched with great anticipation as the eggs developed and then hatched into six fuzzy little friends.

The six ducklings—Clover, Kiwi, Honeybun, Panther, Max, and Fred—brought endless learning opportunities, entertainment and delight to the entire school community.

Students learned how to care for the ducklings, while ensuring their

comfort and practicing empathy. By observing their little friends in their heat-lamped habitat, students witnessed how ducks adapt to their environment, paddling around in their wading pool and exploring the grass at Digger Park!

In examining these ducklings up close, we also learned they have claws on each toe to help them grip surfaces.

After an enriching three weeks of enjoying our new duckling friends, we bid them farewell as they travelled to their new home on a farm.

This was an experiential learning opportunity we will never forget. Our six beautiful ducklings will be missed! ■



Windsor Library buzzing with new resources

BY LISA OTTENBREIT
TEACHER LIBRARIAN

Windsor Secondary's Library and Learning Commons is home to an important resource – a hive of honey bees!

Brad Farrell, science teacher; Magali Chemali, science teacher and Beewatch owner; and I collaborated to provide the school community an opportunity to observe how honey bees work collectively to develop and maintain their hive.

A complementary informative display and library resources teach students about the critical role bees and other pollinators play in the local ecosystem. Visitors can learn about the various contributors to the colony, such as the workers,

drones, and of course, the queen.

We hope this project, along with Argyle Secondary's, inspires other schools to provide a similar learning experience for students to connect with nature, and ultimately, to grow capacity for appreciating the need for protecting these important and complex creatures.

Windsor students, staff and visitors have been very excited to see the bees flying safely in and out of the enclosed structure, building their colony. Every day, students and staff visit the library to check on the bees, with many remarking on the incredible work on display.

Drew Saballa, Grade 11 student, has a great respect for the honey bees and visits daily. He understands "their community is highly complex

and their system of hierarchy is strictly followed. The hive works entirely to protect the queen at the cost of their own lives."

We would like to thank the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Intergenerational Land Learning Project at UBC for generously supporting Windsor's beehive initiative. Thanks also goes to Windsor's Green Team, whose members are helping with this project by replenishing the water and nectar supplies.

On a final note, did you know honey bee species are social? As a superorganism, individual bees cannot survive without each other. What a beautiful metaphor for humans! ■



Local environmental activists acknowledged with awards

BY MINA KERR-LAZENBY
NORTH SHORE NEWS

Community commendation was at the forefront of conversation for the City of North Vancouver as council came together to offer grants and awards to those spearheading climate conscious initiatives.

Ms. Kenny, a Grade 4/5 teacher, bagged the Urban Agriculture, Education and Awareness Award for her work infusing sustainable food systems education into the school's culture and curriculum.

"Through her thoughtfully integrated lessons she cultivates and grows student leadership within the school community," said Mayor Linda Buchanan.

Overseeing a school-wide composting program, Kenny's class of students was responsible for collecting compost from each classroom, tending to the schools vermicompost bin, and collecting the worm castings to fertilize the school gardens.



Ms. Kenny and her Grade 4/5 class maintained the school's gardens with a focus on environmental education and STEM.

Across the previous year the class grabbed hammers, saws and drills to repurpose an old box into a thriving garden, learned how to grow

seedlings in an indoor greenhouse, and practiced transferring their bounty to the kitchen by learning how to cook, chop and bake the

vegetables and proffer them to classmates via the school's annual Salad Day.

Buchanan said Kenny's dedication "embodies sustainability leadership, and inspires and empowers our next generation of urban farmers and environmental leaders."

Council also announced the Cool It Climate Leadership Award, an award given by the City of North Vancouver and the BC Sustainable Energy Association to schools working to help the city achieve their climate action targets.

The award was given to Brooksbank Elementary's Grade 4/5 class who, led by teacher Julie Eldon, completed 345 individual actions to combat climate change and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 9.7 tonnes, the equivalent to taking two passenger vehicles off the road for a year, said Buchanan.

"We deeply admire your tenacity and dedication to creating a more sustainable community," said the mayor. ■

North Vancouver schools battle it out in new reading competition

BY MINA KERR-LAZENBY
NORTH SHORE NEWS

Celebrations are in order for a particularly studious set of Dorothy Lynas Elementary students, who were crowned as the inaugural winners of the North Vancouver School District's Battle of the Books competition.

Cleveland Elementary hosted the first edition of Battle of the Books, a competition that has students read and dissect books in a book-club style before answering questions on them in a head to head with other schools.

Dorothy Lynas and Cleveland battled it out against Highlands, Sherwood Park and Carisbrooke, with teams of three answering rounds of questions in easy, moderate, and hard categories.

"The energy was awesome," said Cleveland Elementary's teacher-librarian Myriam Dumont, who had initiated the event.

"We had some parent volunteers who helped set up and keep score, and all the students were excited and involved. In the end, it was Dorothy Lynas who won first place, and that was awesome because they had worked hard," she said.

The students, around a dozen from each school, had read 12 finalists from the Red Cedar Book Awards over the course of the previous year. The selection had been chosen, said Dumont, because of their range in diversity and spotlight on Canadian authors.

One particular highlight included a graphic novel called *Borders*, an adaptation of one of the most



celebrated short stories to come from Indigenous author Thomas King. Other books spanned grief and loss.

"I think this kind of event is beneficial for kids, especially those who aren't into things like sports. We have a lot of those opportunities for kids in our schools, but we don't have many

other things away from that," she said, adding how this event will be "the first of many."

The winning students, who celebrated with pizza and cake, took home a specially made trophy and gift certificates donated by Vancouver Kidsbooks. ■

Supporting student identity and empathy through diverse stories

BY LAUREN VANDERHAM
VICE PRINCIPAL

With one of Seymour Heights' school plan goals being honouring diversity, we felt it was imperative to examine our resources and books.

We want to look at diversity through a broad lens and increase representation in a multitude of areas, including race, culture, LGBTQIA2+, ability, and neurodiversity. Finding texts young children can read on their own and identify with is an important component to this process.

At a recent staff meeting, educational assistants, teachers, and administrators were asked to bring a book that showcased diversity in some way.

Staff spent time exploring the books, looking for what was missing and noting areas in which we need to develop further. Teachers were also encouraged to expand on this process by taking inventory of their own classroom libraries.



Christine Bird, Grade 2 teacher at Seymour Heights, stands before her diverse story collection.

As one example of how staff have embraced supporting student representation through literature, Christine Bird, Grade 2 teacher,

received \$2,500 through the Indigo Love of Reading Grant. This has gone towards diversifying classroom libraries throughout the school.

Sia Theodoropoulos, school librarian, has been seeking out stories that the school population can connect with. One of her current favourite read-alouds is *My Day with Gong Gong* by Sennah Yee.

This school year, we have switched many of our early readers for primary decodable texts. *Decodable texts* are books that follow a phonological scope and sequence, allowing early readers to sound out the words. The Canadian company, SyllaSense, offers a breadth of racial representation within their stories. Teachers have also been incorporating more dual-language texts, focussing on the home languages reflected in each classroom community.

As we continue this important work at Seymour Heights, we encourage families and school staff to examine their libraries with a critical lens and to consider which voices are amplified and which voices are either missing or misrepresented. ■

Identity, friendships and community

BY RHENA TEVENDALE
CERTIFIED TEACHER OF THE DEAF
AND HARD OF HEARING

In February of 2023, the Hearing Resource Team hosted a gathering for deaf/hard of hearing (DHH) students from Kindergarten through to Grade 12.

As most DHH students attend schools where they are the only student with hearing loss, these gatherings are crucial in that they help students develop identity with a larger group of DHH students. For some, it is the first opportunity to meet others with hearing loss or who use hearing technology or sign language.

While many of the 21 students were shy at first, with the help of amazing youth leaders who facilitated games and activities, students soon were



having lots of fun together.

Below, students described the value of this gathering in their own words:

"It is important to get together because you meet people you can

relate to, and it opens up possibilities for new friendships and role models. It also provides leadership opportunities. I enjoyed seeing all the kids have a fun time and be able to

relate to others and know they are not alone." A Grade 11 student.

"It is important, especially for younger students, so that they know that they aren't the only person with hearing loss. It is good to meet and bond with other people like me. It is interesting to hear about their hearing levels and experiences." Students in Grade 6 and 7.

"I enjoyed all the games, especially the charades... It was fun exploring the high school. And I liked the garden outside the high school. Students were deaf like me. I was happy that it was OK to bring my friend." A Grade 4 student.

"My favourite part was the game where we acted things out and guessed what they were doing. It was nice meeting other kids with hearing loss so I can make hearing loss friends." A Grade 1 student. ■

Reflections on student well-being

BY RYDER OLIVER-GREEN
STUDENT

In a time where the future often seems uncertain and where our past has been occupied by existential catastrophes, where we have to face the detrimental impacts of social media and a pandemic, the importance of critically examining how schools can support students' mental health is paramount.

Representing student voice on a Standing Committee Meeting on Mental Health & Well-Being in schools was an unforgettable experience. Students, community partners, and NVSD staff discussed and reflected on meaningful questions around the theme of mental health and well-being in school.

We engaged in conversation about topics such as stigma mitigation, building an environment conducive to the stresses and anxiety of school, and how NVSD schools can approach students' well-being with a

more holistic lens.

We discussed strategies such as space setting, mindfulness, and the addition of support staff to allow a further de-stigmatization of getting help. As the meeting progressed, we discussed bringing nature-based learning into senior grades, rethinking the construct of scholastic success, and how we can put social emotional learning before all else to uphold NVSD's commitments to our strategic goals.

I felt an immediate sense of belonging and comfort in sharing my perspective, and I felt grateful for the effort put forward to address student mental health in schools, as this issue is much too prevalent in schools today.

Student mental well-being should be the number one priority of schools, as it is irrational to think we can learn when we are not at peace within. Students deserve to be able to approach life with confidence in themselves; luckily, school is the best place to start. ■



Ryder Oliver-Green

Montroyal Elementary brings the classroom to the forest with new outdoor learning space

BY MINA KERR-LAZENBY
NORTH SHORE NEWS

The new learning space at Montroyal Elementary isn't your average classroom.

Instead it is a haven, one that inspires creativity, productivity and a better connection with the outdoors, said the project's instigator and student parent, Christine Campbell.

The outdoor classroom had been the vision of Campbell's late husband David Small, a former Montroyal Parent Advisory Council chair, outdoor enthusiast and avid hiker of the North Shore mountains.

Small envisioned creating a place where students can learn in a natural environment, but he died of terminal and inoperable

Glioblastoma in 2021 before his dreams could become reality.

Campbell made it her mission to have his vision realized, working with Principal Doug Beveridge and fundraising with parents to ensure the 'classroom' was in place before their daughter, Mackenzie, graduated Grade 7 in July.

"David's idea was that kids need outdoor time, they need a change of scenery, and sometimes that change of scenery can spark imagination and a new way of learning," she said.

"Nature is our best instructor that we could ever ask for, and the Indigenous people have known that all along" said Campbell. "We really can grow and thrive and flourish in natural conditions and surroundings.



Kids need to move and they need to breathe fresh air, and so do the teachers."

Rose Greene, the District Principal of Indigenous Education and Equity for school district, said being in nature regularly, especially when in a learning environment, is vital to retaining physical, spiritual, emotional

and mental health.

Beveridge said the space will be used all year round, rain or shine. "We can bring more than one classroom up here, we can do other types of activities here. Learning could be silent reading, it could be science, it could be nature, it could be a creek study, the creativity here is endless." ■

Queensbury students craft sustainable city

BY MAISIE HARRISON
TEACHER

As part of the NVSD's Sustainability and Climate Action Week, Grade 6 and 7 students from Queensbury Elementary participated in the Build your City Minecraft Challenge.

The collaborative process sparked lively discussions among students about what a sustainable city should include. Through hard work, problem solving and collaboration, Sustainville was created.

Sustainville incorporated a range of interesting elements such as engaging public spaces, housing options for residents, public amenities, natural features promoting biodiversity, public and active transportation infrastructure, renewable energy sources, and local food production. "The streets are lined with flowers so when people walk on them, they will feel like they are walking through nature," said Luka, one of Sustainville's city planners.

City Planner Tate mentioned a key



Sustainville's sustainable grocery store.

feature, "The Grandfather Tree is important to Sustainville because it produces oxygen for the city and is a great picnic spot. It is a great habitat for birds and other wildlife and a nice spot to take a break from the sun."

There were also elements that promoted community connection and fun, such as the pool with water slide and diving board that

went all the way up to the top of the world! City Planner Aily spoke to the importance of public amenities. "People in the city can go for a swim on hot days and cool down. The waterslide is also important because little kids can go on it and have a ton of fun!"

It was exciting to see the class use the already familiar Minecraft

platform to try something new. Students realized their actions in the virtual world had consequences in real life.

I am very proud of the cooperation and leadership skills the class built while thinking critically about building a healthy and sustainable space for people to live. ■

An inclusive musical experience for Handsworth students

BY JAMES DIAKUW
TEACHER

Inclusive Education Fine Arts 10 is a music class where diverse learners meet daily to watch, listen to, or actively participate in a wide range of music activities geared as much as possible to their individual skill levels and academic, social, and emotional needs and goals. The course was first offered September 2022.

I drew from my experiences teaching music to diverse learners at the elementary level, but I had to get comfortable with learning what and how I could teach by getting to know this group of students.

To do this, I relied on the joy, humour, support and insights shared by students' educational assistants and heeded Principal Mark Barrett's words to work with students' strengths.

By watching and listening and encouraging students to teach me what their needs, wants and abilities are, I was able to offer students opportunities to dance, sing, and play with a variety of instruments.

I collaborated with support staff to create personalized and meaningful experiences for students. As an example, an education assistant requested on behalf of a student, if I could sing Bruno Mars' "Just the Way You Are."

When I played the song, students were so into it that the song became the group's informal anthem. We enthusiastically played and sang that song at the end of every day for the rest of the semester!

The learning outcomes for the course varied by learner. Some students worked towards successful social interactions using electronic aids,



James Diakuw leads the class in song.



others worked on managing self-regulation in less-preferred settings or situations, and some attempted to remain focused on a person or activity for even a couple of minutes at a time.

It has been my honour and privilege to create what one colleague described as a "magical teaching and learning experience where students clearly felt comfortable and welcome." ■

Black History Month is more than just ticking a box, say North Van schools

BY MINA KERR-LAZENBY
NORTH SHORE NEWS

Staff and students of Carson Graham Secondary school bore witness to history being made, as the school came together to host its first assembly dedicated to Black History Month.

The assembly traversed the serious and the jovial, education and celebration, as it hosted speakers from various walks of life.

John Nweke of Vancouver's Anti-Racism Coalition talked on race, racism, slavery and Black history. The school's choir, led by choral director Frank Lee, came together for song. Afro-Indigenous, hip-hop DJ Orene Askew, or DJ O Show, showed students a documentary that delved into her own history and heritage, before turning the school hall into a dance floor.

Chanel Stanley, Carson's Skwxwú7mesh Snichim (Squamish



Student Sarah Kra-Yip, who MC'd the event, is joined by Chanel Stanley and Valerie Jacober.

Language) and social justice teacher and organizer of the event, said she had been spurred on to put the assembly together after witnessing the education system's lack of multicultural teachings.

Stanley credits Valerie Jacober, education assistant, as being a driving force behind Carson Graham's journey to better representation. Jacober creates the displays that sit in the school's central hallway,

adorned with notes of notable Black Canadian figures and newspaper clippings on Black history from here on the North Shore. Nearby glass display cases are home to exhibits that rotate on a month-by-month basis.

"When I started working here 11 years ago, there was little in the way of Black History Month, no displays, and so I decided to start building my own movement," Jacober said. She added, the Canadian Black experience should be so embedded within the school curriculum that young children are as accustomed to the names of Viola Desmond, the first Black woman to appear on Canadian currency, Willie O'Ree, the National Hockey League's first black player, and Mary Ann Shadd Cary, the first Black woman to publish a newspaper, as they are the likes of Rosa Parks or Martin Luther King. ■

Reflecting on Pro-D Day: Conversations around artificial intelligence

BY ALYSIA FRANCIS
TEACHER

Educators from various school districts gathered at École Handsworth School to explore the power of educational technology.

The day began with recognition of the First Peoples Principal of Learning: Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational.

We then dove into a series of sessions, led by myself and educators, including colleague Simon Worley, who shared insights on using artificial intelligence (AI) in education.

What follows are participant quotes and my thoughts related to their quote.

"Evolve it ... refine it ... work with it."

This quote encapsulates the essence of our day. We came here to evolve and refine our understanding of

educational technology, and to work with it as a tool for enhancing learning. Prompt engineering is key!

Sessions allowed us to engage in collaborative discussions on various educational topics, explore the themes presented, generate new ideas and share resources.

"I see the multiple benefits as an inclusion teacher."

Educational technology offers diverse ways to support and engage students with varying needs and abilities.

"I now think of AI as a tool to support learning."

This quote reflects a common shift in perspective that many experienced. We moved from concerns about the potential for academic dishonesty to recognizing that when harnessed correctly, technology becomes a different kind of academic tool that enhances the learning experience.



"It's about an authentic assessment tool. What am I assessing?"

This question delves into the heart of the matter. Educational technology is not just about evaluating writing skills but also assessing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, making it

an authentic assessment tool.

This Pro-D day provided a welcoming space for questions, connections, engaging conversations and the fostering of a diverse network of educators, united by a common goal: to enrich the educational experience. ■

NVOL students and staff embrace advances in technology

BY JENNIFER TIECHE
VICE PRINCIPAL, NVOL

By harnessing the power of recent advances in technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), North Vancouver Online Learning (NVOL) continues to create an environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and deep understanding.

As learners investigate and test AI's capabilities, teachers are learning too, employing AI to create meaningful and ethical learning experiences for students.

Mme. Sabetghadam, NVOL French Immersion teacher, noticed students using AI for "everything, even for answering the small questions." She therefore built AI engagement into her courses, encouraging learners to use the tools to process vs. copy and paste information. Students make



Left to right: NVOL's Mr. McCormick, Mme. Sabetghadam, Ms. Ahluwalia.

meaning by using their own words to describe and explain the AI generated content and by relating their learning to their personal lives and to the world around them.

The use of AI poses many ethical questions; therefore, NVOL teachers are teaching students to think critically about the tools and how to use them ethically. Ms. Ahluwalia,

NVOL English Language Arts teacher, uses AI as a brainstorming tool with students for writing stories and essays. Students "must cite AI used in their brainstorming and in their written work."

Mr. McCormick, NVOL Social Studies teacher, believes, "AI is a useful tool for learning." He includes an AI policy in his courses and works with learners to use technology effectively to enhance student learning.

As NVOL continues to explore the potential of AI in education, our commitment to supporting student learning in flexible and personalized ways remains unwavering. We are excited about the possibilities innovative technologies offer, as well as our ability to help students take ownership of their learning and embrace the opportunities and challenges of the future. ■

North Shore students compete in international robotics competition

BY MINA KERR-LAZENBY
NORTH SHORE NEWS

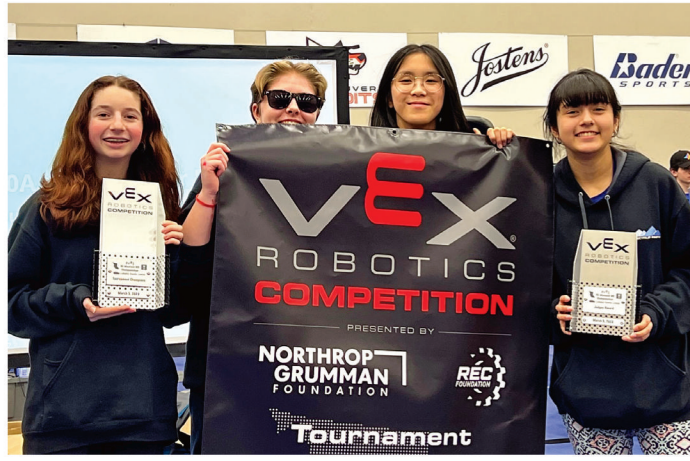
A Windsor Secondary robotics team has won the provincial championships of the VEX Robotics Competition, securing them a coveted spot in the VEX Robotics Worlds Championship.

The Windsor team competed against other middle school teams at the BC Mainland Regional VEX Robotics Competition.

The team's meticulously created machine battled it out against other bots to understand and solve specific challenges as part of Spin Up, a game crafted by the Robotics Education & Competition (REC) Foundation.

"Our main goal was to build a robot that could work on its own and in partnership in alliances, [to try and] generate the maximum points possible," said Edna Manjarrez.

Manjarrez and teammates, Rachelle Ng, Amy Crump and India Newell,



Windsor Secondary students designed, built and programmed a machine using robotics software program VEX V5.

had worked together to design, build and program a machine using robotics software program VEX V5.

The group met throughout the summer and every weekend prior to the competition, learning the

software and getting to grips with particular facets of robot building, including electronics, programming, mechanical systems, animation and computer-aided machining.

Manjarrez said many of the team

members plan to go to college and major in robotics, computer programming, or an engineering-related field.

Alberto Manjarrez, the team's coach and advisor, said, "I am proud of these amazing kids for their commitment and ability to take what they learn in our sessions and apply it to build and program a competition robot from concepts and ideas to completion."

For students who compete, the benefits extend far beyond the technical. "It's an experience that offers a new appreciation for STEM and lays a strong foundation of critical problem-solving, communication and teamwork skills," said Dan Mantz, CEO of the REC Foundation.

The competition saw more than 23,000 teams from 58 countries participate in over 2,300 events worldwide. Each competition season culminates every spring with the World Championship. ■

Longtime Carson Graham coach gets the call to BC Football Hall of Fame



PHOTO BLAIR SHIER

Larry Donohoe has been involved with the Carson Graham football program as a player, coach and administrator for more than 40 years.

BY ANDY PREST
NORTH SHORE NEWS

Larry Donohoe has been a fixture on the Carson Graham football team for more than 40 years. And now he'll be

a permanent fixture on the walls of the BC Football Hall of Fame.

Donohoe's Carson career started as a player in 1978 when Earl Henderson, legendary founder of the Carson

football program who spent nearly three decades as head coach, ordered Donohoe to report for duty.

Donohoe has been working with the Carson program ever since, and his connections to the team have made him the longest serving non-teaching coach in the history of the North Shore Secondary Schools Athletics Association.

His list of accomplishments is extensive, including head coaching and assistant coaching roles with both the Carson junior and senior teams, collecting several provincial championship banners along the way.

He also co-founded and served as co-ordinator of the annual Buchanan Bowl between Carson Graham and Handsworth. Founded in 1987, the Buchanan Bowl is the second-longest running high school rivalry game in the province. Donohoe is also

president of the James Buchanan Memorial Scholarship Fund, which awards academic scholarships to a player from each of the Buchanan Bowl teams.

"Larry is incredibly loyal and caring," said current Carson Graham head coach Brian Brady. "He has grown the Buchanan Bowl not for himself, but for the honour of James Buchanan's memory, for his friend John Buchanan, and to ensure Carson Graham and Handsworth have a special event to build community and come together. These are the memories students will have 20-30-40 years after graduation."

"Football is a different sport," Donohoe said. "I love the preparation, I love working with the kids. It's kind of my happy place with all the stresses of life. ... I've given back, but I always felt like I was getting a lot back as well." ■

School food programs off to a healthy start

BY TINE PARKER,
DISTRICT VICE PRINCIPAL,
HEALTHY FUTURES
AND **LUKE SMEATON,**
MANAGER OF SUSTAINABILITY,
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL
PLANNING

The school district's Healthy Futures program is off to a great start! Using the province's new Feeding Futures funding as a starting point, Healthy Futures is a comprehensive school district program that includes food, physical, and social emotional literacy.

Healthy Futures focuses on the sharing of local healthy food at school and looks differently at each site, with school administrators having the flexibility to implement what works best for their learning community. Examples include

breakfast programs, buffet-style oatmeal bars, fruit and vegetable snacks, bagels with cream cheese, and milk. Cafeteria vouchers are also available in secondary schools.

The NVSD's approach of providing food for all students removes the stigma sometimes associated with the distribution of no-cost food. Since the program launched in September, schools have been sharing successes and learnings with the support of the District Vice Principal for Healthy Futures, Tine Parker.

Success and learnings include

- Involving students in food distribution
- Using apple slicers to make fruit consumption easier for younger students
- Locating fridges with food in school hallways so they are accessible to students

- Partnering with local vendors and non-profits to get food delivered at no cost
- Linking food preparation with English Language Learning (ELL) instruction
- Involving community volunteers to support food preparation and serving

In addition to paving the way for a healthier future on the North Shore, the Healthy Futures program also directly supports all six goals of the school district's Strategic Plan.

Healthy Futures will continue to evolve, with the vision being a long-term program that provides lunch and snacks for every student, improves food literacy, supports better learning outcomes, and builds stronger school communities. ■



Althea, right, is with a group of students who are preparing meals.

Sutherland Secondary's Banana Lounge

BY SHANNON SMART
VICE PRINCIPAL

Students at Sutherland Secondary have started a new club this year: The Banana Lounge.

After identifying a need for additional food supports within Sutherland's community, Grade 11 student Althea Trinidad approached school administrators to ask for support.

Althea modeled Sutherland's Banana Lounge after a food access program at MIT that provides bananas to students, free of charge and with no barrier to access.

Althea has taken MIT's concept one step further, providing not just a piece of fruit but a free lunch to any student who wants one. When she brought the concept to students at our September Club Day, the response was overwhelming. More than 30 students signed up to help.

In early October, the Banana Lounge opened with a make-your-own-sandwich bar. The group now serves

lunch every Tuesday to any student who wants one, advertising the week's offering through Instagram and word of mouth.

Club members meet before school one morning a week to plan and prep the food. Through their hard work and dedication, members have served hundreds of meals to students in the Sutherland community. They have made sandwiches, pasta, and a delicious vegetarian chili.

Althea said this about the group, "I believe it's important to the school because it builds a sense of community through making food in the mornings and serving it during lunch. Each week, lots of people are able get excited to have something to eat for lunch without worrying about spending. It gives people something to look forward to."

The supplies for the lunches are sourced from local organizations that provide donations, with additional support from the North Vancouver School District. ■

North Vancouver students spread holiday cheer to at-risk teens

BY JANELLA HAMILTON
CBC NEWS

Ten-year-olds Nathan Stone and Annalise Breakey look proudly at a pile of gifts stacked high. Each package is filled with donated toiletries, pyjamas, socks and toques.

They are part of a group of Grade 5 and 6 students from Dorothy Lynas Elementary who have been canvassing and collecting donations from local businesses over the past month to go to homeless teens staying at North Shore Youth Safe House.

The safe house is a short-term shelter program that provides a safe space and helps connect vulnerable young people in North Vancouver with vital services.

Stone says it felt good to help kids



PHOTO MARTA ORELLANA

Grade 5 and 6 students collected community donations for youth experiencing homelessness.

in need who are not much older than him.

Steve Kirkby, youth services director at Hollyburn Community Services Society, which operates the safe

house, said the need is higher than ever after other shelters in the area were forced to close due to financial constraints. Donations are down this year, he added.

The students' teacher Marta Orellana said this is the second year her class has donated to the safe house. She says she was blown away by the community's altruism amid growing inflation and an affordability crisis.

"We collected over \$1,200 in gift cards for grocery stores and donations for the shelter itself," Orellana said.

"On top of that, 15 teens received their own box, which is a large wrapped gift with necessities."

Orellana says she aims to teach students about kindness, empathy and giving back to others.

"I want them to learn that, you know, as a community, we have to take care of each other," Orellana said.

Annalise Breakey said she's learned that even the little things can make a big difference. ■

Work experience placement supports learning and development

BY PATTY ARCHIBALD
DISTRICT INCLUSIVE WORK
EXPERIENCE FACILITATOR

Naomi Mackay, an Argyle Secondary student, came to the Work Experience program (WEX) with an interest in working in the community. Based on this interest, I set up a WEX placement at BC Playthings, a quaint neighbourhood toy store in Edgemont Village, specializing in play-based education and sensory friendly toys.

Under the guidance of Job Coach Catherine Yong, Naomi takes on various responsibilities in the store. Some of her responsibilities include stocking shelves, organizing products, displaying merchandise, and contributing toward creating a welcoming, organized and tidy store appearance. According to Catherine, these responsibilities help a student "build independence and confidence through skill."

Learning Support Teacher Tiffany Drew observed that on Naomi's

work days, which are two days per week, "She arrives at school in the morning energized and engaged, ready to experience everything from the transit bus ride, to the skills she is learning at work, to the social environment she has with co-workers."

Tiffany continued, "Naomi has been involved in the Work Experience program for the past few years, in different settings and with different coaches. This most recent experience has shown how she has grown and developed through this program. Naomi has embraced the responsibilities she has been given and finds pride and accomplishment in her work."

Naomi echoes that sentiment, and finds the store an exciting place to work. "I like the toys at BC Playthings. The people I work with are awesome."

The staff at BC Playthings are as enthusiastic about Naomi and the work experience, "She is very much



liked by the staff, and we love having her here."

The WEX Program has given Naomi the opportunity to grow her knowledge, skills, independence

and confidence, all while having fun. Well done, Naomi, and thank you BC Playthings for supporting students through work experience placements! ■

The Ridgeway Refuge

BY THE RIDGEWAY REFUGE COMMITTEE

The Ridgeway Refuge, now in its 35th year, was designed to enhance the Ridgeway school community's environmental awareness. Through education and participation in its development, maintenance and care, the Refuge provides a calm and natural outdoor space for teaching and learning.

The Refuge has been through many iterations. From a once barren school courtyard, the space has evolved throughout the years to include garden beds, including a vegetable garden; trees, vines, shrubs, and perennials planted in honour of



administrators, authors, teachers, students and dignitaries; a pond and water feature; and butterfly garden.

The Refuge encourages all who gather there to pause and reflect. Students observe the subtle seasonal changes. Students and teachers learn together, asking questions and making spontaneous discoveries. Curiosity is awakened.

Students and staff are involved in the Refuge's care and maintenance. The Refuge Committee, a group of dedicated teachers, support staff and administrators, share responsibility for planning and organizing for curricular connections, student activities, and special events.

By planting and tending to the garden, students develop skills in organization, observation and critical thinking. They also develop an understanding and appreciation for their relationship with the environment.

Throughout the years, families have also contributed, from the planning through to the construction stages to annual maintenance. The Ridgeway Refuge is a wonderful example of community coming together to enhance the overall teaching and learning experience. ■

Kid Commute: A Walking School Bus initiative

BY LUKE SMEATON
MANAGER OF SUSTAINABILITY,
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL
PLANNING

The North Vancouver School District has partnered with the District of North Vancouver, The Society for Children and Youth of BC, and TransLink to deliver Kid Commute: A Walking School Bus initiative at Braemar Elementary and Dorothy Lynas Elementary for the 2023/24 school year.

A walking school bus (WSB) involves a group of students walking together under the supervision of dedicated adult walk leaders, creating a "bus route" children can join and walk to/from school together.

This year, we are piloting a new model, which is designed to allow students coming from out of catchment, who would typically be driven to school, to participate alongside students who live close to the WSB route.

Braemar has two WSB routes running in the morning, and Dorothy Lynas



has one route. Since its launch in September, students have collectively walked over 300 km!

"The Walking School Bus is fostering physical activity, alleviating traffic congestion in the Braemar area, and nurturing a strong sense of community among students and families. We extend our gratitude to the volunteers whose assistance ensures the smooth operation of the program," said Principal Spencer Kelly.

This initiative aligns with the school district's commitment to environmental stewardship and efforts to support safe and active travel. The initiative is made possible by funding from TransLink and the District of North Vancouver. ■

Cheakamus Campus becomes a living lab for green innovation

BY CATHY JENKINS
PROJECT MANAGER,
CAMPUS RENEWAL

Cabin #3 is a more comfortable, energy-efficient place to sleep, thanks to a hardworking team of Indigenous youth.

An ongoing partnership with the Aboriginal Housing Management Association and BCIT's School of Construction and the Environment resulted in the completion of the latest cabin retrofit project at Cheakamus Centre.

The young adults who took on this complex task are part of the We Are One high-performance building

training program. This training initiative provides Indigenous youth with in-demand skills that are needed to support a clean economy. The program offers job-readiness skills training and opportunities for young people who are facing barriers to education and employment.

Over 9 weeks, participants gained hands-on technical skills and real-world experience under the guidance of Indigenous instructors from BCIT Zero Energy/Emissions Buildings Learning Centre. Students also developed their soft skills in communication, leadership, and teamwork, with a focus on Indigenous perspectives.



Living lab projects provide opportunities for student learning and knowledge sharing, and create collaborative spaces for

learners and community partners to explore practical climate action solutions that are scalable to wider communities. ■



Argyle Secondary student athletes, staff, coaches, PAC representatives, district staff, trustees and municipal officials celebrate the opening of the artificial turf field.



The school district, along with provincial and municipal officials, proudly announce funding for a new elementary school.



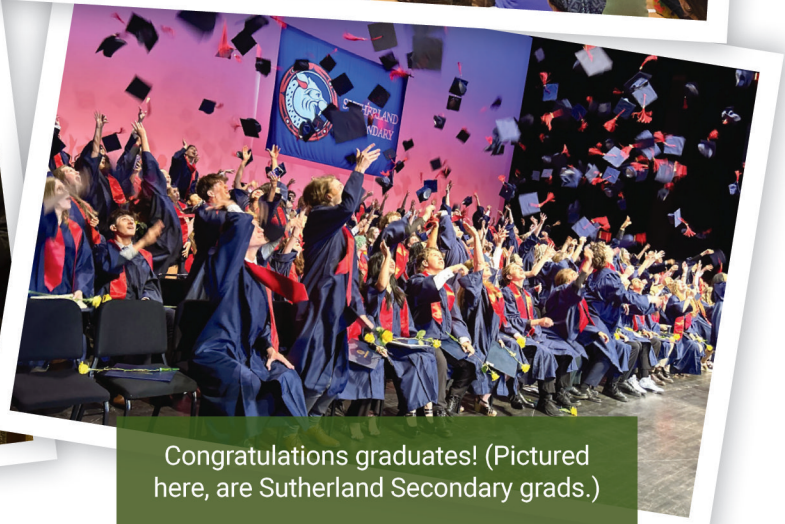
The school district and experts in emergency management host an Outdoor Safety & Emergency Preparedness Open House for the community.



Norgate Xwemélch'stn students and staff gather for a moving Remembrance Day assembly.



Seycove Secondary Student Council members make Valentine's Day cards for their neighbours at Cedar Springs.



Congratulations graduates! (Pictured here, are Sutherland Secondary grads.)