



The Gord Downie
& CHANIE WENJACK FUND

North Vancouver School District Downie Wenjack Legacy Schools Project

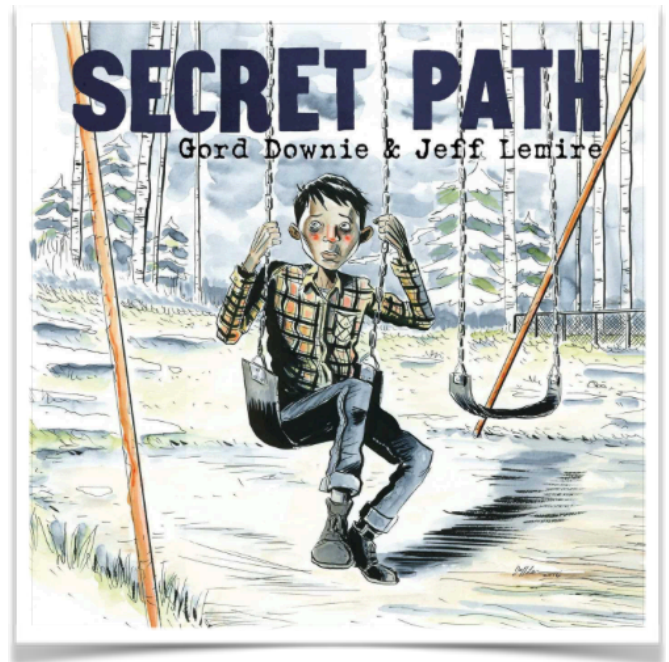
Downie Wenjack Legacy Schools Project 2018-2019



The North Vancouver School District is very honoured to have five schools selected to be part of the *Downie Wenjack Legacy Schools Project*.

The five schools are École Windsor Secondary, Norgate-Xwemélch'stn, Ns7e'yxnitm la Tel:'wet Westview, Carisbrooke and École Sherwood Park.

The Secret Path is an album that began as 10 poems written by Gord Downie from the *Tragically Hip*, after learning about the death of Chanie Wenjack, who died on October 22, 1966, while trying to get home after fleeing from



Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School. The poems later became the basis of an album which was illustrated by Jeff Lemire. You can find out more about the Secret Path [here](#)



Chanie Wenjack

The Downie Wenjack Legacy Schools Project is a program that provides “opportunity for classrooms/schools to lead the movement in awareness of the history and impact of the Residential School System on Indigenous Peoples” (downiewenjack.ca). Schools/classes participating in the Downie Wenjack Legacy Project are encouraged to create a ReconciliACTIONS which is representative of their school and community. You can learn more about the Downie Wenjack Legacy Project [here](#).



October 4, 2018: Mike Downie sharing about the Downie Wenjack Legacy project at Norgate-

The *Downie Wenjack Legacy Schools Project* began with a guest presentation by Mike Downie on behalf of the Downie Wenjack organization, at Norgate-Xwemélch'stn, on October 4, 2018. NVSD representatives from all five Legacy schools were in attendance. Participating schools received a Legacy Schools Toolkit and educational support and resources to share with staff and students.

Save the Date!

There will be District Viewing of the Secret Path on the evening of [Wednesday April 10, 2019.](#) Watch upcoming flyers on how to register and location.

The following is a snapshot of what is happening at each of the five Legacy schools for the 2018-2019 year.

Windsor

Carsibrooke

Norgate-Xwemélch'stn

Ns7e'yxnitm la Tel:'wet, Westview

Ecole Sherwood Park



Windsor Secondary School

Grade 9 student volunteers created a powerful display of our journey as a *Secret Path* Legacy School for Windsor's front foyer. Windsor has been selected along with four Elementary schools from the North Vancouver School District to participate in the *Secret Path* Legacy Schools program, which is supported by the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund in their work towards Reconciliation. Grade 9 students in Ms. Marna Thomas's English classes have been writing, painting, and collaging their thoughts, feelings and questions in response to Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire's *Secret Path*. *Secret Path* is a graphic novel, album and film about Chanie Wenjack, an Anishinaabe boy, who in 1966, at 12-years old, succumbed to starvation and exposure approximately 56 kilometres from Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School in his attempt to reunite with his family who were 600 kilometers away in Ogoki Post, Ontario. Chanie Wenjack's story provides a powerful access point for students to engage in the conversations around the dark legacy of residential schools in Canada and the consequential impact on generations of Indigenous Peoples. On October 1st, Windsor students, staff, and the families of student volunteers gathered in the large gym for an Orange Shirt Day assembly to acknowledge the difficult truths about Canada's residential schools.



For over a century, more than 150,000 thousand Indigenous children were taken from their homes and sent to residential schools where they were not allowed to speak their Indigenous languages or recognize their Indigenous heritage. Mr. Sam George, who is a Windsor parent, a member of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the Squamish Nation, and an Indigenous Support Worker for the Langley School District, shared authentic stories about residential schools. Sam George brought to light the fact that many of the Orange Shirt Day student volunteers are the first generation of Indigenous students who are not attending residential schools. Mr. Gordon Dick, who is a local artist, member of the Tsleil-

Waututh Nation, and works for the NVSD on the District's Indigenous Education Team, visited English 9 classes and shared authentic stories of residential school to help explain why Chanie would have wanted to flee to be with his family.

Windsor continued...

Gordon Dick discussed Raven symbolism in *Secret Path* and taught students how to draw a Raven using Coast Salish art forms. Gordon Dick drew parallels between the significance of how the Raven symbolizes both death and rebirth with how Gord Downie's *Secret Path* about Chanie Wenjack's tragic death is spreading awareness about the painful truths of residential schools. It has been a true honour and a privilege to learn from and collaborate with the guest speakers who have shared their stories and ideas with Windsor students for this project. We are grateful to Mr. Sam George, Ms. Marissa Heaven and the Concert Band, Mr. Shawn Myers and the Roadie Club, Mr. Adam Kozak, Ms. Nancy Deminger, and to all of the Orange Shirt Day student volunteers who gave their time to plan, set-up, present, and perform for the Orange Shirt Day assembly. We are thankful to Mr. Gordon Dick, Mr. Matt Burnett, Ms. Lisa Ottenbreit, and Ms. Sarah Best for also sharing their time and talents with English 9 students for this project. We would like to acknowledge the grade 9 students who have contributed their time and journal entries for the creation of this display and to the class collage to serve as public monuments of our school's *Secret Path* journey to support the Reconciliation process through awareness, education, and action.



Carisbrooke Elementary School

As part of our ongoing commitment to Reconciliation, Carisbrooke

School is exploring Indigenous Worldviews. This is a year long project that is at the heart of our school plan. The Wenjack Downie Legacy School project is supporting our work in exploring Truth. By learning the true history of Canada, including Residential Schools, we hope to be able to undertake authentic and personally meaningful steps towards Reconcili-ACTION. Weekly updates to parents through e-mail communication, keep our community updated on what students are learning about so that they can support learning at home. Sharing our learning with the community and encouraging them to learning alongside the children is an important aspect of our Reconcili-ACTION. Additionally, all parents and community members are welcome to join in our assemblies.

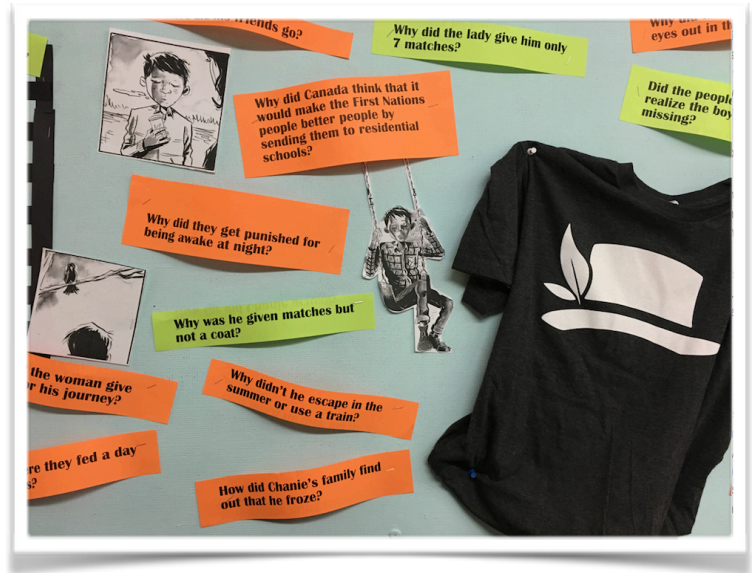


On Monday, October 1st the North Vancouver School District recognized Orange Shirt Day. Students engaged in a variety of age-appropriate educational activities as part of on-

going learning regarding Canada's history of Residential Schools. Grade Three students led our whole school gathering, sharing their questions about Residential Schools as well as what they have learned. All through October, the school community newsletter was **Carisbrooke Continued...**

used to support parent education regarding Residential Schools. Just as the North Vancouver School District is committed to 'educating the educator', Carisbrooke School is committed to educating all members of our community in the true history of Canada. On October 5th Carisbrooke invited parents to join us as we learned about Chanie's 'Secret Path'. The week of October 18 we built on the community momentum to invite families to join us as we launched the project with a walk for Chanie. On October 25th The story of Chanie (pronounced Sh-anie) Wenjack

begins with a child being taken from home to residential school, and ends with the tragedy of him running away from school, never to return home again. "We began our afternoon with a walk around the school at about 1pm. This walk will mark the beginning of our whole school journey as we explore Chanie's life.



Students have been exploring the following discussion question in age appropriate ways – "If you were leaving home, what would you pack for your journey? What would you take to help you feel safe and connected to home. Primary classes read *Shi-shi-etko* by Nicola Campbell. In the story, Shi-shi-etko gathers special items from her home to place in a bag of memories given to her by her Yayah (Grandmother). Intermediate classes may have watched the 'Seven Matches' song video found on YouTube. Chanie was determined to walk the 600km journey all the way to his home. Students recorded seven items they would want to take with them on a perilous journey. They discussed that the concept of a journey can include an emotional journey, a time of emotional challenge like fighting a disease or moving to a new school or community. Similarly, the items that students choose to 'pack' could also be concepts, like hope or security. If they chose a concept to explore, students could want to draw or record their 'item' as a symbol. For example, a blanket can symbolize security.

Save the date! Thursday, January 17th, 7-8pm, in the Carisbrooke library.

There will be a parent information workshop regarding 'The Legacy of Residential Schools in Canada'. This session will be co-facilitated by District Principal of Indigenous Education Brad Baker, Lisa Upton and Kaylen Bevan.



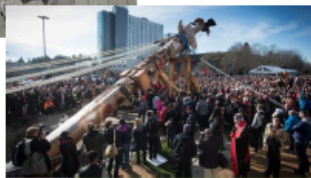
Norgate-Xwemélch'stn Elementary School

Norgate -Xwemélch'stn has continued a wonderful journey into unpacking the true history of Canada's residential schools. We have shared experiences with our community to honour, share and create common understanding of the truth. In the coming months, we will be listening/learning from our students, parents and community as we further experience relevant local history here on the traditional territory. Please see attached the plan for shared experiences. Furthermore, the learning community has been strengthened through this work. In the coming months, teachers will be leading the learning, through the graphic novel the "Secret Path."



Norgate - X'wemélch'stn

October 17th 2018- Visit to local residential school site: St Paul's Residential School
December 10th 2018- Q'um Q'um Xi'em: Dr. Joanne Archibald invited guest to share
December 11th 2018- Board Standing Student Presentation and Reflections
Norgate Learning from our Local Place & the Land - visit to Stanley Park (XwayXway) site of "greeting of the day"
January- Active teaching through resources provided Downie-Wenjack
February- Parent/Supports Dinner & Dialogue (preparing for visit to UBC)
April - Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation Visit (students/parents)
April - Completing the Circle - Honouring the Truth & Reconciliation
Pole which our students/families contributed to in 2016



Partnership with Downie-Wenjack on T-shirt plan Norgate would like to honour the foundation by coordinating T-shirts that blend the NVSD brand with the Foundation Logo in a creative, safe and inclusive way. We want the whole District to be connected to the work being done by the Legacy schools.

ReconciliAction: We will release purple shirts with the Downie Wenjack image and add list, on the back, the schools participating. **Norgate will coordinate this initiative** and donate 50% of the proceeds to the foundation. Target audience (staff, NVPac,) across the district of North Van.

Ns7e'yxnitm la Tel:'wet, Westview



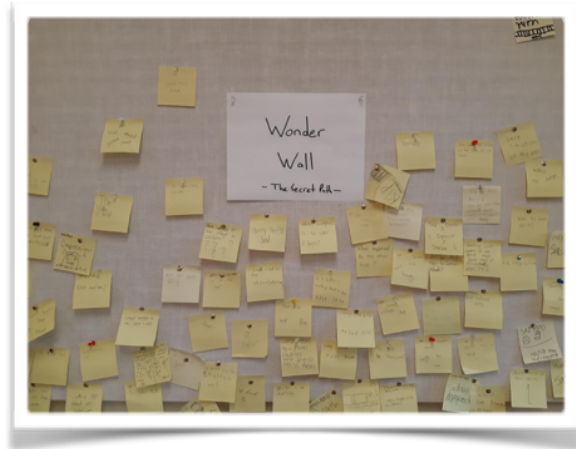
At Westview Elementary three divisions, grade five to seven are participating in the Downie Wenjack Legacy Project. As part of our journey students have participated in pre teaching and post reflections around Orange Shirt Day, including picture books, writing, art and poetry. Westview has also visited Saint Paul's Residential School Memorial and listened to the personal stories of Stuart Gonzales. Students reflected on Stuart's words and teachings.



Students have created a display in the main foyer to create awareness and bring attention to all.

Here is a summary from one of the classroom teachers:

“We've worked through the first three songs of the Wenjack video, breaking down each song's lyrics as poems before listening to the songs. Along the way, after working through each song, we have been creating a **Wonder Wall**.



Courtney, our FNSW, shared about her grandfather, Chief Simon Baker, who has been awarded the *Order of Canada*, among many other accolades. She read a book and led a discussion which brought out the deeper level of bleak unhappiness, courage, and determination. Students made connections between this talk and the visit to Saint Paul's Residential School Memorial .

GOING FORWARD

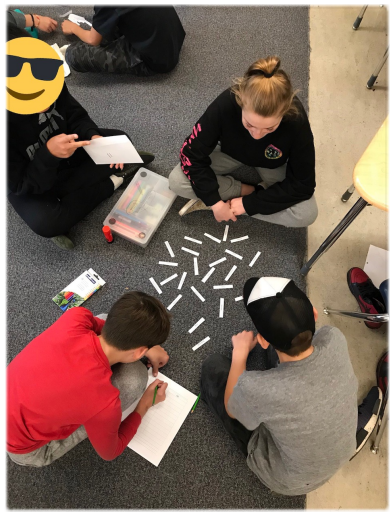
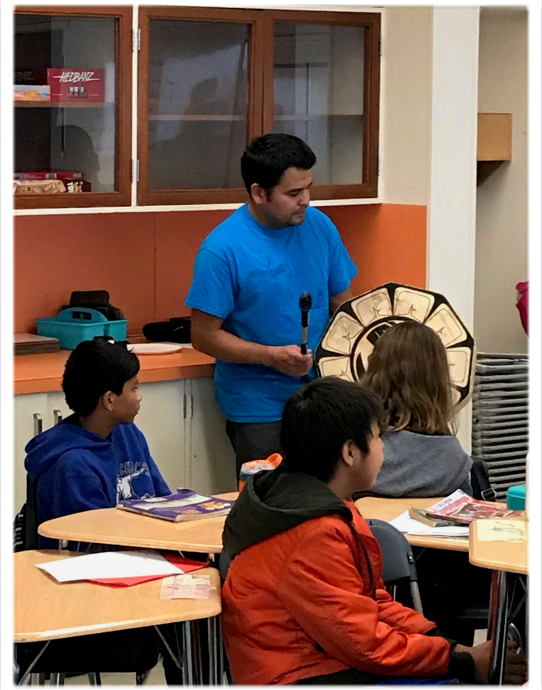
Our “ReconciliACTION” is to take up the role of leaders in educating Westview students about residential schools, the legacy, and the steps needed today. The team intends to “support awareness and appreciation of Indigenous culture and traditions” (per the Legacy Schools and Reconciliation Guide). For example, one division is going to create poems and songs in connection with the poetry and songs of *The Secret Path*, and share out songs (appropriate for younger audiences) at assemblies. We have also made Indigenous Ways of Knowing a standing piece of our monthly assemblies. We have plans to increase understanding of indigenous culture and history through short segments each month.





École Sherwood Park

École Sherwood Park's Journey as a *Secret Path* Legacy School. Ecole Sherwood Park's journey began in mid-October 2018 with Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Johal, and 43 Grade Six and Seven Students working together in their journey towards understanding the affects of residential schools and the true history of Canadian history. The students have an ongoing Know-Wonder-Learn (KWL) chart that allows the teachers to (1) assess student understanding of residential schools and (2) gain student feedback of what they want to learn more about. With help from Downie Wenjack Legacy School Foundation and various authentic resources, the three educators introduced residential schools through a concept formation activity that supported a student-centred approach allowing students to create their own concepts around residential schools. A class wide discussion of various concepts provided a deeper understanding of residential schools.



The journey moved to story telling through literature from residential school survivors – *Not My Girl*, *Shin-Chi's Canoe*, and *I'm Not A Number*. Each story allowed for deeper understanding of life for these three individuals before and during their residential school experience; rich discussions followed and students completed a three-circled Venn diagram to compare and contrast the stories. The following lessons introduced the power of symbol and students watched the *Secret Path* over two periods and highlighted symbols they saw in the film. At each chapter, rich discussion around symbolism allowed the students to learn about Chanie Wenjack and his story of Indian Residential School.

This journey will continue throughout the school year and will include further understanding of what happened in Canada's history and the affects of residential schools. Some plans are to have our intermediate students work with primary students to learn share teachings of the drum by making drums and drumsticks, Intermediate students to participate in the Blanket Exercise, as well as parents. Intermediate students will also spend time analyzing the role of the government and analyzing the Indian Residential School Apology and continue to learn by hearing speakers share their personal stores. École Sherwood Park will also be collaborating with École Windsor to invite parents to see the *Secret Path* and to deepen community connections. We continue to move forward with courage and with an open heart and open mind.

“Charlie was always mischievous, he excelled in dancing, he excelled in just enjoying the moment that he was given”

Pearl Achneepieskum, Chanie’s sister

“Chanie haunts me. His story is Canada’s story. This is about Canada. We are not the country we thought we were. History will be re-written. We are all accountable, but this begins in the late 1800s and goes to 1996. “White” Canada knew – on somebody’s purpose – nothing about this. We weren’t taught it; it was hardly ever mentioned. “

Gord Downie



“In order to move forward in education, we must first acknowledge the truth before we can start our individual and collective journeys to reconciliation. We must start local.”

Brad Baker, District Principal of Indigenous Education, North Vancouver School District

“We’ve got 40,000 teachers in the country, that we know of, using Secret Path in their classrooms, we want to support them. We have lessons plans for them to share, they’re sharing with each other. We’re trying to continue to support that.”

Mike Downie

References:

Quote about Chanie: <https://www.downiewenjack.ca/our-story/chanie-s-path>

Quote from Gord Downie: <https://secretpath.ca>

Photo of Chanie Wenjack. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanie_Wenjack

Images from *The Secret Path*. <https://secretpath.ca>

Quote from Mike Downie <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/gord-downie-brothers->

**Go
Forward
with
Courage**

