



“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all”

~ Aristotle

Dear Families,

As we reach the close of our Spring Break and a return to learning that looks and feels quite different, we are more aware than ever of the importance of our personal and social connections. We are sensitive to the reality that we are all facing unique challenges, so our plan for the continuity of education for your elementary children is extended with the expectation that your family will engage in a way that is most meaningful to you and manageable within your context. We are here for you and your child. Our teaching staff recognizes that this is a very unique year, and over the coming weeks they will be available, responsive and supportive, but not expecting learning at home to look anything like our typical school day.

By the end of this week, you will receive a message from your child's school and teacher with more information about how they will be supporting learning from home. Meanwhile, aligned with the many beautiful ways that we have been watching our local and global community show care and support for one another, our North Vancouver School District invites you to join us in collectively sharing our appreciation and respect for the resilience, commitment, generosity, creativity and patience of our community, and to specifically acknowledge the selflessness, courage and importance of our front line essential workers.

Learning requires the exploration of one's identity. It is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational – focussed on connectedness, relationships and sense of place. We encourage you to engage your children in conversation about interconnectedness with one another and the natural world. What is their awareness and understanding of what is happening in the world? How would or are they showing their support to their family, community and environment? What does it mean to empathize with others? What do they currently need for their own physical and emotional well-being? What are they missing? How are others feeling? These are all connections that students are asked to make at school as they self-assess their personal and social competencies (for more information, see [First Peoples' Principles of Learning](#) and [BC's New Curriculum](#)).

In the pages to follow, you will find two images that we encourage you to print or reproduce to support such a conversation. The NVSD leaf in both images symbolizes support for our staff, students and parents while also reminding us of our relationship with the natural world. The feather represents a powerful tool for healing our hearts and minds. Wolf and Thunderbird in the second image acknowledge the land that we share and stand on together during this challenging time; the Métis sash symbolizes interconnectedness. There is space within both hearts to write or draw feelings and messages. Add colour and your own touches, and then post in your window or share on our Twitter feed @nvsd44 #nvsdfamily as a show of your support.

Additionally, we are offering Skwxw7mesh legend, *The Flood* to read with your child as another way to come alongside their learning about the interconnectedness of people and the natural environment. You may wish to extend this by sharing family stories, or encouraging your child to write, draw, journal, scrapbook, video or otherwise tell their own current story.

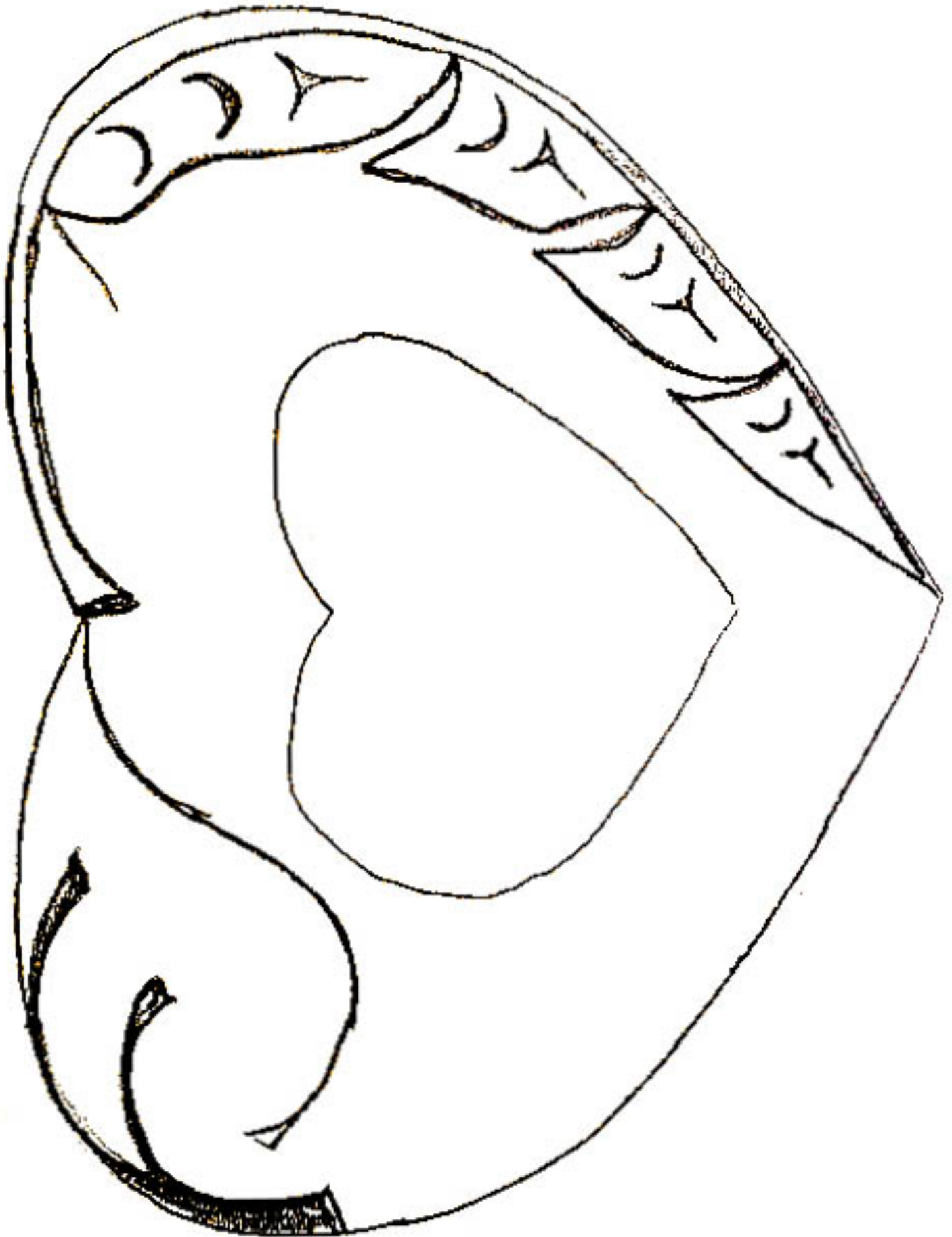
We know that learning takes patience and time, and that is true now more than ever. We appreciate working in partnership with you to continue learning at home. We are committed to consistent communication and providing families support that will foster sustained connection to their school and teacher.

Sincerely,

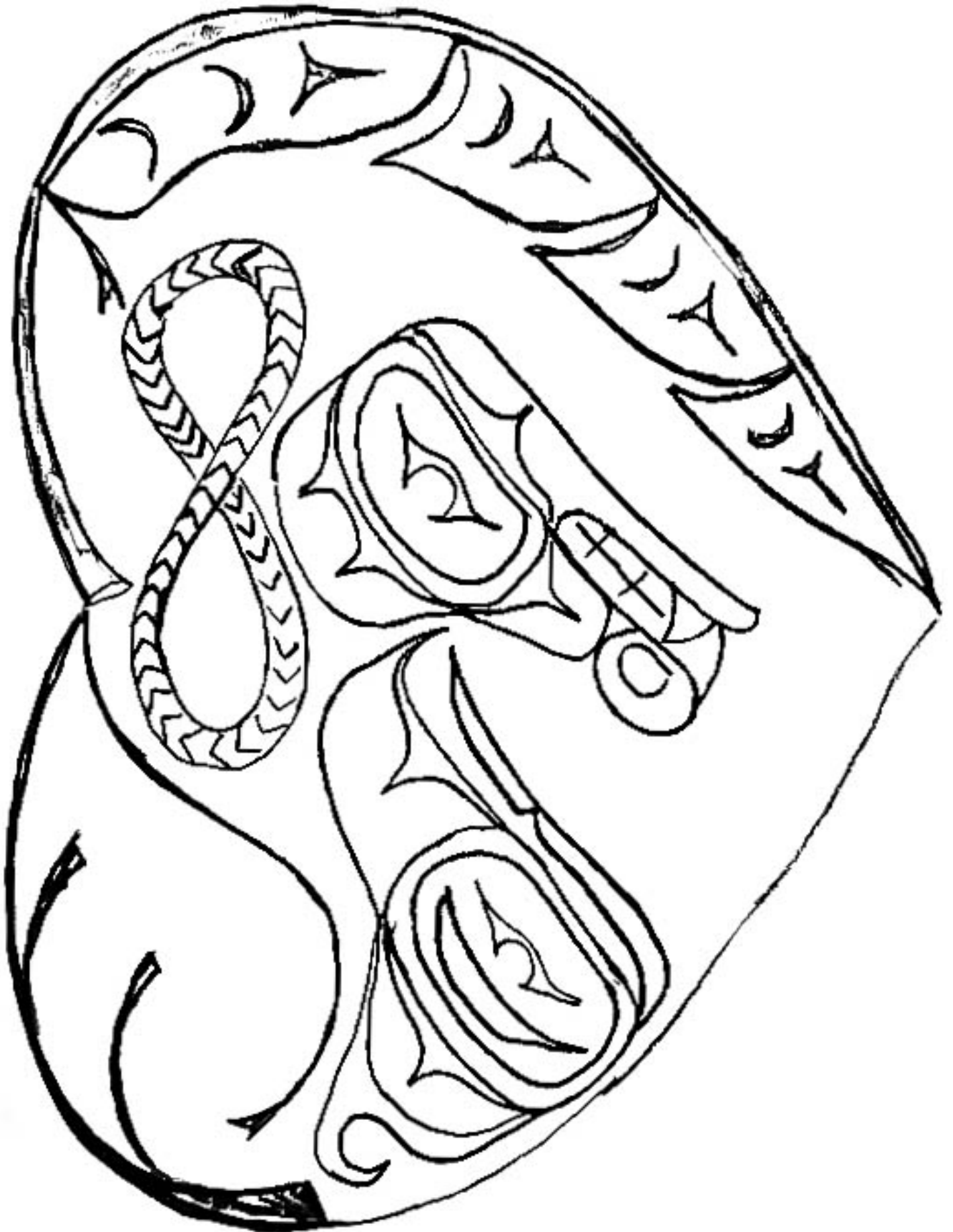
Elementary Continuity of Education Team



Thank you to Tchilaqs7Tchila (Gordon Dick, member of the Tsleil Waututh Nation and the NVSD Indigenous Education Team) for the artwork below. Typically, the NVSD leaf would be green,



Thank you to Tchilaqs7Tchila (Gordon Dick, member of the Tseil Waututh Nation and the NVSD Indigenous Education Team) for the artwork below. Typically, the NVSD leaf would be green, Wolf and Thunderbird would be red and black, and the Métis sash, blue & white.



Skwxw7mesh Legend – The Flood

Shared with permission of Swalklanexw (Dallas Guss), member of the Squamish Nation and NVSD Indigenous Education Team

Then he plunged directly in the tradition, with no preface save a comprehensive sweep of his wonderful hands towards my wide window, against which the rains were beating.

“It was after a long, long time of this-this rain. The mountain-streams were swollen, the rivers choked, the sea began to rise-and yet it rained; for weeks and weeks it rained.” He ceased speaking, while the shadows of centuries gone crept into his eyes. Tales of the misty past always inspired him.

“Yes,” he continued. “It rained for weeks and weeks, while the mountain torrents roared thundering down, and the sea crept silently up. The level lands were first to float in sea-water, then to disappear. The slopes were next to slip into the sea. The world was slowly being flooded. Hurriedly the Indian tribes gathered in one spot, a place of safety far above the reach of the on-creeping sea. The spot was the circling shore of Lake Beautiful, up the North Arm. They held a Great Council and decided at once upon a plan of action. A giant canoe should be built, and some means contrived to anchor it in case the waters mounted to the heights. The men undertook the canoe, the women the anchorage.

“A giant tree was felled, and day and night the men toiled over its construction in the most stupendous canoe the world has ever known. Not an hour, not a moment, but many worked, while the toil-wearied ones slept, only to awake to renewed toil. Meanwhile, the women also worked at a cable-the largest, the longest, the strongest that Indian hands and teeth had ever made. Scores of them gathered and prepared the cedar-fiber; scores of them plaited, rolled, and seasoned it; the scores of them chewed upon it inch by inch to make it pliable; scores of the oiled and worked, oiled and worked, oiled and worked it into a sea-resisting fabric. And still the sea crept up, and up, and up. It was the last day; hope of life for the people, of land for the world, was doomed. Strong hands, self-sacrificing hands, fastened the cable the women had made-one end to the giant canoe, the other about an enormous boulder, a vast immovable rock as firm as the foundations of the world-for might not the canoe, with its priceless freight, drift out, far out, to sea, and when the water subsided might not this ship of safety be leagues and leagues beyond the sight of land on the storm-driven Pacific?

“Then, with the bravest hearts that ever beat, noble hands lifted every child of the tribes into this vast canoe; not one single baby was overlooked. The canoe was stocked with food and fresh water, and, lastly, the ancient men and women of the race selected as guardians to these children, the bravest, most stalwart, handsomest young man of the tribes and the mother of the youngest baby in the camp-she was but a girl of sixteen, her child two weeks old; but she, too was brave and very beautiful. These two were placed, she at the bow of the canoe to watch, he at the stern to guide, and all the little children crowded between.

“And still the sea crept up, and up, and up. At the crest of the bluffs about Lake Beautiful, the doomed people crowded. Not a single person attempted to enter the canoe. There was no wailing, no crying for safety. ‘Let the little children, the young mother, and the bravest and best of our young men live,’ was all the farewell those in the canoe heard as the waters reached the summit, and-the canoe floated. Last of all to be seen was the top of the tallest tree, then- all was a world of water.

“For days and days there was no land-just the rushing of swirling, snarling sea; but the canoe rode safely at anchor, the cable those scores of passed faithful women had made held true as the hearts that beat behind the toil and labor of it all.”

“But one morning at sunrise, far to the south, a speck floated on the crest of the waters; at midday it was larger; at evening it was yet larger. The moon arose, and in its magic light the man at the stern saw it was a patch of land. All night he watched it grow, and at daybreak looked with glad eyes upon the summit of Mount Baker. He cut the cable, grasped his paddle in his strong young hands, and steered for the south. When they landed, the waters were sunken half down the mountain-side. The children were lifted out; the beautiful young mother, the stalwart young brave, turned to each other, clasped hands, looked into each other’s eyes-and smiled.”

“And down in the vast country that lies between Mount Baker and the Fraser River they made a new camp, built new lodges, where the little children grew and thrived, and lived and loved, and earth was repopulated by them.”

“The Squamish say that in a gigantic crevice half-way to the crest of Mount Baker may yet be seen the outlines of an enormous canoe; but I have never seen it myself.”

He ceased speaking with that far-off cadence in his voice with which he always ended a legend, and for a long time we both sat in silence listening to the rains that were still beating against the window.