

January 23, 2017

## **PAYING IT FORWARD IS A TEAM EFFORT**

Team sports aren't just about winning - they're about how you work as a team both on and off the courts. This year, Burnaby Central's Senior Girls' basketball team set a goal of "Paying it Forward." A sushi/bake sale they organized raised \$200 that they donated to the Burnaby Children's Fund. They also spent time together over the winter holidays volunteering at the Vancouver Food Bank. It's likely that this community engagement will become a lifetime goal. Great teamwork girls!

## **A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SENATOR**

Ask any grade 10 or 11 social studies student at Burnaby Central what a senator does, and be prepared for a deep sit down discussion. Senator Yohan Martin was at the school on January 12 to discuss the role of the senate in the legislative process and the issues she works on. She also shared her personal journey – arriving in Canada as a 7 year old with no English skills, to becoming the president of her high school, attending university, teaching English in Burnaby and Coquitlam and becoming the first Senator of Korean descent. Her presentation was engaging and inspirational, encouraging students to explore life's possibilities and discover their true gifts.

## **YOUTH SPEAK. ADULTS LISTEN.**

Last week, a pilot project called "Word Up!" provided 30 parents the opportunity to learn from eight district youth about collective issues youth face and the ways that adults in their lives could guide them. For 1.5 hours, adults listened to the youths' honest and poignant responses to pre-submitted questions posed by group facilitators. Topics included youth stressors, substance abuse, peer pressure, mental health, and effective communication. Both adults and youth were surprised at the powerful connections the evening generated. Plans are already underway for additional sessions in Burnaby's secondary schools.

"Word Up!" is supported by Burnaby's Local Action Team for Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use.

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## **TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**

Three secondary schools kicked off the New Year hosting Truth & Reconciliation Days to honour the resiliency, strength and gifts of Canada's Indigenous communities.

On January 9, Burnaby North Secondary's event featured a theatrical presentation by First Nations storyteller Dallas Yellowfly. It was followed by presentations on the inter-generational impact of the residential school experience. An art project was created by Grade 8 and 9 students. It features individually designed wooden tiles on the theme "What does reconciliation mean to you?"

On January 19, Moscrop Secondary's event featured workshops and films to create awareness on current issues such as the inquiry of missing and murdered Indigenous women and the North American pipeline protests. Students, staff and elders gathered for a luncheon catered by Cedar Feast House that was followed by a performance by Molly Billows, an Aboriginal Spoken Word poet. Throughout the school there were student art projects, including an impactful highway of tears installation in the office foyer.

Burnaby Mountain Secondary will be hosting a week of Truth & Reconciliation activities in early February. Melanie Coon, a First Nations dancer has already started to teach some of the cultural performances to students taking dance.

Events such as these serve to remind us that we are teaching, learning and living on traditional territories.