

February 22, 2016

INAUGURAL BUSINESS COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS INNOVATION

Nearly 50 student business leaders recently faced off in a contest of marketing ingenuity at Burnaby Central Secondary. "The Beyond Burnaby Business Competition" included teams from Central, Burnaby North, Burnaby Mountain and Moscrop. A case study event had teams create a marketing plan for the Microsoft smartwatch. Next, they launched into a "Dragon's Den" inspired component where teams created a product on the spot from randomly chosen household products. They pitched their products to "dragons" who hailed from Langara College, UBC and local businesses. Burnaby North captured first and second place while Central came in third. Sponsors included Microsoft and PriceSmart.

THE WAY OF THE CANOE

A First Nations artist known as Splash, spent the Fall working with Gilpin students carving a First Nations canoe out of a 1,600 year old cedar log. The "skumay" is an exact replica of what indigenous women once used to gather food. On January 27, Splash ceremoniously handed over the responsibility of the canoe to the school community. During his residence, he visited classes to share his cultural knowledge and told many stories. The students were so inspired they created Aboriginal infused artwork and writing that is displayed throughout the school. Special thanks to the PAC for supporting this project.

PARTY AT THE PARK

Last week began with a party and finished with one at Confederation Park where they were celebrating the school's bicentennial plus 10 years as an Education Through the Arts School. A Monday assembly included performances by each class who were proud to showcase teaching through the arts- from opera to dancing. The week finished with an adult party complete with food, entertainment and a walk down memory lane with hallways filled with artifacts. Confederation Park is clearly the thriving hub of a unique community - whatever will they do for an encore? Get ready to go under the sea, when they present "The Little Mermaid" at the MJFox Theatre this spring!

LEARNING TOGETHER

Last Friday was an incredible day of learning for teachers, administrators and staff of Burnaby Schools. The Joint Pro-D day kicked off with a fanfare of performances by the Burnaby North Marching Band and Jazz band. Then keynote Abe Fernandez, Director of the Children's Aid Society spoke about improving outcomes for children and youth. The rest of the day featured more than 110 innovative workshops, with 75% of them taught by our own staff. They shared their strategies for engaging and inspiring our student learners to succeed.

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MAKING LITERACY A FAMILY AFFAIR

The last week of January was Family Literacy Week, and as usual, Burnaby's school libraries celebrated with great fanfare to bring out the joy in reading. Activities included author visits, guest readers, reading in the dark, reader's theatre, book character day, literacy bingo, poster contests, Aboriginal themed picture book activities, a "pop up" Burnaby Public Library, and even a student appointment as "librarian for the day!" Many teacher-librarians kept up the momentum with activities during the week of Valentine's Day connected to "Love Your School Library" Day.

RESPECT THE FOCUS OF FEBRUARY

Windsor Elementary kicked off a month focused on respect with a wellness fair for parents, students and staff alike. It included stations run by Douglas College nurses teaching about nutrition, exercise, sleep needs, screen time guidelines, hygiene and mind over matter. Next up was the 21 Day Happiness Challenge where students were given a journal to write down grateful thoughts and acts of kindness. The school also looked at "Respect for Others," through lessons related to family day. And today, in recognition of International Mother Language Day, students and parents were encouraged to say hello and goodbye to each other in their first language.

SAMPLER PEAKS INTEREST IN TRADES

Five proud young students of Aboriginal heritage recently attended the "Try a Trade" Sampler. This exploration program has been created in partnership with ACCESS at John Oliver Secondary to help indigenous youth choose a possible trade. Students spent the day receiving instruction in the areas of Auto Service, Carpentry and Metalwork. The students were deeply engaged and are already considering one of these successful ACE-IT programs that will lead them to apprenticeship and employment.

IMPROV HITS THE MOUNTAIN TOP – AGAIN!

Burnaby Mountain's Improv Team has literally climbed the mountain yet again to claim top honours in the Lower Mainland Improv Tournament. It means that their dance card for spring break now includes a trip to Ottawa to compete in the National Improv Tournament. The team includes three Grade 12 students – who won the junior tournament in 2014 - and three Grade 11 students. Mountain has a history of alumni students volunteering their time as coaches. This year they are tipping their hats to coach Kenneth Lai, an alumnus whose team won silver at the Nationals in 2011. Mountain also brought back a gold medal in 2008 and bronze in 2006 so the bar is set high. Best of luck to this already impressive team!

