

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**  
**Reporting to Public Session Tuesday, November 24, 2015**

**1. 'Rhythms for Life' Drum-a-thon**

Burnaby School District students and staff are always looking at ways to make a difference in the world. Responding to the needs of Syrian refugees is an issue that is high on the radar of the Ecole Marlborough Elementary School community. Teachers and students have come up with a creative way to raise awareness of this cause and to support the Red Cross Canada Refugee Crisis Relief fund.

A 12 hour 'Rhythms for Life' Drum-a-thon begins tomorrow and the entire student population will be participating. The public is invited to join the school in the gymnasium from 6 to 8 pm. Marlborough students are excited to have the opportunity this evening to provide a sampling of what their Drum-a-thon will sound like. Students will be performing African drum patterns on djembe drums.

Tonight, Shelley Parks, Principal Ecole Marlborough will speak about this event and will introduce music teacher Geraldine Lazaruk who will provide the inspiration behind this ambitious project. Students, Manya Sharma and David He will share some thoughts on what this event has meant to the school community.

Recommendation: THAT the Board of Education receive this information.

**2. Settlement Support in Burnaby Schools**

The Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) Program began in 2007 and is designed to assist new immigrant families in Burnaby who have children registered in Burnaby Schools. There are 12 SWIS workers who work out of the Welcome Centre and various secondary and elementary schools in the district. These workers are placed in schools to support children and families with their settlement needs. Families arrive in Burnaby having come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Initially, they require support in the areas of health care, accommodation, and daily living needs. SWIS workers develop individual settlement plans for each family based on needs ranging from employment, education and re-education, to adults seeking English language instruction.

Newcomer parents are curious about life in Canada and how the education system works, how it is different from their home countries and how it will meet the needs of their children. Settlement workers develop trusting relationships with new immigrant families in their school communities. The connection the family establishes with the settlement worker is often a key factor in the settlement success of both children and adults in schools and the community.

This evening, Natalya Khan, Cultural Transitions Coordinator who leads this program will provide a brief overview of the program and introduce settlement workers Hafal Ahmad and Souad Hage-Hassan. They will welcome two of the families with whom they work. We are pleased that the Jasim family whose children attend Edmonds Community School and two students from Burnaby South and the British Columbia School for the Deaf, Adam Ahmah and Ojalan Zakaria are with us to share their experiences in coming to a new land.

Recommendation: THAT the Board of Education receive this information.