

INSIDE BURNABY SCHOOLS

December 8, 2020



A GRATITUDE TREE TO INSPIRE POSITIVITY

The **Burnaby Youth COVID Response Team** – a cross-district student-led group – wanted to lift people's spirits during the pandemic. As part of their mission to build a sense of community amongst young people across Burnaby amid COVID-19, they came up with the "Gratitude Tree." Students write what they are grateful for on sticky notes and place them on a painted mural of a stylized tree, as seen here at **Burnaby North Secondary**. This tree was created at **Byrne Creek Community School** – all to spread gratitude and remind us to be grateful every day.

DISTRICT AND PARTNERS SUPPORT REFUGEES WITH TECHNOLOGY

Learning while navigating a new language, a new culture, and during a pandemic is made less difficult with access to technology. The District's **Settlement Workers in Schools** – or SWIS workers – have been connecting students and their families who need it most with tablets, computers and the skills to use them. Through a partnership with **Simon Fraser University's Friends of Simon** program and **Rogers**, more than 15 students who are new to Canada from seven schools across the District now have an iPad at home. At **Edmonds Community School** refugees from seven families throughout the District are taking a SWIS-run **Adult Digital Literacy Program**. The refugee families are all Arabic and Tigrinya (Tuh-GRIN-yuh) speaking, and were identified by SWIS workers as those who would benefit the most – due to having no digital literacy skills, limited English, financial need, and having children in our schools. The parents are now learning how to use computers, the internet, school websites and email, so that they can also support their children as they settle into their new schools. When the program is over, the families will be gifted desktop computers and webcams provided by the **BC Technology for Learning Society**.

ELDER LEADS STUDENTS IN THE MAKING OF A POW WOW DRUM

Twenty Indigenous students from **Burnaby South Secondary** have made an Indigenous Pow Wow drum under the guidance of **Elder Phillip Gladue**. Elder Gladue, who is Métis-Cree, worked to empower each student through a connection with cultural teachings. As the Grade 8-12 students worked – measuring, punching holes in the hide, and cutting long strips for stringing – Elder Phil spoke with them about how the drum is meant to bring people together and be shared by the community. The students are already planning new songs for a drum circle.

BURNABY SCHOOLS COMPETE IN THIS YEAR'S CBC MUSIC CHALLENGE

Every year, music classes across the country sign up for the CBC Music Challenge. Last year, the District's **Sound Wave Hand Bell Choir** took top spot in their category – competing against tens of thousands of students across Canada. This year, two schools have classes competing, including two music classes at **Second Street Community School**. **Ms Farina's Grade 7 Class** is singing the Canadian classic "Crabbuckit." **Mr Bell's Grade 7 Class** is doing an instrumental of the hit song "Call Me Maybe." And **Capitol Hill Elementary's Hand Chime Ensemble and Choir** have also submitted entries. **Ms Lui's Grade 4 and 5** students are also doing "Call me Maybe." And her **Grade 3-6 Choir** chose folk song "Seed in the Ground." Winners will be announced December 15, with the top six receiving bragging rights and a classroom recording kit valued at \$5,000. Let's have a listen to our very own entries...

HELPING THOSE WHO NEED IT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Principals, teachers, and other staff have been working together to identify those in their school communities in need, including students who are learning remotely during the pandemic. Food hampers, such as these seen here at **Edmonds Community School**, are being assembled with donations from community partners. The District has received more than \$40,000 in gift cards to distribute for groceries from a variety of partners. Additionally, many schools are taking part in annual donation drives, such as this one for **Burnaby's Food Hubs** by students at **Confederation Park Elementary** – and this toy drive at **Kitchener Elementary**. Meanwhile, leadership students at **Inman Elementary** have been busy sorting hundreds of scarves and gloves that they've collected for the **Burnaby Homeless Taskforce**. While this holiday season will be different for everyone, students, staff, school communities and the District are collectively working to bring joy and necessities to the community.

CONNECTING IN THE COMMUNITY

At a time when much is virtual, there is something to be said for putting pen to paper. Many students in our schools have done just that to support seniors, who have been more isolated during COVID-19. Students at **Stride Avenue Community School** and **Burnaby North Secondary** have been working on the "Sunshine Notes Project" with the **Intentional Acts of Kindness Foundation** and the **City of Burnaby's Citizen Support Services**. The idea is to connect students with seniors through note writing, making cards and art. The student contributions are included in packages of other goods delivered to seniors by volunteers. Students have already received appreciative responses from seniors, such as this one saying, "you made me feel all mushy inside."

COUNTDOWN TO THE HOLIDAYS

Families in our school communities celebrate the holidays in a variety of ways. Every year, schools honour multiple traditions and celebrations. Several classrooms and schools are marking the Christmas season this year with art and activities, such as this Christmas countdown at **Clinton Elementary**. **Confederation Park Elementary** held a "Deck the Halls" art extravaganza. And at **Marlborough Elementary** they are taking an approach that seems particularly poignant this season: a "Christmas Kindness Countdown."