

INSIDE BURNABY SCHOOLS

April 27, 2021



STANDING UP FOR INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

The second Wednesday of every April marks the **International Day of Pink**. Here in Burnaby, school communities honour this annual event in many ways – with a focus on bringing people together in solidarity against homophobic and transphobic bullying, as well as celebrating equity, diversity and inclusion. At **University Highlands Elementary** each class created window displays. A scavenger hunt had students exploring the school-wide messages of love and anti-hate. Over at **Maywood Community School**, staff and students examined how they can create safe, caring spaces for everyone. Meanwhile, **Seaforth Elementary** had several activities that culminated in a school-wide virtual assembly. Let's watch some highlights.

CARDS FOR SENIORS: HOW A STUDENT CAMPAIGN TOUCHED A FAMILY

At **Buckingham Elementary School**, students learned first-hand about the significance of demonstrating empathy and kindness to others. The class sent hand-made cards and letters to show residents at a Burnaby care home that someone is thinking about them during these challenging times. Several months later, the school received a touching letter in return. The adult daughter of one of the residents wrote to the principal, teachers and students, sharing that her mother had recently passed away. The letter read, in part: *"When I picked up [my mother's] personal belongings I found... a handwritten and beautifully decorated card, signed 'Love Buckingham Student.' I can't tell you how much this meant to me and my family...to find out that these beautiful children were...reaching out... brought tears to my eyes. Please let the students know that they are making a difference. This card brought joy to my mother, and our family is very grateful for that."* The class wrote back, showing their love to the grieving family through hand-crafted condolence cards.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY

The District is grateful to community partners for donating tens of thousands of dollars in gift cards for grocery stores. They are distributed after staff work to identify students – whether learning in school or remotely – whose families could most benefit from support.

STUDENT WINS NATIONAL FICTION COMPETITION

Chaffey-Burke Elementary student **Sophie McGowan** won the **CBC First Page Writing Challenge**. Students across the country in Grades 7 to 9 were asked to write the first page of a novel. Tasked with focusing on a current social issue gone wrong, they had to set their story 150 years in the future. Sophie's is about a world without bees – and can be read on CBC's website. In addition to bragging rights, the Grade 7 student's writing earned her free books every month for a year. The honour also nets 50 new books for her school library.

BURNABY SCHOOLS' STAFF EXCELLENCE RECOGNIZED

South Slope Elementary's **Jennifer Araujo** is the recipient of the prestigious **BC Teacher Librarian of the Year** award. Bestowed by the British Columbia Teacher Librarian Association, the provincial recognition honours exemplary leadership, initiative, commitment and innovation. **Kitchener Elementary** music teacher **Adam Turpin** has been singing Oh Canada from his home every night at 7pm to honour first responders. He reached his 365th consecutive night this month and was featured by several media outlets for his nightly rendition. Retired Burnaby Schools Elementary teacher **Ray Myrtle** has won the **Education Advocate Award** from the Association of BC Deans of Education. He was nominated by former colleagues, primarily from **South Slope Elementary**, where he used to teach. They told adjudicators about the thousands of hours of his own time, year after year, that Ray has spent in teacher education programs and projects. And the District's **International Education Program** has won the prestigious **Study Travel Star Award** in the category of Secondary Schools for Canadian school districts. The award is given by global organization Study Travel, with voting from agents around the world. The honour speaks to the quality and service provided by program staff, as well as the appreciation shown by international agents, students and their families.

ANNUAL COMMUNICATION CONTEST GOES VIRTUAL

This is the 26th year the Provincial Outreach Program: Deaf and Hard of Hearing – which is hosted by the Burnaby School District – has held a presentation contest. The event, called the **Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**, brought together students and special guests from across the province virtually. Students shared reflections on living through a global pandemic with their presentations on the theme: “Healing the World with Optimism.”

HONOURING THE PLANET: EARTH DAY IN BURNABY SCHOOLS

High school students who are part of the **Burnaby Youth Sustainability Network** arranged a virtual speaker series for students, their families, district leaders and staff. Nearly 80 people joined the first online presentation, which was held the evening before Earth Day. Grade 6 and 7 students, who are learning online at home, worked under the guidance of their teacher on a podcast for Earth Day. Created “by kids and for kids,” it features students interviewing Mayor Mike Hurley and a skit about global warming. Meanwhile, **Taylor Park** and **Inman Elementary** schools got “hands on” this Earth Day. Students used symbolism in their art, with handprints representing our mark on the planet. At **Lochdale Community School**, Kindergarten students remind us that small changes in how we live can protect creatures both on land and in the sea. **Parkcrest Elementary** had a poster contest, and students created a school wide Kahoot trivia game that shone a light on facts about the planet. **Buckingham Elementary** students crafted chalk art drawings for passersby to see. Students at **Stoney Creek**, **Gilmore**, **Lochdale** and **Maywood Community schools**, **Kitchener**, **Confederation Park** and **South Slope Elementary** schools showed care for the planet by cleaning up the grounds near their schools. Also at **Confederation Park**, a Grade 4/5 class created a group art project emphasizing that we only get one planet. And secondary students at **Byrne Creek Community School** used a variety of mediums from pencil to paint to create powerful messages through art.