

# INSIDE BURNABY SCHOOLS



## MENTAL HEALTH MONTH TAKES ON NEW IMPORTANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

Students, school and District staff are sharing how to support mental wellness – as now, more than ever, we need to look after ourselves and each other. 800 students attended the virtual **Balancing Our Minds Youth Summit**. Guest speakers and conversation topics ranged from substance abuse to de-stigmatizing conversation around mental health. And in advance of **Mental Health Month**, the **District Student Advisory Council** presented a full-day, student-led conference. It was supported by District staff and covered everything from healthy relationships and stress to the importance of sleep. Several schools had an additional spotlight on mental health week. The theme for **Burnaby Central Secondary**'s Wildcat Wellness Week was "Surviving or Thriving?" With a different focus each day on topics such as mindfulness, technology and fun, students also explored their sense of self through stories and photos in a moving display entitled "This is Us."

## TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS DESIGNATION

The Burnaby School District represented two of the ten schools in BC to receive a **Healthy Schools designation**. It was awarded by a provincial organization called DASH – or Dedicated Action for School Health. **Burnaby Mountain Secondary** also received the honour last year, as one of the pilot schools. They earned it, once again, for their collaboration – including with partners – led by their Wellness Council, with a focus on mental health. Just some of their efforts can be seen here during mental health week. **Burnaby South Secondary** was also recognized for their mental health work and related community support, such as these holiday cards for seniors. With activities, throughout the year, including during mental health week, school staff also learned from students. Here, Indigenous leadership students teach teachers how to do a "self-check" that they can use each morning, modelled on the Indigenous Healing Circle.

## HONOURING AND CELEBRATING CULTURE

April is also **Asian Heritage Month**. Students at **Burnaby Mountain** highlighted Asian art and artists, "reflections, expressions and personal meaning" in a display. **Burnaby North** leadership students celebrated the contributions of Asian Canadians, past and present. And school libraries, such as **South Slope Elementary** seen here, showcased books to enhance learning. On the first annual **Day of Action Against Asian Racism**, Board Chair Jen Mezei shared an opinion piece in the Burnaby Now. In it, she also reiterated the Board's condemnation of anti-Asian racism and its deep commitment to anti-racism.

## VIRTUAL EVENT SUPPORTS LGBTQ+ YOUTH

More than 100 students and other guests attended a virtual celebration in honour of the **International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia**. In a year where seeing loved ones and friends has been challenging, the theme for this year's event was "Queer Visibility." Let's watch some highlights... [\[video plays\]](#)

## STUDENTS SHOW CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY AND EACH OTHER

Students and school staff throughout the District are finding ways to lift up and support the community. **Moscrop Secondary** students volunteered for a neighbourhood cleanup that they connected with through their careers program, and as part of their participation in the **Burnaby Neighbourhood House Future Leaders** program. This pre-school sized picnic table and others were created by Grade 9 and 10 students in a Skills Explorations class at **Burnaby Mountain Secondary**. They donated them to a childcare centre near the school. Students at **Confederation Park Elementary** created terrariums for seniors who live in a nearby affordable housing centre. Over at **Gilmore Community School** on the final day of World Autism Month in April, the school shared a video. It included a special thank you from the **Canucks Autism Network** to the students for their fundraising, acceptance and awareness building efforts. And a **Clinton Elementary** student in Grade 4 is being recognized as a kindness leader. **Hanishka** submitted a winning entry to the **Canadian Kindness Leaders Project** contest for her idea to spread kindness, beginning with a box.

## CELEBRATING STUDENT ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

School staff have found creative ways to share student performances, such as this example from **Cariboo Hill Secondary**. The **Junior Concert Band** performed physically distanced and then shared their recording. And after its cancellation last year early in the pandemic, the **Burnaby Festival of Dance** was able to happen virtually this month. A tradition since 1980, students of all ages shared their dances in a non-competitive forum. 15 schools participated, including a class who is part of **Burnaby At Home Learning**, who danced in unison with video chat. Let's watch some highlights... [\[video plays\]](#)

Student art is on display at the **Burnaby Art Gallery** as part of annual exhibitions and can be viewed by appointment. Artists from Kindergarten to Grade 12 took inspiration from living through a global pandemic. The **Arts Alive** theme is "Connection." Additionally, the work of six secondary students is about "Connecting on Unstable Ground." The students are part of the **Artist Apprenticeship Program** for those interested in a fine arts career. And separately, five secondary students published powerful art spotlighting social justice issues. Their work was selected for an online publication, after the opportunity arose through their **Graphics & Media Arts Program**, providing career exploration.

## GRADE 12 STUDENTS COMPETE AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FAIRS

**Moscrop Secondary's Wendy Fang** has won silver in the **Canada-Wide Science Fair** for her project: an air monitoring system for pollen. Additionally, Wendy received another honour when her design was selected for the fair's official pin. And after a gold medal win at the **Greater Vancouver Regional Science Fair**, **Burnaby North Secondary's Rowan Ross** and **William Li** placed fourth last week at the **Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair**. Their project focuses on extracting microplastics from water.