

INNOVATIVE INKLINGS

Comox Valley School District Newsletter for Innovation

April 29, 2016



Earth Stewardship

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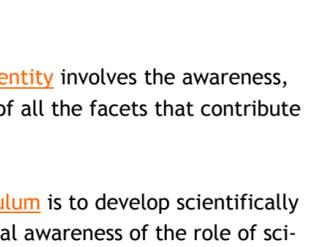
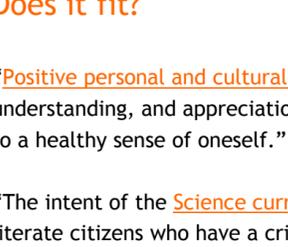
Earth Stewardship Links

The Huffington Post ran a piece about [why we don't talk about Global Warming](#).

The [Global Stew Project](#) at [Capilano University](#) aims to engage youth in high school to raise awareness and create a community of young social entrepreneurs whose mission is to take action in their local and global communities.

The [Kids Gardening web-site](#) has lesson plans and projects related to school gardens.

The [GreenHeart Education web-site](#) has a history of school gardens and some of the benefits that they offer our students.



Does it fit?

“[Positive personal and cultural identity](#) involves the awareness, understanding, and appreciation of all the facets that contribute to a healthy sense of oneself.”

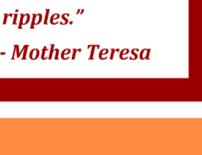
“The intent of the [Science curriculum](#) is to develop scientifically literate citizens who have a critical awareness of the role of science in society, combined with a caring and responsible disposition and an understanding of the social, health, ethical, and environmental dimensions of issues. Scientifically literate citizens are able to use scientific evidence, as well as their knowledge from other areas of learning, to develop their own views, discuss and debate, and make informed decisions in their daily lives and about broader issues, while maintaining their curiosity and wonder about the natural world.”

“Learning involves recognizing the [consequence of one's actions](#).”

“Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, [the community, the land](#), the spirits, and the ancestors.”



“Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential and relational ([focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place](#)).”



“Leave the world a little better than you found it.”

- Robert Baden-Powell

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

- Mother Teresa

Around the District

Innovative events and efforts from around our district

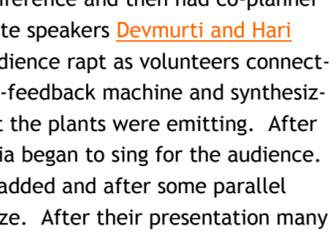
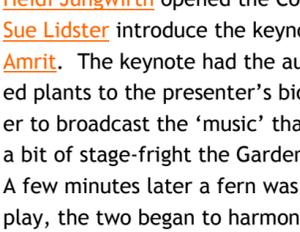
Highland's Earth Day Conference

On Friday, April 22, [Highland Secondary School](#) hosted their second [Earth Day](#) Conference. The day began with German student Sina Berndt from Highland's Eco-Team. Sina spoke of people 'too caught up in their own lives to take global warming seriously,' identifying the value of all of our efforts for equality and protesting discrimination; however, 'if we don't address global warming we will all be equal...equally extinct.' This helped put things into perspective. Sina spoke passionately, but reasonably and it was this theme of getting involved that resonated throughout the day. Sina then introduced teacher [Jill Peacocke](#) who welcomed everyone and introducing the keynote speaker for the day, [Kids Right to Know](#) founder [Rachel Parent](#) (the travel expenses for Rachel and her mother were paid for through fundraising by the Eco-Team and their accommodation was donated by the Old House).

Rachel, a student in Toronto, talked about her journey to being an international activist for labelling of [GMO's](#): it followed a path of [Inquiry](#) questions. In fact, from her story, her journey was driven by passionate inquiry begun by a project when she was 11. Her message was clear and compelling: be aware, get involved, and understand your choices. We are accountable for the choices we make. She urged the audience not to be overwhelmed by the enormous nature of the task, but to understand that everything starts small and change only occurs one step at a time. The Highland student body received her messages well.

The afternoon was made up of a myriad of activities from guest speakers and topical documentaries to planting more than 50 trees under the guidance of Al Fraser from the Town of Comox. All afternoon students were invited to engage in the dialogue and learning designed to increase their understanding and appreciating for our planet. Topics included agriculture, politics, advocacy, wilderness protection, eco-balance, climate change, impact of our decisions and our non-decisions, consumption, clean water, and water consumption. The format for the afternoon sessions was designed to encourage meaningful, thoughtful dialogue with the hope being that every student left the day more aware and feeling more empowered to improve our planet.

Highland Secondary was one of many schools in our district that celebrated Earth Day this year.



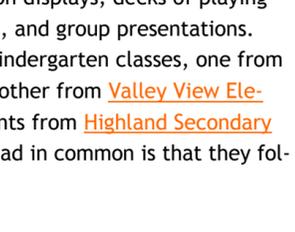
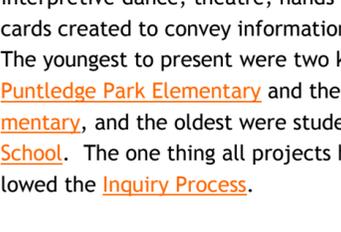
School Garden Conference

Yesterday, Brooklyn Elementary School hosted the 2nd Annual School Garden Conference. More than 60 students from 16 schools attended the conference. Around the gym were displays produced by students and community members addressing topics such as composting, Mason Bees, medicinal plants, harvesting rain water, pallet gardens, winter gardens, soil chemistry, [Hugelkultur](#), and Indigenous Plants. The students were incredibly knowledgeable and eager to answer their inquiries, their learning, and their thoughts.

[Heidi Jungwirth](#) opened the Conference and then had co-planner [Sue Lidster](#) introduce the keynote speakers [Devmurti](#) and [Hari Amrit](#). The keynote had the audience rapt as volunteers connected plants to the presenter's bio-feedback machine and synthesizer to broadcast the 'music' that the plants were emitting. After a bit of stage-fright the Gardenia began to sing for the audience. A few minutes later a Fern was added and after some parallel play, the two began to harmonize. After their presentation many questions from adults and students were asked and then the presenters were given flower baskets as gifts. With the urging of the audience, one of the petunias was connected to the machine and it sang, after some reluctance, for the audience. Being a houseplant it sang in a different pitch.

From here, conference participants were able to participate in two sets of workshops from an engaging selection: Salads and Smoothies 101, How to set up a school wide composting program, Vertical Gardening, Water Wise, Winter Gardening, Composting for kids, using the School Garden to meet curricular goals. Participants learned and were motivated. The morning session ended with a presentation by [LUSH Comox Valley](#) with an aim of making the food served at our concessions healthier and more local, i.e. from our school gardens.

In the afternoon, conference participants toured 3 of our district's 20 School Gardens: [Valley View Elementary](#), [École Robb Road Elementary](#) and [Courtenay Elementary](#). Increasingly school gardens are being used to produce food for our students in addition to helping us to authentically meet many of the learning outcomes from our diverse curricula. This work compliments our increasing number of classes set in the outdoors. On Wednesday morning I was meeting with [Paulette Vaton](#) at [Valley View Elementary](#) and when her students (grades 1 and 2) came through the door the contagious excitement they showed to see how their beans had grown punctuated the importance of natural connections for us and for our students.



Inquiry Fair

On the evening of Tuesday, April 19th, 10 months of planning came to fruition with the launch of our school district's initial Inquiry Fair, held at the Native Sons Hall. That evening 60 students from schools around the district presented their inquiry projects to interested community members. Projects were as varied as the students who created them, as most were projects following a line of inquiry initiated by the students. The opening was short on speeches and long on student performances and displays. At one point students from our [Fine Arts eCademy](#) presented a song created by students at [Queneesh Elementary](#) - [Compassion is our Passion](#).

On Wednesday another 240 students presented their inquiries during a busy day at the Native Sons Hall. Topics ranged from family lineage to Global Warming, bullying to international collaboration and advocacy. Most presented their projects visually with poster boards and responded to questions from the public; however, some were more creative in their presentation methods including interpretive dance, theatre, hands-on displays, decks of playing cards created to convey information, and group presentations. The youngest to present were two kindergarten classes, one from [Puntledge Park Elementary](#) and the other from [Valley View Elementary](#), and the oldest were students from [Highland Secondary School](#). The one thing all projects had in common is that they followed the [Inquiry Process](#).

“I was very happy with the success of the day,” said event committee Chair, [Andrew Ferneyhough](#), “we had students from 19 classes representing 9 different schools and all of the students experienced their inquiry work being celebrated.” The organizing committee consisted of lead learners from across the district who use inquiry as an engine for learning in their classes. A display of pictures from the day are available on Learn71 ([www.learn71.ca](#)), Learning Together, Inquiry Learning. Plans are already underway for next year's extravaganza.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and please direct any suggestions, questions, or inquiries to me directly: Gerald.Fussell@sd71.bc.ca