

INNOVATIVE INKLINGS

Comox Valley School District Newsletter for Innovation

May 13, 2016



Connections

Links
 Adapted Malcolm X
 Quotes
 CCS School Review
 Intergenerational Award
 Communicating with G'ma
 Mental Health Awareness
 Therapy

Connections

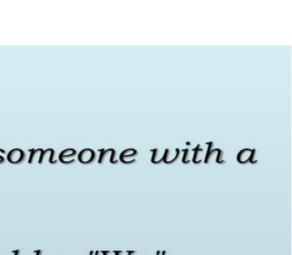
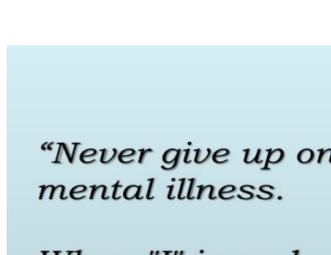
What is [service learning](#)?

What is [connectivism](#)?

Here is a blog about the value of [connecting with others](#).

[Tribune Bay Outdoor Education Centre](#) is a part of our school district and offers a lot of great programs.

Here is a piece about the [value of Intergenerational learning](#) and here is one about the [benefits of intergenerational connections](#).



“Never give up on someone with a mental illness.”

When "I" is replaced by "We", illness becomes wellness.”

Shannon L. Alder

“Connections between generations are essential for the mental health and stability of the nation.”

- Margaret Mead

“It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them.”

- Leo Buscaglia

I'm An Outdoorsy Type.....
 Like in Reading on the Patio



www.belcastroagency.com

Around the District

Innovative events and efforts from around our district

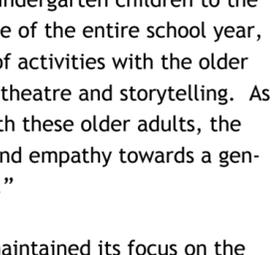
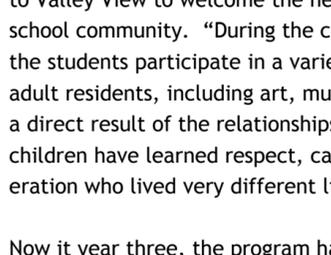
Cumberland Community School Review

This week [Cumberland Community School](#) had their review and the team saw the Outdoor Kindergarten class, though they were hard to find in the forest. With their teacher, [Erin McNamara](#), and a parent or two, the students spend every morning learning outside. As they have built this program, Cumberland Community School has used models such as Sooke School District's [Nature Kindergarten](#) and Maple Ridge's [Environmental School Project](#), research from SFU's [Dr. David Zandvliet](#), and the University of Toronto's [Natural Curiosity Program](#) to inform and shape their practice. The students have shown excellent growth in all core learning outcomes, but it is in their psycho-social development that they have made the greatest gains.

Considering the outstanding location, it is little wonder why an outdoor pre-K, outdoor K, and next year an outdoor grade 1 class are popular and effective. Other students, older students, also get a lot of opportunity to experience the wonders of nature through different classes. We visited [Rachael Black's](#) Outdoor Education class and heard about their plans for a significant campout. The students spent one morning a week this term at Cumberland Park learning about environmental stewardship and basic wilderness survival skills through a partnership with the Cumberland Lake Wilderness Society. Thanks to a grant from the Association of Canadian Alpine Guides the culminating trip will include not just wilderness survival and camping, but outdoor rock climbing at Comox Lake. Needless to say, the kids are very excited and very knowledgeable.

Working with [Amanda Lange](#), [Jina Taylor's](#) Leadership class continues to be a model for leadership classes throughout the district. Not only did they help with the Mental Health Awareness Day last week, but they organized this week's *Be You Be True Conference* for 400 girls from across the district in partnership with UVic. They played a pivotal role in Cumberland Community School's leadership in several [EDAS](#) projects. They work with students at [Royston Elementary School](#), helping bridge their transition to CCS and visit the [Cumberland Lodge](#) to spend time with local seniors. All of this is on top of the dances they organize, the concession they run, and the myriad of other activities they lead in their school. The skills these students learn are all portable skills, things like planning, working out logistics, public speaking, problem solving, inter-personal relationships, etc.

Our final stop was in [Dave Munro's](#) shop. Like [Ann-Marie Kraft](#) in her grade 6/7 class, [Dave Munro](#) supports the student learning in his grade 7/8 class through project-based options. Having access to the shop certainly helps, but his students have been able to integrate their learning into many hands-on options and this has allowed the students to be more engaged and the learning to go deeper. Dave also uses his shop to work with students from Kindergarten through grade 9 working on age appropriate projects. It will be interesting to see if these students continue to grow their interest in woodwork and hands-on experiences.



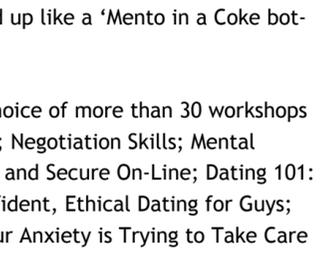
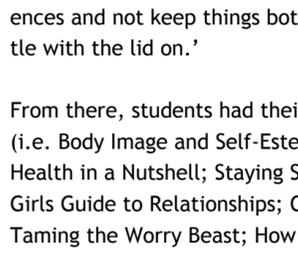
Intergenerational Project

The [Learning Partnership](#), a 25 year old national charitable organization dedicated to building stakeholder partnerships to support, promote and advance publicly funded education in Canada, announced its [2016 honourees](#) for commitment to early learning. The Comox Valley School District was one of the four recipients. "Early education is extremely important because it lays the foundation for future academic and social success," says Akela Peoples, President and CEO of The Learning Partnership. Honourees are chosen by a national selection committee consisting of members from across Canada with extensive knowledge and interest in early years initiatives.

The Comox Valley Intergenerational Project received the award for fostering mentorship opportunities and relationships between kindergarten students at [Valley View Elementary School](#) and the adult community of [Berwick House](#). Most specifically, during the second year of the program, the Berwick Residents were invited to Valley View to welcome the new Kindergarten children to the school community. "During the course of the entire school year, the students participate in a variety of activities with the older adult residents, including art, music, theatre and storytelling. As a direct result of the relationships with these older adults, the children have learned respect, care and empathy towards a generation who lived very different lives."

Now it year three, the program has maintained its focus on the arts to provide hands-on, joyful learning between the generations. It is a win-win project for those involved. The Kindergarten students benefit from weekly visits during which they receive one-on-one attention from a compassionate elder, while they complete tasks. Language and vocabulary are also developed as 'reading and writing float on a sea of talk' ([James Britton](#)). The Berwick residents also benefit in many ways from their involvement and contributions.

From its origins (a conversation between local teachers [Debra Fullerton](#) and [Carol Walters](#) with Barb Carriere from [Invermere](#) at a [Network of Inquiry and Innovation](#) conference) the program has grown due to its success for our students.

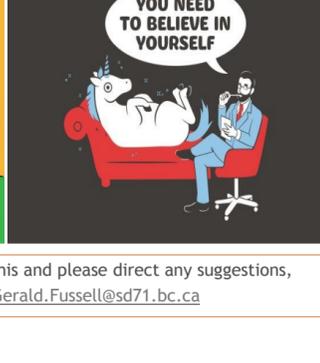


Mental Health Awareness Day

Last Friday, [Cumberland Community School](#) held a day supporting Mental Health for their students in grades 6 through 9 as well as those from [Courtenay Elementary](#), [Ecole Robb Road](#), [Lake Trail Middle School](#), and [Valley View Elementary](#). In his introduction to the day, event organizer [Mike Copes](#) invited the students to think about mental health as "how we handle the challenges life throws at all of us."

Isfeld student, [Maddy Monteiro](#), who is very involved with several organizations helping youth improve their mental health, was the keynote for the day and the students paid rapt attention to her engaging and personal presentation. Maddy's messages were clear and authentic, encouraging youth to talk about their experiences and not keep things bottled up like a 'Mento in a Coke bottle with the lid on.'

From there, students had their choice of more than 30 workshops (i.e. Body Image and Self-Esteem; Negotiation Skills; Mental Health in a Nutshell; Staying Safe and Secure On-Line; Dating 101: Girls Guide to Relationships; Confident, Ethical Dating for Guys; Taming the Worry Beast; How Your Anxiety is Trying to Take Care of You; etc.). Presenters volunteered their time, coming from within the school and from the community at large with many being experts in their respective fields. For the students in grades 3-5, the [Eureka Support Society's Black Top Players](#) were brought in. The feedback from teachers and students was that it was a valuable and important day. Students talked freely and excitedly about what they experienced and some take-away strategies that they could use and share with others.



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