

Via the Seine

Our children’s futures are at stake

A message from Wendy Bloomfield, Chair, Board of Trustees

As you’ll read in this issue of Via the Seine, our schools have been a flurry of activity, with teachers and staff continuing to adapt to ensure students are learning and growing in creative ways. While we strive to keep them safe, our students carry on with optimism and dedication. We hope all of our staff and students have enjoyed a restful and well-deserved Spring Break.

Last month, the Manitoba government released Bill 64 – *The Education Modernization Act*, and the K-12 Review Commission Report. Change isn’t new to the education system in Manitoba and we, as elected trustees, have always met challenges head on and adapted to whatever the Province required. However, we are very concerned about the significant changes now being proposed – not just removing your ability to elect your own local school trustees, but many elements of the bill are very

disturbing. We certainly do not feel the changes are in the best interests of Manitoba students.

Do we need to modernize our education system in Manitoba? Yes. Will the proposed Education Modernization Act achieve results the government is looking for? No, I don’t believe it will.

I became a trustee 38 years ago to make a difference in the school system so that our children would be able to learn, grow and gain the skills necessary for whatever their future might bring. We in education are not manufacturing motors that all look and perform exactly the same. We are developing children’s minds. We need to do this right – not for the sake of political whim or gain, but for the sake of our children and their future. If you agree, I encourage you to make your feelings known to your local MLA and the Minister of Education. 🟡

The power of a letter

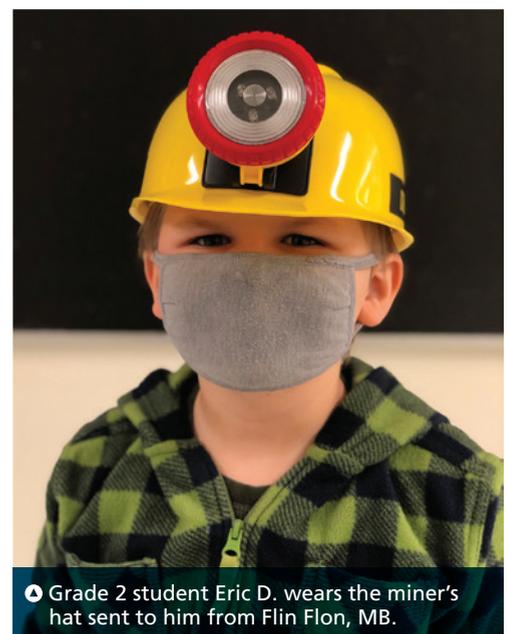
A Grade 2 letter-writing project at Richer School did more than just expand students’ skills – it opened their eyes to the kindness of strangers and helped them learn about the diversity of Canada.

Each student in Frances Gauthier’s class chose a community to write to by pointing to random spots on a map for each province and territory. They then wrote a letter addressed to the town hall, sharing information about Richer and asking questions about that community.

“This shows them a different way to communicate and builds the skills they need to do it, while also giving them a good idea of just how big Canada really is,” Gauthier explains.

Responses have been rolling in, with exciting results: many of the towns have been sending replies along with gifts. For example, Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut sent a package including their municipal flag, traditional ulu knives and pins for each student. Flin Flon, Manitoba sent a miner’s hat with a working light, plus pins and brochures. The Mayor of Truro, Nova Scotia even phoned and left a message for a student.

“We’re compiling all the information we get, to see the diversity of Canada. It has been a great way to incorporate social studies and ELA,” Gauthier says. 🟡



▲ Grade 2 student Eric D. wears the miner’s hat sent to him from Flin Flon, MB.

Coming together for *Festival*

A week-long, school-wide Festival du Voyageur celebration helped lift the spirits of students and staff and re-ignite a feeling of unity at École Ile des Chênes School (EIDC).

While pandemic restrictions prevented EIDC from holding a big community event like they usually do in February, they made the week fun and exciting for the students, building community within the school. The week kicked off with a pancake feast in each classroom. Next, classes designed life-sized paper voyageurs which were displayed in the hallways and voted on, with the winning classroom earning a popcorn party. Despite cold weather, each class took turns participating in winter activities over two days, including sled races, broomball, a snow sculpture contest and other games. A handful of Grade 7 and 8 students helped run the activities.

“Celebrating the French culture is important to us as a French Immersion school. It’s also just been a really long, tough year – we’ve been doing a lot of learning but the students are missing out on events and activities,” says EIDC principal Elizabeth Hammond. “This was something for them to look forward to and bring back a sense of togetherness, while still distanced. There was definitely a buzz in the school.”



Grade 2 student Silas B. tests his balancing skills during outdoor Voyageur games at EIDC.

Discovering a future in medicine

Sewing stitches into the skin of a banana, putting a cast on a fake arm and hearing the experiences of a practicing rural Manitoba family doctor have helped solidify Grade 12 student Brianne J.’s plans to go into the medical field.

These experiences were part of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame’s *Discovery Day in Health Sciences*, which the Collège St. Norbert Collegiate student participated in this past November. Students from several schools in Manitoba and across Canada were given the opportunity to explore career options in medicine and the health sciences.

“It was a fun and valuable experience. It let me see more into the practice of medicine, and helped confirm that I would like to work rurally in family medicine,” says Brianne.



CSNC student Brianne J. casted a fake arm in a virtual workshop on family medicine.

Exploring the arctic, page by page



ESAI Kindergarten students (from left) Khloe P., Vayda L. and Klara K. proudly presented their diorama about arctic animals.

“We love to read!” was a common phrase in many of our schools in February. At École Ste. Anne Immersion, every student got involved in celebrating I Love to Read Month, with a special theme of Climate Change and Arctic Animals.

Each class read books and completed writing activities related to the theme. A school-wide “quilt” made of drawings of books each student enjoyed prompted discussions and encouraged others to read their recommendations. Posters students made about polar bears were used to create a “polar bear walk” outside, sparking conversations about the effects of climate change. Kindergarten students took on a special project, sharing information about arctic animals they read and wrote about.

“They wrote pamphlets about their animals, and used the information to create a diorama that they presented to their classmates using French vocabulary we had learned,” says Kindergarten teacher Lianne Deleurme. “They also enjoyed going on the polar bear walk outside, reading the posters and relating the information to their own research.”

Taking learning outside

What type of toboggan is fastest? How do different activities affect your heart rate? Are the ripples on icicles really always 1 cm apart?

These are some of the questions Eric Lindquist's Grade 6 class at La Salle School have set out to answer, by getting outside and experimenting.

"Since COVID affected the school year, learning inside has come to a point where people can feel stressed and have a difficult time staying on task," the students wrote in a report on their outdoor explorations.

The heart rate experiment saw them testing how being outdoors

versus indoors affected their heart rates while doing certain activities like playing video games or eating a snack. For the tobogganing experiment, they tested the speeds of various sleds and other materials.

"We had classmates time the person sledding so we could get the most accurate average time, for the math portion. For the science section of this curricular activity, we learned about the characteristics of each material. As for the mental health aspect, we got fresh air, exercise and were able to socialize with our classmates and friends," the students wrote.

The class, which is divided into two rooms this year, has also been going for explorative walks around the community, and did a community cleanup in March.

"We have no natural light in our makeshift classroom, so just the access to fresh air and daylight, and just getting their eyes away from screens, is great," says Lindquist. "Whatever we do outside we bring back into the classroom, debrief and look at the data, tying it into the curriculum. It doesn't feel like learning, but we are." 🟡

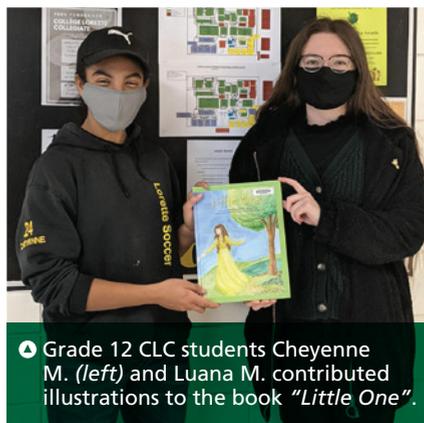


🟡 Grade 6 LSS student Ethan W. tests out the sledding speed of a cardboard box in an outdoor math/science experiment.

Creating hope and healing through art

Artwork by student illustrators from three Seine River School Division schools has been featured in a new book aimed at helping children from homes with addiction issues.

Little One was created by the TJ's Gift Foundation to offer hope to children in homes where a family member is struggling with addiction. All of the book's drawings and paintings were done by students at École Ile des Chênes School, Collège Lorette Collegiate and Ste. Anne Collegiate, and the text was written by students in another school division. A watercolour illustration by Luana M., a Grade 12 student at Collège Lorette Collegiate, was chosen to grace the book's cover.



🟡 Grade 12 CLC students Cheyenne M. (left) and Luana M. contributed illustrations to the book "Little One".

"The art depicts Mother Nature reaching out to a child to show he is loved and cared for and that she is there for him," Luana explains. "The book really has a wonderful message, to help kids and people who are

struggling, and show them they are not alone."

Students were asked to create hopeful illustrations they felt interpreted the meaning of various passages in the book, says Gabrielle Doll, Divisional Visual Arts Consultant.

"Having their art seen in this way is really special," says Doll. "The student's contributions are for such a worthy cause, and that's extremely rewarding – they have been part of something wonderful, and will always know it."

The division purchased copies of *Little One* for each student illustrator, and for the shelves of early years school libraries. To buy a copy visit tjsgift.com. 🟡