

Via the Seine | Special Report

Celebrating 20 days of Grad 2020



▲ CLC grads Emma G. (left) and Makayla R. joined in the car rally organized by the CLC Safe Grad committee.



▲ SAC grad Sam decorated his door with a game inviting visitors to put all his school photos in order.

The way this school year is ending is tough on all students, especially our Grade 12 graduates. To lift their spirits, staff from Ste. Anne Collegiate (SAC), Collège Lorette Collegiate (CLC) and Collège St. Norbert Collegiate (CSNC) each organized a month of fun in June for students, dubbed 20 Days of Grad 2020.

For each of June's 20 school days, schools planned fun events, such as a front-door decorating contest, video messages and songs, displaying grads' names on the schools'

electronic signs, themed dress-up days, and a vehicle decorating contest and car rally – just to name a few. All schools also held cap and gown pickup and delivery days, set up Grad 2020 lawn signs at graduates' homes and held individual socially distanced convocation ceremonies.

"We felt it was important for our graduates of 2020 to feel special. It was a crazy year for them and because they're missing out, we're honouring them for 20 days," says Teresa Yestrau, CLC Principal. "When

we delivered the signs, caps and gowns, their eyes lit up – they felt like the school really cared about them."

SAC student Josie G. was happy to hear her school was doing something special for grads, and has enjoyed participating in the events.

"It was such a sweet idea to make sure we still felt special," she says.

During this final week of activities, all three schools will release Graduation Day videos featuring convocation photos, Valedictorian speeches and more.

"The 20 Days have allowed us to highlight our graduates' accomplishments, giving staff and students the opportunity to come together and celebrate our 2020 grads despite the current circumstances. Our students have been very engaged and momentum is building!" says CSNC teacher Stephanie Bertin.

"The students really appreciated when we came to their houses, and a lot of them had fantastic front door decorations," adds SAC Vice Principal Jeff Enns. ●

Virtual bulletin boards bring classmates together

Even the youngest students need validation that their hard work during distance learning is valued. Kids in Allison Tchir's Kindergarten class at La Salle School have been getting it from "virtual bulletin boards" that showcase their at-home educational activities.

Parents send in photos and descriptions of their children's projects, and Tchir posts them in the class's online group files for each week, under the heading "Look what we've learned". Students send pictures of their writing, drawings, experiments, outings and things they find outside, Tchir explains.

"Sharing the work shows families and students that what they are doing at home matters, and to give each other ideas – while also keeping the students connected remotely." ●



● LSS Kindergarten student Aiden C. shows his work about frogs.

Grad 2020: Students show their artistic flair

This week in our spotlight on graduates, we're highlighting some ways our Grade 12 students have spent the last few years shining brightly in the Arts – on stage, in art rooms and behind the scenes.

CLC grads boast many talents

There are many multi-talented students at Collège Lorette Collegiate. Class of 2020 grads Aubrey Weselake and Cohan Kacperski are no exception.

Aubrey played alto saxophone in the CLC band, and sang in the school choir and vocal jazz group. She was also involved with musical theatre, playing the Teen Angel in *Grease* in Grade 9, and *Sharpay* in *High School Musical* in Grade 11.

"I think it's important to do things you are passionate about, build a sense of community with your peers, and have a space where you can try new things outside of your comfort zone," Aubrey says.

Cohan followed a similar path, singing in the school choir, playing clarinet in band and joining vocal jazz. He played *Ripper* in *High School Musical* in Grade 11, and shop owner Mr. Mushnik in *Little Shop of Horrors* in Grade 12.

"I made a lot of friends and memories, and being part of the Arts allowed me to develop social, communication and teamwork skills, and build my confidence and presentation abilities," Cohan says. 🍷



🍷 Grads Aubrey Weselake (above, in *High School Musical*) and Cohan Kacperski (singing in the choir) shone in the Arts at CLC.

Arts future looks bright for CSNC grads

Collège St. Norbert Collegiate has no shortage of talented grads with promising futures in the Arts.

Kennedy Nicchols is an excellent artist who will be attending the 2D/3D Character Animation program at VanArts (the Vancouver Institute of Media Arts) this fall, focusing on 2D animation.

"Art allows you to create fantastical things and bring a drawing to life, to express yourself in a different way, and to share your stories and connect people," Kennedy says.

Tyler Everley also has a bright future – he was in the band, choir and jazz choir, plus played lead roles in and choreographed CSNC school musicals. A competitive dancer and Rainbow Stage performer, he hopes to attend the Music Theatre Performance program at Sheridan College in Ontario next year.

"Music and theatre allow students from all different backgrounds to come together for a common goal, to work together in a safe and inclusive environment," Tyler says. 🍷



🍷 An example of the artistic skill Kennedy Nicchols will put to use studying 2D animation.



🍷 One of Tyler Everley's many roles was as Bert in *Mary Poppins* last year.

The Arts help SAC grads with confidence, mental health

Ste. Anne Collegiate grad Owen Hofer is a great example of students lifting each other up. The talented and enthusiastic drummer/percussionist and guitarist – who drums for various SAC musical ensembles and the school variety show – also enjoys mentoring younger student musicians.

"I like helping other students because I don't want them to feel discouraged on their instruments," says Owen, who plans to start his own metal rock band. "I think music gives students a way to express themselves creatively and have fun doing it."

SAC students also worked through their emotions while creating art this year, with a goal of increasing positive mental health and wellness through visual arts. They explored themes like depression, body image and societal pressure, by drawing, painting and sculpting, says SAC Art teacher Sarah Fredericks.

"They learn to let go and live in the moment, with simple techniques that help them cope with the pressures and stress they face – especially with the uncharted waters of the pandemic," Fredericks says. "They made incredible art that was so personal, raw and healing." 🍷



🍷 Drummer Owen Hofer helped younger students with their musicianship while at SAC.

🍷 An art piece by 2020 grad Shaylyne S. was part of a mental health theme at SAC.

