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Commission scolaire English-Montréal

Express

English Montreal School Board

Volume 26
Number 2
SPRING 2022
www.emsb.qc.ca

What six schools revealed during EMSB's celebration of Diversity and Inclusion

by Kristin McNeill

“Celebrating Diversity and Inclusivity at the EMSB” week took place at the end of January, launching the board’s Elementary and Kindergarten Registration campaign for the 2022-2023 school year.

Six host schools shared some of the ways they make meaningful matches between diversity of students and creating a feeling of inclusion for everyone. Spokespeople from each school, as well as students, did interviews to speak in more depth about the different ways they embrace themselves, people different from themselves and how to come together as a community.

For this event, **St. Gabriel Elementary School** in Pointe St. Charles showed off its brass band. Under the direction of music specialist John Dodge, they recorded Sly & the Family Stone’s “Everyday People,” which was broadcast on CJAD. As well, special guest Thibault Zimmer from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts spoke virtually with the



Nesbitt Elementary School in Rosemount took home first place honours in the Indigenous Languages category in the CBC Canadian Music Class Challenge.

See pages 5-9
for more on *Diversity
and Inclusivity*

Grade 6 class of visual arts teacher Naomi Aldrich about cultural diversity, using the museum’s educational platform, ÉducArt.

Embracing diversity and inclusion is **Sinclair Laird Elementary School** in Park Extension with its commitment to inclusive learning. The school is small and diverse, and working together as a team is a message that resonates throughout the school all year round. To highlight the team approach, an outdoor obstacle course was built in the playground, with contributions by all the students. “There’s a sense of ownership – that it belongs to all students. They can see it and enjoy

it each day,” said school principal Derrek Cauchi. In an interview with CJAD, he also described the new dog therapy program, which is being added to the school’s existing drama therapy program. Both provide ways to create more learning readiness for students with special needs or challenges.

On January 21, Grade 1 and 2 students at **St. Monica Elementary School** in NDG received a special online live visit from Montreal educator and author, Shanice Nicole. The event was hosted by the school’s Spiritual and Community Animator, Samantha Smith, who helped facilitate conversation between students and Ms. Nicole, after she read her book, *Dear Black Girls*. Ms. Nicole describes it as “a love letter to Black girls –

a letter in many ways I was writing to myself – but specifically thinking of Black girls who wanted to and needed to hear this story. I am so happy to continue to share it.”

Students also took part in a self-reflection activity called “Dear You,” where they were encouraged to make self-portraits and write what they liked about themselves. Several students shared their work with Ms. Nicole via videoconference. The activity was designed to “teach the children to explore their unique identities and provide an opportunity to celebrate themselves and celebrate one another,” explained Ms. Smith, who hosted the event.

At **FACE School** downtown, Kindergarten students from Christine Philp’s class received a

special visit from the EMSB’s educational consultant on sexuality education, Jamie Quinn. The focus was on the diversity of emotions and feelings different people have and that all feelings are acceptable. Elizabeth Pellicone, the school’s Spiritual and Community Animator, guided students in activities to express what feelings feel like on the inside and how they can be demonstrated by the body on the outside. They did role-play exercises and used song to express themselves.

In St. Léonard, **Pierre de Coubertin Elementary School** celebrated their differences with a series of creative and fun events during the week of January 24. Mariana Castro-Lopez’s Grade 6 students took on leadership roles

continued on page 3



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Chair's Message: Disappointed by latest Bill 21 Ruling



Joe Ortona

As of this writing, we are still waiting for the courts to rule on Bill 40, the legislation that would abolish school boards as we know them now. That is already the case in the French system, having been transformed into school service centres. Quebec's Superior Court heard our challenge last April. The nine English boards argued that Bill 40 infringes the protection of the rights of the English-speaking minority in Quebec, which is guaranteed by Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We were disappointed with a Quebec Court of Appeal's interim ruling that refused to stay the application of Bill 21 and permit the temporary hiring of new principals, vice-principals and teachers who wear religious symbols. In April 2021, a Quebec

Superior Court decision found that Bill 21, An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State, violated the English-language minority's constitutionally protected right to manage and control its institutions and exempted English-language school boards from its application.

Bill 21 bars public-school teachers, government lawyers, judges and police officers from wearing religious symbols while at work. Because the Quebec government appealed the decision, the EMSB and other English-language school boards are still unable to hire new principals, vice-principals and teachers who wear religious symbols. On October 18 we asked a judge of the Court of Appeal to be exempted from Bill 21 before the appeal is decided, which will take longer than a year. This decision does not in any way determine the merits of the case. We remain committed to continue our challenge to Bill 21 and to defend our exclusive right to manage and control our institutions in accordance with our culture.

Meanwhile, I wish to thank all of our stakeholders for all they have done over the past two years since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We have been pleased to partner with the Quebec government and the local CIUSSS network to facilitate the



The animals, which were brought to the school by Reptizoo, provided comfort and support, as well as put smiles on faces of Hampstead Elementary School students as they received their COVID-19 vaccines.

vaccination against COVID-19 of students aged five to 11. This was done for high school students last year. Schools are serviced by a number of different integrated university health and social service centres (CIUSSS), and we have been taking the lead based on their recommendations for vaccinations at schools.

We produced a special video about COVID-19 and vaccines with Dr. Earl E. Rubin, Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and in the Department of Laboratory Medicine, Division of Microbiology at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) and the Director for the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the Montreal Children's Hospital; and with Dr. Debbie Schwarcz. You can see that on YouTube at www.youtube.com/emsbstv.

Last year we installed approximately 800 air purifiers in all of our buildings where mechanical ventilation systems are not in place. This past January we completed the process of installing approximately 2,000 carbon dioxide (CO²) sensors in all schools and centres. To ensure that air quality is monitored in all schools in Quebec, the Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ) has asked that educational organizations install CO² sensors in every classroom used for pre-school, elementary and high schools, and for vocational training and adult education. Carbon dioxide is naturally produced by human

respiration. Normal concentrations of CO² in indoor air generally do not negatively affect the health of occupants. They may vary based on factors such as the number of occupants, the size of the room, the type of activity involved, the length of time spent in the room and the effectiveness of ventilation. The CO² concentration at EMSB buildings will be monitored on an ongoing basis to allow for better management of ventilation in classrooms. A daily average CO² concentration of less than 1,500 ppm may be used as an indicator of good ventilation. The installation of sensors will allow the concentration of CO² to be monitored in real time in all classrooms. EMSB in-school administrators have all been supplied with the necessary information about these devices. Last year the EMSB purchased air purifiers for schools without mechanical ventilation systems. I would like to assure our entire community that the health, safety and security of our staff and students remain our priority.

Message from the Director General: Proud of our Success Rate



Nick Katalifos

I am very proud to serve as the Director General of the EMSB, where our pedagogical team continues to do an outstanding job.

To begin with, we continue to boast the highest success rate in graduation and qualification among public school boards on the island of Montreal, based on a seven year cohort at 90.3 percent. These figures were released by the Ministère de l'éducation. While the majority of students

graduated after five years, the Ministry allows each cohort to be followed for an additional two years, to ensure that students have every opportunity to graduate or obtain a first qualification. In addition to having the highest Success Rate on the island of Montreal, the EMSB is also second in the province in the public network and among English boards. The province-wide Success Rate, which includes both public and private school results, remained stable at 81.8 percent in 2020. Since the EMSB's six-year rate is already at 89.6 percent, we are poised to surpass our results in 2021.

Over the last few months, we have all been working very hard on our Diversity and Inclusion Campaign. From my days as a teacher and in-school administrator I have seen the work we do in this area up close and personal. I am very pleased we

chose this theme to kick off our elementary school registration campaign. I was equally excited to announce that a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, composed of board level/management members, has been created with a specific mandate to set forth clear guidelines for all stakeholders. It pursues a goal of fostering and promoting a welcoming and inclusive environment, which identifies, celebrates, respects, and values the contributions and needs of our diverse communities, while inspiring our community towards strengthening and nurturing a culture of belonging for all diverse identities.

The EMSB has 19,702 students in our youth sector as part of the 2021-22 enrolment count. This includes 235 mainstream home school students and 1,226 from the Hasidic Jewish community. There are some 15,000 students in the adult sector.

Produced by the Marketing and Communications Department of the

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Editor:	Michael J. Cohen <i>Manager, Marketing and Communications</i>
Translation:	Manon Bourassa
Layout & design:	Ponctuation Grafix Inc. www.ponctuation.com

Legal Deposit: Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec
 National Library of Canada
 ISSN 1488-416X

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2022

April 7 World Health Day Holocaust Remembrance Day	May 9 to 13 BASE Daycare Employees' Recognition Week
April 12 EMSB Terry Fox Day	May 10 National Denim Day
April 24 to 30 Volunteer Appreciation Week	May 29 Virtual Parents Conference <div>SAVE THE DATE</div> Stay tuned for programming information at www.emsbparents.ca
April 22 Earth Day	May 29 to June 4 National AccessAbility Week
April 27 Administrative Assistants/ Secretary's Day	May 31 World No-Tobacco Day
May is Jewish Heritage Month Recognized by EMSB Council Resolution	June 15 International Caretakers Day
May 1 National Principal's Day	June 23 Last day of classes
May 3 EMSB Teacher Recognition Day	

Council of Commissioners' Meetings

The EMSB council of commissioners meet in public once a month, either at 6000 Fielding Avenue or online due to COVID-19 protocols. **Parents are urged to bookmark the EMSB website (www.emsb.qc.ca) to access Board meeting agendas and to be advised about special meetings.** To register for question period, please call 483-7200, ext. 7264.

All meetings can be viewed live at www.emsb.qc.ca

The 2022 meetings scheduled for the remainder of this academic year are as follows:

• March 23

• May 25

• April 27

• June 22

SIX SCHOOLS – continued from page 1

and led Kindergarten classes through a series of learning experiences. These included reading aloud from a book on neuro diversity and animating a self-reflection art activity using colours to represent personal characteristics. Another special event was the showcasing of the school's Hispanic heritage project undertaken by Ms. Castro-Lopez and her students. Kindergartners learned about Latin American dances and traditional foods. The sixth-grade students were especially excited to meet virtually with Consuls General from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala and learn more about these Central American countries and the kind of work diplomats do.

In an interview with CityNews, Michael Romano, Grade 6, said, "We're the generation that is going to build a better world. So, we need to know how to appreciate and accept others just the way they are."

John F. Kennedy Adult Education Centre in St. Michel was another host school during EMSB's special week highlighting diversity and inclusion. Principal Elizabeth Lagodich said the centre welcomes students from all over world. "It seems like the diversity of our student population almost naturally and effortlessly creates a welcoming atmosphere that is conducive to learning."

Territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka

At the start of each EMSB Council meeting,
Chair Joe Ortona now reads this land acknowledgement statement.

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that the English Montreal School Board is located on the traditional ancestral and unceded territory of the Kanien'kehà:ka

We are grateful to live, learn and work in Tiohti:àke, which has long been a site of meeting and exchange for many First Nations and is currently home to diverse groups of Indigenous and other peoples.

As a school board, it is important that we acknowledge the historic and ongoing role of educational institutions in perpetuating injustices against Indigenous communities.

We are committed to educating staff and students about the true history and current realities of the Indigenous peoples, of what we now call Canada; celebrating the cultures, contributions and knowledge of the many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities; listening to and amplifying Indigenous voices, and partnering with local Indigenous community members.

We offer this acknowledgement as a first step and public commitment to our ongoing process towards reconciliation and justice for Indigenous peoples and communities.



Artwork by Christi Belcourt, "Resilience of the Flower Beadwork People," 1999.

PHOTO: JUSTIN WONNACOTT

EMSB Commissioners

JOE ORTONA Chair president-chair@emsb.qc.ca Member of Executive Committee (Chair), Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal and Quebec English School Boards Association	WARD 4 Hampstead, Côte Saint-Luc JAMIE FABIAN jfabian@emsb.qc.ca Member of Quebec English School Boards Association and Audit Committee Member of Quebec English School Boards	WARD 10 Rivière-des-Prairies, Pointe-aux-Trembles PIETRO MERCURI pmercuri@emsb.qc.ca Member of Executive Committee and Transportation & Safety Advisory Committee
WARD 6 St-Michel, Villeray, Plateau-Mont-Royal, Ville-Marie East AGOSTINO CANNAVINO Vice-Chair acannavino@emsb.qc.ca Member of Executive Committee and Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal (Alternate)	WARD 5 St-Laurent JAMES KROMIDA jkromida@emsb.qc.ca Member of Audit Committee (Chair) and Executive Committee	Parent Commissioner Elementary Schools MARIA CORSI mcorsi2@emsb.qc.ca Member of Executive Committee
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WARD 3 Westmount, Southwest, Ville-Marie West JULIEN FELDMAN jfeldman@emsb.qc.ca Member of Governance & Ethics Committee (Chair) and Human Resources Committee (Vice-Chair)	WARD 9 Anjou, Mercier, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, Rosemount-La Petite-Patrie MARIO BENTROVATO mbentrovato@emsb.qc.ca Member of Executive Committee (Chair) and Human Resources Committee	Parent Commissioner at Large DANIEL TATONE dtatone@emsb.qc.ca Member of Governance & Ethics Committee



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EMSB marks Pink Shirt Day with Jacques Rougeau

The EMSB launched a new anti-bullying campaign on Pink Shirt Day on February 23 when world famous wrestler Jacques Rougeau addressed students at a virtual presentation.

Bullying is a problem in schools, workplaces, homes and online. Over the month of February, and throughout the year, Pink Shirt Day aims to raise awareness of these issues, as well as raise funds to support programs that foster children's healthy self-esteem. In 2007 in Nova Scotia, Grade 12 students David Shepherd, Travis Price and a few friends saw that a Grade 9 student was being bullied for wearing a pink shirt on the first day of school. They knew they had to do something to show that this kind of behaviour was not OK. They decided to go out and buy a bunch of pink shirts and hand them out to other students to wear. By the end of that week, most of the students in the school were wearing pink shirts to show support for the Grade 9 student who was bullied.

The EMSB is proud to announce that Electrika, one of the only companies to exclusively offer residential electrician services in Montreal and Laval, is the official sponsor for the Pink Shirt Day campaign. Owner John McElligott, who started the company in 2004, notes that on t-shirts he recently had printed for



John McElligott

staff the word "Respect" appears on the shoulder. "Clients who do not treat our employees with respect are engaging in a form of bullying," he said.

Rougeau comes from Quebec's most prominent wrestling family. In the late 1980s, he starred in the World Wrestling Federation – today's WWE – in a tag team along with his brother Raymond. After Raymond retired in 1990, he continued to wrestle for another decade before retiring, taking on several other personas, including The Mountie. During his career, Rougeau says he encountered bullying at the hands of a couple

of his WWF contemporaries – another well-known tag team called the British Bulldogs. In recent years he also started speaking in schools, talking to kids and performing skits about how to deal with bullies.

"I'm teaching them how to react to it, how to solve it," Rougeau said. "They pay attention. They are already aware that bullying often starts at school. When a young person bullies a student, they have no idea of the long-term damage it can do. Giving these talks is a kind of therapy for me, having been scarred by what I experienced as a wrestler – yes being



Jacques Rougeau

bullied. I speak from the heart and entertain the children, especially when they see me applying wrestling holds to one of their teachers! When the COVID

situation gets better I will be visiting some schools. One of your EMSB schools has a teacher who is a female wrestler. I won't tell you which one but stay tuned!"



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Please cut out this form and bring it to the office of your school and ask that it be sent to Room 109 of the EMSB Head Office at 6000 Fielding Ave. via the internal mail system.

You can also access the form at www.emsb.qc.ca.

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

The deadline is May 3, 2022.

EMSB Express Quiz

CLUE: The answers to these questions can be easily found by reading this issue of the EMSB Express.

- 1 How many schools were part of the EMSB Diversity and Inclusivity campaign in January?
- 2 Did the EMSB win its recent Court of Appeal attempt on Bill 21?
- 3 The EMSB boasts the highest Success Rate in Graduation and Qualification among public school boards on the island of Montreal at what percent?
- 4 When is International Caretakers Day?
- 5 Which EMSB school took home first place honours in the Indigenous Languages category in the Canadian Music Class Challenge?
- 6 Which EMSB teacher won a Prime Minister's Award?
- 7 How old is adult student Gabriele Santilli ?
- 8 Please complete the slogan on page 8: "Women Take Back _____"?
- 9 Who are the two hosts of our new French podcast (Le Balado de la CSEM)?
- 10 Who hosts our new EMSB French podcast?



Celebrating DIVERSITY and INCLUSIVITY at the EMSB

Stories by Kristin McNeill



Shanice Nicole visits St. Monica and reads from her book, *Dear Black Girls*

On January 21, Grade 1 and 2 students at St. Monica Elementary School in NDG received a (live) virtual visit from Montreal educator and author, Shanice Nicole. The special event was hosted by the school's Spiritual and Community Animator, Samantha Smith, who helped facilitate conversation between students and Shanice Nicole, after she read her book, *Dear Black Girls*. Shanice Nicole describes the book as "a love letter to Black girls – a letter in many ways I was writing to myself – but also specifically thinking of Black girls who wanted to and needed to hear this story. I am so happy to continue to share it." The book is her first children's book and is based on a poem she has performed around Montreal.

After the reading, the students engaged in a self-reflection activity called "Dear You," where they made drawings of, and wrote what they liked about themselves. Several students shared their work with the special visitor. The activity "provides an opportunity for the children to explore their unique identities and to celebrate themselves and one another," explained Ms. Smith.

One student from Grade 1, Maharli, said, "What I like about myself is that I am athletic and competitive." Another, Nicolas from Grade 2, said "I love my heart, I love my body, I love my hands. And, I love myself." "This is wonderful," answered Ms. Nicole, who thanked the students, four in all, for sharing their self-portraits and thoughts.

In an interview with Mark Bergman, she spoke about the positive outcomes of *Dear Black Girls*. "The kids are often very excited, engaged and aware. I have gained so much inspiration from young people who are actually demanding that we have these tough conversations. So, *Dear Black Girls* opens up space to talk about identity, what it means to have yourself be seen and to see yourself reflected. The imagery [in the book] is really important. The illustrations [by Kezna Dalz] depict a diverse range of Black girls. I wanted



Shanice Nicole addresses students by videoconference.



Cover of the book *Dear Black Girls* by Shanice Nicole.

*Shanice Nicole describes
the book as "a love letter
to Black girls – a letter in many
ways I was writing to myself"*

people to open up the book and see themselves or someone they knew on every page."

Zyanne Dudevoir, now in Grade 7 at Westmount High School, attended St. Monica in her elementary school years. She said her Grade 2 self would have found it "really cool" to have this book in her school library. "I would have probably run home to tell my mom about the book I just read!" she said. "Most books that I read don't have a lot of Black children in them, so for me to see this book, it actually feels really nice," she said.

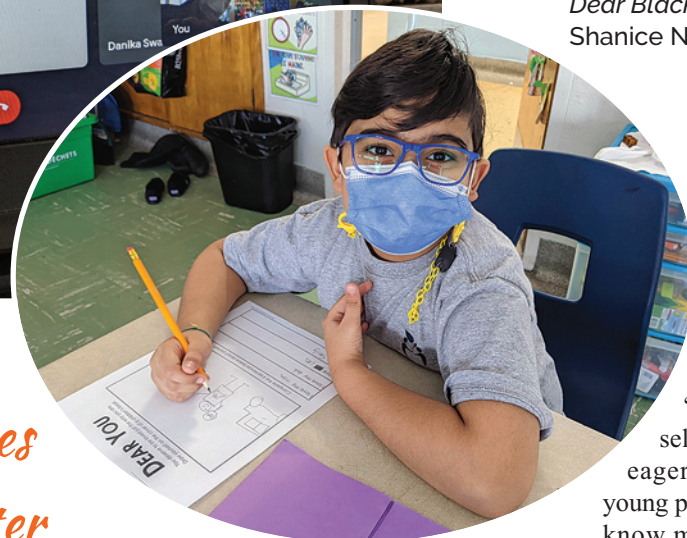
Danika Swanson, who oversees the EMSB's team of Spiritual and Community Animators, said this event was a nice lead-up to Black

History Month in February. She described the EMSB as having robust programming to celebrate Black History Month, with schools providing a variety of interesting ways of bringing awareness and discussion of Black history. These included scavenger hunts, art installations, mobile museums, musical and theatre performances and speaker visits. But, she noted, during the entire school year the Spiritual and Community Animation service helps bring diverse voices, experience and stories into the classrooms. Of note this year was the acquisition of *ABC's of Black Canadian History* kits for every SCA to use with their schools, and a workshop delivered by Dr. Dorothy Williams,

St. Monica student Shriyan Sumeet takes part in the self-reflection activity.

a Montreal-based historian, who specializes in Canadian Black History, and who was instrumental in bringing the kit to life.

In speaking about how subjects around diversity and inclusion are handled with the different ages, Ms. Smith said it's important to use a scaffolded approach with age-appropriate information and language. A great example of this is the story of Viola Desmond. In Kindergarten and younger grades, we can use the CBC Kids CANAdooDAday "She Sat Down to Stand Up" video, she explained. Then, "in high school, we can explore the symbolism of the \$10 bill or why it took so long to have someone like Viola Desmond on our currency. We can talk about systemic racism or economic opportunity or implicit bias. So, it starts in Kindergarten



with a fun song and dance and learning the story but as they go, even in Grades 3 and up, we start having deeper discussions," she said.

Ms. Nicole spoke about the need to start conversations early. "[We are] pushing ourselves to meet the curiosity, eagerness and interest of our young people, who are wanting to know more and are demanding more," she said. "We often underestimate their capacity to understand, to take action. It's really exciting to see this work happening and to follow their lead as well. It starts as early as Kindergarten because Black children and children of colour are experiencing racism as early as Kindergarten so we need to think about what interventions we're putting into place to reduce that harm. And that starts with having those conversations as early as possible."

Building from this event, a project pairing Grade 1 and 2 students with a counterpart in the older grades is underway to turn their self-reflection worksheets into a children's book.

In recalling her time at St. Monica, Zyanne expressed that she felt good being surrounded by people who cared about her and said she "appreciated how the school accepted all races, like mine and all others."



Celebrating

Pierre de Coubertin focuses on Hispanic heritage during Diversity week

As part of the EMSB's continued commitment to honouring diversity, Pierre de Coubertin Elementary School in St. Leonard celebrated its differences with a series of events during EMSB's Diversity and Inclusion week. Students from Mariana Castro-Lopez's Grade 6 class took on leadership roles and led Kindergarten students through a series of experiences to learn about Hispanic cultures. The graduating students read aloud from a book about neuro diversity and animated an art activity, where the younger students used colours to show how they perceived their own individualities.

As with a number of other East End schools, Pierre de Coubertin offers the Italian PELO Program. Its purpose is to teach a language of origin and allow students to broaden their knowledge of language and culture. Because so many students at the school are Italian, the course is integrated into its curriculum and taught in Italian.

Yet, when Ms. Castro-Lopez started talking about her childhood growing up in El Salvador, her students wanted to know more about that culture. So was born the Hispanic Heritage Project. She said she has been watching Montreal's East End neighbourhoods become more and more diverse. "I have always believed that our classrooms are home away from home."

The school showcased the project during EMSB's Diversity and Inclusion week.

As part of the day's festivities, Kindergartners also learned about several Hispanic customs including dance, which they tried for themselves guided by students from the Dance Club. They were also invited to sample

several types of typical Latin American desserts.

Consuls general from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala were invited to speak via video-conference with sixth-grade students on January 21 and 25. Some of the conversation took place in Spanish. The diplomats and students alike were excited to be able to give these Central American countries a platform in the school, said, Jessica Monti, the school's vice principal. Students were able to learn more about these three countries and how their diplomats support the Spanish language and Montreal's Spanish-speaking community. One student asked the representative for El Salvador, Claudia Bonilla de Contreras, how she felt about the fact that their teacher, Ms. Castro-Lopez, was also from El Salvador. "We feel very proud that you have a Salvadorian teacher that represents our country. We are happy she can share a little bit about how beautiful the country is," she said.

In an interview with City-News, Michael Romano, a Grade 6 student said, "We're the generation that is going to build a better world. So we need to know how to appreciate and accept others just the way they are." "His comments perfectly encapsulate the spirit at the school, and its welcoming environment for all students," said school principal, Ida Pisano.

Before the special day unfolded, Mark Bergman for EMSB TV interviewed several Grade 6 students. One was Adamo Comito, who shared what he enjoyed learning about Hispanic culture: "Learning a song by guitar great, Carlos Santana!"

Shayla Williams said she was looking forward to the food tasting activity with Kindergarten



Kindergartners at Pierre de Coubertin Elementary School learned about some Hispanic customs from Grade 6 students.



Teacher Mariana Castro-Lopez (second from the left) with students (left to right) Shayla Williams, Adamo Comito, Michael Romano and Linda Petreccia.

students. Teaching children to try different foods at a young age is also teaching them to be open-minded about different cultures, she said.

Linda Petreccia was asked about the storytelling portion of the event, which included reading *Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* by Latina author and US Supreme court judge Sonia So-

tomayor. "We are all unique and bring something different to the world. We need to create a world where we all accept just the way we are," Linda said.

Grant application accepted for raising awareness of Indigenous history, culture

A grant application submitted by EMSB's Educational Services department was accepted by the ministère de l'Éducation for funding towards projects to sensitize students to the realities of Indigenous people. A range of activities are being designed, with the hope that multiple schools and many students across the board will be able to participate, made possible through the funding of the Mesure 15061.

The application was accepted in the Spring of 2021, with pro-

gramming taking shape for the Spring of 2022, in connection with National Indigenous History Month in June. This is a month earmarked as an opportunity for people across Canada to "acknowledge Indigenous Peoples, to learn about their histories, cultures and ways of life."

Because of the evolving nature of the pandemic, activities and projects are being designed to take place in a virtual format, with partners interacting with students online. Different activities and

workshops are being designed for the elementary and high school levels. "We hope to work with Indigenous artists and community members to introduce students to a range of Indigenous perspectives, art and culture," said Danika Swanson, Spiritual and Community Animation (SCA) Service Consultant, who wrote the grant proposal.



Part of the funding from the ministère de l'Éducation's Mesure 15053 (Intercultural Education) that is dedicated to professional development went to a group of 40 EMSB teachers, librarians, Spiritual & Community Animators and educational consultants to attend the National Gathering for Indigenous Education. This is an annual conference led by Indspire, an organization that brings together educators and partners to improve the educational outcomes of primary and secondary level Indigenous students. Another group from the EMSB attended the Climbing the Mountain workshop, which aims to create healthy educational spaces and workplaces rooted in the principles of reconciliation. For more information, visit <https://indspire.ca/programs/educators/>

DIVERSITY and INCLUSIVITY

Teacher, staff training in sexuality education helps to create more inclusive schools

During an EMSB TV interview for the Board's Diversity and Inclusion Week in January, Kindergarten Daniel Armand at FACE School downtown was asked what his body felt like when he was nervous. He replied: "It feels tingly in my head." And when his classmate Annika Megrelishvili-Nowak was asked what her body does when she's angry. "I stomp on the floor!" she replied. The students were among Christine Philp's class taking part in a special day of activities on learning what they could feel and express with their body. This was a topic for Kindergarten included in the sexuality education curriculum mandated by the province.

For the last three years, EMSB teachers and staff at both the elementary and secondary level have been trained and continue to engage in professional development to be able to implement the Ministère de l'éducation's sexuality education learning content. As well, the EMSB's Spiritual and Community Animation service has been developing and offering its services with some of the mandatory themes. Animators have been going into classrooms and supporting teachers by delivering and modeling lessons. Outside organizations, as well as EMSB's own sexuality education consultant, Jamie Quinn, continue to guide and assist teachers.

Sexuality education has been an important part of the Quebec curriculum for 40 years. In 2018, the Ministère de l'éducation rolled out the mandatory sexuality education program for all students across Quebec. At the elementary level, students receive between five and 10 hours of varied learning content, and students in secondary schools receive between ten and 15 hours.

"The topics are taught in an age-appropriate manner and with instruction that fosters the students' development, and which makes them less vulnerable to certain problems," said Ms. Quinn. "As children continue to grow into adolescence and then adulthood, the themes and activities help them gain a better understanding of important events in their psychosexual development."

The content is diverse. It covers knowledge, attitudes and the development of personal and social competencies, such as management of emotions, resistance to peer and media pressure, critical judgment and conflict resolution. A student from as young as four years old to graduating high school is exposed to the various age-appropriate topics in sexuality education, Ms. Quinn explained. This ranges



Kindergarten students at FACE get an opportunity to express what feelings are like on the inside and what they show on the outside.

professionals, sexologists and many teachers.

Back to the EMSB's Diversity and Inclusion week in January. At FACE School, Kindergarten students received a special visit from Ms. Quinn, who explained the diversity of emotions and feelings different people have and how to ensure that all feelings are acceptable. Guiding students in in-class activities and conversation was Elizabeth Pellicone, the

school's Spiritual and Community Animator, who gave the students space to express what feelings feel like on the inside and what they show on the outside. Through role-play and song, the students were able to recognize what others were feeling or what they could ask if they were not certain.

The questions and concerns coming from children in Kindergarten with respect to sexuality typically stem from curiosity about their bodies and anatomical differences, the discovery of the five senses, the growing awareness of their gender identity, and curiosity regarding where babies come from, said Ms. Quinn.

The EMSB's Spiritual and Community Animation service has been working with students using the Kindness Curriculum from the Center for Healthy Minds and Healthy Minds Innovations Inc. The eight themes and 24 lessons were written sequentially and offer the opportunity to develop the vocabulary necessary to communicate individual experiences. The curriculum follows the requirements of the province's sexuality education content for Kindergarten students. For example, "how I feel on the inside shows on the outside" is a way to teach young children about the different emotions in their faces and bodies as well as learning about feelings through music.

Adult ed. centres: A vibrant multicultural milieu

Joining five other host schools in Celebrating Diversity and Inclusion at the EMSB in January was John F. Kennedy Adult Education Centre (JFKAEC) in St. Michel. A true example of a vibrant multicultural community, people from all over the world attend JFKAEC and the other five English Montreal School Board adult education centres, which welcome students from more than 100 countries.

Normally food has been a way to create socializing opportunities and celebrate all the diverse cultures, but with Covid-19 restrictions and hybrid learning, JFKAEC had to find other ways to bring the school community together this winter and fall.

"Social events provide an opportunity to bring together our students and staff to learn about one another and share stories about our countries of origin," said principal Elizabeth Lagodich.

Small groups were created for tea-and-talk get-togethers to provide students a chance to meet others, and a photo competition was held to celebrate new friendships made at JFKAEC.

Several outdoor activities were offered to students, especially those new to winter, including making different kinds of snow people and an ice fishing trip to provide a Quebec cultural experience.

Virtual workshops were also offered for students to learn about their legal rights in Quebec and in Canada.

In the main hallway at the Centre is a display of still photos and a revolving photo montage showing students who have attended the Centre. "When you look at those photos, all you see is diversity," said teacher Beverley Markus. "It's really an opportunity for students to see themselves in this environment."

Gulpana Dayaan, now 38, arrived in Canada with a bachelor's in economics from her country of origin, Afghanistan. She started the journey into the "bright side of her life" at JFKAEC, she said. With English being her fifth language, she said she felt like it was starting from scratch, but she felt very supported by teachers and staff at JFKAEC. "It is not easy starting your education [as an adult] or your career in a language that is your fifth language," she said, but that with all the help and encouragement from teachers, staff and students, she was able to succeed.

From Vietnam, Hoai Nam To, now 29, arrived in Canada years earlier without speaking English or French. He started by taking a basic English class at the Centre and then turned his attention to courses that would help him complete his high school diploma.

continued on page 8

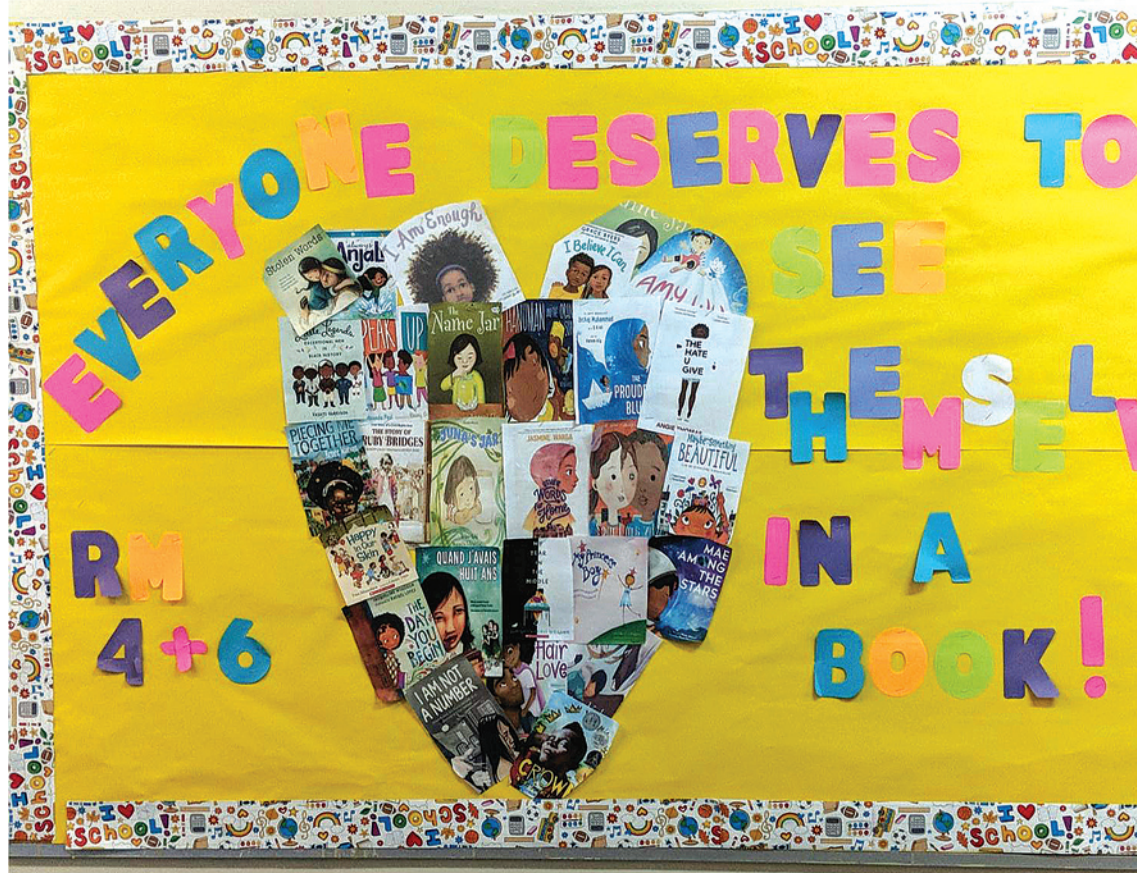


Student Hoai Nam To and teacher Beverley Markus.



Celebrating

Teachers hard at work on multicultural projects



A display at Elizabeth Ballantyne Elementary School.

Many multicultural projects were developed and executed by EMSB teachers last year. And more are underway this spring.

EMSB's Educational Services Department offers Multicultural Project funding to teachers to implement multicultural educational initiatives in their classrooms. Teachers may apply for the funding by describing their intended project and the impact they hope to have on the students and the school culture.

"Over the years, we have seen many creative uses of these funds," said Anne-Marie De Silva, Educational Consultant – ERC. "These have included field trips to local historical or traditional sites of importance, and guest speakers and presenters to enrich the students' learning. We have also seen the fruition of collaborative art projects, such as murals or

school videos, that develop children's sense of pride and belonging. This year many exciting and innovative projects have taken place through the use of these funds – on the themes of diversity and inclusion.”

A multicultural library at Elizabeth Ballantyne

Grade 2 classes at Elizabeth Ballantyne Elementary School in Montreal West have expanded their multicultural libraries in their own classrooms in order to have full access to those resources anytime. The project was led by ERC teachers Jody Wilson and Adina Zairi, who worked with students to include books about race, religions, gender and more. The books have sparked rich discussions and lessons, and have allowed the students to see themselves reflected in a story.

Students create powerful posters at LBPHS

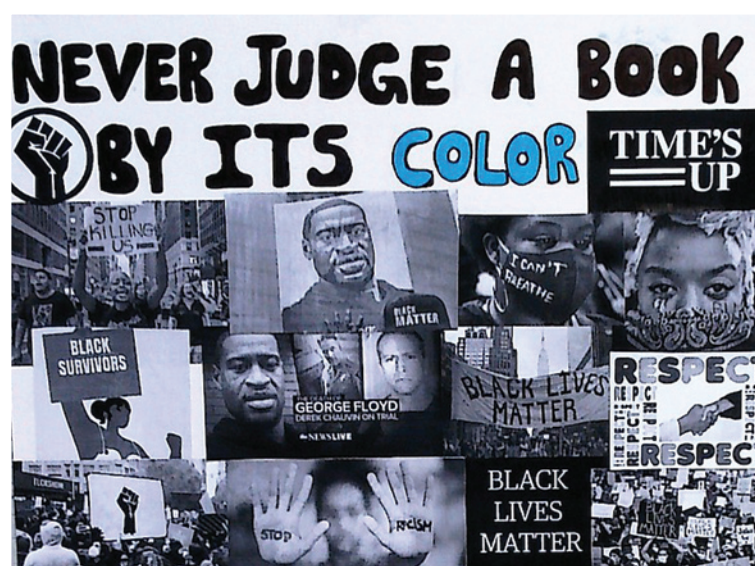
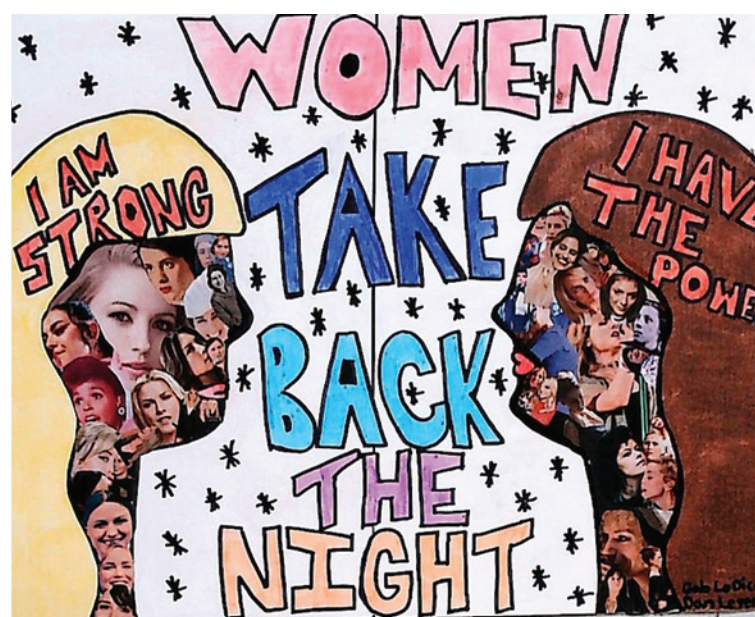
Led by Lester B. Pearson High School teacher Antoinette Koranteng, the Secondary 2, 3 and 5 art classes at the Montreal North school produced some interesting and powerful posters related to anti-racism, women's rights and support for the LGBTQ+ communities. In total, 15 student-created posters were laminated and posted all around the school.

Baratanga drum circle at FACE

The music classes at FACE School downtown were treated to a presentation by Baratanga, a Montreal-area company specializing in entertainment productions, performances and percussion activities. They spoke to the students about the many percussions of the world: Djembes, congas, maracas, guiros and others. FACE teacher Myriam Blouin, organizer of the event, said, "Through different games, the children reproduced patterns and really enjoyed the power of a drum circle. It is a great way to connect all together and to feel our energy."

Learning about Indigenous and Black communities in Quebec history

Grade 4 students at Carlyle Elementary School in the Town of Mount Royal researched, planned and created presentations about the hardships endured by Indigenous and Black communities during



Some beautiful works of art from the students at
Lester B. Pearson High School.

Confederation, and the Early Colonial, Early Contemporary and Late Contemporary periods. The project, led by teachers Angela Chronis and Annette Kehyayan, allowed students to learn many new facts through digital and hands-on learning and presentations.

Black Lives Matter Student Film

Working with Dawson student filmmaker, Noah Leve, students at Elizabeth Ballantyne School were

interviewed about their thoughts on and understanding of the Black Lives Matter movement, their personal experiences with discrimination or the experiences of their friends or family and what they have learned about systemic racism through the movement. Led by teacher Devan Kennedy, and with help from Brent Bodkin and Jessica Doubt, a film was created to foster an awareness of the variety of experiences lived by the students, as well as a respect for diversity and difference.

ADULT ED. CENTRES – continued from page 7

“It’s quite challenging for an adult to go back to school. Especially for someone who is not very familiar with the culture or language. I was very surprised because I felt welcomed here. When I arrived at JFKAEC, I looked around me and saw that everyone was the same as me. They wanted to finish the high school diploma; they had the same goal. The teachers and the staff are very understanding and helpful. Honestly, I feel very proud of myself.”

Mr. Nam said despite coming from different places in the world, in the end he discovered students could find many things in common, like sharing a hobby or having the same academic goals.

Ms. Lagodich said she wants her school to feel like a place of belonging. "It seems like the diversity of our student population almost naturally and effortlessly creates a welcoming atmosphere that is conducive to learning," she said.

DIVERSITY and INCLUSIVITY

The ABC's of Canadian Black History kits available in all schools



The EMSB's Spiritual and Community Animation (SCA) service had the privilege of participating in a workshop led by Dr. Dorothy Williams about *The ABC's of Canadian Black History* kit. Dr. Williams is a Montreal-based historian, who specializes in Canadian Black History. In 2016, her company Blacbiblio.com released the kit, which she co-created with Linton Garner and Jennifer Santos-Sinclair.

This is an educational resource for educators that includes learning tools to help students learn more about Black Canadians in history, geography, politics, migration, military history and defense, labour experiences and settlement. It contains a study guide, teachers' tools, a poster, collectible cards and more. There are options to

delve more deeply into topics such as human rights, racism and discrimination, citizenship and integration, social justice and the law.

In January, the SCAs were led by Dr. Williams in a hands-on workshop to explore all facets of the kit and learn from her ideas and suggestions on how to implement the kits in classrooms.

The EMSB purchased a kit for every Spiritual and Community Animator to work with in their schools. The funding came from the Educational Services Department's Multicultural Project Funds, which provides support to teachers and Spiritual and Community Animators in multicultural educational initiatives.

(L): Grade 11 students at James Lyng High School on February 9 learn about Canadian Black history with a Bingo activity from the ABC's of Canadian Black History kit, led by Spiritual and Community Animator, Ibrahim Abou Arab.



Le Projet du patrimoine hispanique a été présenté à l'école primaire Pierre de Coubertin à Saint-Léonard.

Célébrons DIVERSITÉ et INCLUSIVITÉ



La CSEM a dévoilé son initiative « Célébrons la diversité et l'inclusivité », qui s'est déroulée du 21 au 28 janvier. Cet événement spécial d'une durée de 6 jours a donné le coup d'envoi de la semaine des inscriptions à la maternelle et au primaire. La communauté de la CSEM regroupe une population diversifiée et accueille des élèves de toutes origines et identités. Dans le cadre de cette célébration virtuelle, six écoles hôtes ont été mises en valeur sur les plateformes de médias sociaux de la CSEM, chacune présentant au public un aperçu de la vie scolaire et des programmes axés sur la promotion de la diversité et de l'inclusion tout au long de l'année dans nos écoles.

À l'école primaire St. Gabriel de Pointe-Saint-Charles, les élèves ont pris part à une activité d'arts visuels en lien avec l'image personnelle. L'apprentissage inclusif est

l'un des exemples de l'acceptation de la diversité et de l'inclusion qui fut présenté par l'école primaire Sinclair Laird dans Parc-Extension. À l'école F.A.C.E. du centre-ville, les élèves de la maternelle ont reçu la visite de Jamie Quinn, conseillère pédagogique en matière d'éducation sexuelle à la CSEM. En compagnie d'Elizabeth Pellicone, animatrice de vie spirituelle et d'engagement communautaire de l'école, elles ont guidé les élèves à travers l'exploration de l'expression des émotions. À NDG, l'école primaire St. Monica a accueilli en ligne et en direct une invitée spéciale en la personne de Shanice Nicole, éducatrice, auteure et facilitatrice montréalaise. Elle a lu aux élèves de la 1^{re} et 2^e année des passages de son livre *Dear Black Girls*. En février, les écoles du réseau de la CSEM organiseront diverses activités afin de souligner le Mois de l'histoire des Noirs. Le Projet du patrimoine hispanique a été présenté à l'école primaire Pierre de Coubertin à Saint-Léonard. Sous la direction de l'enseignante Mariana Castro-Lopez, les élèves de 6e

année ont guidé les jeunes de la maternelle dans une activité de narration et d'animation, de manière à leur transmettre la richesse des connaissances acquises dans le cadre du Projet du patrimoine hispanique. La CSEM accueille des élèves de la prématernelle à l'âge adulte. La composition de la population étudiante au secteur des adultes illustre également cette belle diversité au sein de la CSEM. Des élèves provenant de plus de 100 pays sont inscrits dans les écoles de la CSEM, d'où notre empreinte multiculturelle dynamique. Ces derniers s'inscrivent dans les centres d'éducation des adultes de la CSEM, comme le Centre d'éducation des adultes John F. Kennedy à Saint-Michel, pour obtenir leur diplôme d'études secondaires, suivre des cours préalables afin de poursuivre leurs études ou s'inscrire à des cours d'anglais et de français de base pour pouvoir travailler et étudier au Québec. La diversité observée au sein des enseignants et des élèves confère aux centres d'éducation des adultes de la CSEM un caractère bien spécial.

New \$20-million makeover of Westmount Park Elementary School unveiled

Students and staff have returned to the historic Westmount Park Elementary School facility for the 2021-22 academic year. A formal ribbon-cutting ceremony took place in November.

The 108-year-old facility at 15 Park Place had been closed for the last two academic years to complete a \$20-million project of renovations and repairs. In the interim, students were based at the former St. John Bosco Elementary School in Ville Émard (Westmount Park South Campus) and Marymount Academy International in NDG (Westmount Park North Campus).

Westmount Park Elementary School has a rich history with the original structure built in 1913, an addition in 1919 and another one in 1921.

The refurbished facility has modern classrooms, including interactive SMART boards. There is also flexible seating options, a variety of learning spaces, dedicated music and science rooms and the addition of an elevator and an exterior ramp to make the building more accessible to everyone.

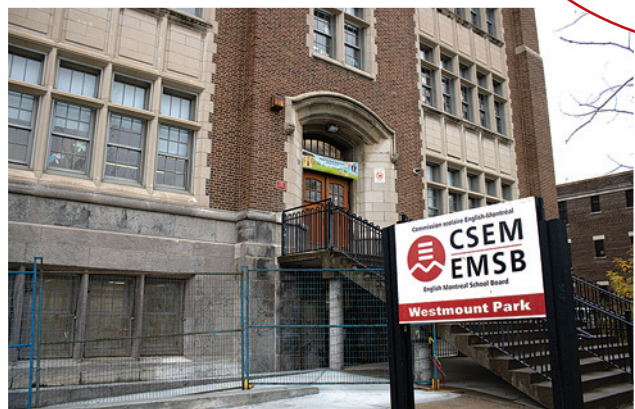
In an effort to maintain some of the building's heritage, the auditorium has been restored with all of its beautiful woodwork while bringing the sprinkler system and emergency exits up to date. The paint was refreshed, the benches repaired and new heating cabinets installed. This spot has been used in a number of motion pictures over the years.

In addition to benefiting from the English-Core program, students are also able to benefit from energy stations that are set up throughout the building. This will allow students to leave class for a movement and/or brain break when needed.

Stations include stationary bikes, rowing machines and sensory paths.

The major renovations at Westmount Park include, but are not limited to, roof, interior finishes, accessibility (elevator), mechanical (plumbing, CVAC, sprinklers), electrical (wiring, lights, telecom, fire alarm system, etc.) and exterior (additional accessibility ramp, public utility works, drainage system and foundation waterproofing).

Last November, EMSB Chair Joe Ortona, Director General Nick Katalifos and the administration of Westmount Park Elementary School invited special guests to the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Westmount Park Elementary School.



PHOTOS: NUR ERDEM

FOODTASTIC

YOUR TEACHERS DESERVE TO BE APPRECIATED

Help them win a dinner at one of Foodtastic's 19 restaurant brands.

On the occasion of EMSB Teacher Appreciation Day on May 3, Foodtastic wants to celebrate the great teachers in your life. Nominate your, or your child's favorite youth and adult sector and physical education teachers to win a \$100 card to a Foodtastic location.

Please tell us why the person you are nominating is special and why they deserve a night out or take-out order at a Foodtastic location. Entries can be e-mailed to mcohen@emsb.qc.ca by April 15, 2022.



EMSB set to honour volunteers virtually

The annual EMSB Parent Volunteer Appreciation Evening will take place on Tuesday, April 26th (7:30 pm). This year's event is being held virtually, and it will mark National Volunteer Week, which runs from April 24 to 30, under the theme of "United in Our Differences: Together We Have It All."

You will be able to access the program via the EMSB website (www.emsb.qc.ca), Facebook page (@EnglishMtl) and YouTube Channel (www.youtube.com/EMSBTV)

Volunteer of Distinction

The Volunteer of Distinction for this year is Mubeenah Mughal. Besides being a parent commissioner for the EMSB, she sits on the Advisory Committee on Special Education Services (ACSES) and is integrally involved at the schools of her own children. Ms. Mughal was recently recognized as one of the 2022 CBC Quebec Black Changemakers. She has worked with organizations advocating for people including undocumented migrants, new parents, and the blind. However, her main identity is as a mother, she said – recognizing that some of the most important contributions to society do not come with a pay cheque. She helped launch the EMSB's legal challenge to Bill 21, the controversial Quebec law that bars teachers and other people in positions of authority from

wearing religious symbols. The board's challenge is still before the Quebec Court of Appeal.

Ambassador of The Year

This year's Ambassador of the Year is Dr. Earl E. Rubin, Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and in the Department of Laboratory Medicine, Division of Micro-



Dr. Earl E. Rubin

biology at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) and the Director for the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at the Montreal Children's Hospital. Dr. Rubin was the chairperson for the Governing Board of Westmount High School for four years. He currently is a Governing Board member for Royal West Academy, where his youngest of three children is in Secondary IV. Dr. Rubin has volunteered to help guide certain EMSB schools as it pertains to COVID-19, hosting webinars/videoconference meet-

ings for the faculty at Westmount High School, as well as for the parent body, doing the same for Royal West Academy, and recently for the student body at Royal Vale (elementary and high school). He has done the same thing at EMSB conferences and video presentations.

Recognizing Volunteers

This year's virtual event will include recognition of all volunteers, notably those with five

years of service or more. There will be formal presentations for Dr. Earl Rubin, Mubeenah Mughal, remarks by EMSB Chair Joe Ortona, Director General Nick Katalifos, Parents Committee Chair Caleigh Saucier and a representative from La Capitale.

Beneva

Beneva is the title sponsor for this event. Beneva (www.beneva.ca) is the result of a merger between La Capitale Financial Services and SSQ (www.lacapitale.com). It

offers a wide range of products and services that are designed to simplify financial choices for members working in the public and para-public sectors in over 900 public and para-public institutions across the province. These services include: personal financial advice, savings, investments and funds; individual life and health insurance; mortgages and personal loans; insurance for automobiles, recreational vehicles, home, travel and legal access; commercial insurance; and group insurance.



PHOTO: CASSANDRA LESLIE/CIÉL



Coping with Grief and/or Anxiety

The recent death of one of our students has impacted the EMSB deeply. We know there are many members in our community who are grieving and may be struggling with different challenges. We wish to connect our students, families, and community with tools and support.

The Student Services Department is available to work with any individuals who may need assistance in receiving services or navigating resources related to coping with grief and/or anxiety.

Please call 514-483-7200 ext. 7479.

In addition, you will find a link below of a few community organizations that have worked with our schools and who are also available to provide inclusive mental health services, leadership programs, and additional services to support individuals and families in our community.

<https://www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb/services/support-services/grief-anxiety>

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Accolades



François Lukawecki
and some of his young
Bancroft music students.

CBC MUSIC CHALLENGE

Nesbitt Elementary School in Rosemount took home first-place honours in the Indigenous Languages category in the Canadian Music Class Challenge, CBC Music's salute to music education in Canada. In association with MusiCounts, every year CBC invites music instructors to teach their students a Canadian song from a pre-approved list. Caroline Derome's music club and choir from Nesbitt performed the song Strawberry Moon (Ode'min Giizis). Passionate about music, in addition to their regular music classes these Grades 4, 5 and 6 students come voluntarily to practice during recess. Bancroft Elementary School in the Plateau made history by becoming the first in the country to ever have five classes, all taught by François Lukawecki, as finalists in the competition. They took home third prize in the Primary Instrumental Category (Kindergarten to Grade 3) for their interpretation of the song Hey Dum, Diddle Dum. Honoré Mercier Elementary School in St. Léonard was also a finalist in the latter category. Marymount Academy International in NDG's Steel Pan Band came in third place in the Junior Instrumental Category (Grades 7 to 10) for their version of I'm Like a Bird.

PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD RECIPIENT



Joseph Romano showcases his award.

Joseph Romano, a Physical Education and Health teacher at John Caboto Academy in Ahuntsic, has been named a recipient of the 2021 Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence – Certificate of Achievement. A formal presentation took place at the end of December via Zoom. On hand was Minister of Foreign Affairs and MP for Ahuntsic-Cartierville Mélanie Joly, St. Léonard-St. Michel (where Mr. Romano resides) MP Patrizia Lattanzio, EMSB Chair Joe Ortona, Commissioner Sophie De Vito and members of EMSB senior management. Mr. Romano is considered a great mentor, coach, motivator, and supporter, as he challenges students to optimize their potential, convincing them that they can do anything they set their minds to. He believes in them before they believe in themselves.

MIND INITIATIVE FOR THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION



MIND students assist with the placing of
the posters on a building.

MIND High School is working with Nakuset, a leading activist for the urban Indigenous population, on a major arts installation led by internationally renowned French photographer and street artist JR. His "Inside Out" Project is a platform that gives everyone the opportunity to make a statement by displaying large-scale black and white portraits of members from their community in public spaces. "Inside Out" is a free global art project that allows communities to turn their untold stories and what they stand for into a public work of art. Montreal's Indigenous community group action is entitled: Indigenous Forced Displacement. Fifty photographs of local Indigenous community members will be displayed throughout the city. These portraits were taken by three different Indigenous photographers representing the Algonquin, Mohawk and Ojibway nations. They will be mounted on the outsides of buildings in an exhibition designed to highlight the challenge of Indigenous forced displacement. On February 21, Head Teacher John Panetta took a group of MIND students to assist Nakuset and her team with the poster for the project at two locations. The EMSB has granted consent for the historic Bancroft Elementary School building on St. Urbain, which houses MIND High School, to be used to feature some of the portraits, which will dissolve over time.

ROBERT ALFRED PECK PRIZES

Six high school students were presented with the Robert Alfred Peck Prizes for Excellence in French, based on the 2021-22 academic year. Attaining the mark of 100 percent last year were students Melina Aravantinos, Amélie Chambon and Helena Senécal, Royal West Academy; Sophie Paradis, Royal Vale; Rita Petrecca, Laurier Macdonald; and Stefania Teresa Zambardi, Vincent Massey Collegiate. They received medals and cheques in the amount of \$100. Amélie and Helena are still at Royal West in Secondary V. The late Mr. Peck began teaching in the 1930s and served as the superintendent of French for the Ministry of Education and held similar posts with the former Westmount School Board and the former Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal. He was a department head for French at Lachine High School and vice-principal of Riverdale High School on the West Island, having completed his career as a teacher in Africa. Mr. Peck co-authored *Le Français Pratique*, the textbook for the teaching of French as a second language with Elizabeth Buchanan. It was a mainstay in Quebec Protestant English schools for over 20 years. Please listen to our new French podcast interview with some of the winners at <https://soundcloud.com/englishmtl/podcasts/balados-csem>.



Helena Senécal

Accolades



Sabrina Gavita

A HERO NEXT DOOR

Leonardo Da Vinci Academy in RDP is so proud of its very own local hero, teacher **Sabrina Gavita**, who was recently recognized as “A Hero Next Door” for her incredible support and fundraising for the Montreal Neurological Institute. Sabrina has been a chief organizer of the fundraising events LDVA has been organizing since 2015. Each year these events get bigger and better and bring together the community for the great cause that touches so many of us.

SOX IN A BOX



Rosemount High School student Julia Arcaro takes part in the Sox in a Box campaign.

Over the course of December, five EMSB schools once again took part in the annual Sox in a Box campaign, which collected 100,000 pairs of new socks over the past eight years. The campaign concluded at Rosemount High School in mid-December with students packing the socks for distribution to families in need. Participating schools were: Rosemount High School and Nesbitt Elementary School in Rosemount, Pierre de Coubertin Elementary School in St. Leonard, Michelangelo International School in RDP and Perspectives I & Perspectives II in St. Michel. The new socks were donated to the Old Brewery Mission, Dans la rue, Chez Doris, Federation CJA (Combined Jewish Appeal), and St. Michael’s Mission. A class from each school that collected the highest number of socks was recognized with fresh bagels from the St-Viateur Bagel and a dessert party courtesy of Les Délices Lafrenaie as well. The EMSB would like to thank Spiritual and Community Animator Vince Lacroce for organizing the campaign as well as to community partners: Les Délices Lafrenaie St-Leonard, St-Viateur Bagel, Emballage Tout, and Moxo Media, participating schools and volunteers for their continued support in this annual campaign!

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



Principal Lino Buttino, Chair Joe Ortona and Vice Principal Andrea Dillon congratulate student Christopher Baggs.

The EMSB is continuing to recognize a Student of the Month. Some of the recent recipients include **Christopher Baggs** from James Lyng High School in St-Henri, **Adriana Colalillo** and **Giulia Maietta** from Pierre de Coubertin Elementary School in St. Léonard and siblings **Josephine** and **Harrison Waldman** from Royal Vale School in NDG. Since the beginning of the school year, Christopher has been and remains a dedicated and hard-working student. He is a great listener, asks great questions and has continuously proven to be a team player. Christopher is always there for his peers and teachers alike. He is hardworking in all his roles at James Lyng. With his ambitious drive and kind heart, we really do see great things in store for Christopher. Adriana and Giulia Maietta started a home-based business last summer called Bead It MTL. These young entrepreneurs make and sell custom-made bead bracelets, necklaces, phone straps, anklets and rings. Adriana Colalillo and Giulia have, and continue to, donate a portion of their earnings to the Montreal Children’s Hospital with the goal of ensuring that all children get the medical help and support they deserve. Josephine and Harrison Waldman, Grade 5 and 2 students, have raised over \$2,000 for the Terry Fox Run over the years and even more the annual spring Jump Rope for Heart.



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www.soundcloud.com/englishmtlpodcasts

ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL SERVICES

Remote Learning: Six Survival Tips for Adult Learners

by Anna Panunto

Being a student during a global pandemic can be quite challenging yet learning virtually can also be quite fun and productive. First, we should learn how to successfully manage our stress levels simply because our regular routine lives have changed.

So, here are a few practical ways of managing our stress levels as a virtual learner:

1. Take it one day at a time

With all that is going on in the world, it is sometimes difficult to sleep peacefully, especially if we or family members, friends, or even co-workers have been affected by Covid. There are natural remedies that can help with temporary insomnia and/or anxiety. These include vitamin supplements such as Omega 3, licorice root, valerian root, and vitamin B, chamomile tisanes, cumin seeds, warm milk and nutmeg. Whenever anxiety strikes, an immediate remedy is deep breathing and positive affirmations. Just learning how to breathe properly can work wonders. There are some useful YouTube videos on (AskDoctor Jo) that can help with this.

2. Reserve time for yourself

Regardless of one's schedule, most adult learners are juggling work, family life, and school. This can be a heavy load for most and so, keeping one's mental health in check is a priority. Whether it be early in the morning, sometime in the afternoon, or late in the evening, we need to take time for ourselves and dedicate a specific time during the day/evening to do it. It can be as short as 15 minutes a day, but we need to do it every single day. Any kind of physical exercise has proven to be helpful – a daily walk, simple aerobic exercises, meditation, etc...

3. Create a "new" routine that works

If learning remotely has changed your schedule or anything else that used to be routine, try creating a new routine! An important part of your new routine is being realistic about the present. Know what these challenges and changes are and write them down, and then create your new routine. You can begin by planning ways to address them. Understand new ways of implementing your goals and completing the activities that were once a part of your standard routine into the new one. Create a work space at home – one that works. Set up your space in a way that it feels like your new sacred space. Bear in the mind that the size of the space is not as important as the feeling that it is yours.

4. Manage your busy schedule

For most students including their teachers, campus life is greatly missed. Most people miss the social interaction and activities that took place among peers. Although we are now saving commute time, this change can feel quite isolating. So, we now have to implement our own deadlines and design practical schedules that work for us in our new work/ learning environment. The best way to know what works and what doesn't work is to keep a diary of your experiences. Remain patient as it is all trial and error at first, until we finally find a successful way to manage our time.

5. Re-invent your peer support

Whether we are computer savvy or not, online learning is indeed challenging. Of course, glitches take place, equipment breaks, laptops/ Ipads suddenly freeze, cell phones break down etc...

The challenges may vary from one learner to another, but we need to re-invent a new way of learning that is both effective and productive for us. Our preferred ways that took place in the classroom may not coincide with our online learning experiences.

Adult learners need flexibility, and remote learning gives adults this opportunity. We are able to choose what to learn, when to learn and at what pace to learn it. The virtual classroom has also given students the opportunity to create their own community. For example, a student who is more knowledgeable in using Zoom can help those that are not yet comfortable using it. Working collaboratively online may be a new form of learning that may motivate some students more so than if they were in the onsite classroom. Peer-to-peer support can be the gateway to change.

6. Online or telephone resources in French and English – there is help within reach!

a) **Telephone services:** amiquebec.org (514) 486-1448 and Multi-Écoute (514) 737-3604, and Écoute Entraide (514) 278-2130, Tom Caplan (514) 737-7208.

b) **Online services** (free online therapy) www.betterhelp.com, www.justanswer.com (24-7 no waiting room) and www.montrealcbtpsychologist.com

Anna Panunto is a teacher at the High School of Montreal Adult Education Centre.

RTC's Most Senior Student

Not many in their 70s can claim the knowledge acquisition that Gabriele Santilli has. At 73, Mr. Santilli is Rosemount Technology Centre's (RTC) oldest student. Of the school's eight vocational programs, he has completed four, and is going strong in a fifth. An inspiration to most people given his love of learning and commitment to his own personal growth, he serves as a role model to his fellow students and, he said, this has been especially meaningful. Affectionately called "Signor Gaby" or "Granddad," classmates will often seek him out for help before they even see their teacher. Teachers are busy, he said, and "it's a pleasure" to be able to help.

When Mr. Santilli retired from the workforce in 2015, it became immediately clear that he didn't want to spend his time "going to the bar and arguing with old men like me about stupidities. I spoke to my wife, who is an educational counsellor with UQAM. She found RTC and said 'hey, let's go and see what it's all about.'" Thus started his educational career at Rosemount Technology Centre. The skillsets he developed during his working life in mechanics for flight simulation systems and others related to the pharmaceutical industry, among others, were very different than what he was about to learn at vocational school. First, he delved into RTC's Industrial Drafting course. This proved to be "too much sitting down," said Mr. Santilli, who admitted he likes working with his hands. Next, he enrolled in Cabinetmaking. "I had a ball; I loved it!" he said.

Then came Furniture Finishing, followed by Digital Graphics Technology (or training in printing), and finally Electromechanics. What's next for Mr. Santilli after his graduation set for September 2022? Please go to <https://bit.ly/3J4gscL>.



Gabriele Santilli

MIRA Dog Joins School



Galileo Adult Education Centre in Montreal North welcomed two new students, Samuel Attias and his four-legged, chocolate-eyed companion, Dobby, this school year. Fittingly named after the loyal house-elf in *Harry Potter*, Dobby is the first Mira service dog to assist at Galileo. She helps Samuel manage anxiety and sleep. Samuel attends Galileo's Social Integration Services program (SIS), which has operated in collaboration with the Miriam Centre and CIUSSS West-Central Montreal since November 2020. Having Dobby in the classroom has been beneficial on many levels. While Galileo students are already familiar with animals due to their pet therapy program, they need to be reminded to not approach Dobby as she's a working dog. Their curiosity about Dobby has helped Attias open up socially, noted SIS educator Matea Dixon. "Her demeanor is always happy and calm," explained Dixon, "whether she is sitting at Samuel's feet and watching – or sleeping!" Always open to new challenges, Galileo Principal Martina Schiavone is thrilled with how well Samuel and Dobby have fit in and hopes other schools will follow suit. "At Galileo, adaptation and inclusion with our students is at the forefront of our students' success."

PAB Students at SHADD

The dedicated Institutional & Home Care Assistance (PAB) instructors and students returned to Shadd Health & Business Centre in NDG after an eventful winter break. With the Omicron outbreak burdening the healthcare system, it is more imperative than ever that the health worker network is supported. The PAB students have had their training in PDSB (moving patients with care), CPR and First Aid, and are entering the CIUSS West-Central Montreal health network for their 180 hours of internship joining many of the teachers who are industry professionals working in hospitals as nurses and LPNs (licensed practical nurses). Since September 2021, Shadd has enrolled over 250 students in the PAB program, along with almost 200 Recognition of Acquired Competencies candidates – and by the end of this school year, will have graduated 450 PABs to care for loved ones in hospitals, long-term care homes and private residences in Quebec.



PAB students at the Shadd Health & Business Centre.

BULLETIN

de la

CSEM



Pierre et sa fille Catherine ont accepté la coprésidence de la campagne de financement de ce projet crucial.

Campagne de financement pour un terrain de jeu à Mackay

La Fondation Habilitas et la CSEM ont dévoilé les plans du terrain de jeu entièrement accessible de 2 millions de dollars qui verra le jour aux écoles Mackay Centre et Philip E. Layton, dans le quartier Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. Le 28 octobre, Pierre Boivin (PDG de Claridge et ancien président des Canadiens de Montréal) et sa fille Catherine (ancienne élève de l'école Mackay Centre, aujourd'hui âgée de 41 ans) ont accepté la coprésidence de la campagne de financement de ce projet crucial. Jusqu'ici, la campagne a permis d'amasser un million de dollars. La Fondation Sami Fruits pour les petits a notamment fait un don de 450 000 \$, qui fut présenté officiellement à cette occasion

devant élèves, membres du personnel et représentants de la commission scolaire. Au total, 189 enfants fréquentent ces deux écoles. Il s'agit des deux seuls établissements anglophones du Québec qui offrent des services spécialisés en enseignement et en réadaptation. Leur clientèle provient de l'ensemble des commissions scolaires anglophones de la province. En 2018, les deux écoles ont quitté leurs anciens locaux du boulevard Décarie pour un nouvel édifice à la fine pointe de la technologie dont l'aménagement a coûté 30 millions de dollars. Le terrain de jeu était la seule pièce manquante à ce grand projet. Depuis trois ans, les élèves des deux écoles, qui vivent avec

différentes déficiences motrices, visuelles, auditives ou du langage, attendent d'avoir un terrain de jeu pour se balancer et glisser ensemble. Les plans complets du terrain de jeu, y compris les rampes, balançoires et glissoires adaptées, seront présentés et expliqués prochainement. Après plus de deux ans de recherches, de plans et d'évaluations, les travaux devraient se mettre en branle l'été prochain. Chaque composante du terrain de jeu a été sélectionnée avec soin afin de maximiser l'accessibilité et la participation. Le projet sollicitera les sens en intégrant un savant mélange de couleurs, de textures, d'éléments naturels, d'ombre et de dénivelés.

Services juridiques

La CSEM a annoncé la nomination de Magdalena Sokol au poste de directrice des Services juridiques. Madame Sokol a joint les rangs de la CSEM en 2017 à titre de coordonnatrice des Services juridiques. Titulaire d'un baccalauréat en droit de l'Université de Montréal, elle a été admise au Barreau en 2010 et a travaillé en pratique privée jusqu'à ce qu'elle se joigne au Comité de gestion de la taxe scolaire de l'île de Montréal en 2016.



Magdalena Sokol

Hockey à East Hill



L'école primaire East Hill de Rivière-des-Prairies a lancé un nouveau programme de hockey sur glace.

L'école primaire East Hill de Rivière-des-Prairies a lancé un nouveau programme de hockey sur glace qui aura lieu lors des journées pédagogiques, et elle compte bien l'étendre au cours des années à venir. Le vendredi 19 novembre, six joueurs des Rangers de Montréal-Est de la Ligue de hockey junior AAA ont rejoint les 17 jeunes de la 3e à la 6e année inscrits au programme, à l'aréna Glaces de l'Est à Rivière-des-Prairies. Ce programme est piloté par Nick Romano, Gianni Cantini et Tony Bocchichio de GNT Hockey. Les joueurs des Rangers qui ont sauté sur la glace vendredi en compagnie des élèves de l'école East Hill étaient le gardien de but Dimitri Chatziiliou, Mitch Wilkie, John Camp, Matis Possa ainsi que les diplômés de la CSEM Salvatore Bucaro et Steven Iannidinardo.

En ligne

La Commission scolaire English-Montréal (CSEM) est fière de faire partie de la nouvelle Alliance Québec en ligne (AQL) (Quebec Online Alliance – QOA), le campus en ligne à l'intention des élèves qui bénéficient d'une exemption médicale dans les commissions scolaires anglophones du Québec. Le lancement officiel de l'AQL a eu lieu la dernière semaine de septembre pour les enseignants, les élèves et les parents. Il s'agit d'une réalisation remarquable, car c'est la première fois que sept commissions scolaires anglophones de la province s'unissent pour offrir un service en ligne unifié aux élèves ayant obtenu une exemption médicale pour l'année scolaire 2021-2022. LEARN (RREA – Réseau des ressources pour l'éducation anglophone) assure la coordination de l'AQL. M. Patrick Hall, administrateur cumulant plus de 20 ans d'expérience en enseignement, spécialiste des besoins particuliers et défenseur de l'inclusion, agit à titre de directeur de l'AQL. Toute l'équipe de l'AQL s'engage à offrir aux élèves une expérience d'apprentissage qui leur permettra de poursuivre leur cheminement scolaire. Christy Tannous, directrice de l'école virtuelle à la CSEM l'an dernier, sera chargée de la supervision du contingent d'élèves et de membres du personnel de la CSEM.

Écoutez L'ÉMISSION DE RADIO MAISON
de la Commission scolaire English-Montréal

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