

BLAKE STREET PS NEWSLETTER: Friday March 29, 2019



On Tuesday our grade 4/5 and 5/6 classes joined with EAST students to participate in a simulation exercise, something we as a staff participated in last fall. The Blanket Exercise ***"is a teaching tool that uses participatory popular education to raise awareness of the nation- to-nation relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. It teaches a history of Canada that most never learn. ...The exercise is designed to deepen understanding of the denial of Indigenous peoples nationhood throughout Canadian history. It examines how federal programs and policies impact the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and identifies what Indigenous peoples and their allies are doing to bring about a positive change."*** The session was led by teachers and staff, and facilitated by our elder in residence, Redfeather, a Migmaw community member. As the name suggests, the Blanket Exercise begins with blankets arranged on the floor to represent Canada before the arrival of European explorers and settlers. The participants, who represent Indigenous peoples, begin by moving around on the blankets. While a narrator reads from a script, other participants – representing the Europeans or newcomers – join and begin to interact with those on the blankets. As the script traces the history of the relationship between Europeans and Indigenous nations in Canada, the



participants respond to various cues and interact by reading prepared scrolls. At the end of the exercises only a few people remain on the blankets, which have been folded into small bundles and cover only a fraction of the original area. The morning began with welcomes, a smudging, the blanket exercise, and then a sharing circle related to our feelings of the morning. The afternoon session had students work in small groups led by teachers to delve into questions about the connection between land and culture, assimilation and residential schools, moved

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into a question and answer period, and ended with another sharing circle about the days learning. It was a day of significant learning that will no doubt affect the way they see their country's history and the experiences of Indigenous communities as they move forward. Learning and debriefing are ongoing. This leaning opportunity will be provided to our junior students every other year, so if you have students currently in the grade 3/4 class who have missed it, they will have the opportunity to participate in this grade 5 and 6 curriculum specific learning in two years.

Volunteers Needed

On Monday, we begin our Kindergarten mural. Parent volunteers will be needed to support our artist in painting backgrounds. If interested, please contact the office. We really will need a number of volunteers so we are hoping many of you can lend a hand.

Blake's Learning Assembly

This Thursday, our school came together for our monthly learning assembly. Led by the students in Mr. Nicolaou 's grade 4/5 class and Mme Wald's grade 1 French immersion class, they reminded us of the value of community, something we have been working to build and celebrate at Blake Street. Mr. Nicolaou's class sang us in and out with a great song entitled MOSAIC (mutual respect, open mindedness, self-respect, attitude, individuality, community.). The key message stated: "if we live by these lessons, and spread them across land and sea, we can build a better future, and live together in peace". They reiterated this message through role plays highlighting each component of MOSAIC, encouraging the audience to guess the right one. Mme Wald's class also led us in song to a Gregg LeRock song and video which all our French students know, "c'est cone ca ici", representing how in our community, we are a family.

Finally the learning assembly concluded with Ms. Arthur sharing news of a new extra-curricular opportunity for our junior students with the introduction of a gay straight alliance (GSA). This great new club will ensure all voices feel heard, valued and included.



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The Big Crunch

On Thursday at precisely 2:30pm all the students, teachers and staff at Blake and EAST gathered in the gym to participate in FoodShare Ontario's, "Great Big Crunch". The event is held yearly and celebrates the bounty of Ontario! This year we, once again, chose to take a bite of an Ontario apple - there is nothing quite like the sound of 400+ apples all being bitten into at precisely the same time!

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For more information on the importance of food literacy and events like the Great Big Crunch, you can follow this link <https://foodshare.net/program/crunch/> or check out the #hashtag #greatbigcrunch on Twitter and Instagram for great pictures from around the province!

Parent Wellness

It was so great to see so many of you out at last night's first ever Parent Wellness forum. The workshops were varied and interesting, and there was such great feedback. A tremendous thank you to Karen Thomson, Sarah Rogers and Victoria Adilman for their tremendous efforts, time and commitment to building community and advocating for our parents.

As well, a thank you to Ian Macpherson, Blake's Community Support Worker and all our presenters and community organizations who came out (Eastview, South Riverdale Community Health Centre, East Metro Youth Services, Toronto Public Health)

Thank you!!!!

Earth Hour

Today, we ended another busy week with a quiet time as we participated in Earth Hour, all lights and electronics were turned off in the building. A reminder that Earth Hour in the City of Toronto takes place this Saturday night at 8:30. You are invited to turn off your lights and #Connect2Earth to draw attention to wildlife loss in Canada and around the world. In Canada, populations of more than one-half of monitored species have already declined by 83% on average since 1970.

Registration for TDSB Summer Music Camps is open.

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Camps include residential (sleepover) camp at Mono Cliffs in Orangeville for one week for grades 5-8, day camp at York Mills CI from July 2-19 (cost \$598) or strings at the Bickford Centre from July 2-12 (cost \$388, grades 3-8). There are brochures in the office, or look online at www.tdsbsummercamps.ca

Upcoming Dates:

April 3: One Little Goat theatre performance
April 9: Performance from the National Ballet at Blake
April 11: Day of Pink
April 18: Lice Check
April 19: Good Friday – no school
April 22: Easter Monday – no school
April 23: Earth Day Assembly
April 26: School Wide Earth Day Clean Up
May 2: Prologue Presentation – Silk Road
May 2: NUIT BLAKE A Celebration of the Arts 6:00 – 7:00
May 6: Start of Ramadan
May 8: Family Fun Night and Parent Presentation on Inquiry, 6:00 – 7:00
May 21-31: EQAO for Grades 3 and 6
May 24: Parent Council Silent Auction
May 23: 6:00 – 7:00 Welcome to Kindergarten Night for both English and French Immersion
June 7: PA DAY – no school
June 10 – 12: Grade 6s at Mono Cliffs
June 18: Volunteer Tea
June 20: Play Day for grades 1- 6
June 26: Blake Graduation, 6:00 – 7:00
June 27: Last Day of School

Should you have any questions or concerns about the content of this newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact me at jennifer.zurba@tdsb.on.ca
Have a great weekend,

Jennifer and Tina

Blake School Council Announcements

Save the (new) date: Blake's Silent Auction is now on **May 25**. This adults-only event will be held at Eastview Community Centre May 25 from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m.

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Organizers are still looking for donations from the community; anything from sports tickets, classes, gift certificates and other goodies. If you have something to donate, please contact Valerie at valerielaurie@hotmail.com.

Blake School Council will be hosting our next movie night the evening of **April 18**. Stay tuned for more details.

You can follow other school council news on our blog <https://blakestreetparents.wordpress.com>

Have a great weekend!

- **Blake**'s School Council