

BC Teachers' Federation

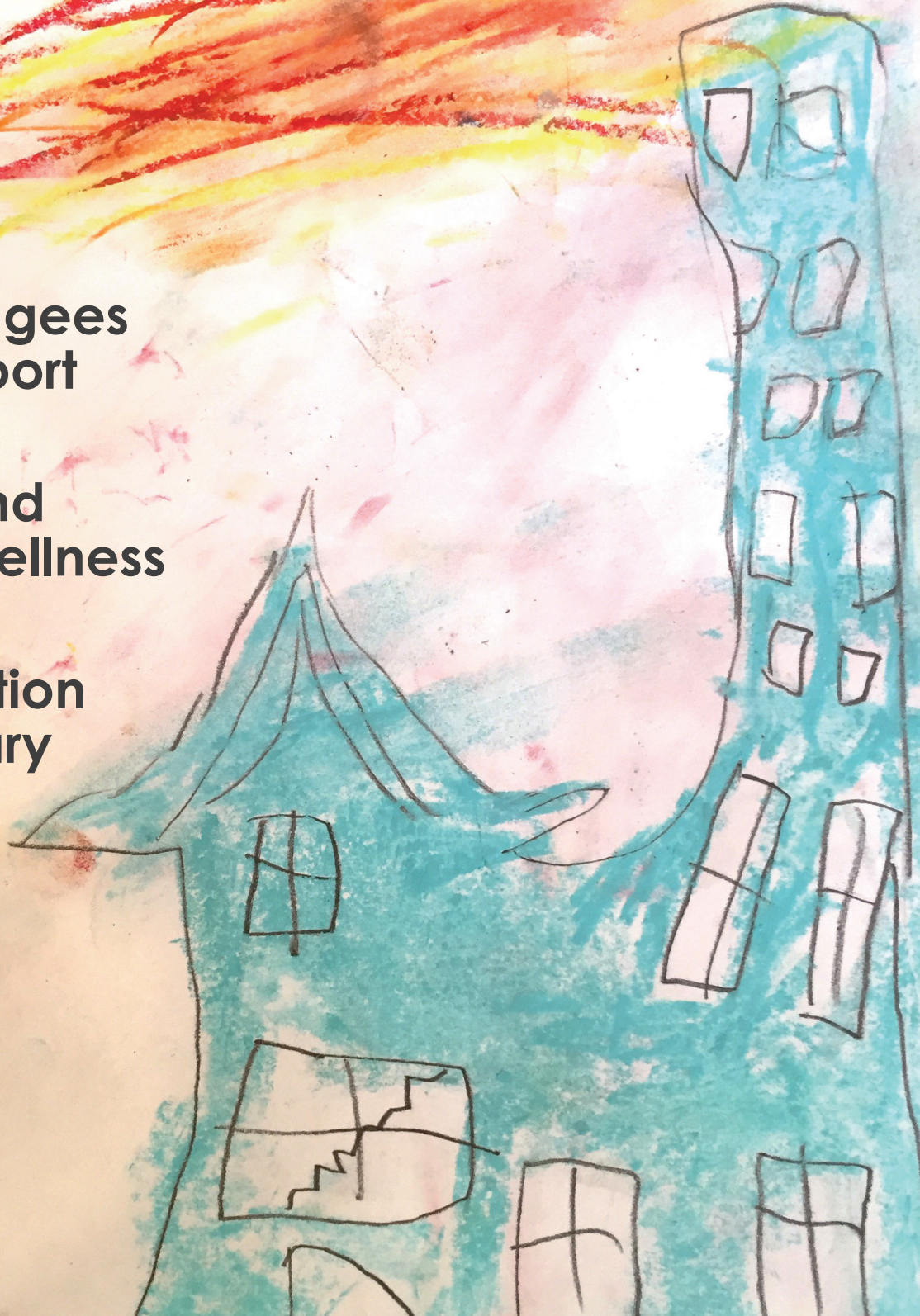
# Teacher.

Jan | Feb 2020

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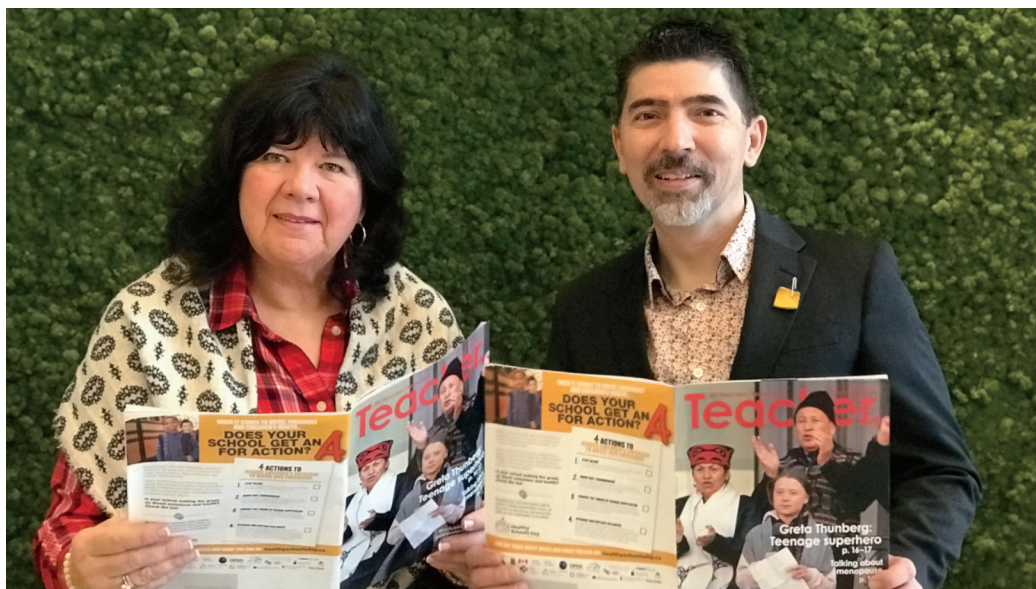
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Articles reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the BCTF. The BCTF does not endorse or promote any products or services advertised in the magazine. Advertisements reviewed and approved by the BCTF must reflect BCTF policy and be politically, environmentally, and professionally appropriate.



▲ Members Carol Arnold, Gulf Islands, and Brian Coleman, Langley, read the Nov/Dec 2019 issue of *Teacher*. Brian is wearing a Moose Hide pin; to learn more about this campaign, see page 27. Send your pictures of you or your colleagues reading *Teacher* to [teachermag@bctf.ca](mailto:teachermag@bctf.ca) and you could be featured! Jennifer Kimbley photo.

## THIS IS YOUR MAGAZINE

Do you enjoy writing? Have a story to tell? Know of a project at your school or in your local you want to share with colleagues?

Then consider writing for *Teacher*, the flagship publication of the BCTF! Submission guidelines are available at [bctf.ca/publications/TeacherNewsmag.aspx](http://bctf.ca/publications/TeacherNewsmag.aspx).

We also welcome letters to the editor. Send your letter to [teachermag@bctf.ca](mailto:teachermag@bctf.ca).

*Teacher* reserves the right to edit or condense any contribution considered for publication. We are unable to publish all submissions we receive.

### Deadlines

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### Contact us

**BC Teachers' Federation**

**Toll free** 1-800-663-9163

**Email** [teachermag@bctf.ca](mailto:teachermag@bctf.ca)

**Web** [bctf.ca/newsmag](http://bctf.ca/newsmag)

**Editor** Susan Croll (on leave)

**Acting Editor** Jennifer Kimbley

[jkimbley@bctf.ca](mailto:jkimbley@bctf.ca)

**Assistant Editor/Design** Sarah Young

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### BCTF Executive Committee

Violette Baillargeon	Teri Mooring
Marjorie Dumont	Jody Polukoshko
Karen Edwards	Robin Toscak
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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## BC's teacher shortage affecting every region

In December, the Coast Mountain school board that represents communities like Terrace, Kitimat, and Hazelton, wrote to the Minister of Education about their "extreme challenges" with teacher recruitment and retention.

The board wrote, "a shortage of teachers continues to plague our school district and we are unsure how long the school district and staff can sustain this work with such significant shortages." <sup>1</sup>

In those communities alone there are 23 people in classrooms who are not certified or qualified teachers. Every student needs a trained professional teacher, but in many parts of BC, that's not happening.

Despite attempts by the government to downplay the scope of the problem, BC's teacher shortage is a crisis. Not only are unqualified people in classrooms, students with special needs are also being sent home because of failures to fill. It's unacceptable and it's not just a rural problem. It's happening in BC's largest urban and suburban districts too.

It used to be that rural districts had a hard time filling positions in remote locations, or for specialized positions like French immersion, music, or technical education, but now it's classroom teachers, counsellors, and other specialists all over the province. There are still close to hundreds of teaching jobs open across BC and half the school year has already flown by.

Every one of those unfilled positions represents students not getting support or access to specialist teachers.

That's why we need the government to start taking the crisis seriously and address our low wages in bargaining. BC has the second-lowest starting salary for teachers in the entire country and the lowest salary for experienced teachers west of Quebec. With BC's high cost of living, school districts have a very tough time convincing teachers from Ontario or the Prairies to move west when they're going to be paid up to 20% less.

To help raise awareness about the crisis, the BCTF ran radio ads across the province for two weeks in November. You can share a version of that ad on social media:

[www.facebook.com/watch/?v=474788460056203z](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=474788460056203z)  
[www.instagram.com/p/B5GDAiEBG7G/](https://www.instagram.com/p/B5GDAiEBG7G/)  
[www.twitter.com/bctf/status/1197210960131325957](https://www.twitter.com/bctf/status/1197210960131325957)

<sup>1</sup> [www.terracestandard.com/news/school-district-briefs-board-writes-letter-to-ministry-on-teacher-retention/](https://www.terracestandard.com/news/school-district-briefs-board-writes-letter-to-ministry-on-teacher-retention/)



# MESSAGE DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

## La pénurie d'enseignant(e)s en C.-B. a des répercussions sur toutes les régions

En décembre, le conseil scolaire de Coast Mountain, représentant entre autres les communautés de Terrace, de Kitimat et d'Hazelton, a écrit au Ministre de l'éducation concernant leurs « défis extrêmes » de recrutement et de rétention des enseignant(e)s.

Le conseil a écrit : « Une pénurie d'enseignant(e)s continue de sévir dans notre district et nous ne sommes pas certain(e)s combien de temps le district et les employé(e)s pourront maintenir le travail avec des pénuries aussi considérables. » <sup>1</sup>

Dans ces seules communautés, 23 personnes dans les salles de classe sont non certifiées ou non qualifiées comme enseignant(e)s. Chaque élève a besoin d'un(e) enseignant(e) professionnel(le) et formé(e), mais dans plusieurs régions de la C.-B., cela n'est pas le cas.

Malgré les tentatives du gouvernement de minimiser l'ampleur du problème, la pénurie d'enseignant(e)s en C.-B. est une crise. Non seulement on retrouve des personnes non qualifiées dans les salles de classe, mais les élèves présentant des besoins spéciaux sont renvoyé(e)s à la maison en raison de l'incapacité de pourvoir à leurs besoins. C'est inacceptable et ce n'est pas qu'un problème en milieu rural. Cela se produit également dans les districts urbains et suburbains les plus étendus de la Colombie-Britannique.

Auparavant, les districts ruraux avaient du mal à combler les postes à pourvoir dans les régions éloigné(e)s ou pour des postes spécifiques comme l'immersion française, la musique ou l'éducation technique, mais maintenant ce sont des enseignant(e)s en salles de classe, des conseillers/conseillères et autres spécialistes à travers toute la province. Il existe encore des centaines d'emplois disponibles en enseignement à travers la C.-B. et la moitié de l'année scolaire est déjà écoulée.

Chacun de ces postes non comblés représente des élèves qui ne reçoivent pas le soutien d'enseignant(e)s spécialisé(e)s ou qui n'y ont pas accès.

C'est pourquoi nous avons besoin que le gouvernement commence à prendre la crise au sérieux et qu'il prenne en considération nos faibles salaires dans les négociations. La Colombie-Britannique possède le deuxième plus bas salaire de base pour les enseignant(e)s dans tout le pays et le plus bas salaire pour les enseignant(e)s expérimenté(e)s à l'ouest du Québec. Avec le coût élevé de la vie en Colombie-Britannique, les districts scolaires ont vraiment de la difficulté à convaincre les enseignant(e)s de l'Ontario ou des Prairies de venir s'installer à l'ouest, puisqu'ils/elles y seraient payé(e)s jusqu'à 20% de moins.

En novembre, dans le but de sensibiliser la population concernant cette crise, la FECB a diffusé des publicités radiophoniques à travers la province durant deux semaines. Vous pouvez partager une version de cette publicité sur les médias sociaux:

[www.facebook.com/watch/?v=474788460056203z](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=474788460056203z)  
[www.instagram.com/p/B5GDAiEBG7G/](https://www.instagram.com/p/B5GDAiEBG7G/)  
[www.twitter.com/bctf/status/1197210960131325957](https://www.twitter.com/bctf/status/1197210960131325957)





## Nov/Dec Teacher magazine

I wanted to say what an excellent edition of *Teacher* magazine this one is! I love all the articles and they made for excellent reading. Thank you!

Melanie Sedergreen is one of our Maple Ridge teachers and I would like to share her article, "Whose responsibility is wellness?" Is there somewhere I can find it in order to share it electronically?

Thanks so much!

## Penny Morgan

First Vice-President, Maple Ridge Teachers' Association

Thanks Penny. I'm very proud of this issue. We're going to submit it to the Canadian Association of Labour Media's annual award for Best Magazine Issue for 2019. We got an honourable mention last year; I think this issue can win!

*Teacher* magazine is available online on the BCTF website at [bctf.ca/publications/TeacherNewsmag.aspx](http://bctf.ca/publications/TeacherNewsmag.aspx). Past issues (going back over 100 years) are available on the BCTF Online Museum at [bctf.ca/history/collections/teacher.aspx](http://bctf.ca/history/collections/teacher.aspx).

Thanks,

## Jennifer Kimbley

Acting Editor, *Teacher*



## Thank you

Many thanks for sending me a copy of *Teacher*. The layout, editing, and general presentation of "Spring break in Tanzania" is first class. It looked so great I even had to read my own article and thought it was terrific!

Again, asante ("Thank you" in Swahili).

**Chris Harker**, author of "Spring break in Tanzania"

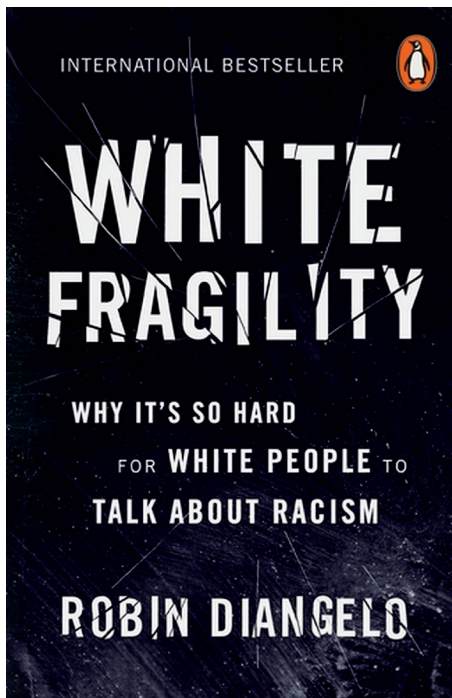
## Let's start talking about menopause!

THANK YOU for starting the conversation on menopause in our *Teacher* magazine. As a 53-year-old local table officer maneuvering the day-to-day AND the new fluxes in my personal well-being, I am encouraged by this attention towards women's health. I could say more, but it is a wild time right now and it is too hot in my office and I am headed to a school visit—but thank you, thank you, THANK YOU!!!!

**Leanne Sjodin**, President Burnaby Teachers' Association







### **White Fragility book review**

Dear Editor:

The article "Eliminating barriers to achieving equity" does not define the term "equity"; the word is synonymous with fairness but fairness itself is a matter of opinion.

I do not consider it fair to label white people as a group, for skin colour or European extraction is not a self-defining quality for anyone I know. Yet the author of the book review on *White Fragility*, June James, writes that "white people form a solidarity," and worse, that our "socialization into white supremacy...[is] to protect, maintain, and reproduce white supremacy."

I am loath to place anyone into a category, for we identify into so many groups beyond race, gender, sexuality and religion. I form no solidarity with other white people but ask what sort of fairness James envisions for us, and particularly for white children in schools. Does she seek to erect barriers for them?

Obviously, none of this has anything to do with educating children and preparing them for their future, a future that would be much brighter without the rehabilitated prejudices of group-identity politics.

**Jim McMurtry**, Ph.D., French Immersion teacher, Abbotsford

Hi Jim,

The quotes you mention come directly from Robin DiAngelo, the author of *White Fragility*, not June James, the book reviewer. They were included by our colleague to give readers a sense of DiAngelo's point that societal structures need to change in order for all people to be truly included. As an educator, I believe this does go hand-in-hand with educating children and preparing them for their future.

As I write this response, I have not read *White Fragility*, but I've organized a book club meeting and invited all my colleagues at the BCTF to read it and have a conversation about it. To quote the review, "DiAngelo's book is a must-read as we journey toward equity and inclusion in our organization."

In Solidarity,

**Jennifer Kimbley**  
Acting Editor, *Teacher*

## **Professional Development Calendar**

Visit the BCTF's PD Calendar for professional development opportunities:

[bcf.ca/PDCalendar](http://bcf.ca/PDCalendar)







# #RedforBCED

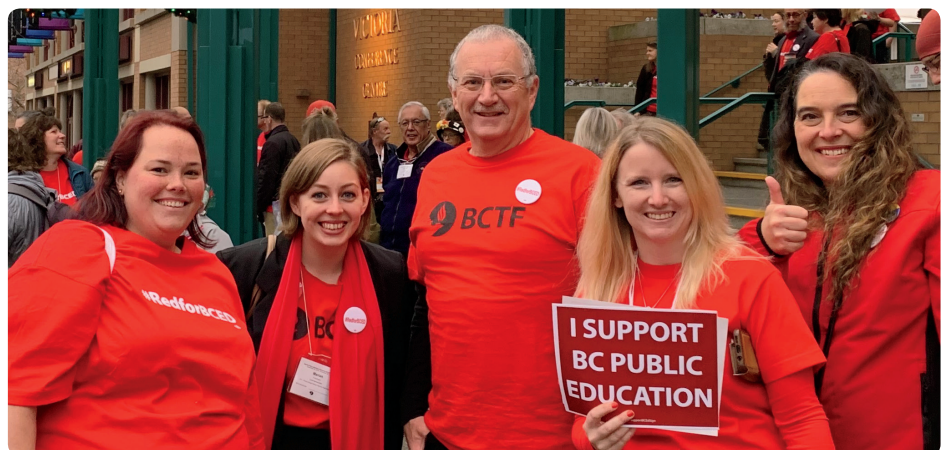
▲ BCTF President Teri Mooring, supported by members, speaks to media during a special meeting of the BCTF Representative Assembly in Victoria. Rich Overgaard photo.

## BCTF members around the province are wearing Red for BC Education

Check out these accounts on Twitter!



@peggybe\_oonujut



@BCTF



@MsHomeEc



@kathtrepanier



@nta68



# #RedforBCED takes over the news cycle at NDP convention

By Rich Overgaard, BCTF staff



**IT WAS A BUSY DAY** in Victoria on November 23 when hundreds of BCTF members staged a leafletting campaign at the BC NDP's convention. Teachers talked to NDP delegates, including MLAs and cabinet ministers, about the need for improved funding to address BC's teacher shortage and chronic underfunding.

The teachers in attendance took full advantage of the event's location and timing by striking up conversations with local media and the Legislature's press gallery. BCTF President Teri Mooring, backed up by a sea of red, also did several interviews that led the day's news cycle and even took top spot on the noon news over the Premier's address to delegates.

Later in the day, Teri Mooring spoke to a conference room full of hundreds of teachers and members of the media. She brought the group to their feet with a call to action for the BC NDP Cabinet to address underfunding and BC's teacher shortage. She said:

"Our low wages and the labour shortage must be addressed. That's going to take more funding than the government has put on the table. They have the information; they need to do it. It can fit within their mandate. And the people sitting at that cabinet table have the power to do it.

It's a political choice. So I say to the NDP ministers here in Victoria today, make that choice. Live up to the promises you made to BC teachers and our students."

One of the easiest ways for members to show support for the BCTF's ongoing efforts to get a good deal is by wearing red on days your local or staff organize a #RedforBCED day. This is a simple way to show solidarity and make a visible impact. Some locals are also organizing rallies at MLA and school board offices, as well as burma shaves, leafletting, and school walk-ins.

Contact your local office to find out how to get involved! •



Nancy Knickerbocker photos



# If a teacher were a barn: A reflection on teacher wellness

By **Larry Dureski**, teacher, Cranbrook

**TAKE A WALK** with me to the back forty and discover what a barn can tell you about your wellness in the teaching profession. This is one article where you are encouraged to look at the pictures and not focus only on the words. Once you are done, take some time for the following reflection: If I were a barn, which one would I be?



This barn near the hamlet of North Star, Alberta, has been exposed to the best and worst conditions of northern Alberta for almost a century; but it has undergone a major restoration and has received regular maintenance during its lifetime. After all that it has endured, it stands straight and sports a fresh coat of classic barn-red paint with white trim that pops.

This barn represents the ideal state of a teacher, possibly someone who is new to the profession or a teacher at the beginning of the school year. Although the working conditions of a teacher are far from perfect and challenges are faced every day, regular maintenance and occasional restoration work need to be part of every teacher's lifestyle. A teacher who feels a sense of control and confidence can withstand the storms and ever-changing wind direction that come with the teaching profession.

**Reflection: What are some examples of maintenance in your life as a teacher? What have you done that can be considered a form of restoration?**



The barn to the left is located near the Canadian Rockies International Airport. With each passing year, the lean in this structure has become more noticeable. Note that the lean was not caused by a single event, but rather from constant pressures such as wind and heavy snow over the decades. As this barn shifts from the plumb line in imperceptible increments, it continues to cling to its solid foundation. This barn bows to relentless external pressure, while striving to stand firm. The people who maintained and restored the barn near North Star did not come here to work on this one.

A teacher who is part-way through the school year or some place along in their career might look at this photo and say, "That's me." They may be trying to hold firm to their foundation, but feel incessant burdens that cause them to bend.



**Reflection: What makes up your foundation to which you hold firm? What persistent pressures have been working on you? What is the degree of severity of each one, and for how long has each one been present?**

To the right is the barn in the second photo one month later. There was no severe weather event during that time. Some locals claim that wind brought this barn down. Whatever the cause, it was no more severe than what this barn has endured before. These leaning walls were exposed to the cause one time too many, and that was enough for this barn to collapse. Any maintenance or restoration efforts at this point will not straighten these walls or put it back on the foundation. This barn is done (as a barn, that is). The weathered boards may reappear as picture frames or interior decorating features.

Teachers who have withstood stressors over time without maintenance or restoration opportunities may find themselves collapsing. These teachers feel done. These are the teachers who leave the profession. The number of teachers who report the feeling of crashing is disturbing. The timeline between the first photo and the third photo is also getting shorter.



**Reflection: Are you on or near the verge of collapsing? Do you know of colleagues who are in this situation? If your answers are remotely close to yes, please take measures to seek support for yourself or assist a colleague in need. Nobody should have to endure pressures to the point of breaking down.**



That takes us to the last photo. A barn that has collapsed will eventually be cleared away, leaving no evidence in the back forty that it was ever there. I hope your choice to become a teacher provides you fulfillment as represented by the first photo. But if your current reality is closer to the other barn photos, remember that your emotional and physical well-being are not worth sacrificing to the point of no return. See your Employee and Family Assistance provider or access the services of your union for maintenance or restoration ideas. May your foundation remain strong and your walls stay upright. •

#### **BCTF Health and Wellness Program**

Physical, psychological, and emotional demands can affect our personal and professional well-being. If you are feeling overwhelmed, you are not alone. The BCTF Health and Wellness Program supports members through a variety of programs and services. Visit [bctf.ca/wellness](https://bctf.ca/wellness) or call 1-800-663-9163 to learn more.

# Lil' Red Dress Project advocates for MMIWG in Comox Valley and beyond

By Nancy Knickerbocker, BCTF staff



**"OH, MY GOODNESS!**  
It's so hard to choose!  
They're all so cool!"

These were typical comments to be heard as teachers at the Aboriginal Education Association's conference in October gathered around a display table for the Lil' Red Dress Project. The objects of their delight were dozens of intricately beaded lapel pins and earrings, all in the shape of little red dresses.

The project is the brainchild of Comox Valley cousins Carla Voyageur and Jeannine Lindsay, both avid beaders and members of the board of the Kumugwe Cultural Society, which celebrates and promotes the culture of the K'omoks and Kwakwaka'wakw people.

In 2010 Jaime Black, a Métis artist from Winnipeg, first conceived of the idea of using red dresses to symbolize and honour missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG). The image of gently swaying red dresses hung from white birch trees powerfully evoked the living spirits of those now gone, but not forgotten.

Since then the concept has spread across the country, including to Comox. Every year from 2015 to 2019, Carla and Jeannine worked with their cultural society to hang more than 100 red dresses along different roadways across the valley. It was a moving experience for all who witnessed it.

Then in the fall of 2018, they noticed numerous billboards featuring a non-Indigenous woman who had been missing for more than 20 years. Her family mounted the billboards to

remember her and possibly to revive clues in what had long been a cold case.

Sitting around the kitchen table, Carla and Jeannine reflected on how many Indigenous women had also gone missing or been murdered over the same time period, yet their families would never be able to afford even one billboard—let alone several. That's when they decided to try to sell their red dress pins and raise money to put up missing persons signage for women they knew.

"We were really naïve. We had no idea how much billboards cost," Carla said. "But we just went ahead and posted our work on Facebook and suddenly we were inundated with orders!"

The project grew and volunteers quickly came on board, including Carla's kids. "Even my non-Aboriginal fiancé learned how, and now he can bead dresses faster than I can!" Jeannine laughed.

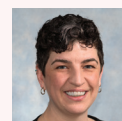
In just one year, they have raised \$10,000 that will go toward the costs of creating and installing their first two billboards. They also plan to mount posters on the buses that connect to ferry routes.

The signs will be in honour of Angeline Pete, a member of the Quatsino First Nation and mother of one son, who was 28 when she was reported missing in August 2011. They have spoken to Angeline's family and have their blessing on this work.

To learn more, shop, and donate visit [www.lilreddressproject.ca](http://www.lilreddressproject.ca). •

## Beadwork inspires reflections on decolonization, misogyny

By Robin Toscak,  
BCTF Executive Committee  
Member-at-Large, Victoria



**MY WORK** engages my head and my heart but not always my hands, so the Lil' Red Dress Project caught

my eye. Their little bead dresses are striking and delicate. And apparently, I could learn to make one in a day! I was intrigued.

**"We wove tiny questions about these tiny beads with our big questions about decolonization and misogyny."**

The beads were so tiny we weren't all convinced it was possible, but the facilitators were patient and helpful. We sat together, sometimes helping each other, often silently tuning into the movement of the needle and thread through the beads.

Once we'd done the trickiest bits, my thoughts became a bit more free, and they turned to the murdered and missing Indigenous girls and women who this project is for. We sat together silently for long stretches. Slowly, conversations started emerging.

We wove tiny questions about these tiny beads with our big questions about decolonization and misogyny. We talked about education and change and hope. And that hope wove itself into my tiny little dress. And by the end of the day, we had all finished our dresses! •



# I don't want to leave teaching, but I might need to

By Katie Marsh, teacher, Burnaby

**I'M THINKING ABOUT** leaving teaching. It's a career I've spent thirteen years building, including getting my Masters degree, and I'm not one to quit anything easily. But the pressures of the job are piling up in a way that makes me nervous that I'll completely burn out soon, and I'm not okay with that.



I've worked mainly as a TTOC, though I've had temporary contracts here and there. I started my career in BC, moved to Halifax for three years, then returned. I've worked in elementary schools, junior high, high schools, and alternative schools, and I see the pressures that my colleagues face in all of these settings. It's not just the prep, the marking, and the meetings with parents and administrators (though those certainly play a part)—it's the criticism and undermining we face in the media and by the public; it's the secondary trauma and the increasing number of tests we are asked to cheerfully administer.

I find myself, despite my skills and experience, overwhelmed at times

by classes that are overloaded by number, by needs, or by both. I'm tired of the 5:00 a.m. calls; I'm tired of the reassigning that happens because there's a TTOC shortage; I'm tired of knowing that I'll always be years behind my actual experience on the pay grid; I'm tired of feeling like I don't have a community or a home of my own; I'm tired knowing that if I took on a contract position, I'd be exhausted by the additional work that job requires.

I like to think I make a difference with the work I do, but I find it hard to not have much concrete proof of that. My core desire is to make things better, but I'm not sure how much longer I can carry on without knowing that my career is doing that.

I've been thinking about leaving for about a year, and I think I have about a year left in me. I would love to be able to stay, but I honestly don't see a way of making the work sustainable. I think the issues are larger than myself: we need systemic changes to make this job we all do (the job we should all love, or at least enjoy most of the time) healthy. I find a culture of "we've always done things this way" in my workplaces that contributes to an unsustainable level of work (emotional and otherwise), but I also know that teaching itself is becoming increasingly unhealthy. All the self-care, treat days, and wellness rooms in the world cannot fix the bigger issues that we face. I don't want to leave teaching, but I might need to. •



# Genrefication in the library or, “Where can I find the sports books?”

By Christy den Haan-Veltman and Lisa Seddon, teacher-librarians, New Westminster



## What?

Sometimes called the bookstore model, subject-based cataloging, or non-traditional shelving, genrefication is the systematic re-organization of library collections into categories that reflect genre based on the work's style, form, or subject matter. Often, genre is determined by the subject matter of the book or by asking the question, “What type of reader is the author seeking to engage?”

## Why?

Why, you might ask, would anyone spend precious time and money on this type of project? The answer, though simple, is well-grounded in educational practice, teacher-action research, and even academic debate. We genrefied our collections because we are learner-centred educators with a passion for providing easy access to materials to foster reading for fun.

Genrefication comes at a time when teachers are implementing a revised curriculum. This is not a coincidence. BC's revised curriculum, designed for project-based learning, is learner-centred, designed to forge students who are lifelong learners and prepared to work with and create knowledge of all kinds. Genrefication, or putting books into categories, sets up students to do this well. Today's students are used to a high level of discrete knowledge; they are sponges that are exposed to information at high volumes from a young age. They need and expect that knowledge to be organized so they can access it quickly and meaningfully.

Such exposure also means they are more aware of what they enjoy and what questions they want answered. Putting books into categories they can immediately recognize allows students to quickly select materials for recreational and informational needs.

Although we are teachers first, the latent librarian in us fuels our passion for access. Libraries were created and funded to provide information of all kinds (hence our distaste for censorship) to all who seek it. We desire to cast our net far and wide to collect works that speak to the diversity of human experience and identity. Genrefication

allows us to showcase our diverse collection and demonstrate our inclusivity to all our users.

Newest educational practice focuses on inquiry as a way to best prepare our students for their future. This guided exploration is reflected in genrefication.

As students select reading materials, they gravitate to certain known books, only to find other books written with diverse characters, settings, and

styles about the same subject, or in the same genre. This guided exploration is a significant feature of library collections, a feature that genrefication illuminates. Genrefication is a flexible process that requires professional and experienced judgment. A book may belong to several genres, or a reading population may resonate with a particular genre. For example, *The Hunger Games* could be Sci-Fi Fantasy or Action & Adventure. The teacher-librarian can put this book where they think their students would most likely find it, engage with it, and enjoy it. Careful selection of location may prompt students to branch out from beloved titles to others in the genre, therefore experiencing a wider array of materials.

## How?

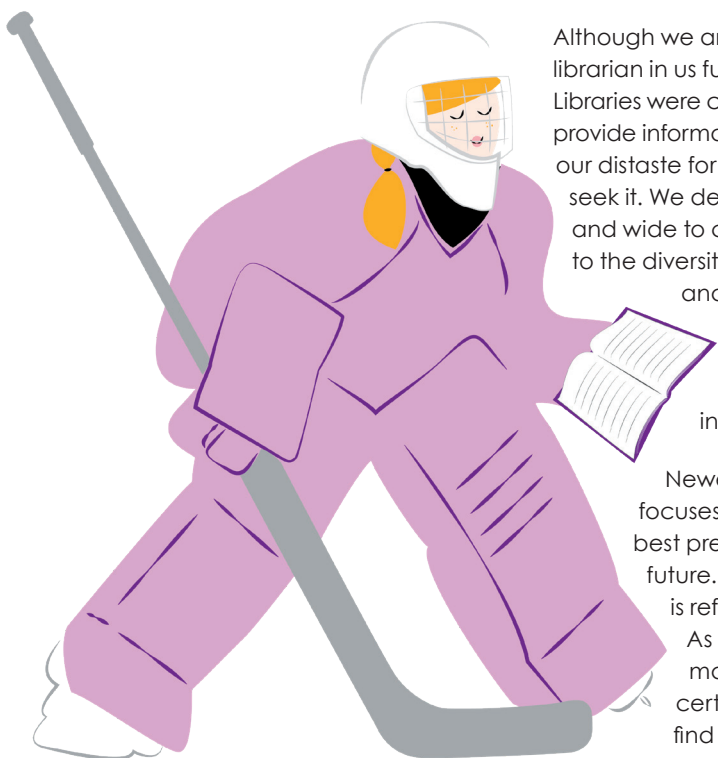


Lisa Seddon is a teacher-librarian at a middle school in New Westminster, BC.

She outlines the process for shifting from traditional library organization to a genrefication-based system below.

Once I made the decision to genrefy the library, the first question was how to begin the process. Where do you start? What's the first thing that you actually do? For me, I began by seeking out blogs or articles written by other teacher-librarians that had genrefied their collections. I found a blog post on [www.EmilyDittmar.com](http://www.EmilyDittmar.com) entitled “Making the Move to Genre.” Bingo! She's a teacher-librarian in Wisconsin, and her blog gave an overview of why and how she genrefied her high school collection. After reading through her blog post and a few others, I decided the first thing I needed to do was make a list of possible categories.

I found there is a sweet spot with the number of categories. If there are too few, then you don't give the students







decisions you will make based on what will work best for your school and your library. Once the weed is complete, then you can start the process of sorting and stickering.

When I started stickering, I took a trolley to the bookshelves, filled it, and then took it back to my workstation. I sorted the books into their genre, stickered them, then did a batch update in Destiny for

their sublocations. I had students who needed volunteer hours come in during recess and lunch to help sticker the books. I also made a conscious decision to take books that are normally classified with Dewey numbers, like poetry, joke books, or the *Haunted Canada* series, and place them with their relevant genres.

Sorting is where your professional judgment really comes into play. There are so many books that can go into multiple areas. I probably spent a couple of days agonizing over whether to put the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy in Action/Adventure or Science Fiction/Fantasy (I picked the latter). I recently purchased two copies of George Takei's graphic novel memoir, *They Called Us Enemy*. One has been placed in Narrative Non-fiction and the other is with Graphic Novels. It's important to remember none of this is ever set in stone. Categories can change and shift. In a few years' time, I might want to dispense with the graphic novel category and regenrefy them according to their subject headings. For example, I could move Gene Luen Yang's *The Shadow Hero* to Action/Adventure and put Raina Telgemeier's *Sisters* and *Smile* into Realistic Fiction. There really are no right or wrong answers to this because you can do whatever works best for your students and your library.

Reorganizing the library shelves was a little more complicated. And messy. Fortunately, I had help from

our district librarian. We took everything off the shelves, then started to sort and shelf by genre. My goal is to include signage directly on the shelf, but for now I have signage all over the library with posters and flyers.

Has it helped students engage with the collection? Absolutely. I checked our circulation stats in Destiny for the same period (September–May) of the year before I genrefied, and the first year I genrefied. In a school with a population of about 330 students, circulations increased by 1,000.

### Final thoughts

Genrefication of library collections can be seen in numerous libraries and school library learning commons spaces throughout BC. There are many models. Some employ an organization model that groups all books in one genre in the same location, others simply employ genre stickers and leave the Dewey system intact. Some sort the collection into few categories, others employ a dozen or more. What's important is that the teacher-librarian use professional judgment in selecting a classification system and continually monitor its functionality. Ultimately, if genrefication answers the question, "Can you find me a book like the one I just read?" efficiently and expertly, then it's an organization model worth exploring. •


enough avenues to explore books based around their likes. If there are too many, then you're back to where you started, and it's too difficult to wade through all the options to even decide what you want to read. This was probably my biggest challenge. I have eleven, but three of those are categories based on format more than a literary genre or subject heading. The genres I use are Realistic Fiction, Action/Adventure, Historical Fiction, Classics, Sports, Science Fiction/Fantasy, Mystery/Thriller/Horror, and Humour. The three format categories are Narrative Non-fiction, Comics/Graphic Novels, and Picture Books.

Once I had my categories, I had to locate stickers. I've opted for plain coloured, rectangular stickers that are about the same size as my spine labels. I order them from [www.InStockLabels.com](http://www.InStockLabels.com), a web-based supplier. They have a lot of options for sizes and colours. I considered using the genre stickers available through library suppliers like Brodart, but I feel they can make the spines look cluttered. It's a personal decision, and many other teacher-librarians have used these labels successfully.

It's at this point that I would recommend doing a thorough weed (discarding unwanted books), before you put a single sticker on a book. It will save you time and materials in the long run. This is when you can either discard unnecessary duplicates or keep one copy in one category and the other in a different category. Again, these are







# Refugee students need support

By **Alyson Mosher**, teacher, Vancouver



**WHAT DOES OUR** Canada look like? Is it everything you imagined, or does it fall short?

When I look at the faces of my students, this question often comes to mind. As a teacher at an inner-city school on the Downtown East Side of Vancouver, my weeks are often filled with the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. Our classrooms are composed of diverse learners who have many challenges and complex needs. I have quickly learned that all of my students have a story.

How are my students and their stories different?

On December 9, 2015, the first plane carrying Syrian refugee families arrived in Canada, and the process of welcoming and resettling these families began. Canada has since welcomed approximately 40,000 Syrian refugees.

Over 3,600 Syrians settled into sixty-nine communities throughout BC, with the majority residing within Metro Vancouver. Most are government-assisted refugees.

According to the Government of Canada, the resettlement of the Syrian

refugees was "an exceptional and time-limited situation which required additional resources as well as special measures which were temporarily put into place." The Government of Canada goes on to state that since their arrival we have learned that this particular group of refugees has "had higher than anticipated needs, but that this information was not available until the refugees were interviewed and began arriving in Canada."

This is where the story of my students and their families comes in. BCTF members know that teachers wear many hats: teacher, social worker, family support worker—the list goes on. This is nothing new. Unfortunately, my refugee students require so much more. A "more" that is currently being provided by teachers such as myself and my school district, despite insufficient government funding.

As a school, we provide a breakfast and hot lunch program, and thanks to corporate donations, we are able to send each student in need home with a "Backpack Buddy" full of food for the weekend. We run clothing drives to ensure all students have appropriate shoes, boots, coats, and clothing to keep them warm and dry throughout the year.

To date, the federal government has provided \$660 million in funding of the \$960 million that was allocated to support Syrian refugees. The remaining \$300 million has yet to be released.

My students light up when Syria is mentioned, and they love telling me stories about their homeland. Unfortunately, with those stories come descriptions of heartache that I am ill-equipped to handle properly. Stories of shootings, death, violence, and much more than any child should have witnessed. As their teacher, all I can do is listen and try to find them the community supports that they so desperately need.

The community supports that are in place are overwhelmed by the influx of need. My students and their families find themselves on never-ending wait lists while the government continues to hold on to the allocated funding that was meant to support them. Aggressive outbursts are a daily reality in my school, and these students struggle not only emotionally but also academically.

Psychological studies have shown that traumatic experiences in childhood can diminish concentration, memory, and the organizational and language abilities children need to succeed in



school. For some children, this can lead to problems with academic performance, inappropriate behaviour in the classroom, and difficulty forming relationships.

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, traumatic reactions can include a variety of responses, such as intense and ongoing emotional upset, depressive symptoms or anxiety, behavioural changes, difficulties with self-regulation, problems relating to others or forming attachments, and regression or loss of previously acquired skills. Studies have also shown that negative childhood experiences can send our brains into a constant feeling of danger and fear. These students are in a continuous state of "fight or flight"—all while trying to concentrate and learn with little or no support.

Again I ask you, what does our Canada look like?

When we welcomed the Syrian refugees into Canada, we welcomed them with everything that Canada has to offer. Hope, peace, and a future. We also welcomed them knowing that they were coming from a war-torn country and would need support. But where is that support?

My colleagues and my school district, like many others, are doing the best that we can. Somehow it is not enough. The fear and trauma that these students have experienced overpowers our efforts. In an education system that is already chronically under-funded, we now require even more support. Support that doesn't appear to be coming any time soon. These students are slipping through the cracks quickly as teachers desperately try to pull them out.

What should our Canada look like? Our Canada should have systems that are properly funded that support all citizens, especially refugee students and their families. •



Above right: A student's drawing of his school on fire in Syria. Below right: The same student's drawing of his home in Canada. Opposite: Another student's drawing of a Syrian flag. Alyson Mosher photos.



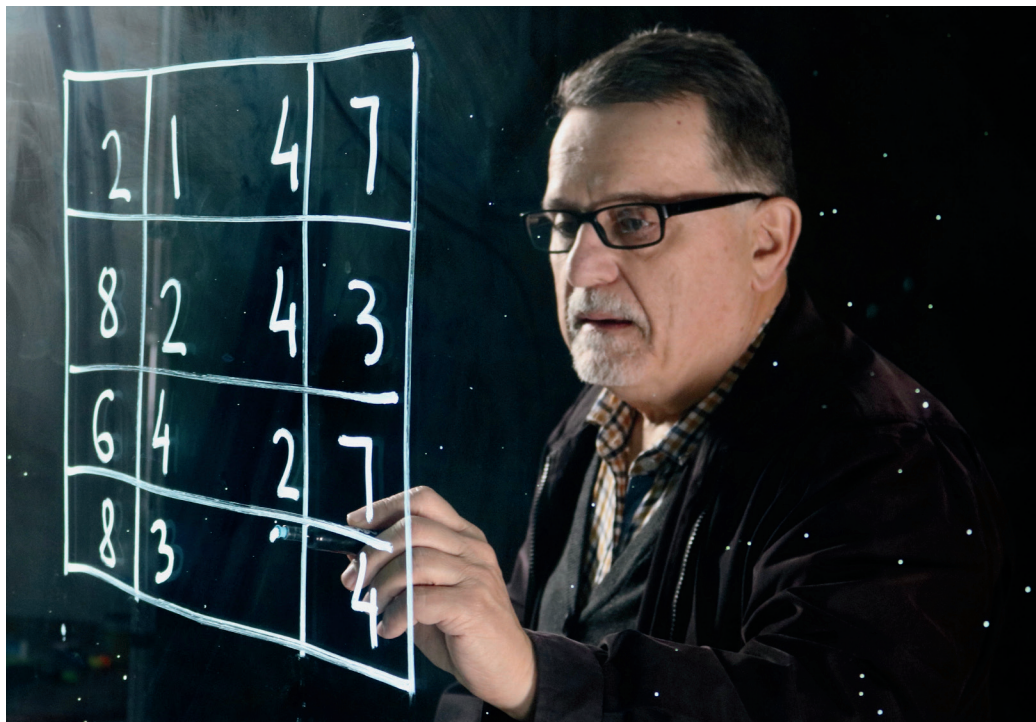
# “What are we the sum of?”<sup>1</sup>

By Veselin Jungic, Department of Mathematics, Simon Fraser University

AS PART OF MY preparation for a recent conference presentation, I was contemplating a possible question from the audience about the roots of my own approach to teaching. It was immediately clear to me that, despite studying and doing mathematics continually from a very young age, my way of presenting and communicating mathematics to my students has been shaped through my interactions with an array of role models and mentors. A relatively surprising part of this realization was that this process has continued throughout my (long) career as a student and a math teacher.

Both of my parents were teachers: my mother was a Kindergarten to Grade 3 teacher, and my father was a math and physics teacher. Just a couple of weeks ago, I was looking at a photograph from the mid-1970s of my mom with her Grade 3 class. To my astonishment, I was able to recognize several of my mom's students' faces on the photo and even remember a few names. I think this is because for my parents, and particularly for my mother, teaching and their commitment to their students was more than just an occupation. It was their way of living, and therefore part of my life too.

I still remember my Grade 1 teacher, Ms. Zlata Telalbašić. In my mind I have a blurry image that I associate with Ms.



▲ Veselin Jungic at work. Jackie Amsden photo.

Telalbašić's physical appearance from six decades ago. On the other hand, just writing down her name brings back a strong and undoubtful feeling that I can describe only as a mixture of love, respect, and trust.

My high school math teacher, Mrs. Nasiha Kasumagić, made me a mathematician. Knowledgeable, systematic, confident, and precise, Mrs. Kasumagić presented mathematics in a way that made me wish to learn more. Even now, so many years later, the same wish to learn more and more mathematics is still there.

As an undergraduate and graduate student, I attended thousands of lessons taught by many great

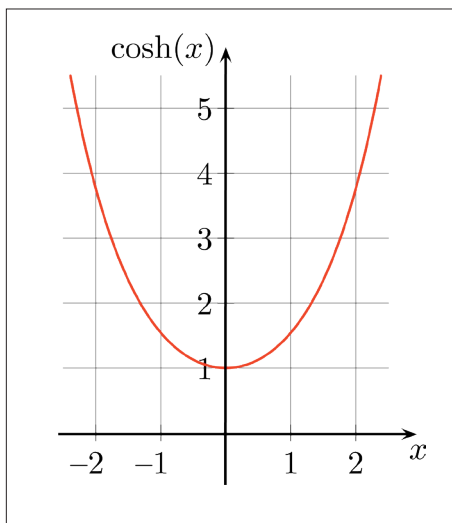
professors. I witnessed master demonstrations of complex proofs of important theorems spanning from mathematical analysis to graph theory and from algebraic geometry to Ramsey theory. Still, the moment from all of those lecture hours that I best remember was an instance of *teaching through storytelling*: After writing on the blackboard the expression for the function called “hyperbolic cosine,” Professor Mahmut Barjaktarević turned toward us, a one-hundred-and-twenty-strong freshmen class of math majors, and said, “The graph<sup>1</sup> of this function has the shape of a fine golden chain hanging around the neck of a beautiful girl.”

<sup>1</sup> The graph of the hyperbolic cosine function is called catenary.

<sup>1</sup> “What are we the sum of?” is the author's translation of the title of the poem “Cega smo zbir?” by Bosnian poet Abdulah Sidran originally published in “Sarajevska zbirka,” Svjetlost, Sarajevo, 1984.

Working as an assistant to Professor Žarko Živanović at the beginning of my teaching career taught me that lecturing is *hard work* that includes hours of preparation, rehearsing before and reflecting after the lecture delivery. Professor Živanović conveyed to me that a teacher must be *always on time, always absolutely fair, and always academically demanding*.

Through conversations with Professor Jonathan Borwein later in my career, I learned that *teaching big ideas* is at least as important as teaching the facts and/or techniques. To realize that by rushing to cover all of the course topics in detail, I was putting my students in a situation where they “could not see the forest for the trees” was a truly liberating moment. Jonathan’s motto, “Sometimes it is easier to see than to say,” has become one of my teaching principles.



▲ Hyperbolic cosine. Source: [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hyperbolic\\_Cosine.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hyperbolic_Cosine.svg)

My friend and colleague Dr. Malgorzata Dubiel helped me realize that teachers’ duties extend outside of the classroom. Belonging to the teaching community also brings the responsibility of *building a constructive relationship with learners and teachers at all levels* of the educational process, as well as with the general public. Hence my commitment to inclusive outreach programs and participation at professional development events, i.e., attending and presenting at and organizing of education-related conferences, workshops, and seminars.

In the relatively late phase of my teaching career, Dr. Cindy Xin opened my eyes and mind to educational scholarship. Thanks to Cindy’s impressive knowledge about mathematical education and her unlimited patience, I’ve converted from a skeptic to a believer that by learning from and contributing to the education-related research I could walk, back and forth, the bridge between research and practice.

Witnessing Elder Evelyn Eagle Speaker Locker share her wisdom with audiences by telling personal stories was a larger-than-life experience. “I talk about what happened to me because that is something that I know for sure,” she told me once. Elder Eagle Speaker had the power of making complex ideas personal. Letting my students know why a certain class topic is important in our, my, and students’ lives and pointing out the topic’s morals, often outside of mathematics, has become an integral part of my teaching practice.

Still, my most important mentors have been my students. Listening to my students has been a crucial part of my development as a teacher. Playing a role in my students’ academic lives and supporting them to achieve their personal, academic, and career goals gives meaning to my professional life.

Hence, a possible set of words and phrases that describe my approach to teaching:

- *love, respect, trust*
- *being knowledgeable, systematic, confident, and precise*
- *teaching through storytelling*
- *hard work*
- *being always on time, always absolutely fair, and always academically demanding*
- *teaching big ideas*
- *building a constructive relationship with the learners and teachers at all levels*
- *educational scholarship*
- *making complex ideas personal*
- *listening to my students.*

And yes, for me teaching is more than an occupation. It is my way of living. •



# My private Cantonese lessons with 婆婆 popo

By Genevieve Larose-Farmer, teacher, Vancouver



“婆婆 早晨 ZOU SAN POPO,”  
I said.

That's how every morning began for me as a Grade 5 French Immersion teacher at Lord Tennyson Elementary. It was my third year in Vancouver, my third year of teaching, and for the first time, with my colleague Renée Wild, I had put together a complete program of daily physical activity (DPA). For the first time too, I was asked to take a student teacher. I had only two years of experience... poor guy! I was clearly UBC's last resort. I accepted.

Those who have already been a school associate know that the biggest challenge, as we see our teaching tasks decrease, is to keep ourselves busy. Every morning, perched on the steps of the main entrance, I watched my student teacher get the students to line-up and take attendance, then facilitate the ten minutes of daily running around the school. Rain or shine, I observed, biting my lip to make sure that I wouldn't say too much, that I wouldn't fuss...

I look around, I smile at some parents. It's good PR after all. We talk about the weather. Emma's grandma is here. She smiles at me.

“Good morning,” I say. “早晨,” she teaches me.

And that's how I started learning Cantonese. My Chinese friends keep telling me, “You should learn Mandarin, it's much more useful!”

What my friends don't know, or forget, is that I spent three years working

with the Huron-Wendat First Nation on their language revival efforts. 婆婆 is teaching me a language of roots and history, a language of family, a language of stories; 婆婆 is teaching me a language of the heart. But 婆婆 is also reminding me of another lesson. This is a lesson I learned working with the Huron-Wendat First Nation: we don't teach brains; we teach hearts. And to teach little hearts means allowing for some time and space in our buzzing classrooms and bell-regimented schools. To take the time to notice 婆婆, to acknowledge and greet 婆婆, to listen and learn from her.

“This is a lesson I learned working with the Huron-Wendat First Nation: we don't teach brains; we teach hearts.”

I transferred to a different school at the end of that year, and it was the end of my private Cantonese lessons. I am now using an app to keep learning. It's hard. I'm not doing so well. Last Friday, I went to say hello to my old colleagues from Tennyson. 婆婆 was there. I went to greet her. She cried. We hugged. I gave her my contact information. “飲茶 Jam cha (we'll go for tea),” we promised. •

## WORD BANK

婆婆 “popo”—Maternal grandmother  
早晨 “zou san”—Good morning  
飲茶 “jam cha”—We'll go for tea

# LOCAL PROFILE

## Prince George District Teachers' Association

By Jennifer Kimbley, Acting Editor, *Teacher*



**I'M FLYING** into Prince George. Grey skies are holding back the rain for now, and through the plane window I see the birch and poplar trees have turned yellow. The wheels drop, connecting with the tarmac with a skid, and minutes later I'm in the terminal. Joanne Hapke, President of the Prince George District Teachers' Association (PGDTA), is waiting for me.

As we drive into town, she fills me in on the local. "We have 1,000 members, working from Valemont and McBride, Mackenzie and Prince George, and small communities in between," she says.

In addition to Joanne, Daryl Beauregard serves as First Vice-President, and Katherine Trepanier is released one day a week as Second Vice-President. There are also the sublocal presidents in McBride and Mackenzie.

The sublocals are necessary in a local as large as this. "Our local is larger than the country of Costa Rica," says Daryl Beauregard. "It's a seven-hour trip to drive to Valemont and back, and five hours to drive through the local end-to-end."

Sublocals provide immediate union representation to members when geographical distance is a barrier. Local 57 has two sublocal Presidents:

Daniel Lawless in McBride-Valemont and Shannon Pride in Mackenzie.

"It is important to have a sublocal. If our members are in need or need answers to questions, they do not have to wait for someone from Prince George to drive here or communicate via the phone or email," says Shannon Pride. "Our members deserve to have face-to-face representation and support just like everyone else in BC. Our sublocal is almost as big as some of the smaller locals."

"Being a sublocal helps us work together and support each other as we have our own executive," she continues. "It also gives our members a voice at the local and provincial level because our executive goes to Prince George for meetings and to the BCTF Representative Assemblies, Bargaining Conferences, Summer Leadership Conferences, etc."

Like many districts, recruitment and retention are a concern. "HR is working hard, but they need more resources from the government," says Joanne. "We have TTOC shortages and really rely on retired teachers. This September we did not have enough teachers to fill all posted positions."

The University of Northern BC has an education program that helps to fill some positions. Precertified teachers are being hired as TTOCs to fill the need.



▲ PGDTA President Joanne Hapke and First Vice-President Daryl Beauregard. Jennifer Kimbley photo.

The PGDTA is proud of their relationships with trustees and the district. "We work collaboratively and respectfully," says Joanne. "The district listens, and we work well together." In fact, the PGDTA sends a representative to attend interviews for principal and vice-principal candidates.

Their voice carries at the provincial level as well. They are the seventeenth largest local, and two seats on the BCTF Executive Committee are held by their members Susan Trabant and Katherine Trepanier.

"We're looking to bring early career teachers into union activism," says Joanne. "We have four members on our local EC who are within their first five years of teaching. I'm hoping they take the torch and run with it." •



### GISCOME ELEMENTARY ALUMNI

PGDTA's Giscome Elementary is 40 kilometres east of Prince George and has 28 students in two divisions. Acting Editor of *Teacher* Jennifer Kimbley and Digital Communication Specialist Jason Dewolfe, both BCTF Communications and Campaigns Division staff, attended Giscome Elementary. Jennifer's mom Brenda

Gale was the secretary, and Jason's mom Shelley Mann was the Grade 2/3 teacher.

To the staff of Giscome Elementary, keep up the good work—the next generation of teachers and union activists may be in your class! •



## Gerry Chidiac inspires change by empowering students

By Lauren Donnelly, BCTF staff



**GERRY CHIDIAC'S** mission statement has two parts. It's posted in his classroom at Duchess Park Secondary in Prince George.

- Create happy memories  
in the lives of each student

- Inspire each student  
to achieve their greatness!

"Create happy memories in the lives of each student," he says. "And to inspire each student to achieve their greatness."

It might sound like a lofty goal, but Gerry is inspiring students to use their individual strengths to change the world, and it's having an impact.

Gerry's focus on changing the world for the better suits him as a social justice teacher. He also teaches languages and career education, and he works with students through the school's Learning Support Centre.

He says his approach to inspiring students is simple—anything is possible when people are empowered to make positive change. Gerry encourages students to ask big questions about what gives them purpose and what gives life meaning.

"As teachers, we're in a special position in changing the world," he says. "We not only do it through our own actions, but we do it through the actions of others that we inspire."

He describes his work as an honour and a privilege. He's heard from students about the ways they're making positive change in their communities after taking his social justice course.

"I don't know how many students have told me that the course changes the way they look at the world," he says. "It's one thing to look at problems, but it's another to realize that we are the solution."

Students are assigned a research project, and Gerry encourages them to choose a topic that interests them. Because genocide is the gravest violation of social justice, some students choose to research and present on genocide that has affected their families.

He remembers one presentation where two girls whose parents had attended residential schools stood together in solidarity in front of the class as they shared their stories.

"It was very powerful and very moving for the students," he says. "To understand that residential schools not only affected the students who attended the residential school, but it also affects their schoolmates."

He says personal connection helps students relate, and it transforms what's otherwise heavy subject matter into something meaningful for students.

"It's an a-ha moment for the students too, to realize that they have something to share, they have something to teach," he says. "It's really neat to see that, you know? It is an empowerment when they realize that they do have an impact."



▲ Gerry Chidiac helps students find purpose. Photo provided by Gerry Chidiac.

After 30 years of teaching, Gerry says he still finds hope and inspiration in the classroom. He's constantly challenged to practise what he teaches.

Gerry writes regular columns for both the *Prince George Citizen* and *Troy Media*. A lot of his writing is inspired by discussions with students, and he sees the columns as an extension of his classroom.

"If I am going to tell my students to challenge themselves and keep growing, I need to take my own advice," he says. "If I am going to tell them that they have a voice that matters in the world, I need to have the courage to speak as well." •

# Jen Moroz uses place-based theatre toward Truth and Reconciliation

Articles and photos by Jennifer Kimbley, Acting Editor, Teacher



**JEN MOROZ** works in the Learning Innovations Department for School District 57. She's been in this role since 2015, and this

year she's working on cross-curricular experiential learning with a focus on Truth and Reconciliation.

It's a big undertaking. She's working at five schools with 180 students in Grades 4–9. This October they created a film that will be used by the district for teaching purposes.

Following themes within the curriculum, students made storyboards, then acted and filmed five scenes to tell the story of the Métis.



▲ Jen Moroz leads learners in creating learning for others.

"It's a beautiful topic in terms of inclusivity because the Métis are truly Canadian. They were created here," she says. "And being Métis myself, it's very meaningful work for me."

Jen hopes to inspire teachers and students to take learning risks. "This project changes the dynamic of learning as we're looking at creating more learning for others. This film will be a lasting resource for others, and we're becoming the experts while creating it," she says. "You need to have a certain level of engagement to create something like this, and it's been so high with this project."

She didn't do it alone. Teachers from the Aboriginal Education Department and Elders brought their stories and shared their experiences. "It pulls people together in interesting ways," she says. "It allowed our community and our students to use their strengths and gifts." •

## Shannon Schinkel goes gradeless

**ALTHOUGH** Prince George Secondary School has 1,300 students, the halls are spotless at the end of the day. Up the stairs, down the hall to the right, and overlooking a greenspace with mature trees, is Shannon Schinkel's classroom.

Shannon teaches humanities and drama. Two years ago, she wondered how she could change her assessment practices, going gradeless in her classes. The challenge excited her.

"It works so well with the revised curriculum," she says. "It breathes life into it and how one can approach their teaching. My assessment has become the hook."

Her students like the gradeless classes as well. "They know it's a learning continuum. It's not about tests and retests. I still have parents who ask 'What

is the percent? What is the grade?' but they buy in when they know the teacher is measuring growth. It's more accurate and authentic assessment."

Shannon wanted to open the discussion up beyond her school staff, so she started a Facebook group called Beyond Report Cards. Over 1,100 teachers from around the province have joined, discussing core competencies, assessment, and weekly hot topics.

"It's all about growth mindset for the students and for me," she says. "It's shifting the focus from a grading mindset to a learning mindset. Trying something new, like gradeless, might feel like more work at the start, because it's new work. But, over time, it will develop into a new routine—one anyone who adopts gradeless practices can be proud of." •



▲ Shannon Schinkel takes assessment beyond report cards.



# “I don’t get math”

## Alleviating anxiety and creating math mindsets

By **Tamara Langan**, teacher, Maple Ridge



### INQUIRY QUESTION:

What would happen if I decreased or eliminated my students' stress levels and anxieties about math

by taking away certain pressures? And, once I've taken away those pressures, can I instill a mathematical mindset promoting curiosity and a willingness to try to learn math when they've given up in the past?

Even when I read my own inquiry question it seems impossible or even outrageous, but I'm a big fan of jumping in the deep end of the pool to learn to swim, so I dove in, head first.

To reduce their stress levels with math I first needed to know what they were stressed about regarding math. For this data, I spent last summer reading Jo Boaler's book *Mathematical Mindsets* and talking to everyone and anyone (especially teenagers) about their experiences in math classes. You see, I'm a science teacher, biology specifically, so I needed data from somewhere as I'd only taught math a few times and I knew the next time I taught it, alleviating math anxiety was what I wanted to focus on. If it worked, it should help the kids learn more math without their defense mechanism, which I call throwing up the math wall, blocking all possible learning.

It's funny how strangers will completely open up to you about what they hated about math, and believe me, everyone has a story to tell about math (some are even happy stories). The number one thing I heard from

people was, “Math? Oh, don't ask me, I don't get math. I'm not a math person.” One of my bankers even said that. How frightening is that? He handles my money! So, to do this properly, I would also have to remove their internal tape recorder.

“I crafted an email to my students' parents letting them know I would not be giving homework to any of my students or classes.”

Preliminary results for what teenagers are stressed about in math:

1. the sheer hours and hours of homework that automatically come with math
2. the daily math fight and pressure from parents (not doing well enough, not doing enough homework, etc.)
3. making mistakes in front of the class
4. tests, tests, and more tests.

The first two are doozies: homework; and somehow I need to wave a magic wand to get rid of parental pressure?

While I was figuring out how to take on the parents, I started reading everything I could about Finland's education system. I had already read most of *Mathematical Mindsets*, which said that if I could instill a mathematical mindset in my students, they

would share their mistakes with each other and learn to see their mistakes as opportunities for growth.

I was fully on board; I just needed a plan.

First, I explained to my students that in my classes, I had high expectations for them. And every year all of my kids live up to my expectations, and they would too. Second, I was going to make them all into math people. In order to do that, I needed their help—they had to be willing to work hard in class every day and to share their mistakes with each other.

At this point I explained Carol Dweck's brain studies that definitively show every time a person makes a mistake—whether they are aware of it or not—their brain creates new neural networks. In other words, mistakes make their brains grow and that is a very good thing! I needed to give them lots of opportunities to make mistakes, but they needed to be willing to work hard and share their mistakes.

At that point, I had most of the kids nodding and saying they would work hard in class. I said if they were willing to do this, then I would explain to their parents that I do not believe in homework. It was unanimous with all 163 students. They were willing to share their mistakes, a stress for them, to get rid of their top two stresses.

I crafted an email to my students' parents letting them know I would not be giving homework to any of my students or classes.



Tamara's students share their work. Photo provided by author.

And I was giving them the gift of time with their children. Time that would ordinarily have been spent each night doing math homework, was now theirs to enjoy with their children. Citing research from Jo Boaler and Carol Dweck about mathematical mindsets and growth mindsets, I advised if they wanted to help their children with math, having a conversation about what they were learning would allow their child to reflect on their math learning and was infinitely more beneficial than 40 math questions.

Between myself, my awesome admin team, our very patient counsellors, our steadfast support teachers, and my wonderful education assistants, we only had to deal with a few backlashes from parents and some students as they got used to this new teaching style. We held fast: I wasn't going anywhere, and I knew they would all come around to this new way of working together to build knowledge.

I gave marks to my students for work done in class. I assigned only between 4–10 questions to be completed in class. If they weren't completed, students needed to come to flex block for me to help them figure out what they were stuck on and why they didn't get it done in 70 minutes. If I gave the class too much work, the next class would be a work block. If they finished early, they could play with my math and brain-teaser puzzles.

I included community building into my lesson planning from September to December. Nel Noddings and

Margaret Wheatley taught me that the key to student learning is that all students need to feel they belong and are important. Teaching is all about belonging and relationships. Kids cannot learn if they won't walk through the doorways to the school, and I was trying to welcome them to class, not make them want to run in the other direction from my door. My doorframe even says "mathematical mindset students welcome here."

**"You cannot teach a student who won't walk through the doors of the school. It's all about relationships."**

To ensure I kept my students' stress levels at bay, I surveyed my students throughout the year with tickets out the door, thumbs up/thumbs down, quick check-ins, student reflections, my own reflections, student interviews, parental interviews, and peer feedback.

All of my students' stress levels decreased over the year, and some went as far as to say they were never stressed about math anymore.

Here are some quotes from my students, beginning with the words of a reformed chronic skipper:

*I love that we all get to contribute to each other's work and help each other out.*

*I love how we get to work together without the teacher yelling at us.*

*I like how we get into groups to actually refresh our memories, but I wish that we got to pick our groups.*

*I like that we work together rather than alone, and we accomplished more with more people.*

*I like how we were all working together and if someone needed help, someone else would know what to do.*

My favourite quote this year from one of my interviews with a Grade 10 Apprenticeship and Workplace Math student:

*You never tell me what to do or give me the answer. You push me into an uncomfortable space so that I can learn.*

One parent told me, "I have no idea how you got my kid to suddenly like math but, now he likes it. He says he's often doing math labs around the school and seeing math in the real world. I just want to say, keep doing whatever it is you are doing."

My key learning: we must all stay mindful of the need for connection—it shows us time and time again that learning cannot happen if the social-emotional learning needs of the student are not attended to. You cannot teach a student who won't walk through the doors of the school. It's all about relationships. •



# BC teachers need an elementary music cohort in universities





By Sonja Karlson, teacher, Burnaby



**BEING A MUSIC SPECIALIST** in a BC elementary school is to be in a unique position. We are often

isolated as the only specialist in a school and confined to one subject area. Other elementary school teachers teach all of the subjects but are confined to one age group or grade. There is a problem in my specialty area that is getting worse and worse: BC elementary music teachers are in short supply. Do you ever wonder why?

When the Liberal government declared that any teacher in elementary school can teach any subject area, our province's universities closed their elementary music programs. Now there are only secondary specialty music programs in BC to train teachers in band and choir. As fewer and fewer teachers are receiving elementary music certificates, the districts are forced to hire music specialists for elementary schools trained in other provinces or who received their training in other ways. For example, I have a Bachelor of Music degree, and my education degree is for elementary classroom. Most of the music teachers being hired in elementary music today are coming out of secondary music programs. These teachers are seeing children of an entirely different age group than they were trained to teach.

At UBC, there is one elementary course within the secondary music program. Developmental psychology is not discussed in this course. Teachers coming out of this program are feeling unprepared to teach in an elementary school.

And there are far more elementary schools in BC than there are secondary schools. Most of these graduates are getting jobs in elementary schools. Burnaby, which has at least one music teacher in every elementary and

secondary school, has 41 elementary schools and only 8 secondary schools. Where do you think most of these teachers are getting hired?

Imagine that you are a secondary school teacher, and you have to start your first year teaching Kindergarten students? Most of these teachers are expected to do just that! Not only is the first year of teaching difficult, but teaching a far different age level than what you were trained in compounds the challenge.

**"A lack of teachers and no post-secondary program is certainly not going to grow music programs in BC."**

There are courses and workshops in elementary music methods offered during the summer. There are methods developed by Zoltan Kodaly and Carl Orff that these new teachers are highly encouraged to take. But, how would you feel completing your teacher training and being told that you need extra courses to do your job? These courses run during our much-needed summer break and cost hundreds of dollars. Wouldn't you want to know that you came out of your program able to perform the job you have been hired to do without needing extra training? Shouldn't these courses be embedded in a music training program?

Some BC districts would require these courses in the people they hire. But with the current teacher shortage, districts needed to hire secondary music educators and then encourage them to get this extra training. What these teachers need is the time and money to receive the qualifications, and not be expected to do it all on their own time and dime.

The universities are noticing that more graduates are getting jobs in elementary schools than secondary schools. It is now an option for these post-secondary students to do an elementary practicum. This is a step in the right direction, but what about the training in the program? Are they even ready to do an elementary practicum? There still needs to be training in the developmental psychology of young children, and applicable courses specifically for teaching music to young children.

But there is another problem. Music programs are being diminished in school districts. In Surrey, most schools only have music from Kindergarten to Grade 4. Some districts have cut elementary music altogether. This is mostly because of the lack of qualified teachers. And many graduates from a secondary school program do not want to teach in an elementary school—at least not for their entire careers. I know lots of colleagues who eventually want to move into a high school job—the job in which they were trained.

And what about elementary schools and districts that are trying to preserve or resurrect a music program? A lack of teachers and no post-secondary program is certainly not going to grow music programs in BC.

Music programs are important for our children. There are so many studies that show the importance of a music program for young children.

We need an elementary music cohort. We need a specialty curriculum for music with the proper courses embedded in teacher training. If not, our districts need to find a way to help these teachers become properly trained. We need to support music programs before they all completely die out in our province. •



# Leana Marton builds community in the classroom and on the pitch

iStock.com/cristiani

By Lauren Donnelly, BCTF staff



**LEANA MARTON** has been passionate about sports for as long as she can remember.

She loved physical education growing up and had a great high school experience. Some of her aunts and uncles were teachers, and it occurred to her that she could combine the two.

"I just thought 'Wow, if I could get paid teaching kids how to play sports—that would be amazing!'," she says.

Throughout her 25-year career she has tackled teaching with passion and commitment. With her down-to-earth, approachable manner and blunt sense of humour, it's easy to see why students see her as a role model.

While studying education at the University of Victoria, Leana was introduced to what would become one of her greatest loves—rugby.

"It was really a match for me," she says. "It kind of became my passion sport to coach."

Her love for rugby surprised her. Growing up, she was a "a scaredy cat" and a rule follower but training to be fit enough to navigate the pitch empowered her.

She moved back home to the Okanagan and started teaching on call in Vernon and Kelowna, and she got a continuing position in 2000.

Today she teaches Physical and Health Education 10, First Peoples 12, World History 11, and social studies at Kelowna Secondary School.

Teaching First Peoples 12 was a happy accident. She was returning from maternity leave when the school gave her the class. Leana says she's grateful that a friend of hers and the district's Aboriginal Education Centre helped her connect with the local Indigenous culture.

The pedagogy of traditional First Nations education resonates with her, and teaching the course has been some of her most meaningful work.

Struck by her students' response to cultural activities in the classroom, she wrote her thesis on the topic when she completed her Masters degree in 2013.

Much of the drive and discipline she developed in rugby has carried over into Leana's life. She is set on self-improvement. While today she's just as comfortable teaching on the pitch or in the classroom, it wasn't always that way.

"I was really geared toward the gym, and the classroom was a little bit scary," she says. "But being in the classroom and being in the field or the gymnasium, you've got the best of both worlds."

"They're different, it's challenging, but it's really interesting—it's the best."

Outside of the classroom, Leana has dedicated herself to building a youth rugby community. She coaches at the school level, as well as the BC Elite Youth Sevens boys' team for Western 7s, and a rugby academy with Central Okanagan Rugby Enthusiasts weekly.

Women coaching men's teams is not common in rugby, but a local middle school needed a coach for its boys'

team, and Leana stepped up. Her players call her by her last name, "Marton." Parents say that she teaches young players respect.

The rugby academy she teaches on Friday nights brings boys and girls together on the pitch. It's an opportunity for players to learn from each other as athletes outside the constraints of gender roles.



▲ Leana Marton (left) with her regional (TORA) U18 team at the 2019 Kamloops 7s, where they won gold. Evan McGee photo.

"We kind of get this reputation with rugby that you're this big brute," she says. "But the reality is that there's a ton of decision-making."

She has seen students flourish in rugby, going from an unruly bunch to a disciplined team. The sport has informed the way she approaches teaching as well.

"I really believe that your classroom has to be a community," she says. "That kids feel safe and they can contribute." •

# Moose Hide Campaign: Standing up against violence toward women and children

## Moose Hide Campaign Day in BC for Kindergarten–Grade 12 schools

On February 24, 2020, schools across British Columbia will be participating in Moose Hide Campaign Day—an annual event aimed at ending violence against women and children. Schools are invited to participate in Moose Hide Campaign Day in BC in two ways:

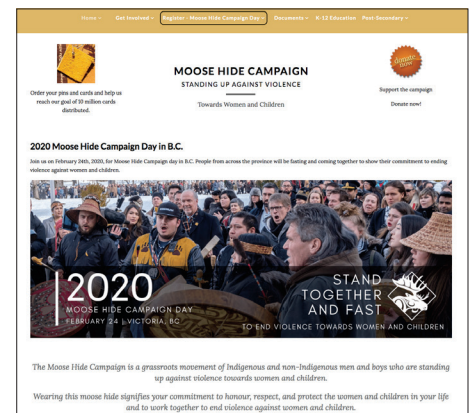
### K–12 Partner School sign up

Sign up to participate in Moose Hide Campaign Day in your school and be recognized as a K–12 partner school on Moose Hide's website and gain access to the live stream from the Youth Activation event in Victoria. On Moose Hide Campaign Day schools are also encouraged to do Moose Hide Campaign events in their own schools, wear the Moose Hide pins, and take the online pledge to stand up against violence.

### Ending Violence through Education for Reconciliation Activation, Victoria Conference Centre

This in-person youth activation event will be happening as part of the BC Provincial Gathering and Day of Fasting, which is taking place at the Victoria Conference Centre. This exciting youth event is open to teachers and students in Grades 5–12.

To learn more and register visit ►  
[www.moosehidecampaign.ca](http://www.moosehidecampaign.ca).



▼ BCTF member Brian Coleman (right), Langley, with members of the Warrior Club at a Moose Hide Campaign meeting. Photo provided by Brian Coleman.







# Reconnecting with my 1979 Grade 3 teacher, Lindsay Watson

By Mary Chang, BCTF staff

**WHEN MY SON** Dylan finished Grade 3 last June, I asked him if he was looking forward to the summer break.

He replied, "NO."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because it means I won't get my favourite teacher Ms. Simcox again for Grade 4."

I realized the significance of Dylan's words. Teachers who use their creative skills to challenge their students' minds, while supporting them with guidance and encouragement, build strong attachments with their students and make children feel valued. This sense of self-worth leads children to recognize their own abilities and develop independence.

My conversation with Dylan inspired me to reach out to my own favourite teacher, Ms. Watson, who taught my Grade 3 class. The emotional connection that transpired between us created a lifetime memory of our student-teacher relationship. The image of her face surrounded by a mane of curly red hair is captured like a Polaroid snapshot in my mind. I wanted to thank her.

Ms. Watson let me sit on her lap whenever I was crying, enabled me to solve problems, and encouraged me whenever she read my stories, which sparked my love for creative writing. She let me become me.

Last September, I sent Ms. Watson a friend request through Facebook. She accepted.

On November 1, 2019, I launched my creative writing website and sent my Facebook friends the link to my blog. The first paragraph was dedicated to Ms. Watson.

She sent a reply:

*...I remember you very well; I have a clear snapshot of you in my mind with your delicate features and shy smile. I can't believe it was 1978! I am honoured to be part of your memories in such a positive way and so impressed by your writing...*

A week later, she sent this message:

*...Now here's quite the coincidence. I've been going through some boxes in the basement and came across two student notebooks from 1979 and one is yours! If you'd like it, I would be happy to pop it in the mail.*

The package arrived on a Thursday in November. Dylan used scissors to carefully cut open the padded brown envelope. It was a Hilroy notebook filled with a collection of my stories penciled in my eight-year-old cursive writing titled, "All of My Great Stories by Mary Chang."

I was unaware of the existence of the notebook until Ms. Watson found it. I brushed my hand over the manila cover, picked it up to smell, and closed my eyes. My mind took a step back into my 1979 portable classroom where I sat cross-legged at circle time as Ms. Watson read books from the *Mr. Men* or *Miss Little* series or stories from student journals. I remembered my sense of security being a part of the class, my eager anticipation of story time, and the tenderness of those moments.

It's past Dylan's bedtime but neither of us can wait to read the journal. We nestle side-by-side on our bed-sized couch with our legs outstretched and I notice our bare feet are almost the same size. We take turns reading aloud the stories and dissolve into frenzied laughter over the peculiar, macabre tales and silly rhymes. Dylan asks, "What does 'scared out my wits' mean? Did you always write cursive? What's a gal?"

As we flipped the pages, I didn't recognize my handwriting and I'd forgotten the stories I'd written, but I knew they were mine.

There are 19 stories outlined in the table of contents with titles such as "The Giggle Gaggles," "The Ugly Little Girl," and "The Story of L.W." Each page is numbered on the bottom corner from 1 to 54. My stories were written to show admiration for my best friends, scare the reader, or make them laugh. I possessed an odd curiosity about ghosts, murder, and death.

My eight-year-old self was hopeful I'd become a great writer someday according to my "All About Me" page where I wrote of "Mary Chang the Great Writer." Dylan giggled when I described myself as "having black hair, dark eyes, a nose, a mouth and of course, some teeth." On page 11, I wrote that Sam said, "Mary Chang is the best writer in the whole world."

Ms. Watson wrote in her remarks: "A good writer should have a beginning, middle and end to her stories." After her critique, I wrote "The Storm."

*...Suddenly me and my roommate Nancy heard thunder and rain. It was a storm! We couldn't believe it! We were scared out of our wits! It was windy. Then we heard a bang. It was the door. I'm glad no one was there. We went back to sleep. Then we heard another bang...it was a g-g-ghost! Boy we were scared! The ghost was choking me to death. The next day we called the police. They investigated. At night we heard another noise. It was a skeleton! It choked Nancy. The police investigated again. For two weeks these ghosts kept coming to our house. The police stayed overnight and caught the murderer and sent him to jail.*

To preserve some of the faded scrawling on the pages, I darkened the letters in pencil. Other than my signature, I haven't written cursive since high school. As my pencil traced over each letter, nostalgia tingled through my fingers, instinctively forming each curve of a vowel or consonant melting them into words. It was strange forging the writing of my eight-year-old hand, yet comforting, familiar, and awkwardly graceful.



My son Dylan is working on a short story in class, learning about character development, setting, and dialogue. Reading my journal captivated his curiosity about writing and offered a glimpse into his mother's childhood. When we chat at bedtime about the notebook, we laugh about the pages I wrote so long ago and today, I see a similar humour in Dylan's own stories.

Ms. Watson held my journal for four decades. My eight-year-old self wonders if she kept it because she thought my stories were amazing, since they were written by "Mary Chang the Great Writer," or simply because I gifted it to her and made her promise to keep it forever.

My adult self imagines Ms. Watson and her teacher colleagues sitting around on a Friday night in the late 1970s reading aloud the stories their students wrote, clinking their wine glasses, laughing uproariously because "kids say the darndest things."

For whatever reason Ms. Watson held onto my journal, I'm grateful she kept it safely stored in her basement or as "Mary Chang the Great Writer" might say, "hidden in the basement with the g-g-ghosts!"

I wonder now if my childhood wish for Ms. Watson to become my pen pal over the summer of 1979 was granted, forty years later. A hand-written card was tucked in the journal:

*Dear Mary, I hope you will enjoy seeing this again. I must have kept it because it was quite remarkable in its originality and attention to detail especially at such a young age (and of course, written by a special student!). Obviously, it was meant to make its way back to you. All the best, Lindsay Watson. •*

### About the author

Mary Chang is a mother of a student in a BC public school, an award-winning short story writer, and freelance fiction and creative non-fiction writer. Her stories can be read at [www.marychangstorywriter.wordpress.com](http://www.marychangstorywriter.wordpress.com).

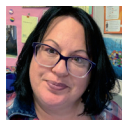


Above: Mary's Grade 3 photo. Opposite: Mary's Grade 3 class photo (Mary's on the bottom right in the overalls). Photos provided by author.



# I'm an LGBTQ2S+ activist teacher and mom to a trans daughter

By Shannon Rerie, teacher, Williams Lake



**I RECENTLY WROTE** an article for our local union paper about supporting LGBTQ2S+

students in our schools. As I sat down to revise it for *Teacher*, I realized it was November 20, the Transgender Day of Remembrance, a day to remember those who have been murdered by transphobia. This hits home personally for me this year. Since I was little, I have been a social justice activist. When I first started working in this district, parents tried to have me fired for “promoting gayness” as I started up the local gay straight alliance (GSA). But this year I became a mom to a transgender daughter. This year everything I thought I knew changed and became even more clear.

“Why are you using a razor in the shower? Is it easier for men too?” I innocently asked my 19-year-old child as I was cleaning up the house.

“Well this is awkward... I'm trans,” replied my child.

In that moment, everything in my world changed, and everything I thought I knew changed. I cried for a week, not because I wasn't accepting, but because the road my child now had laid out in front of her was terrifying. I blogged. I talked to my friends, but I couldn't talk to my family as she didn't want them to know yet. I was the LGBTQ2S+ activist teacher—I knew it all, didn't I? Turns out I knew a lot, but far from everything. And I learn more every day. It's been less than a year since my child came out. In hindsight, she has known, and I should have known, from the time she was a baby; but we did not have the

vocabulary for her to tell me, and I didn't have the knowledge to put it all together.

In our classrooms we deal with LGBTQ2S+ students every single day, whether they are out or not and regardless of their age, socioeconomic status, home life, school life, etc. It is no longer enough to wait until they need us to change our classrooms for them—we need to change our classrooms to protect them now, immediately.

The first thing I think teachers need to do is learn the acronym. Nothing says “I don't really care about you or your group” like stumbling over an easy bunch of letters. Yes, the letters are disputed within the LGBTQ2S+ community, and yes, they occasionally change or grow, as does society. But these letters mean the world to these kids; they are the place they find their identity and their sense of belonging.

So, what do the letters mean?

- L** lesbian
- G** gay
- B** bisexual
- T** trans
- Q** queer or questioning
- 2S** Two-Spirited
- +** others not easily identified or just being discovered as society evolves.

The second easy shift is to put up a rainbow sticker in your classroom. The BCTF has so many amazing resources, from posters to stickers, that allow you to easily mark your classroom as safe for all students. Our classrooms should

be safe for all students. Teachers should be the last people our students are scared to come out to. We should be welcoming and accepting of all of them, regardless of our own personal beliefs. That's why we work in the public school system. Unfortunately, our schools aren't inherently safe spaces for all kids. There are areas that are profoundly unsafe, and as teachers we need to be aware of that and work toward changing that.

When my daughter started at the junior high school in Williams Lake, she was terrified of physical health and education (PHE) class—the changerooms, the teachers, all of it. At the time, I chalked it up to her not being athletic (she's a computer geek), but it turns out it was far more than that. She was terrified of having to change in the boy's changeroom. Although her anatomy said she was a boy, her brain was screaming at her to get out. I eventually pulled her out of PHE, and she completed it online. How can we make our trans, Two-Spirited, and plus students choose a changeroom when neither fits for them? There are not enough gender-neutral washrooms and changerooms in our schools yet.

Do you have a gender-neutral washroom or changeroom in your school? Celebrate it! Talk to all your students about why it is so important and crucial for every single student in that school. Talk to your Kindergartners about it and talk to your Grade 12s about it. The defensive line is, “If we talk to them about this stuff, we are ‘sexualizing’ our kids.” No. This is not about sex, this is about acceptance, belonging, and identity. Besides, I

knew I was female and straight by the time I was five years old playing "catch the boys" on the playground. Didn't you know your gender? They know. They don't have the vocabulary to tell us everything they are feeling, but they know. My daughter said to me, "I knew I was in the wrong body when I was old enough to think, and I thought the doctor had made a mistake by saying I was a boy. I don't like my mistakes pointed out, so I didn't want to point out their mistake."

I write this article not to guilt teachers about not doing enough, but to impress upon teachers the importance of doing more. If I could go back and recognize the signs in my daughter when she was five, choose the "girl" toys over the "boy" ones, and move the world for her to have been able to grow up in the correct gender, I would in a heartbeat. Her school experience would have been vastly different from the one it was. All students should experience the school life we envision for them: making friends, connecting with people over shared experiences, learning acceptance (not just tolerance) of everyone. Please, regardless of where you stand in your personal life, recognize that working in the public system means you took on this responsibility of being accepting of all of our kids. Students like my daughter need the schools to change now, not in 10 years. •

## RESOURCES

The BCTF's LGBTQ2S+ Action Group helps support teachers and social justice activists. Visit this link for lesson plans, resources, and workshops: [bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106](http://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106)





# How the BCTF is making history as a responsible investor

By **Damon van der Linde**, Communications Officer at SHARE



**IN MAY 2019**, shareholders of Waste Connections Inc. were asked to vote on whether the company should establish a plan to increase the representation of women in leadership and across its operation, in light of its high gender imbalance compared to peers. If this vote passed, it would be the first for a proposal on gender at a Canadian company, sending a strong message about the rising standards of responsible investors.

This shareholder proposal was filed by the BCTF, working with us at the Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE), a non-profit that helps organizations align their investments with their values.

The BCTF has long recognized that choosing the right stocks is only the beginning of being a responsible investor. Shareholders are owners who play a role in how a company affects human rights, executive compensation, and climate change, among other pressing issues.

Unfortunately, when responsible investors choose not to engage as shareholders, corporate management is often left hearing only from those who promote short-term gain at the expense of sustainability and long-term profitability.

## **A commitment to shareholder engagement**

The BCTF has been a SHARE client for the past 20 years, consistently using its influence as an institutional investor to leverage the skills of our team to engage in constructive dialogue with company management.

Shareholder engagement is a way to promote the positive impacts of

**“The BCTF has long recognized that choosing the right stocks is only the beginning of being a responsible investor.”**

investments, such as improving diversity within a company, removing barriers to employment for Indigenous people, or increasing investment in renewable energy projects.

For example, we approached Waste Connections after we found that among companies of comparable size women hold on average 25% of board seats, while Waste Connections had only one woman on the Board of Directors (14%), one woman in an executive officer position (11%), and no policy, plans, or targets to improve this situation.

Research demonstrates that companies with greater gender equality in board and executive leadership outperform their peers that do not. Similarly, companies that promote the recruitment and advancement of women into management attract more talented employees of any gender and report better employee engagement, innovation, and productivity.

## **Voting for change**

Sometimes dialogue alone does not result in the needed change at companies. When this happens, SHARE helps investors like the BCTF file proposals that allow other shareholders to have their say through votes at annual company meetings.

In the case of Waste Connections, SHARE and the BCTF recognized through dialogue that the company was resistant to talking about, let alone addressing, gender equality. So we filed a proposal.

Unlike many other Canadian companies that have committed to clear plans and targets to increase diversity, the response from Waste Connections management was to reject the idea and recommend shareholders vote against our proposal.

Waste Connections' shareholders spoke loud and clear, voting 64.5% in favour of the BCTF proposal that the company establish a plan to increase the representation of women not only in executive positions, but across the workforce.

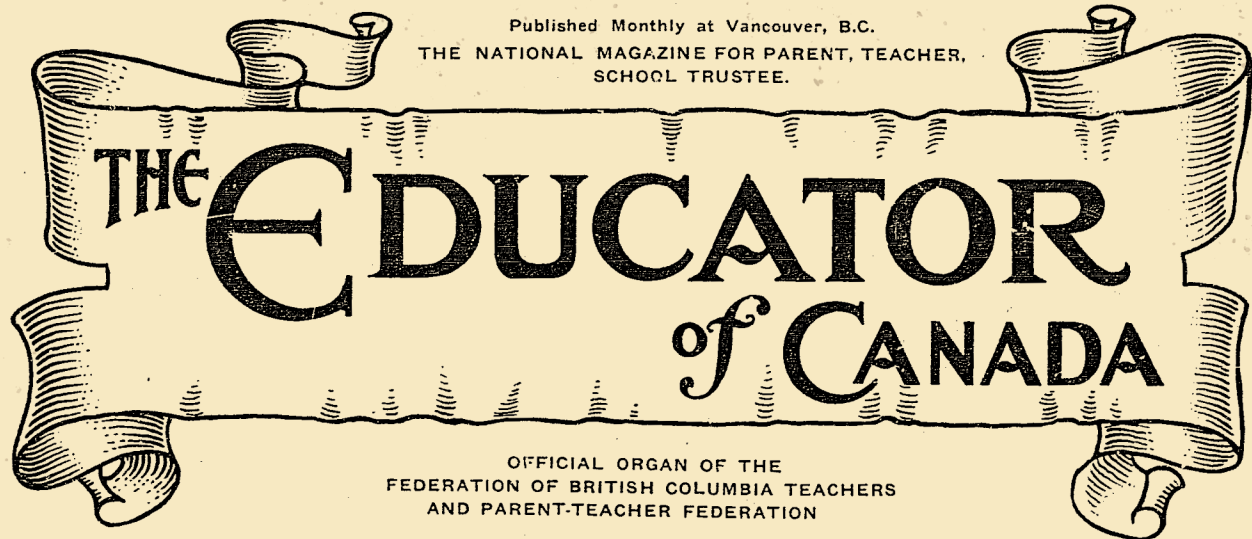
## **Better for investors, better for society**

This result of this shareholder proposal isn't just about making Canadian history; it is part of the BCTF's ongoing commitment to create long-term value for companies, the BCTF members whose money is being invested, and society as a whole.

As a risk-management tool, share-holder engagement helps investors better understand and mitigate avoidable risks. It can also improve the financial value of a company by focusing on previously underaddressed risks and opportunities, sharing best practices, and signalling to management that shareholders support an economy that is sustainable, inclusive, and productive.

While BCTF members across the province are working in schools to support future generations, SHARE and the BCTF are working in company boardrooms to support better investments. •

Published Monthly at Vancouver, B.C.  
THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR PARENT, TEACHER,  
SCHOOL TRUSTEE.



# Teachers Demand Public Recognition

An Address Given at the Annual Convention of the Federation of B.C. Teachers

By Dr. Sedgewick, University of B.C.

...The lecturer then dwelt upon the professions that had risen in public opinion. "Medicine has gone up fully 1,000 per cent.; law lost a little (perhaps it could afford to); engineering, a new profession as far as the interest of the great mass of men is concerned, in one generation has gone up by leaps and bounds. And dentistry, once despised, is now so rapidly advancing that the growth can actually be watched," and he drew the comparison that, "School-teaching has not only remained stationary, but in comparison, has gone down." This condition, the lecturer told the teachers, was, partly—largely—their own fault, for while other professions had deliberately set to work and by conscious effort raised their status. "The teaching profession has never," he said, "at least until recently, set itself to acquire a professional consciousness, a regard for itself as a profession, a pride and sense of its worth and dignity, and importance in the community." The speaker

spoke of the importance of the work undertaken by the Federation in its efforts to "weld the teachers of the province into a body conscious of itself as a great body, with duties to self and state, and a duty to acquire professional ethics."

In continuing his address Professor Sedgewick stated that though there might be many contributory causes, the basic cause to which the low status of the teaching profession must be ascribed was an economic one—an insufficient salary. "There is no use in holding forth the worth of service," said the speaker, "if there is not sufficient reward to enable man or woman to hold up his head in community. You can't expect to attain any status while not enabled to live in decency and dignity. Salary is behind it all and what we have to do is to set our teeth against opposition and see that this first essential is obtained.



"Lost Leaves"

## EDITOR'S NOTE

One hundred years ago, Dr. Garnet Sedgewick, Department Head of English at UBC and a past Vancouver high school teacher, delivered an address to the BCTF AGM discussing the insufficient salary of teachers. What would he say if he knew in 2020 we were ninth in the country for salary?

Read Dr. Sedgewick's further thoughts on the dearth of male teachers and the full January 1920 issue at [bctf.ca/history/collections/teacher.aspx](http://bctf.ca/history/collections/teacher.aspx).





## Learning more about First Peoples principles

**Review by Sara Florence Davidson**, Assistant Professor,  
Teacher Education Department, University of the Fraser Valley  
**Published by Mckellar & Martin, 2018**



**IN THE FLIPBOOK** (two books published back-to-back),  
*The Journey Forward: A Novella on Reconciliation*,

Richard Van Camp and Monique Gray Smith have created two complementary teaching stories about young people who are struggling to make sense of the impact of Canadian history and contemporary realities for Indigenous peoples.

In Van Camp's story *When We Play Our Drums, They Sing!*, twelve-year-old Dene Cho seeks guidance from Elder Snowbird to overcome his anger and reconnect with his ancestral knowledge, and in Gray Smith's story, *Lucy & Lola*, twin eleven-year-olds Lucy and Lola spend the summer with their grandmother and learn more about their mother's and grandmother's experiences at residential school. Both stories explore the long-lasting impact on the children

and grandchildren of residential school survivors while demonstrating how connections to ancestral knowledge can promote healing. The characters from each story are from different nations, which emphasizes the diversity between Indigenous peoples. Through these characters Van Camp and Gray Smith share different understandings of what true reconciliation really means and define reconciliation in ways that may be less familiar to some Canadians.

Van Camp's story embeds Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies that BC educators may recognize as aligned with First Peoples principles for learning, illustrated in ways that emphasize the deeper significance of these principles. Gray Smith's story provides readers with a glimpse into the role of spiritual understandings in healing intergenerational trauma. Both stories are suitable for Grade 5 and up. •

# Looking for new games and activities for your students?

Review by Kerry Richardson, retired teacher  
Published by New Society Publishers, 2019



**CO-OPERATIVE GAMES** and activities have come a long way. The revised and updated third edition of

*Everyone Wins!* may be compact, but it's packed with ideas—far more than one might expect from such a small book. The authors Josette and Ba Luvmour have laid things out simply and logically to help the teacher/leader easily select a suitable activity or game according to categories:

- activity level—from very active to least active
- age—all games are indexed by age at the back of the book
- location—indoors or outdoors
- size of the group.

I am impressed with this book and intend to buy myself a copy for family get-togethers and picnics at the park or beach. If we get rained out and decide to stay indoors, we can select games with a lower activity level.

With students in elementary school, I might use this book in the following instances:

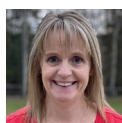
- When I want students to move together for a purpose while communicating in a way that improves their social skills.
- To enhance a science lesson, for example, to create a scene to demonstrate a natural process.
- To help students meet and connect with new classmates to successfully pursue an activity.



Readers will not, of course, use every idea, but there is an abundance of tried-and-true games and activities presented simply, and all easily adaptable, that I believe teachers, youth leaders, and parents would benefit from keeping a copy of *Everyone Wins!* near at hand. •

## Inspiring kindness in students

Review by Maria Dawson, teacher, Quesnel  
Published by Library and Archives Canada, 2019

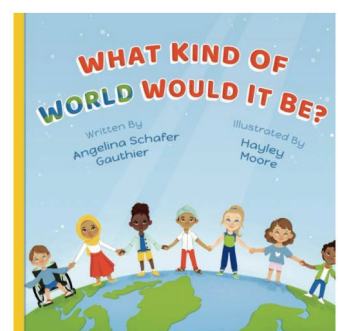


**THE BOOK** *What Kind of World Would It Be?* by Angelina Gauthier is a thoughtful, well-written

book that poses the question of personal kindness to primary-aged students. The book is written in a playful, rhyming way that makes it perfect for an elementary read-aloud. Both the wording and illustrations demonstrate inclusive environments, showcasing students with different ethnic backgrounds. The author uses several feeling words (e.g., agitated and respectful) that build on social-emotional awareness. As a result, this book lends incredibly well to current social-emotional programs like Second Step, Bucket Filling, and The Zones of Regulation.

The pages in this book are filled with bright, beautifully illustrated pictures by Haley Moore. These illustrations portray a wide range of emotions that make it clear for students to connect the words with the feelings. Backgrounds in the book are thoughtfully drawn to include everyday acts of kindness, like helping a friend or recycling garbage, sending reaffirmation that even the simplest gestures can be kind.

*What Kind of a World Would It Be?* is available on Amazon for the very reasonable price of \$12. It is a welcome addition to any class as a read-aloud or in primary classes for a read-to-self or someone book. Some of the wording may be trickier for the lower grades, but the picture clues and addition of rhyming words will allow for several hints that students



can use to decode. As a new Grade 5 teacher, I have found that this book worked into my core competency lessons as a read-aloud with reading responses. My students loved to look for the kind clues throughout the book, and we had a class challenge to count them all and recreate as many as possible in our class. •





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### T1D

MEANS INSULIN  
DEPENDENCY FOR LIFE

DIAGNOSED AT ANY AGE

THREATENS DEVASTATING  
COMPLICATIONS

DEMANDS METICULOUS  
PLANNING TO AVOID  
LIFE-THREATENING  
SITUATIONS

### T1D is not

A LIFESTYLE DISEASE

SOMETHING YOU OUTGROW

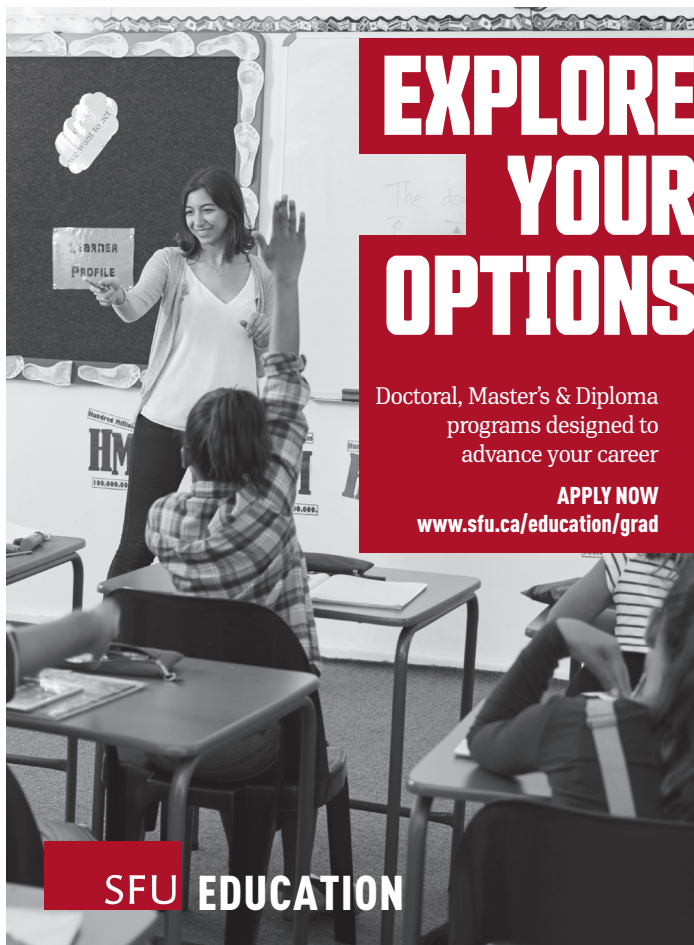
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#### Contact:

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