



Walking Together in the warm land of the Cowichan Valley

Mill Bay Nature School Q'shintul newsletter



We acknowledge that for thousands of years the Malahat, Lake Cowichan, Quw'utsun, Halalt, Penelakut, Stzuminus, & Lyackson Peoples have walked gently on the unceded territories where we now live, work, learn, and play. We seek a new relationship with the first peoples here, one based in honour and respect, and we thank them for their hospitality.

Beginning - NOV. 2020

★SCHOOL PHOTOS are going to be ready this week★ Wednesday is Remembrance Day★

Introducing the formal Practice of Witnessing ...

As we become more aware and attuned to aspects of Hulquiminum Culture, we have been working to live/to enact them in our 'village'. Some examples are: our circle pedagogy (*how we do things*); the space for all voices to be heard (*an ethic of equality through dialogue, voting*); cultivating deep respect for elders and knowledge keepers (*even when they are not present*); care and attention to the land/the natural spaces/animal relations (*where we live, work, play*); honouring each person and highlighting the gifts each brings our 'village' (*birthday honouring circle/chair*). **Witnessing** - to record the message of the event in hearts and minds, and afterward, remember and validate the special occasion by carrying the message and sharing it with friends, neighbors and community members (<https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1069068ar>) - **is a powerful practice** viewed by staff in the Big House, introduced to us by Tousilum, and commenced at MBNS by the Smuqwa Clan during our Towne Halls this year. Raven is also beginning to witness and then document "**astonishing stories of growth and development**" to send to families; she is realizing how many stories are not being shared, which need to be, are calling to be. *As a staff we are also beginning to understand reporting to parents and communicating student learning as actually being witnessing ... we wonder where this beautiful practice will take us ... and the fruit it will produce in our community.*

Don't forget Learning MAPS ...

Learning MAPS provide helpful shared information for all the adults who support your child. We take the time to read each child's story, as well as parent dreams, concerns, and your child's strengths and needs - *at this point on their journey*. The following page of this newsletter is the series of questions which we have asked families to complete upon entering MBNS. **If you are new**, then please complete the entire form and return to your child's Clan Leader ASAP. **If you have already been a part of MBNS** and have completed the MAPS form, then, please complete the strengths and needs section of the form, and return to your child's Clan Leader ASAP. *If you would like a follow up meeting to elaborate or explain aspects of your child's story, please contact your child's Clan Leader and a Zoom meeting can be arranged.*

Witnessing your child's exploring & inquiring ...

Because we do not use paper as our primary technology, and instead use our bodies - hands, senses, minds - with documentation done in our journals which remain in our Clans, we want to invite parents to come and see, come and chat, come and witness so you can see the explorations and inquiries which emerge and we are engaged in on any given day. During COVID these visits must be regulated (following Provincial COVID guidelines) and so we ask that you let Kim know when you would like to visit, wear a mask at all times on our campus, and remain outdoors - a check in with Tanya upon your arrival is also important. We recognize this is not possible for all parents, and in the spirit of equity, each week Kim will be preparing a short film to share with families which will hopefully provoke some conversations at home so you will feel connected to your child's days in the MBNS village.

Emerging Needs/News in the MBNS Village

Until next time,

Q'shintul
(Walking Together),
Kim

- Our Move-A-thon funds have totalled \$8500 - WOW! Funds will be used to provide cover over our outside Clan Learning Spaces, as well as provide easels and other outdoor learning tools. #gratitude
- The Smuqwa bake sale raised almost \$650 - WOW! - which Kim said she would match ... so the PAC is helping us out #gratitud
- Looking for - willow branches - to provide the 'bones' of a building project
- Looking for - wood scraps - to continue to develop our Dandelion loose parts
- Please remember to park your car *if you're needing to chat with your child* during drop-off or pick-up to prevent clogging the bus lane