

Connect Charter School

The Spectrum

March 2018

Principal's Message: Dr. Phil Butterfield

Greetings Connect Families;

February has been another busy month for Connect. The Urban Jungle Book production that took place on February 7th and 8th provided a poignant and often humorous glimpse into the life of an adolescent coming to terms with his own grief and trauma. Our young performers, under the direction of Mrs. Melville and Mr. Bolen, provided us with four stellar performances, including one attended by the playwright and some of the original cast.

The staff retreat on Feb. 15-16, followed by the Family Day weekend, gave us an opportunity to reflect on the year so far and consider the successes and challenges of EXPO as well as modifications that will be incorporated next year. A wonderful attribute of our school community is that everyone feels comfortable asking difficult and challenging questions that lead to respectful discussions and informed strategies for growth.

We are pleased to share with our school community details of the upcoming Partners in Place activities. Partners in Place, and the sustainable learning opportunities that will emerge from these events, will be a tremendous advantage to Connect Charter School and the EXPO program.

In September, 2017, our school, along with our partners TsuuT'ina Education Department, Mount Royal University, and the Outdoor Council of Canada, applied for a Calgary Foundation grant to support a multi-faceted program called Partners in Place. Prior to the winter break we received notification that our grant had been awarded in the amount of \$49,570.

What is Partners in Place?

April 9-18: An Indigenous artists-in-residence program, will provide programming for all students at Connect Charter School.

April 19, 12:30-2 pm, Presentation Powwow: Students from Connect Charter School and TsuuT'ina Education Department schools will congregate at Mount Royal University for a presentation (educational)



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Hello

MARCH



powwow. This event will be emceed by Hal Eagletail, with Elders and dignitaries from TsuuT'ina Nation, as well as performances by TsuuT'ina dancers, drummers, and singers. This event is open to all parents of Connect and TsuuT'ina students, MRU faculty and pre-service teachers, and Lakeview community residents. We will need many parent volunteers for this opportunity.

Please follow this link for details: www.volunteersignup.org/XLAKC

April 19, 6:30-8:30 pm: Parent Symposium: This evening presentation will feature a keynote address by Amy Demarest (ourcurriculummatters.com), who will lead a discussion on the four elements of place-based education - experience, subject, place, and service. Other speakers will include Albi Sole, Outdoor Council of Canada (discussing the roots of Physical Literacy), and Gloria Runner, an Elder from TsuuT'ina Nation. Refreshments will be provided.

Register at this link: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/partners-in-place-parent-symposium-tickets-43380844273>

April 20, 8am-4pm: Educators Symposium at Connect Charter School. The Partners in Place Educators Symposium is focused on place-based education and Indigenous ways of teaching, learning, and knowing. The symposium will be opened with a blessing from Vera Marie Crowchild, an Elder from the TsuuT'ina Nation. Keynote speaker Amy Demarest will lead a discussion of the four principles of place-based education (experience, subject, place, and service). This event is open to all educators in the Calgary area.

More information on Partners In Place will be distributed as it becomes available, but the potential benefits of this series of events on teaching and learning at Connect through EXPO will be significant.

*Phil Butterfield, EdD
Principal*

Board's Message

Some of you may have heard that Susan Chomistek is retiring in June of this year as the Connect Charter Superintendent. It is almost impossible to have not seen or met Susan around the school during her three years with us. Her friendly and outgoing personality shine through as she greets students and many parents by name as they enter the school or move through our hallways. I think everyone in the school community shares the Board view that we will miss her tireless efforts making sure Connect is a great place to educate students. She always ensures students come first while at the same time providing great leadership for the administration and teaching staff. I believe the only one sadder than us about Susan's departure is perhaps Susan herself.

I have been asked what a Superintendents role is. They are leaders in the school district that champion the school community and its vision. They do this in part by helping build relationships between our school and outside educational partners like universities, Alberta Education and the community in general. Within the school walls a superintendent is responsible for creating an environment where teachers and administration are challenged to continuously improve their educational practices. A great superintendent is also a lifelong learner themselves and so shares their personal passion for learning to all levels in the school right down to the students. They also help direct financial and human resources in a way that leads to the best results for students. This has been a tricky balancing act over the last few years when we have seen several small budget cuts force us to make some tough decisions on how we spend our allocated grant money. Susan has done an outstanding job fulfilling all these roles and more for Connect.

We have changed Superintendents 5 times in the last 19 years and so this will not be unfamiliar territory. The search will be conducted by a committee from the board that will work alongside Susan. During the next 6 to 8 weeks the position will be advertised followed by interviews of shortlisted candidates and a decision announced about a month after that. Susan's vast experience and knowledge of education will be an important resource for the Board committee. I cannot think of a better person to guide us through this change.

Developmental Boys Basketball Team

The Developmental Boys Basketball Team is open to any boys in grades 7-9. This team is all about learning fundamental basketball skills, like dribbling, passing, shooting and defense, in a fun environment. This year saw 16 grade 7 boys join the team. Some members brought previous experience playing team basketball to the group while others were trying organized basketball for the first time. In addition to practicing twice weekly, the boys have played 4 games which saw them steadily apply their newly-learned skills on the court. The season will wrap up shortly with a team 3 on 3 tournament and pizza party. It's been a pleasure introducing so many players to the sport of basketball and see their hard work lead to new skills and confidence. Way to go, boys!

Senior Boys Basketball Team

The senior boys basketball team has had a successful season and enter the playoffs with a 7 and 2 record – good enough to be the number 3 seed as the playoffs start next week. The tryouts for this year's team were very well attended with over 30 boys vying for spots. The competition to make the team was fierce and that has been reflected in the boys' level of effort and intensity in both games and practices. More importantly, the boys have continued to improve throughout the season and even if they don't always box out as much as they should, their decision making, attitude and skills have all grown considerably. The team is peaking at the right time and with three good games have a shot at bringing another championship banner to Connect. Well done this year, gentlemen, and for the last time for some of you, Lasers on two, One, Two, LAZERS!

Fort Calgary Mural Project

Fort Calgary is bringing together local students of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous backgrounds to create a mosaic mural that will be displayed within a hallway of the Fort Calgary National Historic Site. The mural will represent the realities of the past, present and future for Indigenous people in Canada. Students will have the opportunity to design visual interpretations of three chosen inspiration pieces composed by Canadian Indigenous artists, with finalists chosen by both students and elders.

All participating students from a variety of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous schools will be involved with creating the final mural through the painting of tiles that will create the completed piece. Fort Calgary is also encouraging partnering schools to meet during the duration of the mural project to share knowledge and strengthen relationships.

Connect Charter School is currently involved with forging a relationship with Tsuu T'ina Nation, so it was only natural to partner with one of their schools. The Connect Charter School grade seven students will be working with Chiila Elementary's grade three/four students, which will encourage Connect Charter students to take on more of a leadership role.

"Once Chiila agreed to partner with us, we spent some time with their teachers brainstorming relationship building activities that we could participate in as we build toward the culminating project of the mural," explains grade seven teacher Heather Fawcett.

Recently, the schools came together for their first meeting. Half of the Connect Charter School grade seven students went to Chiila Elementary, while the other half of the grade sevens waited for a portion of the grade three/four students to arrive from Chiila Elementary. At both schools, students were paired up with their 'buddies' and the visiting students were taken on a tour. Later, students had the opportunity to share their ideas for the mural with each other as well as develop new ideas by listening to two additional inspiration pieces.

Teachers from both schools are meeting every two to three weeks to discuss new ideas, and the overall progress of the project. Future visits between the two schools may include snow shoeing or cross-country skiing, some buddy reading or writing, etc. The final contrition of the mural will happen later this year, but the date itself has yet to be determined.



Physical Education

The Phys. Ed. program continued with our field experiences in February with the Grade 4 & 5 Swim to Survive program at Southland Leisure Centre. All of our Grade 4 and 5 students had 4 hours of total time in the water and reportedly had a fantastic time. A huge thank-you to our parent volunteers for helping to facilitate this experience for our students.

The Phys. Ed. classes are in the middle of their climbing unit (Mr. Cadman) and fitness unit (Mr. Schmeichel). These units will take us all the way to Spring Break.

In mid-March, the Phys. Ed. Department will be welcoming two University of Calgary student teachers: Ms. Mercer and Mr. Alviar. We look forward to introducing them to the students. The Connect Basketball teams wind up their season with CAAA playoffs and a game against the Connect staff (later in March). Good luck to our Lasers.

Connect Badminton teams will begin their tryouts in early March – so please listen for announcements and keep an eye on the Phys. Ed. webpage.

Mr. Schmeichel and Mr. Cadman

Grade 4 Expo Lougheed House



On a recent EXPO trip, the grade four classes visited the Lougheed House where they were immersed in the point of view of people who immigrated to Canada to settle in the West in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Students had the opportunity to explore the stories of immigrants from a variety of countries by acting out short scripts provided by the Lougheed House. Each group acted out a skit pretending to be a family in another country discussing their reasons for moving to Alberta, and their hopes for their new lives. This allowed students to inquire about the hard decisions people had to make to leave their homes for a new life.

Students also considered the role of artifacts in helping to understand people's stories. The grade fours were able to work closely with the Lougheed House historians to determine what people brought with them on their journey to the West, and why. The most favoured part of the trip was the Lougheed House tour, which exposed the students to the realities of life in the 1890s if they were among the wealthy. Many students were surprised to see the realities of life at this time, they even had a telephone!

Grade four teacher Ivy Waite states that, "we are continuing this inquiry through an immersive simulation, where students have created their own personas and are exploring what it may have been like to settle in Alberta in 1890." Waite further explains how "the students are encountering a variety of struggles, incorporating their knowledge of simple machines in order to try and survive life on the Prairies."

After the Lougheed House experience, it was time for a special treat. To ensure students completed their daily physical activity, the grade fours hopped back onto the bus and drove to the Olympic Plaza downtown Calgary for an afternoon of skating fun. Overall, the students had an amazing time practicing active exploration to connect their learning to authentic experiences, which thoughtfully aligns with Connect Charter Schools inquiry-based practices.



Urban Jungle Book

Connect Charter School presented "The Urban Jungle Book" with 4 shows on February 7th & 8th to rave reviews. The cast and crew appreciate all the support they received from their friends and family. Thank you to everyone who came out to the show on the snowiest week of February! On opening night, we had the pleasure of having the playwright, Joe Slabe, and the original cast and director from StoryBook Theatre in the audience. Thank you as well to all the parents who volunteered and drove students for months to and from rehearsals. It was an incredible experience for all of us and we miss seeing each other every day. We became a close-knit group and made lasting friendships.



11 Spring Break Staycation Ideas to Enjoy with Kids

This year, skip the airport restroom lines and cross-country road trip meltdowns, and take your family on a spring break staycation in your hometown.

By: Angela Tague

There's nothing relaxing about a spring break vacation filled with travel delays, cranky kids, and overpriced food. This year, make your time off more enjoyable for everyone by investigating attractions close to your home. Fuel up the car, pack some snacks, and fill your week with a handful of these staycation ideas.

1. Connect with nature

You always whiz past the signs on the highway, now it's finally time to make the turn and see what's available at your nearby state park. Camping, fishing, swimming, horseback riding, nature centers, fire pits, trails, and playgrounds are just a few of the activities you can expect to find. If you have an RV, park it for a few days so you can soak in all the park has to offer. And, don't forget to pack the marshmallows.

2. Play all day

Sure, you've probably visited the local children's museum, but have you spent the entire day there? Did you let the kids try all the hands-on exhibits? Submerge yourself in a full day of play at the museum by taking tons of photos and stopping to enjoy a picnic lunch or snack outside the building when it's time for a break. Wrap up the visit with a quick trip to the souvenir shop for some cool stickers or a T-shirt.

3. Take a ride

Does your community have a bike trail system? Pack up the family, dust off the bikes in the garage, and plan a day of exploring the entire path. Or, rent a tandem with a baby seat. Look at a map before you go to plan plenty of stops for taking bathroom breaks, snacking, and admiring the views.

4. Enjoy the river

When you live in a river community, it's easy to take it for granted. Spring break is the perfect time to reconnect with the natural wonder by going for a local boat cruise, renting a paddle boat or canoe, or spending the afternoon fishing. If your family has a boat, dig it out of winter storage and take it for a spin.

5. Explore your creativity

Community colleges, art centers, and local organizations offer pay-as-you go art classes. As a family, try your hand at painting, making pottery, or taking photographs. Any of the activities help you bond as a family, and you end up with cool handmade mementos of your spring break staycation.

6. Plan a movie-a-thon

Is it a rainy, yucky day? Convert the TV room into a plush movie theater, complete with pillows, bean bags, and extra blankets to keep the whole family cozy. Prepare a menu of theater treats, such as hot dogs, nachos, shakes, and of course, hot

buttery popcorn. You can even invite a few friends over and make it a daytime party for the neighborhood kids. Having trouble deciding what to watch? Check out our "20 Best Movies for Families" list.

7. Make some crafts

You can fill a morning with glitter, colored paper, and scented markers. If it's nice outside, you can try one of these "10 Awesomely Messy Outdoor Activities for Kids" on the deck or patio, or if you're stuck inside, try one of these "9 Easy-to-Clean-Up Crafts for Kids." Or, encourage your children to create their own masks, drawings, or artwork to give to a neighbor. You can release your inner child and join in on the creative fun, too.

8. Take a tour

From bakeries to pizza places, several businesses in your community offer tours. After you see how things work behind the scenes, put what you learned into action at home. For example, if you saw a baker making huge batches of cake batter and cookie dough, show your kids how to make your famous chocolate chip cookies from scratch as you get messy together in the kitchen.

9. Try new food

No vacation is complete without eating something totally unexpected. Your staycation is the perfect time to book a table at that new Indian restaurant or try the pizza place with 101 toppings. Splurge and order the fancy mocktails for the kids and a decadent dessert for yourself.

10. Make a splash

It's probably too chilly for the local water park just yet, but you can book a night at a nearby hotel with an indoor pool and water recreation area. Take along the kids' favorite beach toys and a book to enjoy while they mingle with other kids in the water.

11. Do a park-hop

Do you have super energetic kids? Plan a day-long park hop, where you visit multiple playgrounds all in one day. Don't forget to incorporate parks with special features, like petting zoos or majestic fountains. Pack sunscreen and changes of clothes for little ones who tend to get extra messy.

This article is available from: <https://www.parenting.com/family-time/travel/11-spring-break-staycation-ideas-to-enjoy-kids>