



## **Indigenous Education School Plan 2020- 2021**

**1. School: Eagle Harbour Montessori**

**2. School Indigenous Education Committee Members: Erica Hardern, Trevor Kolkea, Debbie Tobin, Randeep St. Jaques (Parent Representative)**

**3. School Main Contact Person(s): Debbie Tobin [DTobin@wvschools.ca](mailto:DTobin@wvschools.ca)**

**4. Activities, events, speakers, presentations, projects etc. that have occurred at your location over the past two years:**

**2019-2020**

### **Orange Shirt Day:**

Starting with a school wide project around Orange Shirt Day the staff and students are encouraged to wear an orange t-shirt. All students will be learning about Orange Shirt Day and why we acknowledge the day. We will be using the following picture books:

- *Stolen Words*
- *Shi-shi-etko*
- *When I Was 8*

Orange shirts were made with messages inspired by the theme of “ Every Child Matters”. These messages were displayed throughout our school as a visual reminder. On September 30th we wore orange shirts to acknowledge the day and our prior learning. On October 1st we had Chaslynn and Donny Gillanders present to our lower elementary students about Aboriginal Peoples and residential schools as their parents are residential school survivors. The children also made bannock as well as a traditional hide and deer bone bracelet.

The upper elementary spent the day with an Elder from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

### **Upper Elementary Learning at Eagle Harbour Montessori:**



Through the fall, the upper elementary (intermediate) students at Eagle Harbour explored how Indigenous ways of knowing impacted how local governments make decisions. They spent a day with the District of West Vancouver staff where they learned about the issue of sea level rise on the North Shore through the lens of a Western democratic scientific perspective. Next, they spent a day on Maplewood Flats and then at Capilano University learning from Tsleil-Waututh Hereditary Chief Ernie George about the land as unceded territory and about the issue from an Indigenous knowledge perspective drawing on the history of the traditional territories passed down to him by his elders.

This allowed us to situate Indigenous government within the pantheon of government types and talk about how it does not fit well within the "three levels of government" paradigm. It also let us examine how the different lenses are useful for understanding the issue and engaging in action.

To supplement this, we did a novel study of Hannah and the Spindle Whorl, which explores the intersection of history and colonialism. This made a thematic link to how we understood the role colonisation had on shaping the kinds of decisions that are being made on our behalf today.

### **Whole School Learning at Eagle Harbour Montessori:**

We then moved into a school wide study about Africa. Through this study we made discoveries and connections about the Indigenous People of Africa and the First Peoples of Canada. These cross curricular connections not only strengthened and solidified our learning about the First Peoples of Canada but gave our students a broader view of the teachings and struggles of other Indigenous peoples around the world. We hosted a community Feast in February to celebrate our learning and shared our knowledge with our families.

Milton Randall was contracted to work with our students as they learned the traditional Djembe Drums. This learning culminated in an evening performance at the Feast for the families as well as a community drum circle. It was our wish to have 200 people drumming at the same time.

Our Vice- Principal was gifted a traditional First Peoples drum. The drum was made with the intention that the maker was giving it to her and Eagle Harbour Montessori School. Once the drum was completed she attended the awakening ceremony to make it her own. Once that was done the drum became the new bell for Eagle Harbour Montessori. It continues to be used each lunch hour to bring the children in and a daily reminder for us as we remember we are guests on this beautiful land that we live, learn, work and play.



As we moved forward with our learning this past year it was our intention to keep the First Peoples Principles of Learning as a living, breathing and guiding part of all that we do at Eagle Harbour.

We embarked on a new FESL this year. We chose *Identity and Belonging* as our main Inquiry. With this focus as our guiding torch we worked to develop our three year plan. We wanted to commission an artist to work with us to build a traditional cedar identity box for Eagle Harbour Montessori. This was in the very early stages of planning, as our school goals had a significant First Peoples focus as we moved forward.

## **2020/2021**

Starting the year with Orange Shirt Day grounded our school community in our Indigenous ways of Knowing and Learning. Our previous year of learning using The First People's Principles of Learning taught our school community to embed these principles into our everyday lives. The year began the way we ended 2019-20 with our weekly school wide drum circles. We had to be creative and find a way to drum that fell within the new COVID guidelines. We persevered and found ways to socially distance while drumming. We changed our school schedule to allow Ms. Harden to teach all of us at different times while staying within our school health and safety guidelines. Orange Shirt Day was more meaningful and authentic to our community in 2020/21 which was attributed to the seamless ways of learning and teaching that have become a part of the Eagle Harbour pedagogy. Click here to learn more about [Orange Shirt Day](#) from September 30th 2020 at Eagle Harbour.

Through our drum circles the children were authentically taking part in traditions that have been gifted to us. The children have come to intrinsically understand and recognize how our school community strives to follow the First People's Principle of Learning: "Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or certain situations."

Drumming has become an integral part of who we are at Eagle Harbour. We had the bells turned off and now signal the end of recess and lunch with a drum that was built by the school's Vice-Principal and gifted to Eagle Harbour for this very purpose. The students take turns using the drum which ensures every child shares the responsibility of safely ending recess throughout the year. To hear this drum call each day reminds us how important it is for us to be connected to the



land, the people who came before us and the people who's land we are so fortunate to work, play and live on each day.

As we moved through the year the community of Eagle Harbour was committed to exploring our identity. We embarked on an Identity Wall with one question “ What is your story? ”

We had subsets of questions for all to discover such as:

- What is the story of your name?
- What is your DNA? (dreams, needs and abilities)
- How are we connected to this place?
- How did we all land at Eagle Harbour?

Through this inquiry we hoped to embed memory, history and story into our everyday lives.

## **5. Action Plan for 2021/2022**

Our action plan is a continuous learning journey and is told through our school drum. The 2021/22 school year at Eagle Harbour started the way it ended in June of 2021 with a drum circle as the children entered the school grounds. With the discovery of 215 children by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc people in Kamloops our school like many others wanted to find a way to authentically honour and remember all the children who became the change makers that day and in the subsequent days to come.

As a school we felt honouring and remembering would need to be embedded in our culture and not be relegated to one day. The staff asked if each Tuesday for the rest of June we could start the day with a drum circle. As the children arrived they dropped their bags, found a drum, quietly joined the circle on field and used their voice to remember and honour. “Every Voice Matters” is a foundational pillar at Eagle Harbour.

What happened next was extraordinary. The community began to join in from afar with their voices and like the children if they didn't have a drum they used their hands to create the percussion sounds of the drum.

Organically drumming at Eagle Harbour has become a part of the foundation that guides and holds the learning up in our community. Our drum traveled with our Vice Principal to summer school and became the bell for the children who attended summer school. The drum told the story of our school and carried with it the First People's Principle of Learning: “Learning



involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or certain situations.”

As Orange Shirt Day approached this year and the first National Truth and Reconciliation Day was recognized our school worked together to further understand the significance of these days. The Upper Elementary students took an indepth look at residential schools with the novel “Fatty Legs” while the K’s and Lower Elementary students used a variety of picture books to further thier understanding. To honour both days we held a school wide drum circle, read “Awâsis and the World-Famous Bannock ” and then made Bannock.



With the help of our parents, district gardener, Nat’s Nursery and a grant from the World Wildlife Federation we have been working a piece of land at Eagle Harbour to bring it back to its original beauty. This piece of land is known as “ The Spirit Garden” in honour of all the children whose seeds never got the chance to grow. The garden is filled with Indigenous plants that bring healing and life. This year, with the help of the larger Eagle Harbour community, we will continue to work this land and the surrounding land to eradicate the non Indigenous invasive species and replace them with Indigenous species. Listen to [The Story of our Spirit Garden](#) by clicking the link.





Our extended Eagle Harbour community has become involved in our Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Ms. Harden has been asked to share our learning, songs, drumming and stories that we have been gifted to local Beaver groups and their families during their evening sessions.

Drumming at Eagle Harbour is an integral part of our whole school music curriculum. Music is scheduled in a way that all students can participate and have the opportunity to experience the gifts and expertise that Ms Harden has been given permission to teach and share.

It is our hope this year that each child along with a family member will build a drum that will stay at Eagle Harbour so our learning and stories can live on in the lives of those that come after us.

All of this learning is shaping our sense of community which in turn is contributing to our sense of belonging at Eagle Harbour.

## **6. How does your plan support the goals of the 2020-2025 Indigenous Enhancement Agreement?**

We continue to plan our school learning journey using the Indigenous Ways of Knowing as our guide. We use these ways of knowing to “inform and empower our teaching, learning and decision making” in what we feel is authentic and true to who we are as individuals and learners. Our school community has committed to continually educating those around us that these truths still exist today and it is our duty to make a better future for everyone.