

KNOX NEWS

June 2022

STORYTELLING IN FRENCH

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Letters to the Editor

We invite questions, comments, story ideas, as well as any general feedback you may have to the Knox News. Please email the editorial team at development@johnknoxbc.org

JOHN KNOX
Christian School

Knox News is produced by:

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Pictured on the Cover: Grade 5 students perform the French play "Arbre Ungali"

Back Cover Photo: Knox Walk 2022



PIEROGIES FOR UKRAINE

By Arusha Vegt, Development Director

Watching the events unfold in Ukraine over the past months has brought feelings of worry, anger and hopelessness to all of us. Students and staff at JKCS wanted to respond in a meaningful way, and Pierogies for Ukraine was born. Christian Studies and Foods Classes collaborated with the Missions and Outreach program to create a project that provided space to grieve and lament while giving us a way to actively support Ukrainians in a God-honoring way.

Before we could do anything, we needed to learn how to properly make pierogies. Principal Adam Wasik connected us with his neighbour and future JKCS grandparent Nataliya. She shared her story with us and demonstrated her pierogi making technique, which students filmed and made into an instructional video.

Nataliya was only planning on being in Canada for a short time to visit her son and his family, but while she was

here, the war in Ukraine broke out. She is glad to be safe here and spend more time with her family, but worries for her husband in Kiev, who is under 60 and cannot leave. She asks for prayer not just for her own family in Kiev, but for all the people in Ukraine whom she considers her brothers and sisters.

Once equipped with Nataliya's recipe and technique, students in Christian Studies classes began to produce quantities of

pierogies with different fillings. On a professional development day in April a group of parents came to make even larger quantities and shared a time of prayer and a delicious lunch of borscht made by parent Doris Jahanshahi. It was quickly evident that day that there are many pierogi making techniques in our parent population! Even after school, groups of students would come to the Foods Lab to continue honing their new skills and spend time together. All times of pierogi making included an opportunity to post prayers and laments on the doors of the Foods Lab.

Frozen and packaged in 1kg bags, these pierogis were offered for sale with proceeds going to the church of a JKCS family, the Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church in Vancouver. This church is supporting Ukrainians both here and abroad in many ways including sending money to churches directly supporting refugees in and around Ukraine, working with refugees trying to make their way to Canada, and supporting families arriving in the lower mainland with clothing, household goods, and groceries.

Thank you to everyone who donated ingredients, made pierogies, and purchased the final product. We continue to pray for peace and justice in Ukraine.

Photos:

Left: Beautifully made pierogies made by a JKCS parent (left), Pierogies and borscht (right).

Below: Parents Doris and Connie make pierogies (top), Food class making pierogies (bottom left), Students frying onions (bottom middle), Parents Jixiu and Sha Sha making dough (bottom right).



FRESH ROOTS FIELD TRIP

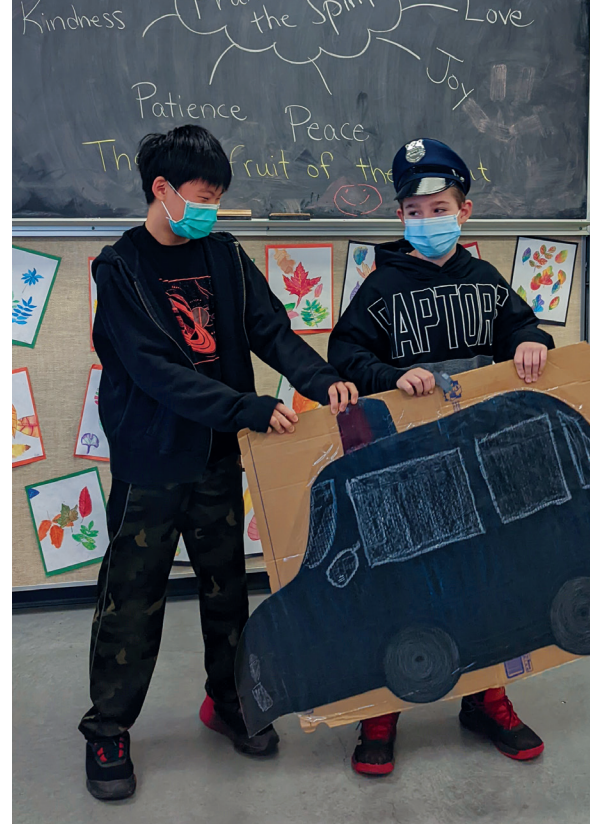
By Jodie Huen and Joyce Kwan, Grade 1 Teachers

Our Grade 1 class had a very action and learning-packed two hours at the Fresh Roots Farm at David Thompson Secondary. We searched for tiny treasures on the farm, dug for itty bitty soil friends, and used our imaginations to design mini farms. We also ate some delicious food on the farm that we harvested ourselves! Many students said that eating the fresh cabbage, baby radishes, and lettuce was their favourite part. We have never seen so many children so happy to eat their vegetables!

Photos:

Grade 1 students on a field trip at Fresh Roots Farm.





STORYTELLING IN FRENCH

By Vivian Lew, French Teacher

Bonjour la classe! Students taking French at the Elementary campus at John Knox are immersing themselves in the world of French storytelling through the learning, studying, and performing of plays. Grades 3 to 6 French classes at John Knox use the AIM Language Learning program that is based on stories and music for teaching French. Stories are written in the form of plays, and the vocabulary used within are the focus for a range of language activities that help students develop confidence, competence and fluency in French as they progress through each specifically designed story unit.

Along with the Gesture Approach, a technique that uses hand signs to

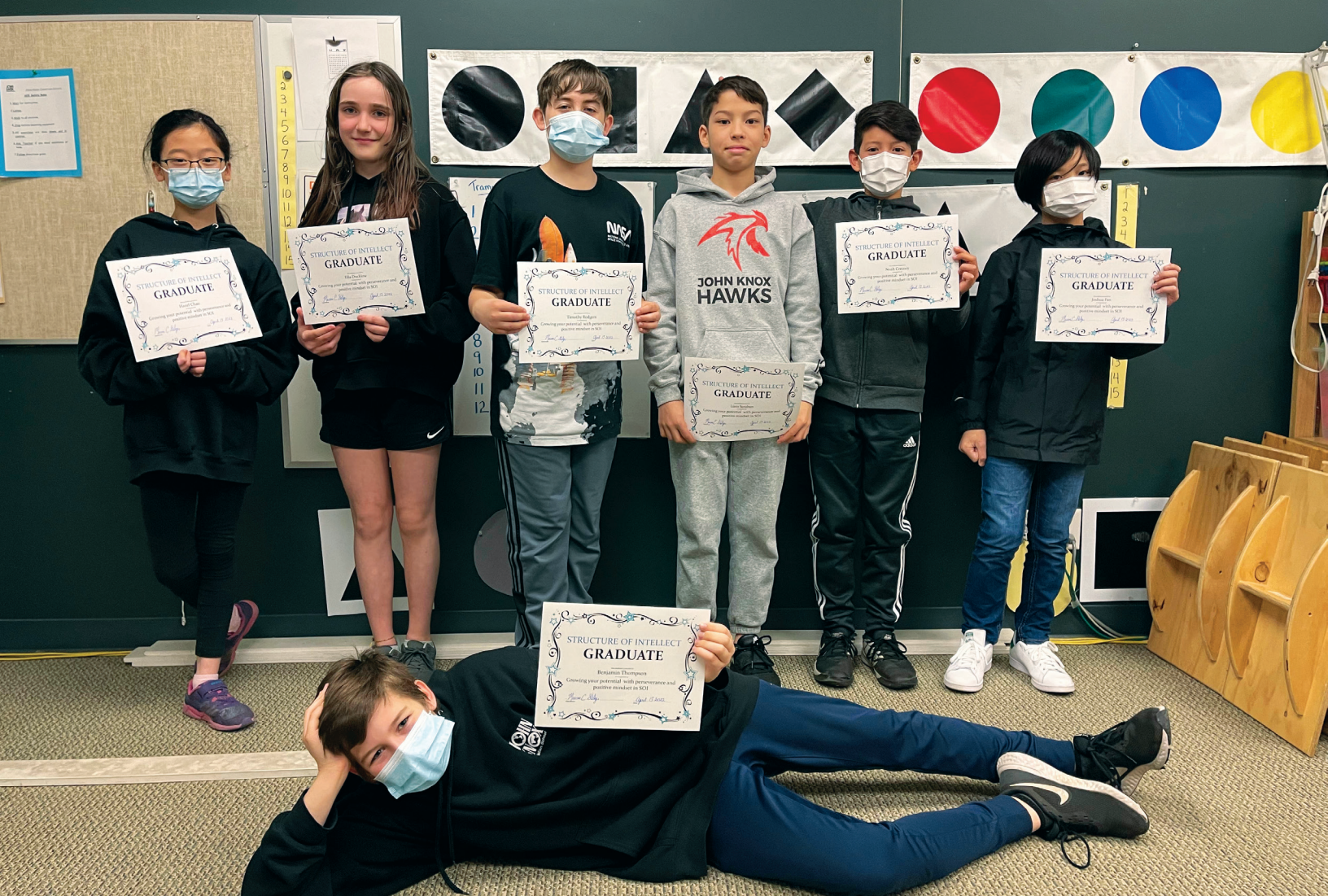
help students learn and remember vocabulary, the AIM Program allows language development to be supported and nurtured within the familiar and predictable context of stories. Through various activities, we work on the development of all four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Music is also integrated with the story, and in each unit, students learn to perform a play along with a dance. The vocabulary in each unit is carefully selected for students towards building a foundation during the beginning stages of French language learning.

The play presentations at the end of each unit give students opportunities to showcase their hard work in

internalizing proper pronunciation, meaning and expression. I love how students grow in fluency and work with others to improve while practicing in a group. Students have a feeling of accomplishment when performing (often in costume!) and also have the enjoyment of being an audience for the other groups in class. What a memorable way for students to build comprehension and become confident in speaking and using the French language!

Photos:

Grade 5 students perform the French Play
"Comment Y Aller?"



SPECIAL PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: STRUCTURE OF INTELLECT

CELEBRATING SOI

By Arusha Vegt, Development Director

Structure of Intellect (SOI) has been a significant part of JKCS's elementary campus for the past 20 years. The program is skillfully and lovingly headed by Marne Stelzer with support from many parent volunteers and

additional staff members over the years.

SOI works on the principle that the body, brain, eyes, and ears need to work together for a strong intellectual system. Having a strong physical base helps with focus, hand-eye coordination, and balance. Vision in

learning is not just about our technical eyesight. The eyes have to successfully scan text from left to right, not lose their place, and shift focus, like from your desk to the board. Each of us needs certain abilities in order to learn, whether it be at school, in our hobbies, or in our careers. The learning abilities SOI focuses on are

comprehension, memory, problem-solving, evaluation, and creativity.

The SOI journey begins with an assessment to get a snapshot of the student's learning abilities. Next, a learning profile is created highlighting learning ability strengths, areas in need of attention, and the student's dominant learning style. The real work begins once the student begins their individualized training program.

At JKCS, students often join SOI based on a teacher's recommendations. All students in primary grades will participate in whole-class exercises, and some teachers are even trained in SOI activities to use them regularly in their classrooms.

A visit to the SOI room at John Knox shows an orderly space filled with balance boards, computer work stations, posters with shapes, diagrams, and words, and even a small trampoline. Based on their individual

plan, students work independently or with an instructor on their activities which could include auditory and visual activities, workbooks, or structured physical exercises.

The JKCS SOI program has enabled many students over the years to reach their learning potential and gain confidence in their unique and God-given abilities. This year, we are thrilled that seven Grade 6 students are graduating from this program. In this edition of Knox News, we are grateful to hear from the experience of JKCS alumni, Olivia Kopp, along with her mother, Karen Bos, on how the SOI program impacted their lives.

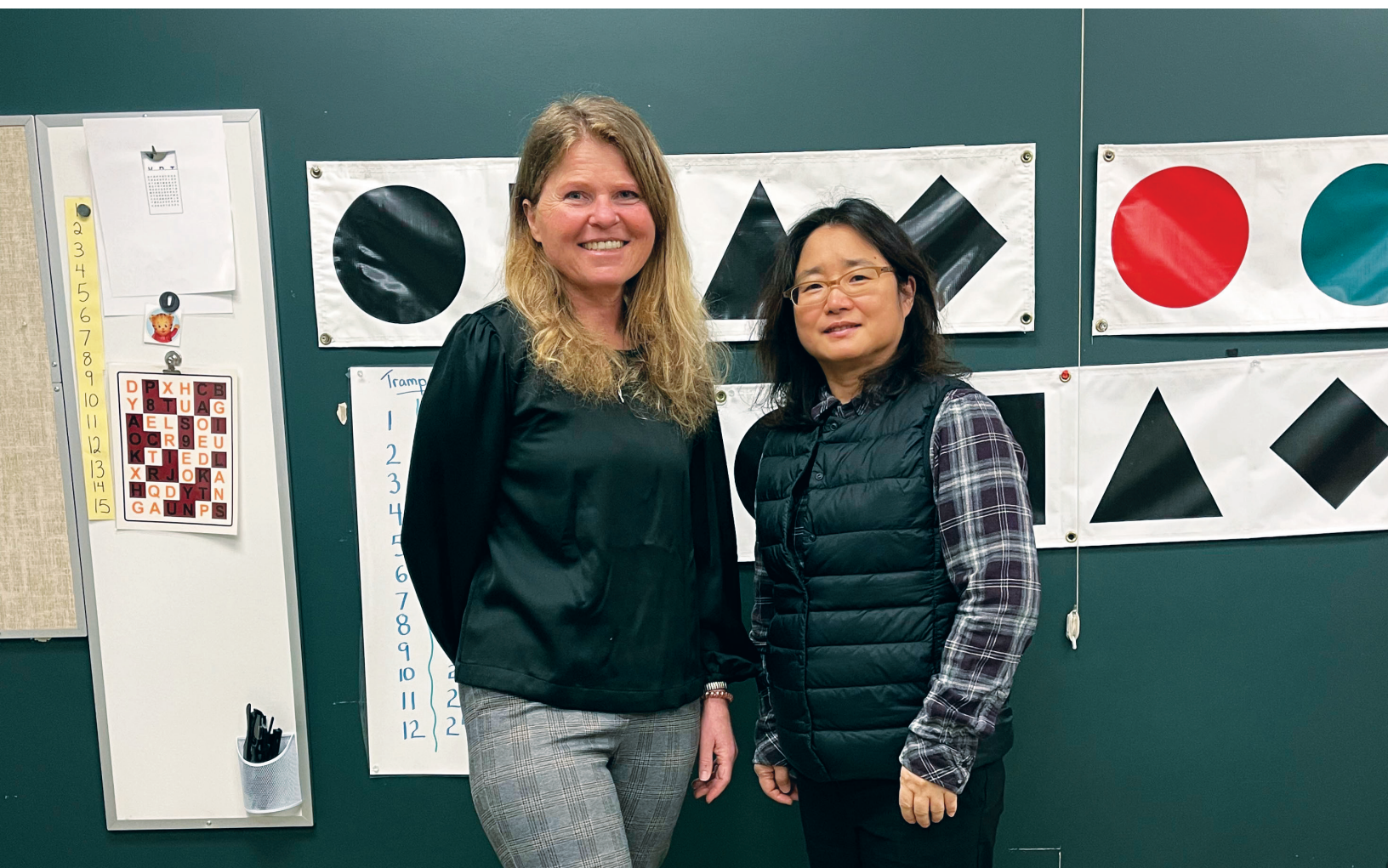
SOI: A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Olivia Kopp (nee Bos), JKCS alumni

I am an alumni of John Knox Christian School who struggled through the better half of my time there due to an undiagnosed learning disability. School had always been frustrating for me

since Kindergarten. I seemed to always be behind and everything seemed to be so much harder for me compared to the other children in my classes. I believe my teachers at the time must have chalked this up to my being born late in the year or perhaps just not being as intelligent as others.

The SOI program was relatively new to the school at that time and I was selected to be placed into the program due to my obvious struggles in the classroom. At the time I did not understand what it was or how it was helping me. Mrs. Wendy Perttula was running the SOI program then and she was the first one to really try to understand my learning problems. She suggested to my parents that I should see Dr. Shajani, a developmental optometrist. It was there that I was diagnosed with a visual tracking disorder amongst other eye problems (though my vision at the time was perfect).



School, and thus life, became so much easier after my diagnosis. The school did a great job of supporting my family and me through the year of vision therapy that was required to correct my eye problems. I was in Grade 7 at that point. Vision therapy, with the help of the SOI program, corrected my vision problems.

Suddenly school seemed much easier and more enjoyable. I went on to be a straight “A” student in high school, where previously I had just been scraping by with a “pass.” After high school I went on to obtain my Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Saskatchewan and am now practicing as a veterinarian in Victoria, BC.

I have often thought back to the beginning of my education and marveled at how far I have come. I truly believe that without the awesome teachers, the SOI program and the vision therapists I would not have the exciting career and life that I have today. I will be forever thankful to the wonderful staff and teachers at John Knox Christian School for helping me to identify my problem, so that it could be overcome. All glory be to God!



“I TRULY BELIEVE THAT WITHOUT THE AWESOME TEACHERS, THE SOI PROGRAM AND THE VISION THERAPISTS I WOULD NOT HAVE THE EXCITING CAREER AND LIFE THAT I HAVE TODAY.”

SOI: A MOTHER'S PERSPECTIVE

By Karen Bos, JCKS alumni parent

My daughter Olivia entered Kindergarten at John Knox as all 5-year-olds do in September, with excitement and anticipation. She seemed to thrive, but by the time she was part way through Grade 1 she began having difficulties. She was not handling school well; she would throw tantrums and hide under her desk or tear up her homework. Thus began a long struggle for both her and I with homework and projects; many battles and floods of tears. I could not understand what was wrong. I was struggling to help her get through elementary school, how were we ever going to get her through high school! I envisioned her dropping out.

Olivia was a smart child and loved to listen to stories but would not read them herself even though she knew the words. What I didn't realize was that the words on the page made no sense to her. A teacher new to the school, Mrs. Tanya Komori, had Olivia in her class for Grade 5. Within the first week Mrs. Komori asked me if there was something wrong with Olivia. My mother's heart went Yes!!! Finally, there was an acknowledgement that something was not right.

Thus began Olivia's entry into the SOI program which was then new at John Knox. Olivia went through all the testing and had extra support. Mrs. Wendy Perttula finally came to me and asked if I would be willing to take her to a special eye doctor in North Vancouver. Mrs. Perttula said that there was definitely something

happening and she could not help my daughter get through the wall they had encountered. I agreed and she went for in-depth testing that was totally fascinating.

Olivia, as it turned out, had a visual processing problem. She could see fine but what she saw was not registering in her brain correctly. It was as though she was reading through a straw and only seeing the center portion of a paragraph. In Grade 6 she read at a Grade 1 level. I pulled Olivia out of school for Grade 7 and we concentrated strictly on eye therapy. She made huge progress and by the end of the year was reading at a Grade 9 level!

After all the work with her vision therapy coach and the SOI program run by Mrs. Perttula, Olivia did finish high school, in fact 6 months early! She went on to attend UVic and complete 2 1/2 years of her Bachelors degree and then was miraculously accepted on the first interview to the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon. There are only 20 seats offered to people from BC and in her year 400 applied. She has since graduated and is a practicing veterinarian in Victoria.

Thank You to all the staff at John Knox for helping Olivia fulfill her dream.

Photos:

Previous Left Page: Grade 6 SOI students Hazel, Ella, Tim, Liam, Noah, Josh and Ben (on the floor)

Previous page: SOI instructors Marne Stelzer and Kyoung Kang.

Left: JCKS Alumni Olivia Koppe (nee Bos)



PEAK WEEK HIGHLIGHTS

By Arusha Vegt, Development Director

Grade 11 PEAK Week is 2 weeks dedicated to meeting Jesus out in the world. Students in past years would go on overseas trips to China, Thailand, or Costa Rica. This year was focused on serving Christ in a variety of ways close to home.

First, students ministered to a group of 27 kids at the MetroKids Klub with CLA Church in Langley through worship, skits, games, activities, and Bible stories. Next up was a beach clean-up at Crescent Beach that included times of team building and worship. The week continued with work at NightShift Ministries, Jacob's Well in the downtown eastside, A Rocha, and the JKCS student-led

initiative Operation: New Genesis. The week ended with a worship service at CLA Church.

This is a reflection from Grade 11 student Faith Fuhr:

"In the one week that we had together, our class grew a lot. Not only were we able to see how privileged we were, but we were also able to help those who needed us the most. We went to many places and each of those places taught us something different. By the end of the week, we had developed the skills to be servant leaders of God. This included growing closer to God with worship and spending time with his creation.

Being able to serve the Lord here in the Lower Mainland, helped us to grow closer together as a class. If we didn't go on this trip, our eyes wouldn't have been opened to the challenges that our community experiences daily and we wouldn't have been able to step into the shoes of others to learn what true empathy feels like."

Photos:

Students helping at Nightshift Ministries (top left), Students visiting A Rocha (top middle), Operation New Genesis pop up event (right), MetroKids Connexion Service (bottom)





Photos:

Left page: Kindergarten students celebrate 100 Day (top), Valentine's Day Candygrams (middle left), Grad Retreat (middle right), Senior chemistry (bottom left), Kindergarten students celebrate 100 Day (bottom right)

Right page: Grade 7 field trip (top left), JKCS bike repair club (top right), Junior science class makes Rube Goldberg machines (middle left), Grade 7 field trip (middle right), Library with Mrs. Hwang (bottom left), Grad Retreat (bottom right)



BUILDING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AT JOHN KNOX

By Kelly Blackmore, Teacher and Intermediate Coordinator

As a Christian educator, I often find myself thinking about an eternal perspective. How are our choices different when we all take a step back and think about the eternal and our place in God's kingdom? Restorative practices is one way of integrating eternal perspective

with teaching by equipping teachers and students with healthy ways of addressing conflict and entering into God's redemptive work.

I was first introduced to the concept many years ago as a novice teacher when I attended the Christian

Educators of British Columbia Conference. There, I happened upon a workshop led by Mark Nill and Kathy VanAndel, two educators from Surrey Christian School. In their workshop, Mark and Kathy shared strategies and program ideas for teachers to incorporate restorative practices into

their classrooms. They also shared the successes that schools had found by implementing, supporting, and incorporating restorative strategies into the very framework of their school communities.

Restorative practices is a way of thinking and being that is focused on creating safe spaces for conversations that deepen relationships and build stronger and more connected communities, particularly in instances of conflict. The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) was created in response to a number of concerns being raised among schools in the United States regarding student behaviors, classroom management, teacher and student burnout, and community building struggles.

Restorative practice works to proactively create living and accountable communities in our classrooms. These practices work to hold students responsible for their actions, yet focus not on retribution or retaliation but on the restoring of relationships. It mirrors our own walk with Christ in the creation, fall, redemption, and restoration schema. It also allows space for those who were hurt to share how they feel and how they were hurt and what that hurt did to them. Perpetrators are then able to hear the effect of their actions and with the guidance of our teachers, walk through the process of

reconciliation and restoration of that relationship. Rather than punishing, neglecting, or condoning conflict, teachers guide the students to work with each other to come to resolution.

Last summer, when staff and students were preparing to return to school in the middle of a seemingly endless pandemic, we recognized the need for these approaches. We looked for ways to empower teachers and students to build strong classroom communities, communities full of grace and forgiveness knowing that hurt and conflict would still creep their way into our classrooms. We reached out to Mark Nill for his expertise to help our school integrate restorative practices.

In August of 2021, Mark and Kathy led staff at the high school and elementary school campuses in an “Introduction to Restorative Practices” which provided teachers with tools and strategies to strengthen relationships and repair harm in a way that builds community. The framework training emphasizes proactive strategies for building strong relationships, engaging with students, and addressing incidents of harm and hurt. Teachers spent time working through ways of setting high expectations while being supportive of student growth, learning how to provide direct feedback and ask questions that foster accountability and model some of the most effective

methods to resolve conflict.

Mark and Kathy visited us again in January for a follow up to their first session. Since then teachers and staff have worked hard to incorporate the practices, strategies, tips, and tools into their classrooms and school community.

At JKCS, through integrating restorative practices, we are now beginning to see the formation of cultures of care, and communities of learning, where students are more in tune with how their actions affect others and what they can do to right their wrongs in a way that builds our communities and allows for growth and friendships. Teachers feel equipped to ask the right questions and empowered to hold class meetings and sharing circles. Whole class struggles can be addressed, but also successes can be shared and celebrated. Students can be heard asking, “Do you know how that made me feel?”, “I hear you,” and “I’m sorry.” While we are far from finished incorporating restorative practices into the JKCS community, we have begun the work. Our students and staff are excited to continue to work towards incorporating these practices into the very bedrock of our John Knox community.

Photos:

Students in grade 4 take part in a circle exercise at the end of the day

“THROUGH INTEGRATING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES, WE ARE NOW BEGINNING TO SEE THE FORMATION OF CULTURES OF CARE, AND COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING, WHERE STUDENTS ARE MORE IN TUNE WITH HOW THEIR ACTIONS AFFECT OTHERS AND WHAT THEY CAN DO TO RIGHT THEIR WRONGS.”



KNOX WALK 2022

By Arusha Vegt, Development Director

In many ways, the 17th annual Knox Walk felt like the first. It was the first time doing the Knox Walk together in person after a two-year pandemic break. It was the first time secondary students followed their own route to Queen's Park to meet up with elementary students. And it was the

first time that we had a really lofty goal of \$100,000.

Students met this challenge head on. In the weeks leading up to the walk, neighborhoods were dotted with lemonade and cookie stands on weekends, crafty grade 3 student

Abigail made beautiful bookmarks for sale, and students phoned family around the country and knocked on neighbours' doors. The Knox Walk raises money for important needs at each campus, like playground upgrades and rooftop safety netting, as well as supporting Journey Home, a local

organization offering housing and community to recently arrived refugees.

Another first was a new incentive – if students reached their goal, both campus principals would have their heads shaved during chapel. It was nerve wracking watching the total slowly inch upwards, but at the last moment we surpassed \$100,000 by a mere \$6.55! At the elementary campus, Mr. Rodgers tried valiantly to escape the gym before having his head shaved in front of a jubilant audience of students. The honour of shaving Mr. Wasik went to Cameron D-F, the secondary student who raised the most money. Next year, athletic director Mr. Loro says we can shave

his head, but only if we hit the million-dollar mark!

Students, staff and parents were proud to represent Christ and JKCS throughout Burnaby and New Westminster on our 5km walk. We were generously supported by the New Westminster Police Department who literally stopped traffic for our student walkers, and by the wonderful staff at Queen's Park who were excited to see the sea of red march through their park once again.

A huge thank you to students who worked so hard to raise money and then go on their long walk, to the parents and staff who supported them, to our

kind JKCS donors, and to our loving God who is the giver of all good things.

See you at the Knox Walk next year!

Photos:

Left Page: Students walking around Queen's Park at the 2022 Knox Walk

Right Page: Secondary principal Adam Wasik getting his head shaved by Grade 8 student Cameron (top left), Elementary vice-principal Jacob Rodgers after his head was shaved (top right), New Westminster police office stopping traffic for JKCS students (bottom left), Mrs Beyer (bottom middle), the Queen's Park Cheering Station (bottom right)

Photos by: Patrick Ng, Rozsika DenHaan and Duran Cheung





SECONDARY MUSIC AT JOHN KNOX

By Cara Lau, Music Teacher

Music is a big part of our school and something that many students are excited about each year. We wanted to highlight the various ways our students are learning music at John Knox.

CONCERT BANDS

Our secondary school has three bands. All Grade 7 students are part of the Grade 7 band, which is a course. Usually students would have had one year of band in Grade 6 and already chosen an instrument, although some may want to switch. The Grade 8 concert band is an elective, but is still a class within the regular school timetable. The senior band is for students in Grades 9-12 and is an elective course that meets outside of the regular school timetable. They practice twice a week for 1 hour and focus on concert band literature, including movie and pop music.

Next year, our Concert Band will resume attendance at local music festivals, including the Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival. We also hope to resume travel with the Senior Band and Choir to the Whistler Music Festival, which is a 3-night trip to Whistler, where we have performances and workshops with other bands and choirs from across BC.

All three bands will perform at the Christmas and Year End Concert.

CHOIR

Our secondary school has two choirs: Concert Choir and Senior Vocal Ensemble. The Concert Choir is open to all students and is a fully elective course. They practice twice a week, once in the morning before school, and once after school, both for 1 hour. In Concert Choir we focus on foundational singing skills and making music together, and no previous experience is required to join. We explore a variety of genres and styles and students have the opportunity for cross-grade friendships and mentoring within the choir.

The Senior Vocal Ensemble is an elective course for students who have prior choir experience and based on teacher recommendation. This is a smaller ensemble consisting of between 6-12 students. They meet after school for one 2-hour rehearsal per week and focus heavily on independent part singing. Students sing “on-system” with microphones and the repertoire includes a cappella, jazz

and pop arrangements. This group also has opportunities for additional community performances, such as providing background music at fundraising events.

Next year, our choirs will resume attendance at local music festivals, including the Vancouver Kiwanis Music Festival. We also hope to resume travel with the choirs and Senior Band to the Whistler Music Festival, which is a 3-night trip to Whistler, where we have performances and workshops with other bands and choirs from across BC.

STRINGS CLUB

Our Strings Club is a very strong ensemble and is not a course for credit. Students in the Strings Club have prior experience (e.g. a few years of private lessons) and meet once a week, usually before school, to practice for 1 hour. The Strings Club offers opportunities for student-led initiatives and a select number of students who take it as a course (with teacher approval) will conduct a piece at the concert or be given extra solos in performances. One of our student leaders from Strings Club was accepted into Julliard for violin this year!

JAZZ BAND CLUB

Our Jazz Band did not meet this year but we are hoping to restart it in the 2022-2023 school year. Its aim is to introduce students to the jazz genre and it's recommended that students have at least 2 years of band experience before joining as it is not beginner level. The Jazz Band meets after school once a week for 1 hour of practice.

WORSHIP TEAMS

We encourage students to get involved and participate in worship teams. Students with skills in piano, guitar, drums, bass, vocalist, or other instruments such as strings or concert band instruments, are welcome to join. Rehearsals are outside of school time, often during lunch or after school.

JUNIOR GUITAR CLASS

The Junior Guitar Class is a new class that started this year as a Grade 9 music elective. It is an experience-based course with the aim to introduce students to a new skill and teach them enough that they can jam with some friends or join the church worship team. The class meets twice a week for 12 weeks within the school timetable and by the end of the course, students will know about 7 chords, which is enough to play thousands of songs. Students can either use the school's guitars or bring their own from home. This class does not hold performances.

BCMEA PROVINCIAL HONOUR CHOIR

Each year, the BC Music Educators' Association hosts Provincial Honour Ensembles for Concert Choir, Concert Band, Jazz Choir, and Jazz Band. This year we had a few students audition for the Honour Concert Choir. If the students are accepted, they will come together with other accepted students in October for 2-3 days for intensive rehearsals with a guest clinician, culminating in a performance on the final evening. We should find out soon if these students have been accepted!

CHRISTMAS CONCERT & YEAR-END CONCERT

JKCS puts on two big community concerts every year – one in December, and one in June. Usually held in the school gym, these concerts feature all of our bands and choirs, as well as the strings, with each group performing 2-3 pieces. These concerts are open to all family and community to celebrate our student accomplishments.

Photos:

Left: Strings ensemble (left), Choir students (right)

Below: Grade 8 band students (left), Choir students (right)





JOHN KNOX HAWKS UPDATE

By *Christian Loro, Athletic Director*

The athletics program at John Knox has been busy this spring with three out of our four core sports (Volleyball, Basketball, Badminton, and Ultimate) taking place. It's been extra exciting this year as all the sports are playing games again. We are also looking forward to our Athletic Banquet which we have not done since 2019 and will also be the first one hosted in our new building. We have many students who are multi-sport athletes, playing two or more sports in

a year – however, we make sure they don't overcommit so that they have time and energy to focus to their academics. We look forward to celebrating all our athletes at the banquet.

BASKETBALL

After a year without games due to COVID, it was fantastic to see players back and playing games again. Many students, both boys and girls, took the

year off seriously and really developed their game and improved their skills. This year we had 5 teams: Junior Girls, Bantam Girls, Junior Boys, Bantam Boys, and the Senior Boys. The Junior Boys team lost in the quarter finals this year and the Senior Boys finished 3rd, losing by 1 point at the buzzer in the Zone semi-finals to end the season. The basketball season wrapped up in February.

BADMINTON

This year we had four badminton teams who practiced twice a week during the season. All four teams did well with the Grade 7 team finishing 3rd overall in their elementary school championships, the Bantam team (Grade 8) finishing 2nd in the league championships, our Junior team finishing 3rd in the league championships, and our Senior team finishing 3rd and winning Most Sportsmanlike Team in the league championships. A couple of our athletes also won individual medals. Big congratulations to Nicole Li and Wendy Song for their respective gold and silver medals in Girls Singles at BC Christian Schools Senior Badminton Championship. Nicole also made history as the youngest female singles badminton champion at the senior championships.

ULTIMATE

We had a great Ultimate season this year with one senior team (Grades 8-12) and 25 amazing players who are all learning how to play the game well. We saw many small wins and some tough losses but we had lots of learning experiences. We played against some tough competition where we learned a lot which puts us in a better situation for next year. The

Ultimate team practices twice a week with league games every Friday, along with some tournaments. The future is exciting for our Ultimate team!

TRACK & FIELD

The Middle School track team (Grades 6-8) met with other Christian Schools on May 16 in Abbotsford. Students who wanted to compete joined the team.

GOLF TEAM

This year, JKCS had a golf team for the first time. It was a demonstration year to gauge interest and see what the students thought of it. All our players had some prior experience and their own equipment. On May 16 we played our only match of this season for the Fraser North Zone Championships. Our team consisted of 5 golfers from Grade 8-11 and played 18 holes in 5 hours. We played Maple Ridge Christian school in the final and lost by 6 strokes, which was really close, especially since our opposing team was all Grade 12 students. Our team was disappointed by the loss but are looking forward to next year when we will grow the team and add in more practice time.

COACHES NEEDED

Do you have a passion for youth and want to use sports to inspire and help

students grow into better versions of themselves? Are you a person of faith who loves motivating and teaching young people? Come join us! We are looking for coaches for all our sports teams next year - Volleyball, Basketball, Track & Field, Cross Country, Badminton, and Ultimate.

Time commitment varies for each sport and ranges from 1-3 practices a week, with 1-2 games per week for basketball and volleyball, as well as tournaments and meets sprinkled throughout the season. Application form can be found at: athletics.johnknoxbc.org/jkcshawks/CommunityCoachingApplication. Please email Mr. Loro (cloro@johnknoxbc.org) if you are interested and/or have any questions.

Photos:

Left Page: Senior badminton team with 3rd place and Most Sportsmanlike Team trophies (left), Junior basketball team finishing 2nd place in Knox Ball invitational (top right), Senior ultimate team at the BC Ultimate Senior Invite in Surrey (bottom right) Below: Senior badminton team (left), Track and field team (right)





STAFF RETIREE BOOK CLUB

By Arusha Vegt, Development Director

“Why would I miss John Knox?
I have John Knox right here!”
says retired JKCS kindergarten teacher
Wil deKleer.

Looking around Wil’s artistically decorated living room full of retired staff, I can see what she means. It looks – and sounds! – like the elementary staff room from 10 years ago.

I’m a guest today at the April meeting of the JKCS Retirees Book Club, also known as the LLL, Laughing Ladies of Literature, as it was jokingly named at its inception by former ESS Coordinator Mabel Sluis. It’s an appropriate name. With all the laughing, conversation, and gezelligheid (Dutch for a happy and cozy time together) I wondered if they would actually get around to discussing this month’s book. But after coffee, cookies, and a walk along the river, they did indeed have a robust conversation about this month’s literary choice, *The Music Shop* by Rachel Joyce.

The book club began as a scheduled and intentional way to stay connected to former colleagues. In the early days of the club, members encouraged Mabel through her cancer diagnosis spending the time eating delicious food and enjoying the outdoors together. After Mabel’s passing, the club continued gaining new members as other JKCS staff retired. Members have continued to be a support to one another through happy times and sad. As Wil says, “it’s more than just sharing books, it’s sharing life”.

Retired Grade 1 teacher Anne Langille often chooses the books by picking up a ready-to-go book club kit from her local library. The members tell me that is month’s book was not a resounding hit, but they enjoyed the first book the club read, Trevor Noah’s *Born a Crime*, so much that the club read it twice.

After the book discussion we have lunch and reminisce about times spent at John Knox. Retired Grade 5 teacher Trena Aukema starts by remembering her time as a new teacher from the 70’s and 80’s under principals DeRegt and Hendricks and even being on the Education Committee when principal Peter Valkenier was hired.

Trena shares something Wendy Brouwer (former Grade 2 teacher and honorary JKCS retiree) said about her time at the school, “Wendy used to say John Knox was nothing to look at. But there were a lot of good things happening in the spirit of the school”.

“There was always a level of cooperation among teachers. We were welcome in each other’s classrooms and there was help available if you needed it.” remembers Mary Braacx, retired Grade 7 teacher.

“I would often get choked up in the week before school began,” says retired librarian Janice Gifford. “People would say, we need help, we need help! And we all wanted to help. I remember being quite moved by that and discovered it’s not like that at other schools”.

Wil agrees, saying, “Helping each other was almost expected in a way. We used to have those big musicals with Ann Herfst. We all had to play a part. It was all extracurricular, but we didn’t complain. It was something we all did. It was for the greater good.”

As the group recalls names, dates, and details from the past Trena jokes, “You know, I can see that we’re all getting older, because our long-term memory is fantastic!”

The fun was still in full swing by the time I had to leave to pick my Grade 7 daughter up from school. It was a blessing to spend the day with the club and a reminder of the supportive and laughter-filled culture our former staff members built that we work to maintain today. Each retiree shared stories about their retirement including a lot of time with family, volunteering, travel, and of course reading. They continue to pray for John Knox. I hope the group is still going strong by the time I retire.

Group Photo:

Left to right: Wil deKleer, Janice Gifford, Mary Braacx, Laura Weesies, Nel Valkenier, Bev Wall, Pat (Anne Langille’s sister), Trena Aukema, Tina Shrimmer, Anne Burnett, Anne Langille (Members not in attendance May Baelde, Evelyn Kersbergen, Anne Ferguson)

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