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CELEBRATE

A TANTRAMAR IMPACT JOURNAL



SHOWCASING



Innovation in Education

Inspiring stories from educators and community partners

Note from the Editors

"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself" - John Dewey

Most of us see education as training for the future, which is true, but the bigger picture here is missing. Everything happening inside school is not a simulation, it is real life. Which is why we are thrilled to showcase innovation in education and to celebrate our educators and our learners, right here in the Tantramar!

We live in a world with many complex, intersecting, and interdisciplinary issues. Our collective need to address these global issues is pressing—we need immediate action on a global scale. We believe students not only have good ideas, but they may just have new, unique or even better ones. In an effort to find their own voice and place in the world, they may see things that we don't see or have long been paralyzed to do anything about. Projects with real-world outcomes hold some of the greatest potential for helping students become driven, empathetic and engaged citizens.

There are few better ways to get students to deeper inquiry and connected learning than to have them engaged in real issues that have deep connected meaning to them, their family, and their community. This approach to education is foundational to lifelong learning, for many reasons, including student engagement, student voice, relevance and authenticity. But beyond that, we also do it because this is where jobs are. Jobs are created and grown as we work to address the real problems facing our world and peoples. Our students are ready to tackle the problems facing our world. They have a voice. They have the tools and resources. And they are not afraid to collaborate and form new communities poised for the problem-solving work that needs to be done.

As human beings, we are heavily influenced by our environment; our first impression of the world is set in stone from a very young age. Research shows that schools with high levels of community support from parental involvement and partnership programs have increased student attendance, grades, and achievements and resulted in fewer behavioral issues and a general attitude of positivity towards school. An entire community has an essential role in raising a child. Therefore, it is our collective responsibility to prioritize good education for our learners.

We are happy to release the first edition of *Celebrate: A Tantramar Impact Journal*. We hope it provides inspiration and aspiration to propel us forward in education—to a place where every child is at their best.

Together, we can inspire students to live authentically, think expansively, and create bravely.

Sincerely,

Stuart Murray and Jessica Hughes

Editors	Stuart Murray Jessica Hughes Stephanie Patterson
Design	Jessica Hughes Stuart Murray
Primary Author	Nadine Robinson
Additional Authors	Amanda Marlin Fiona Black

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**A Tantramar Impact Journal
Spring 2021**

CLASS PETS

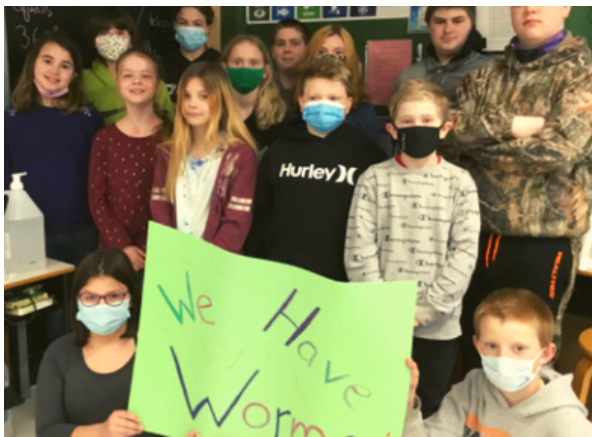
Port Elgin Regional School
Teacher: Maria Beltz

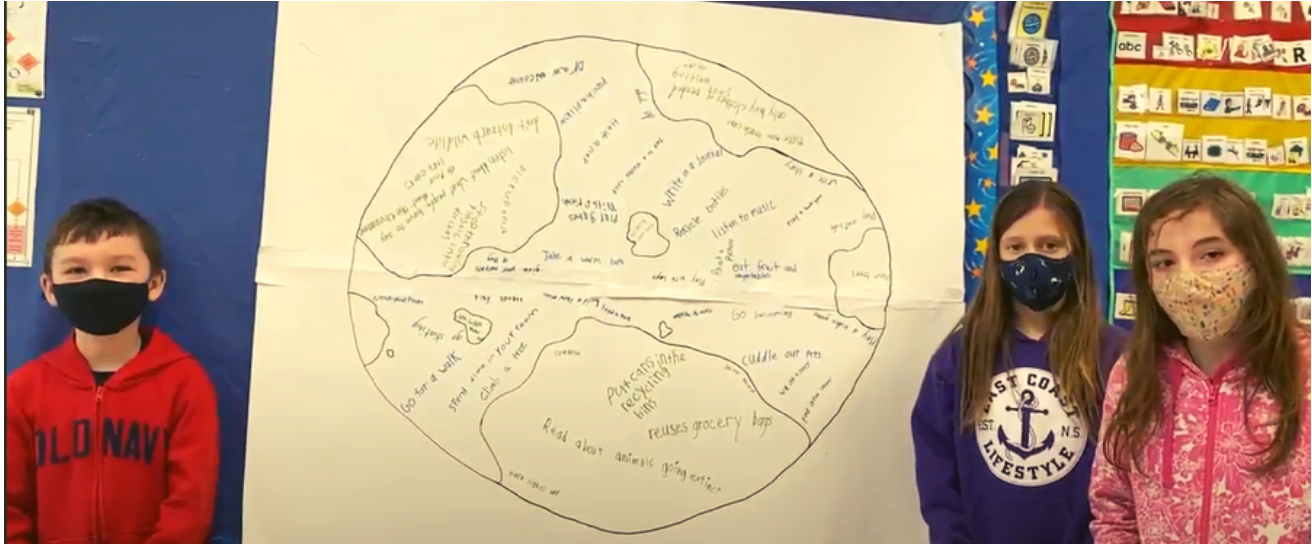
When kids come home and say they have a class pet, they are usually referring to a hamster or a fish. When Maria Beltz's Grade 6/7 class says they have class pets, they are referring to hundreds of red wiggler (or manure) worms. The group was out on a routine nature walk when they came across some mushrooms. This discovery sparked a lively conversation about decomposers in nature. The Grade 6 science curriculum includes learning about the natural world as an introduction to biology. What better way to be introduced to biology than through a series of wonderful walks and curious exploration of their local environment? Much to Maria's surprise, days after the passionate student discussion, a parent showed up with one hundred worms and a worm bin for her class.

Maria said, "funnily enough I never wanted a class pet." Thanks to the curiosity of her students and the support of an engaged parent, she now has roughly five hundred worm pets, who are all loved, adored, and even named by her students. After receiving the bin with the worms, Maria and her students took every opportunity to learn all that they could about their worms and how to take care of them. What do they eat? How do they reproduce? Will they die if we drop them? And my personal favourite - how do we stop this bin from making our classroom smell so bad? Every question was generated, researched, and answered by the students themselves.

Through collective observation, the class learned that worms could eat some foods, but leftover sandwich crusts are not on that list. They learned that worms have connections to birds and chickens, which sparked an interest in birds. They even learned about acids, neutralizers, and bases to keep their bin from smelling.

Although the worm bin was not planned, it was the students' curiosity that led to thoughtful questions and scientific investigation. It was the little spark of wonder that made one of Maria's students want to go home and tell their family all about what they had learned that day at school, which motivated their parent to show up with the now infamous worm bin that has sparked so much interest and inspired so many hands-on learning opportunities in Maria's Grade 6 classroom. Curiosity is truly the compost of learning!





ACTIVISM AND SELF CARE GO HAND IN HAND

Port Elgin Regional School
Teacher: Melissa Firlotte

Upon introducing her Grade 4 class to the environment and environmental issues, Melissa Firlotte's students put their heads together to figure out what they could do to be the change they wanted to see in the world. The students decided to create a graphic, where environmental actions were added in green and self-care items were added in blue to replicate a globe. The self-care piece was added as an antidote to the emotional toll talking about environmental issues can have on a person's mental health. Students are inspiring others to take care of the environment and themselves with this project. Melissa's students have taken this outside of their classroom and challenged their peers in other classes to produce and add ideas to the graphic as well.

Melissa describes her students as empowered and engaged because of this project, a sentiment that speaks volumes about inquiry- and project-based learning. Melissa has noticed that all students are using their voices and sharing their ideas. Going forward, Melissa hopes to connect her students with Tantramar High School students and environmental activist Quinn MacAskill. Quinn is a young environmental warrior whose activism resume is already long and impressive, it includes a TEDx talk and pioneering a transition to three-stream waste at Marshview Middle School. It is fantastic to see young students being inspired by other young students in their community, proving that environmental activism is something you can do right here at home.

Port Elgin Regional School
Teacher: Lawrence Welling

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

It is unsurprising that giving kids the opportunity to give back to their community, gain valuable life skills and potentially make a little bit of money was a massive hit in Lawrence's classroom. Pair this with the opportunity to explore something the students love. It is no wonder the kids were instantly hooked on their entrepreneurial class project.

The project began when Lawrence Welling decided to create a class store that sold wooden goods, focusing on outdoor furniture. Lawrence describes the project as a "class-wide initiative where all students were going to find a facet of the business that interested them and work on a team or individually to help 'build' a business. The goal was to take advantage of the market (cottagers and campers) and sell benches and potentially other outdoor furniture. Students could be part of the design team, construction team, finishing, orders, budget and finance, social media and promotion, ordering stock or supplies, shipping, or delivery. This project is to be continued in late April of this school year."



The desire to turn their custom wood creations into a profitable enterprise sparked an interest in learning about running a business. Some examples of what Lawrence's students' business ideas are children's toys and soap, birdhouses using recycled materials and pallets, dog treats using homemade recipes, dog houses, tin art (this student was "punching" tin, like using copper, but cheaper!). To support this journey, Lawrence discovered a fantastic program called PowerPlay Young Entrepreneurs (PPYE).

PPYE is an educational program that helps students in Grades 4 through 8 develop an entrepreneurial mindset. Students have fun gaining real-life career experience by exploring the world of business. As they build their independent business ventures, they set and achieve goals, acquire confidence, and develop practical life skills.

They will put their plans into action at the Young Entrepreneur Show, a dynamic event where they interact with customers and earn money. By donating a portion of their profits to charity, they also discover the impact of giving. Lawrence's students are not only learning about entrepreneurship through this project, but they are also learning a plethora of other valuable skills. They are expanding their vocabularies and interpersonal skills through marketing, fine motor, and hands-on creative skills through building their products, math skills through financing and selling their products. Projects like this help create well-rounded students, with all the necessary skills and tools to take on the real world.

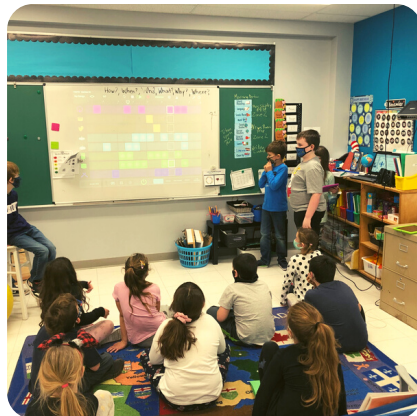
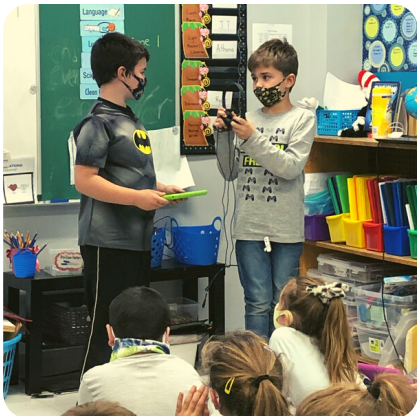
**"FUTURE-READY LIFE SKILLS
ARE IMMEASURABLE"**

HOW ABOUT THAT WEATHER

Port Elgin Regional School
Teacher: Robyn Leger

As an adult, upon being asked the question “what is the difference between -17 and +17 degrees?” I was confident I could explain the difference easily. One’s hot and one’s cold, right? In practice, this is much easier said than done. Think I’m wrong? Give it a shot! This is the question Robyn posed to her Grade 3 class one morning as a simple warmup for their math lesson. Little did she know that posing this question, followed by the question of “*who* needs to know this information?”, would spark a class-wide interest in weather. This inspired Robyn and her students to watch the videos of a young meteorologist, Clare, on YouTube. After watching Clare and her school's channel *AFLA Elementary Broadcast News*, Robyn's class wanted to create their own news show. That’s right—a simple open ended math warmup question, combined with Robyn’s willingness to listen to her students, resulted in a fully student produced news show.

Robyn left it up to her students to pick something they were passionate about and turn it into a segment. Because of this creative freedom, the show includes a photography showcase, a science segment that focuses on water temperatures, a director’s corner, a weather report, and even a nutrition focused cooking show. Robyn’s stance on this project is simple: students run the segments. She has let them harness their passions and explore a new creative outlet. Robyn joked that she’ll often answer questions with “I don’t know, how about you try asking one of our class experts” to foster communication, teamwork, and learning between her students.



Just imagine being given the space to explore a passion at such a young age in a structured school setting like Robyn’s students are doing. When asked what kind of changes Robyn sees in her students, she has a multitude of answers. She has been watching their self-confidence increase, which has made them more willing to explore and discuss new ideas without fear of failure. She also sees a massive improvement in their writing abilities while being wholeheartedly impressed with the consistent creativity and effort from her students. If there is one takeaway from Robyn’s class news show project, it is that a seemingly simple question paired with the space to be vulnerable in asking questions and exploring the answers can take us somewhere awesome.

PASSION PROJECTS & HARLEY DAVIDSONS

Port Elgin Regional School
Teacher: Breanna Saulnier

If you were ever lucky enough to participate in a passion project of your own in school, you are aware of the creativity a passion project fosters in young people and the importance of being able to explore your interests in a positive learning environment. Breanna Saunier uses this model in her own classroom and she continues to be inspired by her students' enthusiasm and engagement.

Breanna's passion project initiative is cross-curricular, blending French Language Arts and History with a special focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goal of each project is that it will challenge students to meet curricular outcomes in creative ways. For example, one student learned about the Holocaust and chose to share their insights through the creation of a comic strip told by a teddy bear. Another student is looking at the use of Harley Davidson Bikes during the World Wars.

Breanna supports and guides her students when needed, but these projects are student developed and student lead. Passion projects are students' time to explore what they are interested in and choose how they are going to deliver a final product. Learning about history, improving their French language skills, and embracing their creativity are natural outcomes of these projects. Students experience different skills and information, in a low-stakes setting. The students' end goal is not to learn French, it is to use French effectively to communicate their interest through their project. Students also further develop interpersonal communication skills such as teamwork, independence, and time management.

“THERE ARE SO MANY DIFFERENT NEEDS IN A CLASSROOM AND NOT EVERY STUDENT IS GOING TO BE HOOKED IN THE SAME MANNER. WHEREAS IF IT IS SKILL AND CONCEPT BASED, YOU'RE ALLOWING EACH KID TO BRING THEIR OWN SPIN TO THE CURRICULUM”

It is no secret that while some students love school and embrace learning, others struggle. Consistently experiencing struggle can lead to feeling disconnected from school as students can get frustrated by the feeling that they are failing. Passion projects allow students to meet curricular outcomes by exploring their interests which gives them a sense of value and control over their education. It is important not to marginalize things that develop 'self' in education. Students can develop their identity, foster their creativity, and explore their interests while still meeting important educational outcomes. There is no “one size fits all” learning model, but the positive outcomes of passion projects speak for themselves. While they are not a new concept, educators like Breanna—who create unique ways to follow a curriculum and give their students a chance to explore their interests—often reap the positive benefits of engaged and happy students, which lead to further academic success.



SMALL TOWN, RICH RELATIONSHIPS: MOUNT ALLISON, COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING AND PROJECT ENGAGE!

BY FIONA BLACK
MOUNT ALLISON PROFESSOR AND R-PEACE MEMBER

R-PEACE (Research Partnerships for Education and Community Engagement) sprung from the impulse to find a practical way of demonstrating the principle that learning occurs best within a network of rich, multidisciplinary and intergenerational relationships. Project Engage! had its origins in just that kind of network; it also reflected the realities of community life. Living in a small town like Sackville, one often wears a number of hats. A few years ago, a member of R-PEACE, who was also a member of Marshview Middle School PSSC, heard about challenges with behavioural and social issues in the classroom; he also heard about the desire to bring community members into the school. From here, numerous conversations and collaborations with the school ensued, which resulted in the innovative and ongoing experiment that is Project Engage! The teachers and administrative staff of Marshview are best able to reflect on the learning successes and challenges of this project for their students. Here, we wanted to offer some observations about our participation in this great initiative, both in terms of our own MTA students' experiences, and as liaising community members (because again, sometimes members

of R-PEACE are also wearing the hats of community partners who come to the school to participate in some of the projects!)

A number of our students have described the Engage!-connected MTA courses, Community Engaged Learning and Community as Classroom, as some of the best courses they have ever taken. Why might this be? For many, it is about getting to connect with the excitement of passion-driven learning in children. Some of our students are looking to go into Education, and this is a brief taste. For others, it is about the meaningful experience of translating their own passions and learning into a context for other communities. It helps them to answer the question: Why (or how) does what I am learning matter? They are also fully embracing the experiential or applied learning component to this course work. It is an invigorating and inspirational chance to get out of their own classrooms and shift from the traditional means of learning (research, papers, tests) that they usually experience.

How it works at Mount Allison: Our students take one of the above courses, spending some time learning about models of community engagement and about the dynamics of public education in New Brunswick. They also receive a few pointers from the school's principal, Heather Dixon, or from teachers, about what makes students tick. They learn what to do when they appear to be struggling or how to manage some of the unexpected blips or developments that come with the meeting of different groups and minds. They are not, of course, being trained as teachers, nor are they placed in charge of classroom management. This step really offers them some reassurance that a situation that they initially see as daunting can be parsed in certain ways, and that there are clear boundaries to where their responsibilities lie. They also do some personal development work in the course, which is aimed at helping them to see what values and dispositions are needed to engage in community-integrated learning, and in volunteer work in the community generally. Finally, and most visibly from Marshview's perspective, they are partnered with a teacher and a community partner, where they co-design a project, identifying aims, outcomes and activities.

Naturally, there have been challenges along the way. Covid-19 notwithstanding, there were terms where community partners were not available, where our students were less numerous, and where Marshview students

did not connect with the material well. We have also heard of some of the challenges that the school staff have faced in pivoting to this kind of work as they navigate the curriculum. Overwhelmingly, though, the Engage! program has been a great success. Some members of R-PEACE are parents, and we hear from others just what a game-changer this has been for their children. The project has been so successful that it has gained attention from around the province. Not only was it an innovation in terms of crossing the boundaries of educational silos, but it was a remarkably effective way of demonstrating the power and scope of community-engaged learning. The Mount Allison students observed that learning takes place in remarkably vivid ways when students are meaningfully participating in their community. Not only is this a question of skills and knowledge—which of course is broad and multilayered—but the engagement in community also reveals that values and interpersonal identity provide the context and drive for engaged and effective learning.

Moreover, the Engage! program reveals that learning and engagement are multi-directional. Students ended up teaching as much as learning as the projects and issues were negotiated as a community. In some ways, Engage! demonstrates collaborative learning at its best and provides a remarkably rich context for the post-secondary classroom. As one of our students remarked in an end of a course reflection:



I AM SO GRATEFUL TO HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS INITIATIVE, AND IT'S CLEAR TO ME THAT I HAVE LEARNED JUST AS MUCH AS THE STUDENTS. I HAVE GAINED SKILLS THAT I WILL TAKE WITH ME TO FUTURE EMPLOYMENT, AND THROUGHOUT LIFE. I ALSO FEEL BLESSED TO HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE GENUINE FRIENDSHIPS WITH THE STUDENTS, AND TO EVEN HAVE A FEW THAT ARE ESPECIALLY DEAR TO MY HEART.

MULTI AGED LEARNING & MULTIMEDIA THEATRE PERFORMANCES

Marshview Middle School
Teacher: Ryan Slashinski

Community-supported education creates opportunities to bring together students of all ages. It is based on similar interests and offers a unique learning environment that will often take students beyond traditional experiences.

Live Bait Theatre is a local theatre company in Sackville N.B. With the help of community resources and funding, Ryan Slashinski was able to bring theatre back into Marshview Middle School. Ryan is passionate about theatre, but he is also passionate about multi-grade-level learning with students from multiple schools working and learning together. This makes the collaboration between Marshveiw Middle, Tantramar High, and Mount Allison for this project even more special.

In Ryan's theatre program, middle school students have an opportunity to receive mentorship from high school and university students. This provides essential support for younger students to learn new skills and offers a sense of purpose for the student mentors. Despite the challenges faced by Covid-19 restrictions, all three schools creatively overcame the obstacles to creating a fantastic show. In partnership, the three schools created video scenes and were able to put them together to make a collaborative final product, all while never actually seeing each other in person. Although the crew is hoping to be able to be back in person in years to come, Ryan highlights his class's excitement about seeing their play performed in places it would not normally be debuted. Congratulations on a successful show Ryan & co!



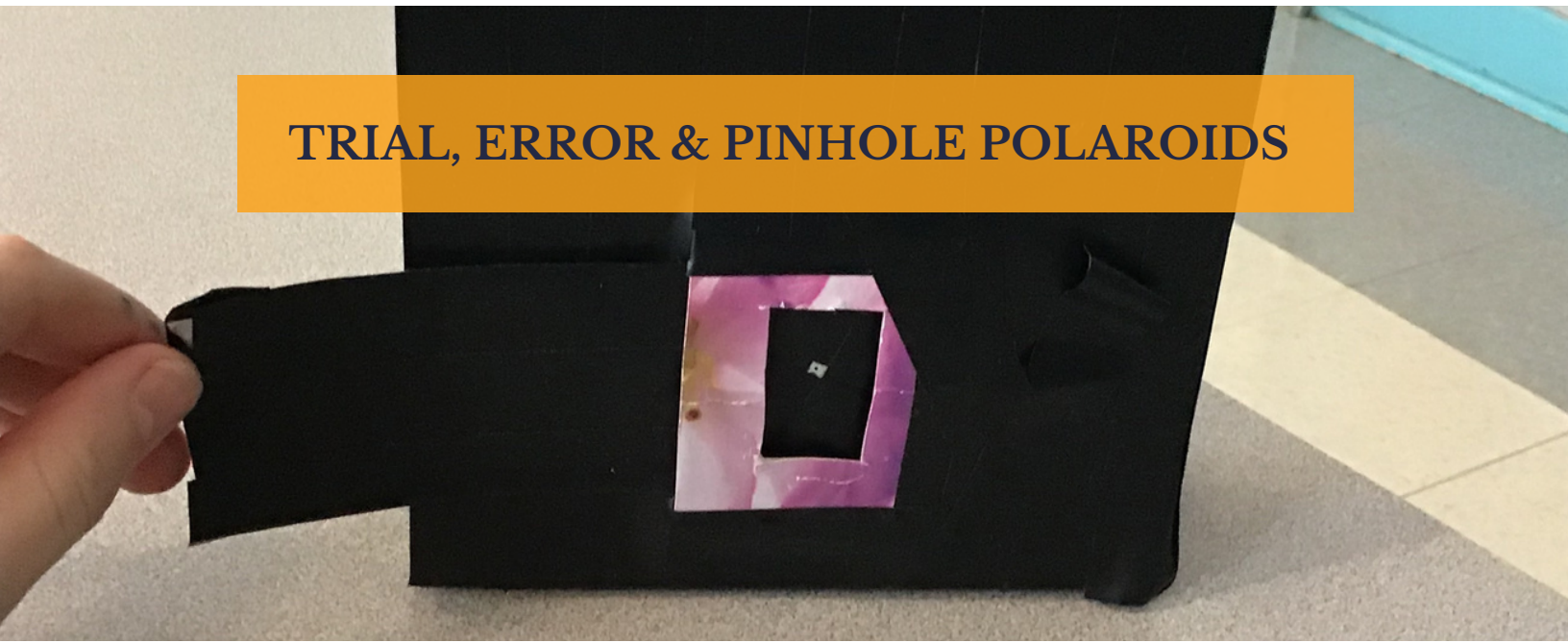
A DOG'S JOURNEY OR HOW TO DEAL WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

A Virtual Bilingual Interactive Show

**LIVE
Bait
Theatre**

Presented by Live Bait Theatre with
students from Mount Allison University, Tantramar High School,
and Marshview Middle School.
Sponsored by New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund

TRIAL, ERROR & PINHOLE POLAROID



If you are someone who geeks out over photography, you have likely tried developing film. You also likely know the trials and tribulations that come with such a task: blurry photos and ruined film to name a few. Christiana Steeve's Grade 8 class experienced these frustrations firsthand while making pinhole polaroid cameras. The goal of this project was for students to use their pinhole polaroids to photograph the Tantramar Marshes and develop the film themselves.

"It didn't work. It all went in different directions, but we are not closing that door, says Christiana. "Failing is part of the learning process and just because it didn't go as planned, doesn't mean the class didn't learn a lot. Plus, they had a blast doing it!"

Students learned about the basics of photography, experimented with red light photo development, and laughed about bumping into each other in the darkroom. Doing a unique experiment with a group of kids often leads to "trial and error with lots of error;" but every 'error' recounted by Christiana is told with a smile.

The Pinhole Polaroid project was about the experience and the process, far more than it was about a final product. Dozens of photos did not develop, but one did and sometimes that is all it takes- the kids were thrilled. When the students were finally able to see a blurry (but recognizable) figure in that one photo, they exclaimed with excitement, "we did it!" For Christiana, their enthusiasm for the one good photo was more than enough validation for the project. The students got to learn a real-life lesson: sometimes you try something new and you do not succeed, but with continued effort the messiness can develop into something beautiful.

**"GIVE THEM AS MUCH AUTONOMY AS POSSIBLE
SO THEY CAN BUILD AND LEARN"**

**Marshview Middle School
Teacher: Christiana Steeves**

MORNING WALKS & NATURE TALKS

Marshview Middle
School
Teacher: Kirsten Harpur

Physical activity is key to a child's health and development. Even a short 15 minutes a day of a brisk walk can have dramatic physical, mental and emotional benefits for children and youth. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that children and youth aged 5-17 should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily.

Kirsten's ongoing commitment to physical activity and experiential learning in her classroom is nothing short of inspirational. While on their daily morning walks around Sackville, Kirsten's class had the opportunity to find wonder in the natural environment: including observing animal tracks, different plants and flowers, bird identification, and chatting about what has changed around Sackville with particular attention to the town and local history. Kirsten takes immense pride and enthusiasm in her students writing in their nature journals every day and collecting flowers for their flower pressing projects. The class is currently working on building nesting boxes to put out around their walking route. This daily nature walks effortlessly combine social studies, English, and art and it is abundantly clear that Kirsten is instilling a passion for the outdoors in her students while creating a fantastic space for them to think and learn both freely and creatively.

"WE'VE BEEN WALKING TO THE POND EVERY DAY AND WE'VE RACKED UP ALMOST 160 KILOMETERS OF WALKING THIS YEAR. AND SO IT'S BEEN A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO NOT JUST GET OUT AND HAVE SOME EXCERSICE, BUT ALSO BE INVOLVED IN LOCAL ISSUES AND MAKE A POSITIVE CHANGE FOR THE COMMUNITY"





GET ENERGIZED ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

BY AMANDA MARLIN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EOS ECO-ENERGY

EOS Eco-Energy was formed nearly two decades ago to promote energy conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy. EOS envisions the Tantramar region as safe, thriving, and resilient in the face of climate change and this drives everything that we do. We focus on research and monitoring, community planning, action projects on the ground, and education. We offer a range of experiential and hands-on activities in local schools related to our focus areas of sustainability, renewable energy, climate change adaptation and watershed management.

Our staff at EOS are always enthusiastic to share our knowledge with students and show the power of community-based actions. We know that getting to experiment, experience, fiddle with things and get your hands dirty are the most exciting ways to learn.

Over the years, EOS has brought a variety of programs and activities to K-12 classes. During outdoor education days at Salem Elementary, I have built tiny fairy villages in the magical woods behind the school. A sense of wonder and curiosity about the natural world grew quickly as children focused on the tiniest details while also thinking about community development and town planning.

EOS also teaches about watersheds and why a healthy watershed is important. We have a portable and interactive watershed table and a variety of hands-on experiments and activities for students. They can easily see how watersheds work, how pollution can travel, how wetlands can help filter pollutants, and more. EOS staff play fun games like water cycle tag that get kids in the middle of the water cycle. And EOS has a collection of Water Rangers kits for testing water quality parameters such as temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, salinity, etc. Students can test fresh and saltwater, learn more about their environment and what a healthy watershed means by being a citizen scientist.

At the high school level EOS has coordinated a climate change fair, bringing lots of local groups and businesses to Tantramar Regional High School. Students said they have often felt disconnected from climate change, so it was great to learn about local climate change impacts and local actions. High school students in the Essential Skills program have also helped EOS at their draft-proofing work parties, helping to seal air leaks with simple materials like caulking, spray foam and weather stripping. Students helped homeowners in need make their homes more energy efficient while also learning valuable skills, and helping EOS reduce emissions. It was a win-win-win!

EOS is focused on helping residents build resilience to a changing climate. We are creating an opportunity for students to develop the skills to be resilient adults that can prepare, adapt, respond to, and recover from climate change events. EOS also offers free printable lesson plans, and a new year-long kid's guide to climate change action with activities and resources for each season. At EOS we are thrilled to help students become resilient leaders.

Find these resources and more at <https://eosecoenergy.com/en/projects/education/>



RECYCLING HEROES INTO THE TOMATOSPHERE

Lana's class is simultaneously completing two projects, and both are equally inspiring. The first project is their tomato germination. Lana's class learned about plant life cycles using real tomato plants. The group claims their biggest challenges were the beginning stages, Lana jokingly mentions there was a little too much 'willynillyness' where they did not have professional equipment or much of a gardening setup. Nonetheless, with a sprinkle of creativity and perseverance, the students were able to successfully grow tomatoes inside. Evidence that whether you are a tomato plant or a child, Lana's classroom is a fantastic place to grow. Once the class received some professional gear, such as grow lights, they were able to expand their project. Now, they are excited to be responsible for their own plants, sharing tomatoes with their school breakfast club, partnering with EOS for some compost assistance, and sharing their knowledge with friends and family. Lana's class also received a Vermi composter from EOS, just like Maria Beltz's class has.



Salem Elementary School
Teacher: Lana Ward

Lana's class has a second project that they are working on simultaneously to the tomatoes. Aptly named the 'Litterless Lunch Project' the students are aiming to get rid of all litter from their lunches while educating and assisting their peers to be able to do the same. The class started by purchasing reusable sandwich bags. They then began collecting juice boxes from all the classrooms in their school, to raise funds for this project. Using their math skills, they calculated how many weeks it would take them to pay back their sandwich bags (at about 95 juice boxes a day, they made about \$15 per week). Using their innovative marketing skills, they created an informative video to be shared with all their peers and teach them about the importance of recycling and show them where to put their juice boxes. Thanks to a generous donation from Encore, they were able to give each class a bin for their juice box collection, making it easier for them to collect and count and sort. In the beginning, students said that organization was their biggest struggle, but through trial and error and lots of research, they have since found a system that works best for them. The class calls themselves recycling heroes. The passion and excitement the kids have for their projects, combined with Lana's unwavering support are truly inspiring.

"I LOVE THAT YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT TRASH CAN BE USED AGAIN"

"IT'S IMPORTANT TO RECYCLE SO THINGS DON'T GO TO THE LANDFILL"

"WE NEED TO STOP THROWING GARBAGE IN THE OCEAN"

"PLASTIC CAN END UP IN FISH AND THEN WE EAT IT AND THAT IS VERY BAD"

LITTLE GREEN THUMB PROJECT

Salem Elementary School
Teacher: Laurie Tingley

This project was presented by Laurie Tingley with the help of her entire Kindergarten class. It would be an understatement to say the class was buzzing with excitement to share everything they had learned about plants and plant maintenance. Their project is called Little Green Thumbs.

Little Green Thumbs is a program that provides a complete garden kit setup to Kindergarten to Grade 8 classrooms across Canada. This setup includes a vermi-composting kit, seeds, soil, student journals, classroom posters, teaching resources, how-to videos, support for salad-rations (eating the food they grew), professional development, and programming support. The graphic below from the Little Green Thumbs website describes the goal of the program as well as what children will get out of it.

A Garden of Possibilities



Plant... a Garden!

Students get their hands dirty – literally – planting their garden from seed. Working with soil bridges the relationship to the outside environment, connecting children to the earth and to agriculture.



Grow... Understanding!

We grow more than just food in our gardens! Countless learning opportunities blossom as students cultivate their garden and grow their understanding of the relationships between food, themselves, their community and the environment.



Eat... the Harvest!

Students taste the fruits of their labour, and celebrate with their classmates at a salad-bration! Engaging students in food production, harvest and preparation inspires inquiry into where their food comes from and how it grows.



Share... the Surplus!

Little Green Thumbs pass on the gift through sharing vegetables, knowledge, experience, compost or even worms to other classrooms, family and community members. Students cultivate environmental stewardship while caring for their classroom garden and each other.

Source: <https://www.littlegreenthumbs.org/>

Students learned that some plants grow fast, and others grow slow. They said plants need water and warmth, but not too much warmth (they learned that the hard way). Students shared they learned how to thin out carrots, which means pulling out unhealthy carrots to make room for the healthy ones to grow. The class is excited to harvest their vegetables and make a big salad, and to sample all their challenging work. In addition, they recently started taking care of and growing their seedlings. The students' sense of ownership is inspiring and their passion for this project is contagious.

OUTDOOR LEARNING

Dorchester Consolidated School
Teacher: Ryan Estabrooks

Ryan Estabrooks believes that risky play builds self-reliance and resiliency in her students. She describes the concept of risky play as, “giving children the opportunity to play with clear boundaries established while allowing students to play without an abundance of rules to limit their experience. Ryan develops an understanding of what is risky (minimal danger) vs. what is harmful. Risky play will be different for each child, she says, “one may define ‘risk taking’ as stepping off a small rock, while others may define ‘risk taking’ as climbing a tree.”

Ryan’s Kindergarten to Grade 2 team at Dorchester Consolidated School has decided to escape the boundaries of the four walls and engage in outdoor learning with their students. They make their classroom wherever they need it to be. Ryan and her colleagues have made a few observations about their students and school through their outdoor learning experience, one being that there were over thirty rules in place for their outdoor time. Ryan found that these rules resulted in her students being unable to confidently decipher harm from risk.

While students engage in outdoor learning, they abide by two pivotal rules: the first is that they need to be within Ryan’s sight (“If you can’t see me, I can’t see you”) and the second rule is to be respectful to nature, yourself, and others. The K-2 team also believes strongly that there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing! They do not allow weather to dictate their outdoor learning experience. Their students know that “If we are at school, we are outside!”

It is also an important practice that prior to entering the wooded area students participate in a Land Acknowledgment.

The transition to outdoor learning was not seamless. Ryan and her colleagues faced challenges around buy-in, as some people were skeptical as to how the program would address the academic needs of the students involved. This is addressed with empathy, open and transparent communication, and education on the positive outcomes associated with an outdoor learning model. There is truly little that can be done inside that cannot be done outside, too.

The changes Ryan has seen in her students are significant. She says they use more complex language when describing what they see on their daily whisper walks, they are far more focused and engaged than when they are inside the classroom, and they demonstrate a sense of pride in the nature around them. It is abundantly clear that when given autonomy and trust in a setting where they can explore their own boundaries and, quite literally, think outside the box, the students show extraordinary passion and excitement for their own learning.

**OUTDOOR EDUCATION AND AUTONOMY HAVE A
DIRECT CORRELATION TO ENGAGEMENT AND
ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

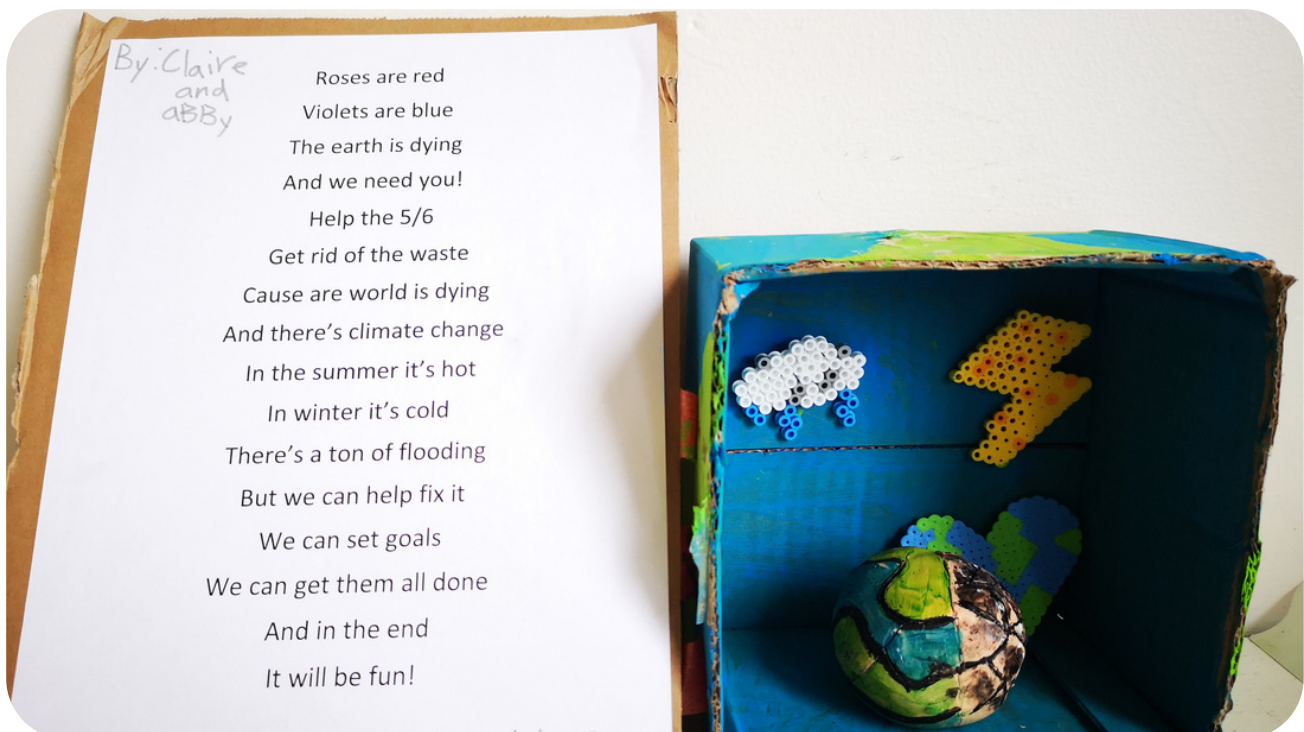


THINK GLOBALLY ACT LOCALLY

Dorchester Consolidated School
Teacher: Stuart Murray

Stuart Murray began one morning by asking his Grade 5/6 class “what are the biggest problems in our community, our country, and around the world?” This big question sparked a two-and-a-half-hour discussion about the issues students identified. Collectively, the class decided that the ultimate, most pressing issue is the environment. With the motto ‘think globally act locally’ at the forefront of their brains, Stuart asked them, “What can you do about it, here and now?”

The class was inspired after watching *Mighty Earth Warriors*, (to watch: <https://bit.ly/3ocJa1O>) featuring the students who pioneered the three-stream recycling (compost, recycling, and garbage) program at Marshview Middle School. With the flame of inspiration lit, Stuart's students wanted to act. They began by conducting a waste audit, where they collected and saved every single piece of waste their school produced in one day. They sorted it, weighed it, and calculated how much of it could have been recycled or composted. They were appalled to discover 70 percent of their daily waste could have avoided the landfill if they had a proper three-stream recycling system in place. They also learned that over a one-year period, their small school of 75 students would generate over 9000 pounds of waste—that is the weight of one and a half elephants! Once this realization settled in, students quickly planned to educate their peers and implement a three-stream recycling program at Dorchester Consolidated School.



With the support of community-minded leaders like Michael Fox and organizations like the Mount Allison Student Union's (MASU) Green Investment Fund, students were able to purchase the bins needed for this new waste management system. To educate their peers on the seriousness of the issue, the class got creative. They made informative and inspiring puppet shows, PowerPoints, and plays and recorded them to share with their peers. These presentations covered how to properly sort three-stream waste and why it is so important to use. Students also wrote and received a grant of \$500 to go toward reusable sandwich bags for everyone in the entire school, as well as prizes to incentivize their peers to bring litterless lunches. Litterless lunches are based on the benefits of simplicity. By using reusable bags, containers, and water bottles, one can reduce packaged foods and beverages, saving money and the planet. If a student brings a litterless lunch to school, they receive a ticket that gives them a chance to win an awesome outdoor sports themed prize. Within the first weeks of its launch, the school is already close to 90% participation!

Although Stuart and his class have made this seem easy, it has not been without its fair share of complications. Piloting a project with such a large scope and impact is challenging, especially one with so many moving parts and key partners. They attribute much of their success to the Anglophone East School District (for piloting a special three-stream initiative in the Tantramar Region), Mount Allison University (Michael Fox and his Honours student Maggie Ivimey for their expertise), MASU (for funding to purchase the new waste receptacles), Eco360 (Patrick for his informative presentations), the students and staff at Dorchester (for being willing to take this on and learn together), and many more. When listing all the individuals and organizations that have been pivotal in the success of his project, Stuart says, "Schools are embedded in the community and must reflect our lived realities. When we come together as a community to support our young people, we provide them with the opportunity to become active global citizens, while granting them their right to be involved in the processes that concern them." When kids are given the autonomy and support to do great things, they will rise to the occasion.

"SCHOOLS ARE EMBEDDED IN THE COMMUNITY AND MUST REFLECT OUR LIVED REALITIES. WHEN WE COME TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, WE PROVIDE THEM WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME ACTIVE GLOBAL CITIZENS, WHILE GRANTING THEM THEIR RIGHT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PROCESSES THAT CONCERN THEM"



Article	Name	School / Organization	Email
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Little Green Thumb Project	Laurie Tingley	Salem Elementary School	laurie.tingley@nbed.nb.ca
Outdoor Learning	Ryan Estabrooks	Dorchester Consolidated School	ryan.estabrooks@nbed.nb.ca
Think Globally, Act Locally	Stuart Murray	Dorchester Consolidated School	stuart.murray@nbed.nb.ca
Small Town, Rich Relationships	Fiona Black	Mount Allison University / R- PEACE	fblack@mta.ca
Get Energized about Climate Change Action	Amanda Marlin	EOS	eos@nb.ainb.com

Role	Name	Organization	Email
Author	Nadine Robinson	Mount Allison	nrobinson@mta.ca
Editor	Jessica Hughes	Sackville 20/20	jessica@sackville2020.com
Editor	Stuart Murray	ASD-E / Dorchester Consolidated School	stuart.murray@nbed.nb.ca
Editor	Stephanie Patterson	ASD-E	stephanie.patterson@nbed.nb.ca





Thank you!

