

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN ACTION

Learning opportunities and initiatives demonstrating commitment to
Thames Valley's Strategic Priorities and Operational Goals

Saunders Students build doghouses as a way to give back



Quincy Sickles-Jarvis (left), Conner Casey (middle left), Blade Hendrick (middle right) and Niigonii White-Eye (right), are part of the doghouse project, which gives back to First Nations communities across southwestern Ontario. CBC News (Submitted by Stephen Merklinger)

On December 27th, five First Nation students from Saunders Secondary School and grad coach Quincy Sickles-Jarvis braved the cold and worked for 8 hours to build 60 doghouses.

The students are leaders in the school's 4th R Program, which is a mentorship program that helps Indigenous students find their voices and be active members in the community.

The project was initiated to help support the Aboriginal Community and Animal Advocacy Connection, a group that helps Indigenous communities access veterinary care for pets on reserves.

Teacher Stephen Merklinger collaborates with the students in Saunders 4th R Program and said that the doghouse project helped give students the opportunity to develop a sense of culture, identity, community, and self.

Niigonii White-Eye and Conner Casey, Grade 12 students at Saunders, agreed that the most important part of this project is bringing a community together, while also making sure animals stay warm.

"Something you don't want to see is animals in the cold all winter, so this warms your heart while it warms up the dogs," said White-Eye.

"Building a strong community is very important. It brings everyone together during these tough times and it gives back to the community," said Casey.

The doghouse project is just one example of the community builds which the Saunders students have participated in – other examples include the creation of a fence around a local Atlohsa Family Healing Services shelter, building Buddy Benches for Antler River Elementary School and constructing gazebos for Standing Stone Elementary School.



 @DirFisherTVDSB

This is our first Strategic Priorities in Action newsletter of 2022. I hope everyone had an enjoyable Winter Break and was able to spend time with family and friends. It was a snowy start, but we were happy to welcome back our in-person learners on January 17.

I would like to share a short video with you that highlights some of the amazing work that happened across Thames Valley over the past couple of weeks and is a great example of our Strategic Priorities in Action.

The video showcases staff and student resilience and commitment to excellence and student achievement.

Excellence Starts in Thames Valley



Thames Valley has launched a new campaign to promote registration across TVDSB.

The campaign is called Excellence Starts at Thames Valley and features TVDSB alumni and Olympians Damian Warner, Jessie Fleming, Maggie Mac Neil, Miranda Ayim and Susanne Grainger.

These athletes embody hard work, resilience, and compassion – traits we strive for as educators and hope to instill in our students – and we thank these athletes for being part of our registration campaign.

Together we are
#TVDSB Strong



Bell Let's Talk



Bell Let's Talk Day was observed across Canada on Wednesday, January 26, 2022.

Thames Valley is committed to promoting positive student mental health across all learning environments.

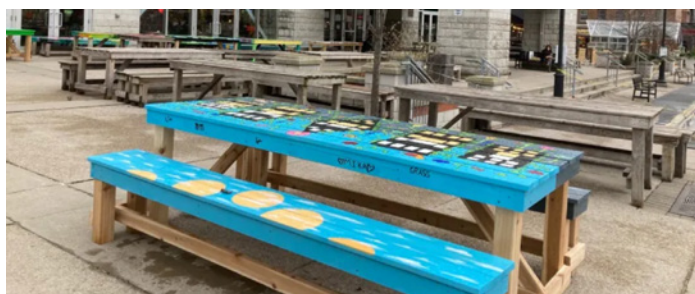
TVDSB system staff and educators have implemented many initiatives throughout the pandemic that speak to the importance of student self-care.

We know that these types of conversations are important to have all year long.

In his latest video installment of Strategic Priorities in Action, Director of Education Mark Fisher spoke with Hickson Central PS Principal Anne Martin and Grade 7 Teacher Jill Baker about how restorative approaches, building positive relationships and fostering a sense of community help to promote student mental health and well-being.



Students design picnic table displayed at Convent Garden Market



James Chaarani/CBC

Sir Frederick and Nelson Nicholas are Grade 10 students at H.B. Beal Secondary School who designed a colourfully painted picnic table on display outside the Covent Garden Market.

The brothers, who are from the Oneida Nation of the Thames, featured symbols important to their culture on the table.

"The shapes that we formed out of the diamond in the centre and the squares on the sides are actually representative of the Hiawatha Belt in our culture," said Sir Frederick. "It represents the unity of the Haudenosaunee Six Nations."

"We also have strawberries on the table," Sir Frederick said. "That one's really important. It's in the creation story."

Todd Woollings, principal at H.B. Beal, is proud of the students and says this project is a great example of the power of experiential learning opportunities as a way to engage students and build community.

"It's fantastic that students are able to have their work public for everyone to see, and it just makes us proud as a school."

The work is part of a larger community art project at the market involving students from four other schools within Thames Valley. The brothers worked on their table with the help of Mushkego Cree artist Hawlii Pichette, who also painted a table and a mural at the market.



Chair's Corner

@lapizzolato

On behalf of your Trustees, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year! I hope as we navigate the second half of the school year that we continue to see a return to a more normal school experience. Understanding that not every student was ready to return to in-person learning, we were pleased to be able to offer families the option of Short-Term Virtual Learning. However, we do believe that in-person learning provides the best experience and support and look forward to when we can welcome all students back to the school classroom.

I would like to thank TVDSB staff and the London Fire Department who helped unbox, sort and package the 146,000 Rapid Antigen Tests so that we could get them into the hands of students and staff. Without your help it would not have been possible! Health and safety remains our priority and these kits are an important part to the safe return to in-person learning.

Lori-Ann Pizzolato
Chair