

Golden Star Awards 2019

Congratulations to the BCRTA *Golden Star Award* winners for 2019! Five public school programs were recognized for demonstrating excellence in intergenerational programming involving students and seniors. Veterans and other survivors of war were an integral part of the sixth program that won the *Legion/ Golden Star Award*. Each of the six schools selected received the *Golden Star Award* statuette and a cheque for \$1500.00. Kudos to the inspirational teachers who spearheaded the programs and to the students and seniors who brought so much to the interactions. Here are their stories.

Arthur Stevenson Elementary School, Kamloops: Crib at the Hamlets.

Sharon Parker offered her students a unique way to develop math and creative thinking skills. Several times during the school year, her grade four class went to the Hamlets at Westsyde seniors' residence to play crib with the residents. The games were played in small groups which facilitated the development of good manners and empathy. For their part, the seniors benefitted from contact with the children. The socialization that occurred during the games and at snack time was enriching for everyone. The *Golden Star Award* monies will be used to fund more games, craft supplies, snacks and transportation for a group activity.

Muheim Elementary School, Smithers: Buddy Program.

Liliana Pesce and her grade four and five students regularly met with residents at the Meadows Assisted Living facility. During monthly visits and on special occasions, seniors and students gathered to play games, sing, dance, paint and do crafts. The students and seniors collaborated and in June performed a play called "Project Memory". This is Liliana's second *Golden Star Award*; since her first win, she has done workshops that show other teachers the value of intergenerational programming. Her students kept journals and demonstrated that they have developed creative and critical thinking skills, communication skills and social responsibility attributes. The interaction with seniors also helped the students to develop a sense of personal identity. The *Golden Star Award* monies will be used to fund activities and events, including gardening projects and a picnic.

Qualicum Beach Elementary School: The Real Toy Story

Lynne Murray and her grade six class visited The Gardens Care Facility ten times last year. The students introduced their favourite toys to the seniors and later interviewed the seniors about the toys they had liked as children during the Depression and WW II. The interview answers became creative writing experiences for the students; they wrote stories in the first person or from the perspective of a toy. Another link to the past was made through baking a traditional sugar cookie recipe dating from the 1800's. On other days, students and seniors played with toys and games from the past. Near the end of the school year, the students worked in groups to create toys to be sold to raise funds for the Alzheimer's Society. The engagement of students with seniors led to the development of many skills including critical thinking, interviewing, understanding change, building connections and communicating. The *Golden Star Award* monies will be used to continue the program and enhance its scope.

Strawberry Vale Elementary School, Victoria: Berwick Royal Oak Grandparent Program.

Marjorie Ireton Roach and her grade one class met twelve times last school year with seniors at Berwick Royal Oak residence. During the visits, students and their Berwick Grandparents read together, played games, danced and did crafts. Special activities at Hallowe'en, Remembrance Day and Christmas enriched the intergenerational experiences for everyone involved. The students developed a number of skills including conversation, respect for others, empathy for their Berwick Grandparents and cooperation. They wrote and illustrated thank you notes, cards and letters and planted flowers in pots as gifts for the seniors. The Grandparents for their part created a scrapbook of their interactions with the children. Many of the students and Grandparents exchanged contact information so that they could meet during the summer break. The Grandparent program, in its ninth year, was a second time winner of the *Golden Star Award*. The *Golden Star Award* monies will be used to fund crafts, books and games.

Westcot Elementary School, West Vancouver: Intergenerational Studies.

Every three weeks throughout the school year, Sandy Kwan's grade five students walked to the Maison Senior Living facility to spend time with seniors residing there. The isolation and loneliness experienced by many seniors can have a serious impact on health and well-being, so connection with Westcot students contributed to residents' lives in positive ways. There were many benefits for the students as well. The project introduced them to issues around aging and they became more empathetic. Sandy prepared her students in advance of each session, teaching them about things like moodiness and memory loss, and finding ways to make a connection through common experience. The students sang to the seniors as a choir. They shared Christmas cards, games, music, directed drawing, art, reading and discussion, all of which supported the development of communication, listening, planning and reporting out skills. The *Golden Star Award* monies will be used to purchase an electric piano for practice sessions before visiting the Maison residence.

Legion/ Golden Star Award: L V Rogers Secondary School, Nelson: Growing Together.

Carla Wilson's grade 10 and 11 students met with seniors to discuss and record the challenges and strengths both groups experienced with ageing, love, death, 'Me too', climate change, gender choices, hate, violence, war, loneliness and hopes for the future. For example, they talked about the sacrifices that led to the peace and freedom we enjoy in Canada and the importance of protecting our freedoms. Students developed a greater interest in our history and formed stronger bonds with the seniors in the group who had shared their wartime experiences. After several gatherings, the conversations culminated in a book that encourages other schools and seniors' services to build intergenerational groups into their programming. The *Golden Star Award* monies will be used in part to produce a documentary film about the second part of the 'Growing Together' program, 'Rising Strong'. Remaining money will be used to purchase snacks, provide transportation for seniors who want to participate and provide a celebratory pizza party for all participants.