

# FOSTERING ENGAGEMENT AND STUDENT PERSEVERANCE



## COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES CHANGING LIVES AND COMMUNITIES

*2013-2014 Annual Report of CLC Activities*

*September 2014*

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**Front Cover: Thanks to the students and CLC Coordinator of the Centennial Regional CLC in Greenfield Park for their artwork.**

## COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES - IMPACTING STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and the larger community (Melaville, 2000). The community school model is built upon an ecological view of school and community as one integral entity (Smith, 2006). Community schools supplement the usual academic function of schools by bringing together various stakeholders in partnership for youth development, lifelong learning, community engagement, family support, and community health and safety. Community schools have been shown to improve student learning and to contribute to better-functioning schools, increased family engagement with students and schools, and more vital communities (Blank, Melaville, & Shah, 2003; Dryfoos, 1994).<sup>1</sup>

Community schools support activities for students, families and the extended community. These additional activities may be housed in the school or at a neighboring facility, and may include, early childhood programs, job search and other employment programs, parenting education classes, adult or family literacy classes, intergenerational learning opportunities, and workshops for lifelong learners.

Every year there is increased demand for quality programs for children of all ages, including activities for school-aged children during non-school hours and a sense that families need an array of supports and services to help them raise healthy and competent children, and that these needs can best be met in a comprehensive fashion at the community level.

In the Québec context, schools serving the English-speaking community take on special significance. Students attending English schools account for less than 10 per cent of all students in the Québec education system and many of the 340 English schools are small and isolated. These schools—often the last remaining English institutions in their communities—are increasingly being turned to as community centres, “responsible not only for the students’ academic performance, but also for the development of their language and culture” (Advisory Board on English Education, 2000). If these schools were to disappear, it would “have a devastating effect on communities already dealing with a delicate sociolinguistic balance” (Berger, 1999, in Advisory Board of English Education, 2000).

English-language minority communities in the province of Quebec do not always have equitable access to education, health and social services. Located in English schools across Quebec, Community Learning Centres (CLC) help to meet existing needs by facilitating access to a broad range of services and activities intended for students, their families and the wider community. CLCs establish services and activities by building partnerships between English schools and the various organizations in their community (citizens, community-based organizations and businesses) to respond to local needs. The CLC Initiative supports the development of a diverse group of English community schools that serve as ‘hubs’ for English-language education and community development in their respective communities. This year, CLCs across Quebec developed/maintained more than 1100 partnerships and leveraged more than 3.3 million dollars in in-kind contributions to support local activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the final evaluation report 2007-2010 by Learning Innovations at WestEd

Since the Initiative was launched in 2006, popular CLC strategies have included the introduction of innovative learning opportunities that often leverage both technology and local expertise, as well as after school programs to support student perseverance and well-being. Recreational, social and lifelong learning opportunities have also been developed for community members. Over 2000 different activities/programs/services occurred this year in CLCs across the province – some were 1 time activities, others lasted the whole school year.

CLCs contribute significantly to student perseverance while, at the same time, responding to the particular culture and needs of the community it serves. Services that are developed by the CLC are typically accessible to the broader community and are self-supporting with the aim of being sustainable over time. The primary focus is for CLCs to deliver educational and support services in a seamless and integrated fashion and bring various agencies and partners together to pool resources and share the responsibility for service delivery.

Entering its 9<sup>th</sup> year, the CLC Initiative has maintained a diversity of partnerships which has benefitted the English-speaking community and has led to a number of positive impacts, including:

- ✓ increased student perseverance, health and well-being,
- ✓ an improved sense of belonging

- ✓ increased student engagement in community service
- ✓ increased access to resources and services for the English-speaking community

Additionally, CLC services and resources are being offered in more than 50 English schools in Quebec and that number increases each year as new partnerships are developed. These schools are increasingly opening their doors to support the broader community and are moving towards adopting a ‘whole child approach’ to education.

The stories and best practices highlighted in this report capture the essence of the initiatives being implemented by CLCs to achieve change and progress in English-speaking communities across Quebec. Activities for adults and seniors demonstrate to students that learning truly is a lifelong process. Engaging parents before their children have even entered school and continuing to find ways to connect and support parents throughout school life is an ongoing and important part of the work CLCs do.

The Community Learning Center Initiative would like to thank its generous community partners. Thanks to these partners, CLCs are building community and providing much needed services and programs. Contributions from community partners come in many forms – in-kind contributions of time, expertise, materials, and financial donations – each is of great value to us and our community.

“CLCs have made great strides in assembling a wide array of partnerships. It has to be acknowledged that this is a major component of success for the initiative given that only a few of these partnerships existed prior to the establishment of the CLCs, and that these contribute to both the educational, community and sustainability objectives on a local basis. CLC schools have generated over \$10.5 million in contributions (human, material and financial resources) over the last four years (2010-2014) for an estimated 2.13 return on investment.”

*CLC Evaluation - The Quest for Sustainability & Best Practices, Preliminary Summary - September 2014*

## BUILDING ON SUCCESS: LEARNING THROUGH EVALUATION

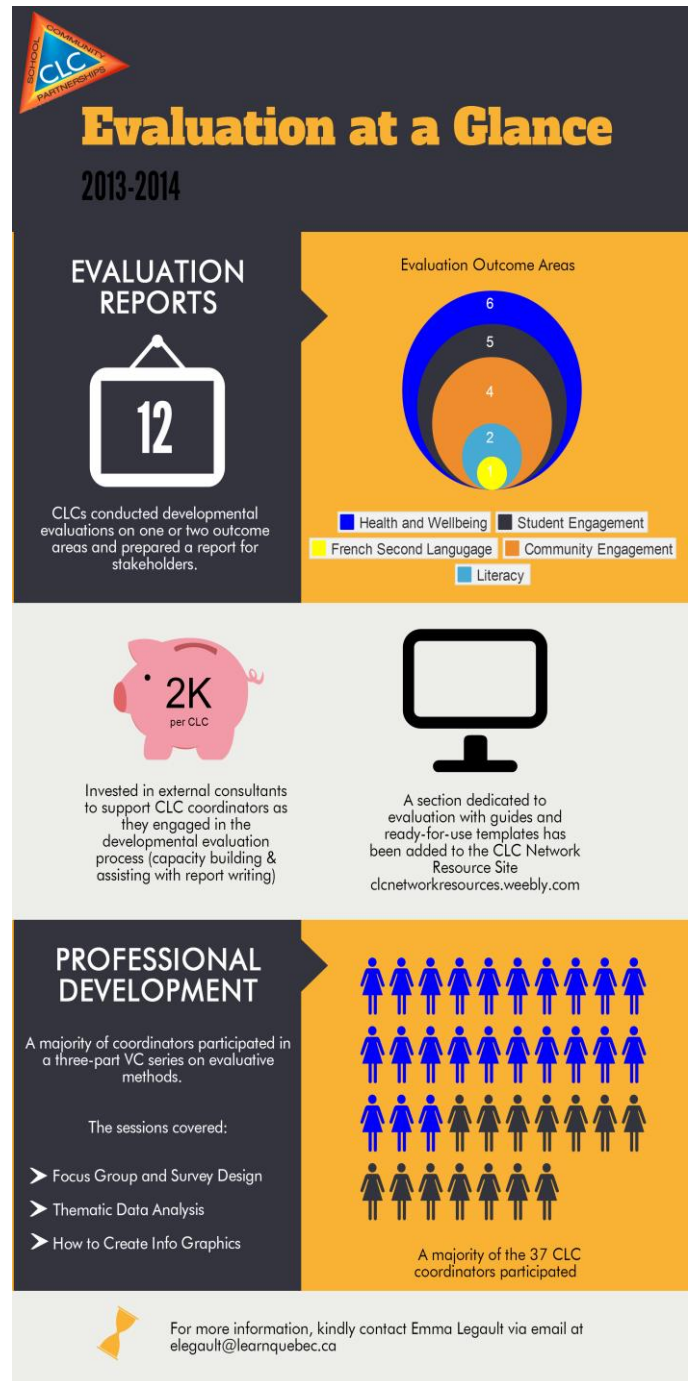
CLC coordinators regularly track data like participation rates, in-kind contributions and financial contributions using a monthly monitoring report. They also collect verbal and written feedback on the impact of available programs and events offered at the CLC. While taking the time to continuously capture details such as these can sometimes be pain-staking, this data is put to good use.

CLCs are encouraged to conduct developmental evaluations approximately every three years. The purpose of these evaluations is to learn more about each CLC's context, what is and isn't working and why. Each CLC's Theory of Change acts as a guide, outlining pre-established indicators of success that are tested against the data. Throughout the process, CLCs are concerned with identifying opportunities to build on success, garnering new insights that can help to overcome existing challenges.

The CLC Initiative strongly supports on-going evaluation as it offers:

- A way to stay connected to and further develop relationships with teachers, parents, students, partners, and school boards
- An outreach tool to stay connected with partners and community organizations
- A vehicle to promote the CLC in the school and the community
- A way to measure and learn from the impact of programming
- A way to support transparency and accountability within the school and community

Ten CLCs undertook an evaluation of key aspects of their programming and development this year. Highlights from those evaluation findings are featured in this report.





## BRIDGING COMMUNITIES

Grosse Ile CLC (ESSB), located on the Magdalen Islands, is poised to respond to local challenges surrounding youth retention by focusing on building relationships with their neighbouring francophone communities. Partners and parents express a need to increase French second language (FSL) skills. This is equally beneficial to Francophone children, as they will also be exposed to more activities and to a second language. It is felt that bridging the communities and developing positive relationships will increase students' FSL skills and will ultimately allow for their return to the Islands to work and have their families.

The Grosse-Ile CLC has already begun to implement activities which are creating bridges between the

Anglophone and Francophone communities and has also secured funding for future initiatives.

For the first time ever, thanks in large part to the work the CLC has been doing, the Maison Des Jeunes hired a bilingual animator specifically to serve the needs of English-speaking youth. The CLC has secured, in partnership with their local regional association, a project for the 2014-2015 school year from Canadian Heritage that is specifically intended to create an appreciation and build relationships between the Anglophone and Francophone communities.

## FOSTERING HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Promoting the health and well-being of our community is a component of what many CLCs do to support the vitality of the English speaking community in Quebec.

No matter how well prepared teachers are, the educational progress of youth will be limited if they are not motivated and able to learn. Healthier students are better learners. Research indicates that the majority of school-aged youth do not meet recommended levels of daily physical activity<sup>2</sup> and up to 30% skip breakfast.<sup>3</sup>

The majority of health and well-being projects initiated in CLCs this year created opportunities for students and community members to exercise (48%) and promoted healthy eating habits (52%). There remains work to be done in several areas; namely sexual health, substance abuse, and issues related to self-esteem.

“The CLC has direct contact with students and a link to professional services / networks that can support the development & implementation of activities aimed at improving second language skills, i.e. Emploi-Quebec, Adult Ed...etc.”

*Helena Burke, Director of CAMI*

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health\\_and\\_academics/pdf/pa-pe\\_paper.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/pa-pe_paper.pdf)

<sup>3</sup><http://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/The-Case-for-Eating-Breakfast.aspx>

**Valleyfield CLC** (NFSB) initiated an after school sports program that data shows has had a positive impact on student health and well-being.

The program is divided into three main modules.

1. The first part focuses on fitness: games/challenges which focus on cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and muscular endurance
2. The second component focuses on the sports unit children are participating in during school hours. This provides them with more time to practice the skills learned and apply the knowledge acquired.
3. The third module is free time where students can work on any sport skill they choose. This allows them to develop the skills they enjoy the most.

The physical education teacher at Gault Institute, where the Valleyfield CLC is housed, has seen positive changes among the students who participate in the after-school activity programs: "...there is a major improvement in their fitness components (cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and muscular endurance). Implementing these modules has improved almost all of the children's fitness which translates into better abilities when it comes to the sports units." But the benefits don't stop there.

The Valleyfield CLC Principal explained that "studies show that engaging in sport activities not only increases overall health and well-being but engagement and individual implication in school." It is also believed that when a child participates in sports programs, it increases their attention span, enhances their capability of registering information and it relieves anxiety.

Social-Emotional Outcomes <sup>4</sup>	2011-2012		2012-2013		2013-2014	
	Gault / Valleyfield CLC	Canada	Gault / Valleyfield CLC	Canada	Gault / Valleyfield CLC	Canada
<b>Participation in School Sports</b>	73%	68%	89%	68%	87%	68%
Girls 92% / Boys: 84%						
<b>Student participation in school clubs:</b>	47%	49%	53%	49%	60%	49%
Increasing, especially for girls: 78%						
<b>Positive sense of belonging:</b>	89%	89%	81%	86%	86%	86%
94% of girls had a high sense of belonging						

<sup>4</sup> TTFM Data from the Valleyfield Community Learning Centre Evaluation Report – June 2014

The New Carlisle CLC (ESSB) partnered with local regional association CASA (Committee for Anglophone Social Action) in 2011 to develop a fitness center. With additional support from the Municipality of New Carlisle and *Baie des Chaleurs active et en santé* (BDCAS), the fitness centre is now open 39 hours a week, Monday to Friday and is operated exclusively by dedicated community volunteers. The Centre is open to both high school students as well as community members from New Carlisle and surrounding communities.



*The New Carlisle CLC Fitness Centre*

In recent interviews, secondary teachers stated they were “starting to notice that their students are more motivated to be in school during the afternoon because they now had something to look forward to - access to the CLC fitness centre”, “it helps them to blow off steam and come back to class refreshed.”

When the CLC Coordinator surveyed fitness centre members, results indicated that access to a low-cost fitness center at the school has significantly contributed to the adoption of positive exercise habits. The survey indicated that 26.83% of members had never exercised prior to joining the fitness centre and 55% say they now exercise 3 to 4 times a week compared to a previous average of 21.95%.

Healthy living is a combination of many things, including good nutrition, regular exercise and a positive attitude. Taking care of your body and feeling pride in your accomplishments can improve both your physical and mental health. There are many things you can do to improve your quality of life - improving your diet and exercising regularly is two of the easiest steps. The New Carlisle Fitness Centre allows community members to reach their goals with affordable membership rates and easy access.<sup>5</sup>

84.6% of parents believe the school/CLC is a safe and socially inclusive environment.

87% of parents feel welcome as volunteers at the school/CLC.

84.6% believe that the CLC has increased the amount of English services available in the community

78.9% believe the CLC has improved the connection between the school and other organizations serving the English-speaking community

*New Carlisle Qu'Anglo Parent Survey  
Results, 2013*

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<sup>5</sup> *Our Story: The New Carlisle Community Learning Centre Developmental Evaluation Report, June 2014*



Richmond Regional CLC (ETSB) participates in the Community Health Education Program (CHEP), which is offered through Townshippers' Association. This dynamic program facilitates distance community learning of English health and social services information in remote Quebec communities. The aim is to raise awareness and provide information to individuals and their communities where there is a gap or a void in health and social services information. These videoconferences take place during the day and give students an opportunity to see seniors modeling lifelong learning and maintaining contact with the school. Program participants often become school volunteers.

Another health and well-being project that secondary two students initiative to promote healthy eating habits in the community, was to transform fruits and vegetables harvested from the school-community garden into healthy snacks that were 'taste-tested' at local daycares, elementary schools and a senior's home. Students also made pamphlets that included the recipe, nutritional facts and fun facts about the fruits and vegetables. One teacher stated that project based learning involving vegetables and fruit harvested from the school-community garden was applied to numerous areas of study such as math, cooking, and eating healthy.



The advantage of this is that students can apply their learning to the real world, which makes the learning more relevant to them.

The greatest achievement of Pierre Elliot Trudeau CLC (WQSB) since its inception 3 years ago is that students are building healthy relationships in a safe school environment, a winning combination for student perseverance and engagement.

A crucial component of the school's plan for a safe and healthy school and a key part of the CLC mission is to foster healthy and active lifestyles. Contributing to the achievement of this goal, the CLC has dramatically increased extra-curricular activities available to students and introduced *Community Sports Evenings*, an intergenerational program promoting healthy and active lifestyles through fun games.

"We wanted to promote locally grown, healthy snacks as well as reach out to our community showing positive things that the teens are doing at the high school. I linked my project to proportional situations, a topic that we teach in grade 7 math. The students had to use proportions to double or triple their recipes."

*Richmond Regional Teacher*

Data from the Pierre Elliott Trudeau CLC Evaluation, ***Community Building Impacting Student Perseverance and Engagement***, indicates that the CLC provides beneficial services to families and has improved access to services that were not previously available in the community.

- 68 % of the English-speaking and 100% of the French-speaking parents surveyed agree or strongly agree that the CLC has increased access to the school as a community resource
- 75% of the parents think it has improved connections between the school and other organizations serving the English-speaking community.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND STUDENT PERSEVERANCE

Gerald McShane CLC (EMSB) approached student engagement in a different way – by embedding mentoring opportunities in reading activities. The students developed a more positive attitude towards literacy and enjoyed being mentors/role models.

Now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year, the '**Reading Buddies**' program is a partnership with a daycare near the school. Students from Gerald McShane read stories and develop peer mentor relationships with the daycare children. This year the 'buddies' came together in the CLC room - the senior buddies (GMS students) wrote down what their favourite things were and the junior buddies (daycare students) drew pictures. These writings, drawings and photos were made into a book that was distributed to all the children involved in the project at the end of June 2014.

Parents praised this initiative and found that it improved the students' self-esteem and their sense of responsibility. Most were glad that their children were reading for fun and some were just happy their children were reading at all!

In preparation for its evaluation, the Chateauguay Valley CLC (NFSB) set out to examine how the CLC's activities were contributing to student perseverance

and engagement. Elements of behaviour such as a sense of belonging, learning and involvement in community were used as indicators.

Data indicated that the CLC is having a positive impact on indicators such as inclusivity, safety, motivation and participation - all factors that contribute to student success and engagement. The TTFM results (2010-2014) show that:

- student sense of belonging to the school has increased from 65% to 67%
- their sense of feeling safe at school has risen from 71% to 80%
- bullying has gone down from 30% to 18% (2% below the Canadian average)
- truancy has decreased from 22% to 16%

All of these factors indicate that school is a more welcoming place for students; however more data is needed to determine the extent to which the CLC is contributing to this change. Parents, teachers and community partners confirm that the CLC is building strong community connections and that community building impacts students learning by connecting classroom learning to the real world.



*Gerald McShane Junior and Senior Buddies*

## TEACHER ENGAGEMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY BASED SERVICE LEARNING

Community Based Service Learning (CBSL) is a strategy that combines curricular and social educational goals to meet authentic community needs through the application of knowledge, skills and reflection about the experience. CBSL is also a method for engaging young people in the community and for integrating the community into the school environment. To facilitate community links, CLCs have been working hard on outreach to teachers, to connect them to community members and partners, and to provide community based resources to enhance classroom learning.

Teachers reported that most of the CBSL projects conducted across the CLC network were fully or at least somewhat integrated into the curriculum. The following chart indicates that CBSL projects have been embedded into a variety of subjects across the QEP curriculum.

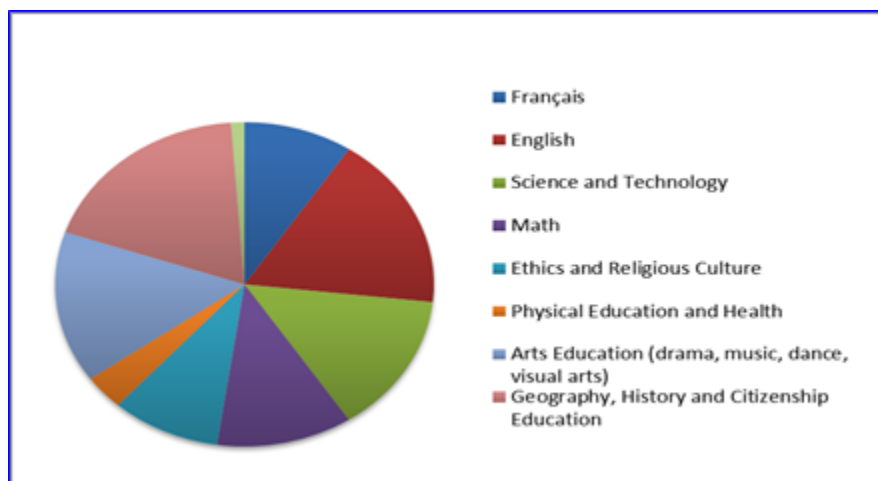
The '**Growing-Up Green**' environmental initiative at **Parkdale CLC (EMSB)** has resulted in increased teacher engagement in CLC activities and programs.

The objective of the program is to, "encourage healthy lifestyle choices for children and parents." More than 170 of the school's approximately 340 students participate in the program and Parkdale teachers believe it is helping instill healthy lifestyle habits in both parents and children.

Teachers incorporate the *Growing-Up Green* curriculum into their daily planning and see the benefit of its "cross-curricular abilities," its ability to connect with programs already being offered (nutrition month) as well as its cyclical nature that blends well with the school semesters (planting, growing, harvesting).

The Parkdale community garden was developed in collaboration with the local Éco-Quartier, which also animates workshops for the students and teachers. The program is teaching students the value of environmental conservation.

To enhance the program, the CLC will assess what students, parents and teachers want regarding health and well-being, and then look for strategic community partners to help launch new activities and programming for more students.



In March 2014, students from Mecatina School CLC (LSB) founded and began to manage GrEAU, a hydroponic-based agricultural business. Students recognized a need in their community – the lack of availability of organic, pesticide-free, locally grown produce - so they built a hydroponic garden using cost and energy efficient methods. Now they are able to supply their isolated community with fresh produce throughout the year.

Mecatina School is situated on the rocky coastline of La Tabatière, on the Lower North Shore of the St. Lawrence River, where there is no access to the community by road. Goods and supplies are sent in by boat or airplane. When produce arrives, it tends to be old or was harvested before it's ripe, forcing residents to pay a high price for food with reduced nutritional value.

The student-run business and hydroponic garden began with “brain storming in early November,” said Christopher Wong, the Science and Technology teacher who supervised the project. Three of his students wanted to enter the Quebec Entrepreneurial Contest 2014 and their goal was to create a business that applied the technology and science concepts they had learned in class with their desire to improve their community. A great deal of research, planning and labour went into the garden's construction. The students worked for many hours after school and even on weekends, which certainly mimics the reality of entrepreneurship.





The Work-Oriented Training Path (WOTP) students at **Richmond Regional CLC** (ESTB) collaborated with the local municipality, members of the *Amies de la Terre* volunteer organization and the Richmond & County Historical Society to pick-up litter along the shoreline, plant water vegetation and build bird houses, and raise trout to release into the river. The teacher connected the project to the curriculum through lessons about the ecosystem, wildlife, the hydrosphere, water pollution, recycling, etc.

Through CBSL, multiple projects and cross-curricular learning opportunities can be developed in relation to a community need. This means many chances to accommodate diverse learning styles while engaging students in an applied learning experience. The fact that the students were learning by doing made their learning more meaningful as it was applicable. The teachers also saw that CBSL projects accommodated various ways of learning.<sup>6</sup>

***Feed your Body, Feed your Heart, Feed your Soul'*** was a CBSL project with Primary Cycles 1, 2 and 3 students at **Netagamiou CLC** (LSB) on the Lower North Shore. The original idea was to create a cookbook which would present the history of food in the community of Chevery, Quebec; however the project quickly grew into so much more, due to the enthusiasm of the students and their desire to give back to their community, and even, communities abroad. The project integrated Social Studies and Language Arts.

The students were to find old recipes from their community to put together in a cookbook. The classes then decided to make some of the recipes and sold them at the school 'bakery'. During the process, the students shared stories about the friends and loved ones who had provided them the cookbook recipes, which led to the idea to transform



*Richmond Regional Students releasing the trout*

the cookbook into a memory book which would include photos, stories, and of course, the recipes.

From there, the student's wanted to do something good with the profits they had made from selling the treats and book. They sent money to the victims of Typhoon Haiyan (Philippines 2014) and helped fund a student through the Hilde Back Education Fund<sup>7</sup> in Kenya. The students also gave back to their own community by spending time with seniors, sharing their baked goods and telling stories. The teacher describes the project as a great success. "The students learned so much, I am having trouble putting it into words," she writes, "Leadership, mentoring, cooking, safety in the kitchen, compassion, writing, storytelling, listening skills and most of all, they learned that it takes a team to make it all happen."

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<sup>6</sup> *Richmond Regional High School CLC 2013/14 Evaluation: Fostering Community Partner Connections and Meaningful Learning Opportunities for Students*

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.hildebackeducationfund/>

Students in the Work Oriented Training Program (WOTP) at St. Michael's CLC (WQSB) jumped into action and took over food preparation for their school two days a week after a local restaurant that provided school meals ended that service. The class also made sandwiches daily for several students who are undernourished.

As if that wasn't enough, the class also wanted to support seniors in their community so they took some of the by-products - such as chicken bones for making soup - and made meals for members of the community who are shut in or less mobile.

The project, called '**Food in our school, food in our community**', was fully integrated into the curriculum and taught practical skills like procedures for safe handling of food and working in a professional style kitchen.

The teacher commented that his "students are more engaged by projects, especially those that require much hands on work. This project helped to allow for that to happen." They also learned the "value of giving back to the community and making healthy choices." Students felt they had "accomplished something real, and peers who came from lesser means were able to get a lunch."

This is a great example of CBSL whereby students identified an authentic need, came up with a solution, all the while learning and making a contribution to their community.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Centennial High School CLC (RSB) partnered with ACCESS, the Riverside School Board Adult Education and Vocational Training Centre, to offer IPAD course to seniors to help break their isolation by engaging them in community activities. This had some very positive results. Participants were surveyed and indicated that:

- They loved their experience and felt that they grew in both their technological and social abilities
- 100% of participants felt more comfortable using technology and felt more connected to their community and their peers
- Many seniors expressed a desire to become more involved in the school community (and did)
- 65% of participants said if the CLC was open outside of their IPAD class hours, they would be interested in visiting the centre for other programs and/or coming to the newly opened used bookstore

- Only 20% said that if the CLC was not offering the course, they would be taking the course elsewhere. The rest indicated they would still be at home due to a lack of services, awareness or cost.

This turned out to be a reciprocal relationship because in addition to what the IPAD course brought the seniors, they also gave back to the school with donations totaling over \$1500. Contributions ranged from used books for all ages, clothing for the second-hand clothing boutique, materials and resources and food for students.

The Centennial CLC makes it easier to find and make connections in the community. The CLC gives one of the rare chances and places to meet others in the community and the network.

*Centennial CLC Partners*



'Slice of Life' is the story of how a local artifact can get students and the wider community to talk about their history and reflect on the changes in their community and throughout the world over the past century. It started in 2010 when a towering pine tree near the Eaton Valley CLC had to be cut down because it was sick. The school's principal at the time preserved a two-inch-thick slab of the tree, putting it in a closet for years.

This year, the grade 5/6 teacher found the tree slab and brought it into her classroom, inspired by the book '**While a Tree was Growing**'<sup>8</sup> by Jane Bosveld, a story about a tree that grew in California for 3000 years and the things that happened while it was growing. The Bury tree slab motivated her and another teacher to approach the CLC coordinator and together they came up with the 'Slice of Life' project. The first thing the students did was count the tree rings, and they determined that the tree was 109 years old, having sprouted in 1901.



Community members were then asked to contribute their ideas for community events that occurred during the lifespan of the tree and suggestions poured in. The project culminated in students, staff and community members voting on the top 5 local

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<sup>8</sup> *While a Tree was Growing* by Jane Bosveld – 1997 - American Museum of Natural History, Workman Publishing, New York

and historical events. The winning events are clearly displayed on the tree slab, their own community artifact which is now on display in the CLC room at the school.<sup>9</sup>

The Valleyfield CLC (NFSB) has only been in operation for 3 years but during this time has formed more than 25 community partnerships, supporting over 20 programs for students and community members. The collaborative work has been a tremendous success and mutually beneficial. Existing partners continue to work more broadly with the CLC, maintaining relationships and leveraging resources.



A recent initiative is the collaboration with the City of Valleyfield to build a permanent ice rink (value \$ 120,000) on school property. The City of Valleyfield will be responsible for the maintenance of the rink. Students will have access to the skating rink during school hours and the city will be able to provide community with sport, cultural and artistic activities that will result in a decrease in loitering in the city and greater harmony among young people and residents, not to mention the health benefits.

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<sup>9</sup> *The Sherbrooke Record*, May 12, 2014  
[https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwbJTdx9\\_so6S3FzeUd\\_DVUJXWVk/edit](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0BwbJTdx9_so6S3FzeUd_DVUJXWVk/edit)

The Riverview CLC (LBPSB) set out to improve the school environment, and in consultation with the students and staff, a committee of staff and parents raised \$25,000 to make the school yard improvement project dream a reality.

Over the summer their schoolyard has been transformed from a weathered concrete jungle into a beautiful playground that includes a large jungle gym, soccer field, basketball court and the expansion of an existing sustainable collective garden. What began two and a half years ago as a small scale project has expanded beyond what we imagined to be possible and has come to fruition.

The CLC partnered with the Department of Design and Computation Arts at Concordia University to create designs for the new schoolyard, taking into account the suggestions of Riverview students.



## VIDEOCONFERENCING: STUDENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A classroom learning resource for teachers, CLC videoconferencing systems are used for everything from supporting partners, professional development for Community Development Agents, teachers and school board staff.

Integrating videoconferencing into the classroom curriculum was a new experience for most teachers and students at Joliette CLC however it turned out to be quite remarkable. Everyone was impressed with the quality of the presentations and the level of professionalism of the presenters. The subjects covered during these video-conferences was varied and interesting, students said they were “innovative and different.” They found the VCs to be uniquely interactive and appreciated the opportunity to exchange with the presenter in real time. Students are so used to watching something without it being interactive that they were impressed with the idea of being able to exchange, for example, with a doctor who was in the process of doing an autopsy,

or chatting with a scuba diver who was diving along the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

By bringing the outside world into the classroom, students become more motivated to learn. Experts are readily available to answer student questions, going beyond the normal classroom experience. Interactive virtual field trips are available to support all subject areas. Often, pre and post activities are



offered by content providers to help students to set learning goals and to reflect on their experiences.<sup>10</sup>

Collaborative projects with schools from around the world develop cultural awareness and cooperative learning skills. Students soon begin to improve their communication skills and physical appearance as they become aware of how others hear and see them. Roles and responsibilities are given to students to enable them to become better learners. Technology plays an important role in the lives of today's students and these skills will increase their opportunities in the workforce.

Videoconferencing can become an extension of the classroom offering a multitude of teaching possibilities. Teachers now have additional resources for their students; allowing them to visit places and have face-to-face discussions with people they would not normally be exposed to. Videoconferencing is a tool for teachers that can help to enhance students' learning experience.

Videoconferencing for professional development and general interest are also offered to CLCs and their communities, many organized by CLC partners. Topics were varied and many of the sessions were offered more than once to accommodate the high level of interest from the community.

The Vanier College Lunch and Learn VC Series was a new initiative offered this year to students in remote regions who were considering continuing their education at CEGEP. Students from Vanier and 5 CLCs took part in the sessions. Students enjoyed being able to talk to actual CEGEP students and learning about different programs and courses. They also learned about how to cope with homesickness and heard perspectives from professors and students at Vanier. The CLC students reported that they enjoyed the series of 6 lunchtime videoconferences. They said they particularly appreciated the casual nature of the discussion and the quality of the information shared. Next year the series may be expanded to include secondary 3-4-5 students so that they too can benefit from this information. It is hoped that by exposing students in rural areas to CEGEP life earlier on, more students will be prepared and interested in pursuing higher education.



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<sup>10</sup> Report to the Ministère de l'éducation, du Loisir et du Sport - 2013 – 2014 Community Learning Centre-Provincial Resource Team Year-End Report



## CREATING AWARENESS OF ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND HISTORY

With the long term goal of increasing Aboriginal student perseverance, CLCs have worked to develop strong collaborative relationships with Aboriginal partners at the local, provincial and national levels. This includes working with families, students, communities, organizations.

Most projects this year fell into one of four areas, many combining multiple methods.

- ◆ Cultural Awareness through contact with an Aboriginal person or organization
- ◆ Knowledge of Aboriginal history and/or contemporary issues through curriculum
- ◆ Reconciliatory relationships established
- ◆ Extra-curricular projects to expand or share knowledge developed

Ormstown Elementary School (Chateauguay Valley CLC) teachers took it upon themselves to make more connections to Aboriginal cultures and history in their classrooms. With the help of the CLC Coordinator, teachers introduced students to key concepts and an historical overview using the Kairos



*Kairos Blanket activity*

Blanket Exercise<sup>11</sup>. A facilitator lead this interactive theatre-based lesson on the history most Canadians are never taught. This opened a discussion about the appreciation of First Nations culture, which is especially important in their community, given their close proximity to large Mohawk populations.



*New Richmond Mural*

At the New Richmond CLC (ESSB) one teacher demonstrated that awareness of Aboriginal cultures can be integrated into the classroom quite successfully. With the help of a local Mi'kmaq artist and elder, the primary cycle 3 group completed an art mural project. The project was embedded into several subjects: arts education, geography, history and citizenship education. The mural was mounted and unveiled in the school entrance at the end of the project.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.kairoscanada.org/dignity-rights/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise/>

## COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is an area that the CLC Initiative is continuously working to improve. The development of a variety of resources for the Community Development Agents (CLC Coordinators) helps them create high quality communications and strengthen the visual identity of the CLC initiative.

A resource site<sup>12</sup> was launched in December and is intended to support the ongoing development of the CLCs. There are tools and resources related to videoconferencing, community based service learning, evaluation, communications, Theory of Change, and aboriginal education and social justice initiatives. This site is password protected and resources are continuously being added.

Two community conversations were held this year to determine how CLCs can continue their important work as liaisons fostering collaboration between schools and their communities. These conversations offered important insights as well as questions about the value, visibility, governance, and sustainability of CLCs. A clear and common thread was that the Community Learning Centre model in English-speaking Quebec has become a valuable vehicle for building community involvement and cohesion across the province.

Surveys conducted with CLC parents indicate that even more outreach is necessary and would produce additional benefits in parental engagement for both the CLC and the School.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS.....

Every year CLCs face growing demand to increase programs and services, and data is indicating that the initiative is having a positive impact on educational outcomes, in particular student engagement. From improved attendance rates, to increased participation in non-class educational activities, the message is consistent, families are looking for services and support to help them raise healthy and successful children, and these needs are best met in a comprehensive fashion at the community level.

CLCs are well placed to meet community needs by facilitating access to a broad range of services and activities for students, their families and the wider community. They build partnerships between English schools and the various organizations in their community (citizens, community based organizations and businesses) to respond to local needs. CLCs are creating bridges between the Anglophone and Francophone communities, promoting the health and well-being of our community and contributing to the vitality of the English speaking community in Quebec.

The last eight years have shown that the CLC is no longer just an idea but is something unique and innovative that could become a fixture that helps dissolve the division between school and community – for the benefit of both.

The CLC has reinvigorated the community, and a vigorous community has families and families have children who go to school. While rural and remote communities are dealing with youth retention and whether there will be an English-speaking community for the next generation, urban communities are facing an influx of 'somewhat' English-speakers from around the world trying to find their place as a minority, within a minority, within a minority. The

CLC concept is well situated to play an essential role in both contexts.

*CLC Evaluation - The Quest for Sustainability & Best Practices. Preliminary Summary - September 2014*

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<sup>12</sup> <http://clcnetworkresources.weebly.com/>



# SUPPORTING STUDENTS

the CLC way



Identify a student need

Identify local resource or expertise (partner)

Connect partner with school



Assess impact

Partners and school staff build sustained relationships through ongoing collaboration

Introduce new activity, resource or service to address student need

For more information on the CLC Initiative contact your local CLC, visit our [website](#) or contact the Provincial Resource Team at 450-622-2212.