



Bayview Elementary school students love to create rhythm with their new shakers.

Photos: Shauna DeBodt

Your gift makes a big difference

Music Helps Students to Focus and Thrive

Ms. Julia Browning has seen improvements in her students' 3Rs (reading, writing, 'rithmetic) by incorporating music, dance and drama in her classes at Bayview Elementary school.

A recent \$2,500 grant from the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation allowed the teacher to purchase more musical instruments for her Kindergarten - Grade 4 students, whose families cannot afford to buy instruments.

"Students who previously were unable to participate in music have found the confidence to focus and thrive in class," says Ms. Browning. "Students who may not excel academically find confidence in creative thinking. I've noticed a change in the social skills of some students as a result of working cooperatively within a fine arts atmosphere; they're able to be leaders in music class."

She used the grant to purchase five xylophones, two class sets of recorders and percussion tools such as rhythm shakers, as well as tuners for the ukuleles the school already owns.

"Students love playing the instruments, and they've been composing their own songs. It's wonderful to see and hear them use their music skills creatively," she says.

Ms. Browning says that Bayview's Arts Education program stresses communication, respect, responsibility, critical and creative thinking, and development of the student's personal and cultural identity.

"This is the only opportunity for many of our students to engage in formal training in music, dance and drama at the elementary level," she adds.

Crystal Dennison, the Foundation's new Executive Director, says that since 2009 NLSF has distributed \$29,000 for instruments at 13 elementary schools in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District. "Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we're able to fund special initiatives when school budgets are tight. Our Elementary Music grants have introduced many students to the joy of playing music," she adds.



Students love making music.



Charity begins at home

Meet Board Member and Donor Carol Baird-Krul

Personal experience shaped empathy for students in need

A desire to give back to her community and a belief that 'charity begins at home' motivated Carol Baird-Krul to become a donor and Board member of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation.

As a retired teacher-librarian, who worked in Canada and overseas, Mrs. Baird-Krul has seen her share of school children affected by poverty.

She spent 20 years working both as a classroom teacher and a teacher-librarian for School District 68, and she saw first-hand how our region has a proportionally high number of vulnerable students compared to the two Alberta school districts where she had previously been employed.

Throughout her career in this District, the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation didn't exist and helping vulnerable students was very much dependent on individual teachers or schools.

"The many sad stories I heard and saw did much to make me understand the need for the Schools Foundation."

"During my time working in the Nanaimo-Ladysmith area, I had the opportunity to work in several schools all of which, with the exception of one or two, had a significant number of vulnerable students," she says.

"The many sad stories I heard and saw did much to make me understand the need for the Schools Foundation, and I have no doubt that the money and support that the Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation provides to our students is beyond measure. For me, it's a privilege to be able to do my part to help today's students."

On a personal, as well as a professional level, Mrs Baird-Krul knows very well how an organization such as the Schools Foundation can make a big difference in the lives of students, who may not be as lucky as she was when she was a teenager in trouble.

"I left school in Grade 11 and had a baby," she says. "Had it not been for the financial and emotional support from my family and friends, I would not have returned to school and been able to do what I have done in my life."

Since retiring, Mrs. Baird-Krul has done a variety of things including co-presenting workshops, co-authoring a book and writing a national magazine column on retirement preparation.

She has been involved in international student placements, and English as second language translations for a small offshore educational company. She is also the current President of the Retired Teachers Association.



Carol Baird-Krul, standing, with Phyllis Stephens, daughter of the late John Barsby, at last year's Appreciation Tea.

Thank You!



"I am extremely thankful and grateful for the generosity and altruism of the donors. The scholarships I received have allowed me to fulfil my wish of studying at Western University, in London, Ontario."

Camila Marcus (2014 NDSS grad) is completing her first year of a Bachelor of Arts in Media, Information & Technoculture.

Bequest spurs thirst for learning

Students Learn by Connecting with Environment

Eco pilot project at Departure Bay Elementary school

A unique approach to teaching is getting students at Departure Bay Elementary school excited about learning. While gaining hands-on experience and knowledge about the world outside their school, students are learning reading, writing and math.

Principal Lisa Frey explains that the school is piloting an eco-themed approach to teaching, in response to the Ministry of Education's curriculum changes that call for education experiences that are more engaging and student-centred.

"Our school is surrounded by numerous green spaces and parks in which many groups are doing great work," she says. "We want to better connect our students to their community, and we're partnering with these groups on exciting multi-disciplinary projects."

By way of example, she cites a recent project where the Grade 5/6 class studied varnish clams alongside students from Vancouver Island University. "Our students practised the scientific process, collected data, and learned about the varnish clam as an invasive species. This involved science, math and language arts."



Learning about nature.

Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation provided the school with a \$3,000 grant. Funding for the grant comes from a bequest earmarked for initiatives that teach student leadership, community development and social responsibility.

The new curriculum contains many aboriginal themes, and the grant has helped obtain special resources.

"The resources have allowed us to confidently reach out to our aboriginal community and have spurred activities such as drum making and visits to a long house. We also adapted a Coast Salish legend as a musical, which the whole school performed.



Grade 5/6 students collect data on varnish clams.

Newly purchased Jr. Streamkeepers materials will allow students to take part in a course to become experts on local streams and share their knowledge with the community.

"Students enjoy what they're learning, and they see relevance and purpose for what they're doing. I believe it has caused our families with Aboriginal heritage a sense of pride in seeing their culture recognized and celebrated. The financial support from the Foundation has made a huge difference to our school. We're very grateful," says Ms. Frey.

Donor Profile

Order of the Royal Purple

For 40 years, dedicated volunteers of the Order of the Royal Purple have raised funds to provide scholarships and bursaries for local graduating students. Their first donation, in 1974, was a \$200 bursary. In June 2014, two lucky graduates received scholarships of \$1,000 each.

Over the years the Order has donated thousands of dollars to provide disadvantaged students with school supplies, clothing, gym shoes, food, and other necessities.

We were saddened to hear about the recent dissolving of the Order due to their dwindling membership. On behalf of local school children, we offer our sincere gratitude to all the women of the Order of the Royal Purple who volunteered so diligently and selflessly to better our community.



Order of the Royal Purple members, standing, Joyce Wagstaff and Deborah Munday; seated, Betty Hill and Dorothy Dool.



Meet Crystal Dennison Executive Director

Passionate about working in community and building synergistic relationships

Dr. Patrick Ross, President of Nanaimo-Ladysmith Schools Foundation (NLSF), is pleased to announce the appointment of Crystal Dennison as Executive Director, effective January 1, 2015.

“Crystal was Executive Director for the non-profit Nanaimo Foodshare Society for the past nine years, and she brings over 25 years of professional administrative and financial experience in both the profit and non-profit sectors. She’s a long-time Nanaimo resident and community leader, who continues to broaden her knowledge and skills in non-profit management and community leadership,” says Dr. Ross.

“She’s passionate about working in community and building synergistic relationships, and she has a very good understanding of the great work the Schools Foundation accomplishes on a daily basis. I know that she’ll be able to build on the good relationships established by our founding Executive Director Erin van Steen, who retired on December 31 after 18 years at the helm,” adds Dr. Ross.

Mrs. Dennison is excited about expanding the work she has been doing for the past decade. “While working for a local food security organization, I developed and implemented a number of programs that helped students in some schools, and I’m pleased to broaden the scope of my community work by providing comprehensive support to all students - from Kindergarten to Grade 12 - in our local public schools,” she says. “I have a strong belief in the importance of supporting young people to help ensure their success, and I’m proud to be part of an organization that offers direct assistance to students.”

“Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District is one of a few Canadian school districts that has a community based non-profit to support vulnerable students at risk of failing at school. We also raise funds for scholarships and bursaries to help our Grade 12 graduates with the high cost of post-secondary education and to encourage them to continue their studies. I look forward to meeting current and new donors, and working with Foundation directors as we continue to strengthen our partnerships and provide valuable programs to assist students,” she says.



Crystal Dennison



Stock the Lockers

Save the dates: 13 August – 3 September

Our sixth annual campaign to raise funds for school supplies and other practical needs of vulnerable students at School District 68.

Help us raise \$50,000 to give students an equal chance to succeed in school.

Thank You Donors & Community Partners!

Your generosity supports 380 scholarships & bursaries worth more than \$300,000. The Ministry of Education is providing 151 District Authority Awards for Grade 12 grads, each valued at \$1,000. In June we will be able to present more than \$450,000 to graduating students to help with the cost of their post-secondary education. We have received 420 applications from students.