

Connect Charter School:

Partners in Place - Overview

The Partners in Place: Building Communities Through Experiential Learning multi-faceted event has officially come to an end. Connect Charter School partnered with Tsuut'ina Education Department, Mount Royal University, and the Outdoor Council of Canada, to strengthen collaboration with the community and improve educational outcomes. Thanks to grants from the Calgary Foundation and Activate YYC, the tremendously successful event promoted collaboration and community, as well as best practices in learning, teaching, and leadership.

Chiila Elementary students walking in with their flags

On April 19, 2018, students from Connect Charter School and Tsuut'ina Education Schools met in Lakeview to walk together across the 37th Street interchange to Mount Royal

University to symbolize the deep bonds of this partnership. Over 1000 guests, including students, dignitaries, and Elders congregated at Mount Royal University for a presentation style powwow, which included performances by Tsuut'ina dancers, drummers, and singers. The powwow was emceed by Hal Eagletail who explained the different dances and the detailing on the dancers' regalia. Multiple people in the crowd stated that they felt like they were in a rock concert due to Eagletail's enthusiastic demeanour and undeniable gusto.



Connect Charter School student signs



Dancers performing the old style fancy shawl dance

The Parent Symposium was held later that evening at Connect Charter School. Parents from Connect Charter School and Tsuut'ina Education schools were invited to attend a keynote address by place-based education expert, Amy Demarest, who lead a discussion on the four elements of place-based education (experience, subject, place, and service). Guest speaker Albi Sole, Executive Director of the Outdoor Council of Canada, spoke to the group about the roots of physical literacy.

On April 20, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Connect Charter School hosted the Partners in Place Educators Symposium, which focused on place-based education and Indigenous ways of teaching, learning, and knowing. At the start of the day, Amy Demarest once again lead a discussion on the four elements of place-based education (experience, subject, place, and service) for the attendees. The group then dispersed to attend one of 10 the different breakout sessions offered in the morning. One of the most highly attended session of the morning was Learning math from place: What does it mean to circle, which was lead by Gladys Sternberg from Mount Royal University and Courtney Fox from Chiila Elementary.



Keynote Speaker Amy Demarest



Group breakout session

“I liked that we were able to practice the different circle activities during the session and not just hear them being explained,” stated a teacher from Chiila Elementary.

Other popular sessions included Relationships and School Culture, Tsuut'ina Language 101 and Tipi Raising. There was a delicious lunch served to all the attendees, which included stew, bannock and an array of desserts to choose from. Pemmican, berry



Tipi Raising Session

soup and Indian popcorn were handed out in tester containers for guests to sample traditional Tsuut'ina snacks. After lunch, guest speaker Albi Sole, Executive Director of the Outdoor Council of Canada, lead the entire group in a discussion of physical literacy before everyone left to attend their final sessions of the day. The afternoon sessions ranged from Place, Pedagogy and Partnership: Shared Voices in Socioecological Connectivity, The Power of Place: Cultivating Inquiry With/In and Through Nature and Fun Environmental Activities in your Schoolyard. One of the most memorable sessions of the day was Storytelling lead by Gerald Meguinis, who held his session in the outdoor Tipi. "I love story telling," explained a Connect Charter School Staff member, "It's something everyone can benefit from, and Gerald was amazing."

Overall, the symposium was a great success thanks to all of our talented session leaders, staff and student volunteers. Connect Charter School has made sure to collect timely feedback from participants who attended the symposium to ensure future event success.



**Dr. Butterfield being interviewed
by CTV News**

To review some the media coverage of the Partners in Place: Building Communities Through Experiential Learning please click on the links below.

<https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/students-from-calgary-and-tsuut-ina-share-traditions-create-mural-1.3894563>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/tsuutina-powwow-charter-reconciliation-1.4627273>

<https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1375530&binId=1.1201914&playlistPageNum=1>

<http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/charter-school-partners-with-tsuutina-for-symbolic-walk-indigenous-awareness>

<http://calgarysun.com/news/local-news/calgary-weather/wcm/e0484d27-41a0-457a-bb81-3773645dc2d9>

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<http://neilzellerphotography.zenfolio.com/>