

CONNECTING GENERATIONS Update December- April 2018



GISS

Initiatives that started in September/October 2017 have continued to blossom including:

The GISS student-led WELLNESS Committee

1) **Wellness Wednesdays:**

December

Jodi French, a counselor with IWAV led a workshop on strategies for “Coping with Stress at Home” in time for Christmas! Participants at the workshop came up with multiple suggestions for how anyone might find healthy coping strategies:

January

Cornelia Krikke (Yoga instructor and Energy Medicine teacher) facilitated a workshop on some of the ways to prepare for exams.

February

Peer Counsellors participated in a conversation with the B.C. Lions after their school-wide assembly “Don’t Be a Bystander”.



GISS peer counsellors with the B.C. Lions

March

The “Opioid Dialogues”, a discussion facilitated by public health nurse Trinda Kajack and Community Services counsellor, Angela Koetzle.

April/May

The “Opioid Dialogues” will be held again during the next month with more promotion through the Leadership students.

2) Peer Counselling training and support



11 of our 13 peer counsellors

Christa Campsall facilitated a training and provides ongoing weekly supervision for student peer counsellors, using her books focusing on wellness, My Guide Inside . Peer counsellors are now in “hot demand” visiting a class at Fulford Elementary last week, offering an art project at Phoenix Elementary, co-facilitating at the SIMS Wellness Fair later this month and giving a workshop to



Fulford Elementary

a Grade 9 class at the beginning of May.

As part of their training they created a short P.S.A.: <https://vimeo.com/263462985>
In response to the tragedy in Parkland, Florida, they made this video:
<https://vimeo.com/258924172>

The GISS Writers' Group

The GISS Writers' Group continues to meet every Thursday after school. A regular group of 15-18 participants includes international students – from Germany, from Sweden, from Mexico and from Japan! Our theme of “Home” continues this semester with “Writing Ourselves Home”. We are preparing our 4th anthology of work and through a collaboration with Salt Spring Literacy members of the Group and any other interested students will also be given the opportunity to connect with an elder at Greenwoods/Braehaven and listen to and record their stories, to be printed in a collection before the end of May.



Cyber Scorpions

The Cyber Scorpions finished 3rd in the Robotics First competition in Victoria last month. Once again this year adult mentors have been highly involved.

ELL (English Language Learners)

Our one volunteer is being joined by a newcomer this month who will also be visiting the classroom with a view of giving students opportunity for practicing their conversational skills.

Salt Spring Community Radio

Weekly meetings attended by a group of enthusiastic students have dwindled to a standstill for this year with students torn between other extra-curricular activities and commitments. One of 3 interested adults has offered to start again at the beginning of the 2018/19 year. The new community radio station is interested in the creation of programming for/by youth.

Home Words

Home Words Phase 1 reached a conclusion in March with 5 new Writing Groups started by 8 newly-trained facilitators as the practicum part of the training.

Among the populations that have benefitted were 15-19 participants in a group who joined a "Women's Journaling Circle", including some who are clients of IWAV; a group of high school students living on Galiano; seniors who participated in a "Writing Retreat" Group at the Seniors Wellness Centre; a class of Phoenix Elementary school students and members of a church group. (See letter below written by a trainee).

Home Words is a partnership project of the Salt Spring Arts Council and Connecting Generations. A proposal for a new collaboration has been submitted by the Salt Spring Arts Council and the Yellow Submarine Drop-In Centre (Community Services) to the B.C. Arts Council for Home Words Phase 2 to begin in the Fall.

Science Fair in May

CG is assisting with the plans for a Science Fair to take place during the first /second week of May

SIMS

Conversation practice for French Immersion students

2 French-speaking volunteers visit the French Immersion classrooms regularly in order to give students the opportunity to practice reading and conversational skills.

Workshops

CG has been involved in the organization of 3 workshops (on Body Image, Mental Wellness and Drugs and Alcohol) to be offered at the SIMS Wellness Fair on April 26th. Several of the GISS Peer Counsellors will be co-facilitating and/or offering support to the facilitators.

OTHER INVOLVEMENTS

Growing Innovation

Connecting Generations was accepted this year as a "sustained" project with Growing Innovation, the joint UBC and Ministry of Education project that focuses on innovative projects and programs that are created in rural communities in B.C. A symposium at which different rural districts will be presenting their projects takes place on May 5th at U.B.C.

Aboriginal Education Committee

Connecting Generations continues to participate on the SD 64 Aboriginal Education committee.

Grant applications and donations

Connecting Generations has been successful in 9 grant applications:

- SS Arts Council for 2 workshop series on “The written and spoken word” and “Multi-media storytelling and collage”.
- The BC Arts Council Arts-Based Community Development program for “Home Words -Writing in Community”, a partnership project of the Salt Spring Arts Council and Connecting Generations.
- GISS PAC for a Peer Counselling training program
- Salt Spring Foundation for “Home Words -Writing in Community”
- Healthy Schools grant partnering with Public Health (Jenny Redpath) for Peer Counselling training and ongoing supervision
- Salt Spring Foundation of Youth- Peer Counselling training.
- UBC/ Ministry of Education Growing Innovation program
- McCreary Society Cyber Scorpions Robotics First team
- Salt Spring Foundation of Youth – Robotics First team

In addition we would like to thank:

- Opus Art Supplies in Victoria for their generous donation of art supplies and journals for the GISS Writing group, for the Home Words trainees and for the Peer Counsellors
- Country Grocer for their willingness and generosity in supply refreshments for all of the above projects!

A letter of support for Home Words Phase 2 written by one of the newly-trained Home Words facilitators:

“I knew Home Words was something transformative that I had to sign up for when I first read about the project in the Gulf Islands Driftwood newspaper, and then went back the next day and re-read it, and then again for a third time and a fourth. Powerful words, including: intergenerational, journal, writing, share, listen, community, and connection. It piqued my curiosity and so I signed up. I was nervous when we started, but with Ahava and Sarah’s warmth and guidance, our facilitation group cracked the spines of our new journals and opened up into Writing Alone Together. By writing freely and sharing our words in a safe space, we were supported in our respective journeys of connection, building community, and a sense of belonging. I have experience with writing and writing about trauma. In my book, Imprint: A Memoir of Trauma in the Third Generation, I write about intergenerational trauma and how it passes down from one generation to the next. But I also look at ways of healing. Writing is one of many art forms that can be used as a tool to explore

the trauma and emotions we hold in our bodies. In Home Words, I felt supported through our weekly check-in's, our mindfulness practice, of putting pen to paper and letting the words flow. I listened and felt listened to when others in the group gave me affirmative feedback after I shared my words with them. We held each other as a group, gave each other the space to feel emotions when they arose, and were there to bear witness to the beauty that comes from being vulnerable. After the eight-week facilitation course, my co-facilitator and I went out into the Salt Spring community and led our own journaling circle, and it was so successful, we have another one planned for the end of this month. Together we are fostering a safe space for intergenerational connection and community building.

There is something so very beautiful about being in a room with others, listening to pens scratch the pages, hearing words so often held inside, spoken out loud. When writing can be so solitary, Home Words creates a space of intimate gathering where one feels less alone.”