

MARCH
2026



Selkirk Montessori School E-Newsletter

From the Head of School, Erin Hayes

Did you know that this year marks our twelfth year of Immersion Week for our Middle Years students? Twelve years of curiosity, creativity, courage, and connection — and we couldn't be more proud of what this week has become in our community.

Research tells us that as children move into adolescence, they begin to “prune.” They don't just pull back from adult guidance — they often begin to drop activities as well. Sometimes this happens as recreation becomes competition. Sometimes it's changing voices and bodies, shifting peer groups, or a dip in confidence. Sometimes it's simply the hesitation to try something new when others seem more experienced. What we know — and what research confirms — is that when students stay engaged in activities they enjoy, they feel more connected to themselves and to each other in healthy, meaningful ways.

Immersion Week was born from our desire to support exactly that connection.

We wanted to create space for students to both explore their gifts and bravely test new interests. When a child immerses themselves in a topic — focusing deeply, working consistently, and seeing growth — powerful things happen. Self-esteem strengthens. Understanding deepens. Students experience firsthand that talent is developed through effort. They discover that skills are transferable. And perhaps most importantly, they begin to understand something we know as adults: there are many ways to engage in an interest without competition or the need to prove excellence. There is profound value in the joy of growth, expression, and shared experience.

So how does it work?

The week before Spring Break, our mornings are devoted to an intensive, curriculum-connected study across grade groups. These immersive challenges often culminate in collaborative projects that showcase teamwork and problem-solving. Past themes have included engineering, space exploration, and human rights — each one stretching students' thinking and strengthening their ability to work together.

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**March: A month
of new
beginnings, fresh
ideas, and the
joy of growing
together every
day.**

Message from Erin (cont'd)

In the afternoons, students dive deeply into a single area of personal interest. Guided by a teacher, they rapidly build skills while developing meaningful understanding in that field. The week concludes with a celebratory showcase on Friday afternoon, where students proudly share their learning with peers and families.

We begin by offering a wide range of topics led by passionate teacher-guides. Students select their top three choices, and groups are formed thoughtfully based on interest and balance. While students may not receive their first choice every year, they are always placed in one of their top selections — and we consistently see wonderful surprises emerge. A new interest takes root. An unexpected talent surfaces. A new friendship forms over a shared passion.

Over the course of the week, students certainly build skills. But even more importantly, they experience something deeper: community is built through participation, communication, and shared interests. Confidence grows. Identity strengthens. Students begin to see the value of hobbies and pursuits that enrich their lives — at any level of involvement.

Immersion Week continues to be one of the most joyful and meaningful traditions in our Middle Years program. We are so proud of the courage, curiosity, and collaboration our students demonstrate each year.

Some past and present offerings of Immersion Week include:

Entrepreneurship
Sustainable landscapes
Animal Care
Cycling and Bike Repair
Extreme Reading
Weaving and Felting
Book Nook Making
Outdoor Art
Tennis
Golf
Jug Band
Busking
Robotics
Water Polo
Spheros
Cooking
Baking
Cold Water Immersion
Karate
Meditation and Mindfulness
Cake Decorating
Roller Skating/Blading
Crafting
Dance
Stage Craft



1000X5

1000 Books by Age Five
Children's Book Recycling Project Greater Victoria

1000X5 would love books from your spring cleaning

15years: 380,000 books

1000 babies and preschoolers/month receive a gift bag of 3 books. Currently we are running a bit short of the demand for books.

Please check the corners of your house and continue to donate books into the pink bin outside the office.

(cont'd on page 3)

Message from Erin (cont'd)

Photography
Sculpture
Health and Wellness for Athletes
Painting
Musical Composing
Becoming a Writer
Curling
...and more!

Community Appreciation - Kind Words from a Local Resident About Our Grade 8 Students

Good afternoon!

My name is Carrie, and a few weeks ago I ran into three of your Grade 8 students in Fairfield. They were interviewing strangers and asking them about their thoughts on the neighbourhood. I was one of the lucky strangers who was invited to stop and chat with them.

I have three children of my own around the same age, so I was absolutely blown away by how polite, engaged, and enthusiastic your students were. We spoke for about five minutes, and I mentioned that I run a non-profit in the area that gives people the tools to connect with strangers through conversation. Your students tracked me down after that interview and mailed me the sweetest hand-written thank-you card.

I just wanted to shoot off a quick note to say thank you to Sophia, Indira, Holden, and Natalie for the beautiful card. It was such a pleasure running into children who are brave enough to strike up a conversation with a stranger. Kudos to your school for encouraging the students to go out into the community and start conversations. The loneliest demographic in Canada is the 15–25 age range, so what you're doing by encouraging these students to get out there and initiate a conversation with a stranger is a life-saving skill. As a parent, I want to say THANK YOU for encouraging your students to learn this skill now—before they reach that 15–25 demographic.

Thanks again! Have a great day!

Carrie Parsons

Roots and Wings Bursary Fund Update

Bursary Program Update

For many years, our bursary program has helped children continue their Montessori education during temporary financial hardship. Traditionally funded through operating revenue, the program has been a source of pride since the early days of the Pacific Montessori Society.

After moving from Oaklands to the Selkirk Waterfront, we began fundraising to create a self-sustaining bursary fund outside the operating budget. Over time, investment income will help cover bursaries and reduce reliance on school revenue.

Since 1998, our community has raised over \$50,000. Last year, this enabled us to establish the Roots & Wings Bursary Fund with the Victoria Foundation, which contributed an additional \$7,500, bringing the total to \$57,500.

Founded in 1936, the Victoria Foundation manages permanent, income-generating funds that support hundreds of charities. Its assets under administration now exceed \$609 million, supporting innovative programs that strengthen the Victoria community.

There are several ways to contribute. Donations can be made directly to the Pacific Montessori Society at accounting@selkirkmontessori.ca (please note the donation is for the Roots & Wings Bursary Fund). Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$20.

Donations can also be made through the Victoria Foundation by selecting the Roots & Wings Bursary Fund under Hosted Organization Funds. The Foundation also offers options for legacy gifts and bequests.

For questions about the bursary program or the Victoria Foundation, please contact Board Chair Penny Barner at 250-213-3273 or pjbarner@shaw.ca.



The Importance of Setting Boundaries

“First and foremost, our job is to keep our children safe, physically and psychologically.” - Dr. Becky Kennedy



Over the last decade, many parenting experts have been emphasizing the importance of fostering strong connections with our children. No doubt, we are WIRED for connection. Similarly, we are also wired for safety, which explains why so much of our behaviour as humans revolves around survival. So naturally, if a child feels unsafe, they will respond in fight, flight, freeze, and fawn modes to seek safety. The most challenging behaviours can arise when our children feel unsafe. So, when we are faced with difficult moments and are told to focus on connection, we can often find ourselves throwing rules and boundaries out the window. So, if we know that boundaries and connection are necessary, how on earth do we balance both? We do so by remembering this rule: Two things can be true at the same time. In other words, you can hold a boundary AND your child can feel upset about it. By giving children permission to feel their feelings, they are more likely to feel safe and seen.

Counsellor's Corner

*So, you might be wondering what holding a boundary AND validating your child's feelings would sound like. Well, let's look at an example: Your child has been on their iPad for the agreed upon time now, but when you tell them to turn it off, they refuse. Setting the boundary is all about what YOU will do as the parent. In her book, *Good Inside: A Practical Guide to Becoming the Parent You Want to Be*, Becky Kennedy writes:*

"Boundaries are not what we tell kids not to do; boundaries are what we tell kids we will do. Boundaries embody your authority as a parent and don't require your child to do anything."

Setting a boundary with the iPad example might sound like: "Okay! Your time is up on the iPad." Your child continues to play on their iPad. You say, "I'm going to take the iPad now and put it away." You go ahead and take the iPad out of their hands and put it out of sight. Your child might fuss or get upset. To stick to the boundary AND give them permission to have feelings about it, you might say, "I know. It's hard to stop doing something that's fun. I understand that you're angry." That's it. No need to make your child feel better, and no need to give them extra iPad time to avoid a tantrum.

Holding boundaries is hard. Maintaining a connection with our children can be hard, too. But with consistency and confidence in your decisions as a parent, your children will find safety in you.

To listen to Dr. Becky's example of setting boundaries, check out this video on YouTube: [How to Set Boundaries with Kids](#)

For any additional information or resources, please feel free to contact me via email at counsellor@selkirkmontessori.ca

Warmly,

*Carmelle Hermoso, M.Ed., RCC
School Counsellor*

Selkirk Parent Group (SPG) Update

Our community ROCKS!



Thanks to all of you who spread kindness through our community by finding, hiding and painting rocks during Selkirk Rocks the Heart. A special shoutout to Chris, Benjamin and Olivia for hosting the rock decorating station all week long! You rock!!

Happening Now

Ordering for term 3 hot lunches is open now and runs until March 13. Get your orders and payments in for lunch deliveries starting Monday, March 30 and ending June 12 (no hot lunches the last week of school)

Purdys ordering is also open, with orders and payments due March 22. Check out the catalogue for all kinds of yummy gifts, including vegan and diabetic-friendly options. Order online - family and friends can order, too!

The SPG is looking for a Fundraising Coordinator to plan out fundraisers throughout the year and line up leads for each fundraiser (e.g., Purdys, Art Cards, etc.). To learn more, email the SPG: spg@selkirkmontessori.ca

Watch for It

Mark March 16 on your calendars for Pizza Day ordering (that's to order all 3 Pizza Days in term 3) and keep an eye on the weeklies and upcoming newsletters for information about our annual Art Cards fundraiser, a delicious new Parachute Ice Cream gift card fundraiser, a new compost fundraiser, fresh designs for spirit wear and a spring social on May 2!

Key dates for March ...

March TBD: Compost fundraiser - watch the weeklies for details

March 13: orders and payments due for term 3 hot lunches (lunches delivered starting the first Monday back at school after spring break)

March 13: last Pizza Day of term 2 (Friday before spring break)

March 16 - 31: ordering for all 3 term 3 Pizza Days

March 22: Purdys orders and payments due; order pickup on Thursday, April 2 (before school is closed for Good Friday on April 3)

Assemblies and Observances

Celebrating Lunar New Year

This month, our school community came together to celebrate Lunar New Year, a time of joy, family, and new beginnings. Our students enjoyed learning about the rich traditions, vibrant decorations, and festive foods that make this celebration so special. Through crafts, storytelling, and shared activities, we embraced the spirit of togetherness, gratitude, and cultural appreciation. It was a wonderful way to welcome the year ahead with happiness and hope!



Assemblies and Observances



Our students had a fantastic time at Jump Rope for Heart, jumping, skipping, and having fun while learning about healthy habits! The event reminded everyone that staying active, eating nutritious foods, drinking plenty of water, and getting enough sleep are all important for a strong heart and a healthy body. We're proud of our students for showing energy, teamwork, and enthusiasm while making healthy choices a part of their everyday lives.



Events & Activities



Our little ones are having a wonderful time painting stones for our Selkirk Rocks activities! Their creativity and bright imaginations are bringing each stone to life, making this project a fun and colorful way to celebrate art, play and community.



Play Pace Team from Kinsol





Colorful Parachute Playtime!

Our little ones had so much fun playing with the colorful parachute top! They enjoyed holding the edges, lifting it high, and watching the bright colors move up and down together. The activity brought lots of laughter and excitement while helping them practice teamwork and coordination. It was a joyful and engaging experience for everyone! 🌈

Events & Activities



At Selkirk, we are soon bringing our school community to life through Indigenous wooden carvings, with each board representing a classroom, the library, office or activity spaces. We are seeking sponsorship to help cover materials and tools, supporting creativity, cultural appreciation, and student learning. Join us in celebrating Indigenous art and community—contact our school to be part of this meaningful project.



As we celebrated the **Lunar New Year**, students learned about the **Chinese zodiac**, a 12-year cycle where each year is represented by an animal with its own unique traits. From the brave **Tiger** to the clever **Rat**, the zodiac inspires fun stories and traditions while teaching us about personality, culture, and the passing of time. It's a wonderful way to explore heritage and discover the qualities that make each year special!

Library Note

Hello Selkirk Community,

We had yet another fabulous Russell Books Book Fair this month! One of the students was heard to declare, "this may be the BEST BOOK FAIR EVER!". Many people commented that they were really happy with the selection and if you came to set up you know that there was AMPLE supply that was delivered.

Some of the top hits included *Warriors: graphic novel*, *I Survived*, and *Dragon Masters*. My two personal favourites were: *The Beloved Folk Song I's the B'y* which I have never actually known the words to but will delight in learning and singing to your children ad nauseum - my apologies in advance when they come home singing; and the *Ottolenghi: Sweet* bakery book that contains a recipe for their Persian Love Cake that I will enjoy drooling over on a lazy Sunday afternoon during Spring Break.



All in all, this fair brings in almost the same amount as the Scholastic fair but with far less plastic shrapnel landing in your homes and on the floors of the school. We sold over \$5500.00 worth of Russell's product and that resulted in over \$1500.00 in credit to spend at their store. That money goes towards buying new class novel sets, filling the classrooms with new books, and supporting students who are looking for something that the library collection is missing. Being able to partner with a local, family-owned bookstore gives me a lot of joy and I am so grateful to all of you for your support!

As ever, this could not be done without the momentous effort by our generous volunteers. From family members to students and siblings, and of course our favourite furry friend, Toby: THANK YOU! I could not pull this off alone with any shred of sanity remaining.

With gratitude from The Bear's Den,

Bree and Toby

SIMTI Earns AMS & MACTE Recognition

We are proud to share that SIMTI's Elementary I-II Teacher Training Program is now AMS-affiliated and MACTE-accredited, reflecting our commitment to excellence in Montessori education. With a supportive learning community, experienced instructors, and a blended online and in-person format, SIMTI continues to prepare high-quality Montessori educators.



SIMTI

MONTESSORI TEACHER TRAINING

We are delighted that SIMTI's Elementary I-II Training Program is now AMS-affiliated and MACTE-accredited.



Why Learning at SIMTI?

-  **A Warm, Supportive Learning Community**
SIMTI offers a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where students are supported by a strong network of mentors, instructors, and peers throughout their training journey.
-  **High-Quality Instruction and Teaching Resources**
Our programs are led by a highly experienced instructor team and supported by carefully developed, high-quality teaching manuals that reflect depth, clarity, and authentic Montessori practice.
-  **Blended Online and In-Person Learning**
SIMTI's thoughtfully designed blended curriculum combines online learning with in-person, hands-on experiences - offering flexibility while maintaining the integrity of experiential Montessori training.



Inquiries are welcome!
Learn more about our Foundation Course and Elementary I-II Teacher Training Program at simti.ca, or contact our Program Director, Ayako Thiessen, at info@simti.ca.

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We can make a difference!

www.selkirkmontessori.ca



Please make sure you bring everything home before the break! Our **Lost & Found** is brimming full of winter clothes!

Dates to Remember

- * March 09 to March 13 – Immersion Week
- * March 11 – Fire Drill (K/P Only)
- * March 13 – Pizza Day / Last Day of School
- * March 16 – Spring Break
- * March 30 – School Re-Opens

Selkirk Montessori School is located on the traditional territories of the Lək'wəŋən people, today known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on this territory.