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ISSUE NO. 2

BCSD ALUMNI

BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Inside

BCSD PRINCIPAL: EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW

GREY CUP FUNDRAISING
UPDATE

REUNION ANNOUNCEMENT

POKER FUNDRAISING EVENT

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

New Addition to BCSDAA Board

On behalf of the board, please
welcome Kareem Mansouri to
the BCSDAA Board. We are
looking forward to working with
Kareem on coming activities and
projects.

Welcome aboard, Kareem!

Not Alumni member?
Please contact Jeanne at
bcsdareunion2015@gmail.com
with your starting and
ending enrolment dates
at school anywhere in BC

BCSDAA
5455 Rumble Street
Burnaby, BC
V5J 2B7

Questions about Alumni -
please contact Dan
dlecours@shaw.ca
or Diana
dianatarchuk@shaw.ca



PAH!

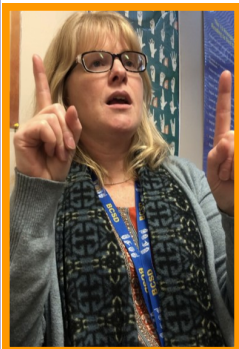
A Deaf Principal!

Interview with our Catherine Bennett

BY: JASCINE PETERSON

Jascine: When you were offered the job at BCSD, how did you feel?

Cathy: Felt honored, always wanted to come back to my homeland, Canada, because I was born and raised in Canada. When I realized I was the first Deaf principal, I was floored and inspired. I love working in the school setting and I love working with children. I was surprised when I was told that I am the FIRST DEAF PRINCIPAL EVER in over 100 years of the Deaf school's operation.



Jascine : Wow, I can see in your eyes that children are truly your passion. We are very fortunate to have someone like you working with the children of our future. What was your reaction when you found out you were our first BCSD Deaf Principal?

Cathy: PAH!! What's next? Hopefully there will be more opportunities for our Deaf community and create

opportunities for growth for Deaf teachers and administrators. We need more leadership from our Deaf teacher and the administrative level for children to follow and look up to. It is crucial that we provide role models for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. The Ripple Effect of Leadership will start from Teachers and administrators serving as Deaf role models. Children will receive the message that they can chase and capture their dreams. I want them to see that they CAN DO IT whatever they want to do in their future. When they see our accomplishments in our careers; they will find the confidence and desire to find their own accomplishments.



Jascine : What accomplishments do you feel you have made since September?

Cathy: I am aware that in Canada, it has always been difficult for the Deaf community to enter into the administration level. This has been a huge accomplishment for me when I had the opportunity to become the BCSD's Principal. I did not realize the impact it had on BC's Deaf community. A lot of people expressed their joy, congratulations, and many positive and exciting comments about me being BCSD's first Deaf Principal, and it was then that I realized, how much it means to the Deaf community and the parents in BC. We want to look at the changes and im-



provements that we can make for our Deaf school to promote a sense of cultural belonging, identity, and ASL linguistics. Deaf and personal values, including Deaf History and Cultural knowledge among the students, parents, teachers, and the administrators are so

important. Deafhood is another main focus of mine; I encourage Deaf children to develop an understanding of Deafhood, because it reflects their connections based on similarities in the cultural values among the students and at the same time develops unique personalities, leadership style, and individual values and goals. I am very surprised it has taken over 100 years for BCSD to finally have a Deaf Principal, but it is TIME for us to make our goals happen. I am thrilled and excited for the Deaf community and students. We also will focus on upgrading BCSD's

technologies to meet BC's new curriculum and Deaf Educational needs. Each student is now going to have their own IPAD at school for educational purpose and this is another huge accomplishment being made by BCSD.

Jascine: That's amazing and I am really excited to see the things you and BCSD will bring to the BCSD students in the near future. Now, what kind of challenges do you face as the BCSD Deaf Principal?

Cathy: Challenge? Oh plenty! My job is full of challenges and it has kept me strong and determined. Through frequent meetings it became apparent that the challenge as a Deaf Principal was representing a Deaf perspective for our school without others in the meeting having a deep understanding or knowledge in Deaf Education and their needs. I need to show them that I am capable of being a Deaf Principal, and that my students are capable of reaching their accomplishments with their full understanding and support. Communicating with them is also challenging. I was very fortunate to have an interpreter with me at all times. Often I spend my time re-educating them regarding Deaf students' learning needs. I am often asked about the reasons behind Deaf peoples' actions. I remind them that our actions and/or reactions are often based on our cultural and/or language deprivation experiences.

I push myself to educate them about why language is so important? It is our own language and the need for language foundation and acquisition through ASL is all important. That's when the important Bilingual discussion came up and when I was asked "What about English?" So educating them that the bilingual language occurs best when there is a strong ASL foundation and acquisition, and that ASL acquisition for Deaf children is the same as English acquisition is for Hearing children. With a bilingual approach, Deaf children will be able to acquire both languages. It became clear to me that there needs to be more discussion on how Deaf Education should look, so that is where I come in. I am very fortunate to work with this person, the Hearing administrator who I consider my ally, and who had little understanding or knowledge of Deaf Education and its culture, history, and needs until I explained to him the circumstances of Deaf Education and the factors, as well as the impacts, the educational history had on Deaf Education. He said he has learned so much and has supported me all the way through various meetings, including school board meetings.



He has never taken over or talked over any of my dialogue in meetings and is very respectful of my position. Without his support, I don't think we would have achieved as much as we have. However, there is a serious lack of understanding and knowledge within the Educational system on Deaf Education that needs to be addressed. I believe it does not matter who my ally is; it could be Deaf or Hearing, what is really crucial is that each of us have an ally walking through obstacles with us, and advocating for the needs of our students.

Jascine: What is your biggest passion?

Cathy: My passions? Definitely students' accomplishments after they graduate from BCSD ; wherever they go; it could be to college/University, work, chasing their dreams or actively involved in their communities. My wish is to invest in our students' education so they can meet their passions and dreams after they graduate. I was given the opportunity while growing up to be taught with



passion by people in my life, and in turn, I want to do the same for BCSD children. I want to INVEST in their future to make sure they are ready out in the real world. My passion is to promote an enriched learning environment for BCSD children to thrive through a strong educational setting. I want to give, give, and give some more, opportunities for them to accumulate everything they can learn from us to

become the person they want to be. Students are my inspiration. I remember my own past, as a little Cathy, I used to look up to the Deaf role models at my school, now I want to them to look at me in the same way. Now it is my opportunity to INVEST in them and help to create the best quality Deaf Education for them for as long as I work as their principal.

Children have the opportunity to see our work as teachers

and administrators investing all of our energy in improving their education and creating a Deaf Friendly setting for learning. Later, as I reflect back, I want to be able to say "WOW" we sure invested so much in our students, including challenging them to reach a higher educational level. Yes, students have different



goals, career preferences, learning needs, and learning styles, so much DIVERSITY within our school, but the most important thing is they experience a sense of accomplishments in their own way.

Jascine: We are so lucky to have you representing BCSD. Now, what do you do for fun when you are not working?

Cathy: Outdoor, hiking, skiing, kayaking, water sports, I love outdoor activities, so BC is a perfect place for me to explore. Tofino is my next place to go.

Jascine: That is perfect because now you are in BC and we have all of that!

Cathy: I am a down to earth person, I love the mountains and ocean; the beautiful BC

Jascine: Definitely! Lastly, what is a few things that we do not know about you?

Cathy: I know several languages; BSL, Maritime Sign Language, ASL, Japan Sign Language and English. I used these languages a lot when I travel and still do depending on who I stay in touch with.

Jascine: Wow that's amazing! Thank you so much for your time and allowing us to get to know you more. Thank you for everything you have done for our children and BCSD.

Cathy: My pleasure! My office is always open.



Update on Grey Cup Fundraising Event

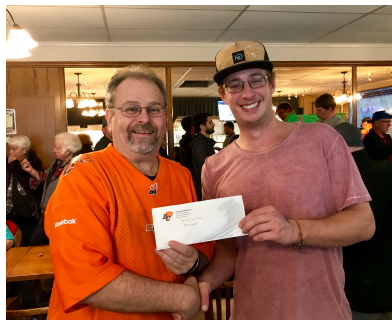
Thank you, BCSDAA board members, for making the event a SUCCESS! Jascine Peterson, Brian Sawyer, Jeanne Durnion, Doug Lambert, Diana Tarchuk, Roxy Mayall, and Kareem Mansouri did the amazing work!! Well done, my fellas!

Please help me thank the following companies for their generous donations:
Canadian Tire, BC Lions, Home Depot, Boston Pizza, Coast Capital Savings, President Choice Superstore, London Drugs, Starbucks, Subway, Quiznos, Cactus Cafe Club, McDonald's, TD Bank, Staples and Best Buy.

Last but not least, thank you fans for your support towards the event - MANY THANKS!!!

We had 74 people attended in their spirits rooting for either Ottawa Redblacks and Calgary Stampeders. There were 21 door prizes and 50/50 draw. Everyone had a GREAT time.

Dan,
BCSDAA President



BCSD Reunion

Save the Date!



Everyone is welcome! The reunion is an exciting opportunity to meet the past and current Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind students who attended school anywhere in BC. Those who have never attended school in BC are also welcome.

May 28 – 30, 2020

Please check BCSDAA Facebook and DeafBC.ca in the late Spring for the exciting details!



***“Though our branches grow
in different directions,
our Deaf roots remain as one.”***

BCSD Alumni Reunion Fundraising

DEAF POKER NIGHT

SATURDAY, MAY 25TH

RICHMOND CURLING LOUNGE
5540 HOLLYBRIDGE WAY
RICHMOND, BC

MUST BE 19 & OLDER
DOOR OPENS AT 6:30PM
GAME STARTS AT 7:00PM

BUY-IN - \$65.00

OPEN CASH BAR

APPETIZERS WILL BE PROVIDED

DEADLINE FOR SIGN UP /
PRE-PAY: MAY 22ND

CONTACT PAOLO SERENA FOR
E-TRANSFER -
PAOLOREUNION2020@GMAIL.COM

NON-TRANSFERABLE / NON-REFUNDABLE



The fundraising will help cover the BCSD Reunion 2020 costs. Hope to see you there. Thank you for your support.

Alumni Spotlight by Kareem Mansouri

Kareem: What is your name and where do you originally come from?

Dalong: My name is Dalong Houang and I was born and raised in beautiful Vancouver, BC.

Kareem: Were you born Deaf?

Dalong: Yes, I was born fully Deaf.

Kareem: How did you experience making sushi or poke bowl?

Dalong: My personality is I love to make something that is healthy which is part of my culture. I love to eat fish and slice any fish.

Kareem: Why did you decide to open this restaurant?

Dalong: When my step-mom and dad visited Hawaii and tried Poke bowls made by our Hawaiian relatives, they fell in love with this fresh, healthy and delicious food, so they thought about me opening this restaurant. Last Summer, I had a family reunion at my home and I made a lot of sushi, my whole family ate the whole thing and there were no leftovers!

Kareem: What are your goals for this restaurant?

Dalong: My goals are a little difficult and challenging because I am thinking about opening another restaurant in a different area, hiring new people or trying to get our own food truck for whenever there is an event. Before, my parents tried to get me my own business because I was good at making sushi for 8 years in Downtown Vancouver, so I decided to open this restaurant and many people enjoyed it. That's how my previous goals worked out! Hope I will see a good future with my business and achieve my present goals.

Dalong - BCSD 2006



Do you have a story to share for next newsletter?

Please contact dianatarchuk@shaw.ca