

# Equinox Student Council Meeting

February 4th 2021 12:15 - 1:00 pm

## Land Acknowledgement - Marcia McVean

- We have a lot to be grateful to those people for stewarding the land for thousands of years. Opportunity every day to see great relationships in our lives to honour natural law and live in good ways. Honour land today, offer a question for consideration: "What would we be willing to give up for the greater good?"

## Williamson Ravine - Marcia McVean

- May know that there's an amazing community advocacy group looking out for this space
- Open House/Consultation with the community around the MetroLinx project. Set to begin any day now. Construction will affect the Williamson Ravine. We've been going there for 12 years. North end of the ravine is a slope with the GO trains running on top of the rain bed. They will extend for a fourth rail. That will require construction and expanding the bed up there.
- Even though it's an ecologically sensitive area, they still had to go ahead. Troubling to people who care for this place and important to give voice to the species who live there and speak out.
- This Evening - 6:30 - 7:30. Also Petition - Asking for very precise things. Nobody is expecting construction to stop. Asks are to justify why the building has to go through ravine and for specific restoration plans and timelines. Petition and more info here: <https://www.lakeshoreeasttrains.com/smalls-creek-and-merrill-bridge-park>
- Ribbons tied onto the trees on the ravines. Those ribbons are part of an action to get people's attention and get them to realize that almost 300 trees are set to be cut.
- Carrie - encouraged parents to check out student's work, some linked on [Equinox Instagram page](#), to see how kids are joining in for the advocacy

## Song Opening - Lisa

- My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem - Carrie recently finished reading this. Much of his work is healing racial trauma, and how to move it through the body. White supremacy hurts us all. As an activist, he harmonizes groups at rallies through moving together, singing together. Carrie wants to see if we can also harmonize digitally and invited Lisa to lead us in a song, [Lead with Love](#), by community singer, artist, and activist Melanie DeMore.
- Students sang this as part of our climate march last year. Leading with love is what holds us together.
- *Chorus: We've got to put on front in front of the other and lead with love* THANK YOU, LISA!

### **EarlyON - Shelly**

- In regular times, can find me in little room off of the breakfast club off the library.
- In person it's a place where parents, caregivers, anyone who is caring for a young child can come, be supported. 2 days to kindergarten age.
- TDSB runs 75 EarlyON centres. They've gone virtual and divided into 10 groups based on geography. Morse, Secord, George Webster, Crescenttown and more
- Facebook group - post things. Lots of activities. Facebook Lives happening throughout the day. Virtual drop-in through Google Meet. Three of them through 9 - 12 am.
- Kind of like coming to drop-in. Very casual. Chat with parents. Sing songs and see where kids are at. People can drop in and out.
- For children coming into kindergarten it's been valuable.
- Happy to have people email her if they are needing support or if they know of someone who is needing support.
- Her email is [shelley.wakefield@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:shelley.wakefield@tdsb.on.ca). If anyone is not on Facebook she sends regular emails with our google meets and zoom programming
- EarlyON - Toronto East facebook group  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/245961660020099>

**How Children Understand Race and How Adults Can Help - Carrie Klassen** - not covered right now due to limited time during the meeting and importance of topic ... notes to be included in next school council newsletter

### **Update from Cathy Pollock**

- Grocery cards from Toronto Foundation for Student Success - have gift cards available to support families during this challenging time
- If you are having a difficult time, or know of anybody who is having a difficult time with groceries, let them know to reach out to Cathy. Don't want to miss anybody and make sure that everyone is well fed.
- Announcement today at 4 pm regarding school - whether we are going back and when.
- Staffing Allocations will be coming out very shortly. Always involves one member from the school council who will work with them on staffing models. Know how many teachers get. Council member reports back to parents. If interested, reach out to Carrie and she will let Cathy know. Equinox lottery coming up at the end of the month. Fill 25% of JK spots with students from marginalized communities to be representative of Toronto's diversity. A lot more applicants than ever from diverse communities. Word of mouth and work from the community.
- Vu and Kyle have been working on a tech cart - more technology to support older students
- Leadership team working on anti-racism conversations among teachers. Started that work last year and continuing this year and going a little bit deeper. Trying to infuse it within the school. Vu and Cathy going to every single class - going to teach the class. Going to work

on a culminating task that students can be part of that brings us back to a community of learners. Don't know exactly what it'll look like. Presenting to teachers.

- Caralina and Sydney have been working with Cathy on some excellent announcements and have taken on a huge leadership role on anti-racism. Other students who now want to be a part of virtual announcements. Carrie adds this is another way of creating shared experiences for students in virtual and in-person. Announcements being posted on school Facebook page for virtual families.
- Thelma's class is working on a Black history video. Been prompted by certain things they've seen online. Will be shared across the school by the end of this month.
- Been some really great discussions occurring in some classrooms that Vu and Cathy have been a part of. Dan Risken - came to talk of the effects of online and impacts of students. Grade 7/8s had some amazing questions.
- Will has an NHL hockey player coming on Friday to talk with his students.
- Yesterday Cathy's daughter was a mystery reader in one of the classrooms. She can empathize with how hard it is and how much work parents are putting into this with their kids, was totally distracted from meeting by daughter's tech issues

## **Coping with the Pandemic - Sarah Grant 2 minute summary**

### **Strategies for Organizing Routines**

- Routines are v important
- Have to structure the day by yourself
- Have to create routine
- If something is working do more of it. If something is not working, do less of it
- Begin day with a schedule (wake up, eat, get dressed)
- Take breaks - may need an exercise break
- May want to personalize school space so it feels different from play space
- Help child to connect with classmates
- Reward self (GAP - demands of the situation and capabilities to meet it)

### **How to incorporate physical activity into the day?**

- Be consistent with a schedule
- Routines help feel in control, reduce stress and boost overall mental health
- Validate that this is a difficult time
- Educate kids on importance of exercise
- Put kids in teaching role e.g.exercises they used to do in gym class
- Kids take ownership on creating schedule, ask them where they want it displayed
- Exercise with kids (kids learn more what you model with them)
- If found something that worked for 3/4 days and then it didn't work, that's okay too! It's not a failure

### **Screentime**

- Pick your battles
- If you think screentime is an issue then have a conversation
- Important to move more in order to have more energy (e.g. vigorous exercise that moves your heart rate)
- Practice what you preach
- Don't use screen times as a reward
- Have something good as an alternative
- Active parenting controls that can monitor when time is up

### **Child is isolated, Not very happy, lonely**

- Validate these feelings
- Positive affirmations
- If kid says 'zoom sucks' or 'I'm not good at math' ask 'what part of it sucks' or 'what part of it don't you feel comfortable with?'
- Rub hands together 60 seconds and cup over eyes to create darkness
- Breath in a flower, blow out a candle
- Really take time to understand (people see in real life are the ones you have the best chance of connecting with these days)

### **Parents struggling to motivate their kids with School**

- Try First THEN Approach (give them a timer because getting started is half the battle)
- Explore reasons for lower motivation (harder, hard to understand something, communicate with the teacher)
- Social connection may be behind it. Find ways for kids to connect virtually with their peers.
- Make sure to take breaks - it's hard to do this day and in and day out