

# MARGARET PARK SCHOOL

## SEVEN OAKS SCHOOL DIVISION

385 Cork Avenue | Winnipeg, MB | R2V 1R6  
204.338.9384 (p) | 204.334.6876 (f)

Principal: Mr. Ross Meacham  
Vice Principal: Mrs. Jillian Green

# Report to the Community

*JUNE 2020*



**Margaret Park School** is a Kindergarten to Grade 5 community school in the heart of the West Kildonan neighbourhood. Our school has approximately 250 students. Almost all of our students learn in multi-age classrooms.

Our staff plans for our school-wide goals around three categories:  
**Care, Community & Curriculum.**

Under the category of **Care**, we commit ourselves to creating an environment that is safe, inclusive and engaging to all of the learners in our community. Also within care, we strive to teach the youngest generation to look after the place where they live, and to understand its history.

Through **Community**, we provide opportunities for our students to connect through the sharing of healthy meals and snacks, as well as group fitness and wellness activities built into the school day. Indigenous education is a central part of our community, and we incorporate learning from a historical and contemporary Indigenous lens throughout out the curriculum.

**Curriculum** guides our work, and we want to ensure it is discovered and experienced by our students in ways that are meaningful, varied, authentic and engaging. We are constantly exploring ways to grow our practice to give our students opportunities to experience mastery in literacy and numeracy.

Please read on to discover more detail on the ways Care, Community and Curriculum came to life at Margaret Park over the course of the 2019/2020 school year.

This year has been a year unlike any other, and our community was stretched in ways we could not anticipate. However, our goals remained central to our work with students and families during the period of remote learning and partial reopening of schools. What is clear is that Margaret Park is much



more than a building, and **You Belong Here**. All we have worked for throughout our school's history has supported us in retaining our sense of community in this difficult spring. We are a group of people with a strong sense of connection, to each other, to our community, and most of all, to our children.

We are looking forward to the possibilities of the upcoming school year and wish all of our families a safe, restful and fun-filled summer.

# Care



## Outdoor Education

Throughout the 2019/2020 school year, we learned and played outside. As teachers, we collaborated to plan experiences for students to connect to curriculum through natural, cultural and historical aspects of the land in our community.

We also had the privilege of visiting the Aki Centre, Seven Oaks' land-based learning centre. At the Aki Centre, students learn about, "growing food and nutrition, land stewardship, cultural and historic connection to the land, and well becoming" ([www.7OaksGrows/](http://www.7OaksGrows/)).



This year, outdoor learning included reading, writing, and other literacies, as well as math, science and social studies. Learning outdoors provides a wonderful opportunity to integrate learning from multiple subject areas into rich, hands-on experiences.



Teachers, along with Elders, presented land-based learning from an Indigenous perspective to cultivate connection to the land, to history, to language, to family and community. This learning allowed children to find their place within the interconnectedness of all natural elements and beings. Our hope is that these experiences brought to reality a feeling of belonging and identity for all our learners. Indigenous perspectives in land-based learning provides a foundation for the work of healing & reconciliation.

This year, learning outdoors was essential to our ability to connect as a community during the suspension of classes. We planned for Garden Club, but were unable to see it through with our students at school. Instead, we built garden boxes to distribute to families to grow vegetables and flowers in their own outdoor spaces. Many of our teachers provided students with materials to grow plants in their homes, or with provocations to experience the outdoors with their families. Students connected and reflected on their experiences with teachers and classmates on virtual platforms. Staff members visited homes to deliver learning packages and other resources, but also had opportunities to visit students on front lawns and front steps. In a time of necessary social distancing, the outdoors was the first place where we could meet with students as schools partially reopened. The outdoors has and will continue to be an ideal place for children to learn together.

## Safe & Caring Schools



Margaret Park has been, and will continue to be, deeply committed to making our school a safe and inclusive space for all learners. We want all students to feel that Margaret Park is their place, and that they are free to fully express their identity in our community. This year, we continued to support students in developing and maintaining healthy relationships. We worked to give them tools to solve problems in respectful and safe ways. We provided opportunities to appreciate and experience the diversity around them. We have many clubs that students

can join to connect with peers beyond their classroom, to learn new perspectives and to experience wellness. This year, these included the GSA, Recess Club, Fit Club, Science Club, Dreamcatcher Club, and MYR-CA Reading Club among others.

Teachers also ran programs in their classrooms such as Roots of Empathy, Mind Up and Zones of Regulation that directly teach children strategies for mindfulness, self-regulation and problem-solving that they can practice and apply over time. These programs also helped children understand and accept their own feelings, and in turn, they can accept and understand others. Teachers also made class meetings and sharing/learning circles a regular part of the routine to establish positive communication, develop active listening skills, promote understanding of unique experiences and build community. Many teachers used Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage to conceptualize a balanced approach to well-being.



Through this difficult spring, we showed care for each other by communicating regularly through phone calls, virtual meetings, and at-home visits. As schools partially reopened in June, we continued to connect in those ways, with many students coming back to school in small groups. We would like to thank our staff, as well as our students' families, for their incredible commitment to the learning and wellbeing of our children.

# Community



## Health & Nutrition



Breakfast, Lunch and Healthy Snack programs continued at Margaret Park during the 2019/2020 school year. Many of our students started the day together in our beautiful, open library and kitchen space, sharing a healthy breakfast before the start of the school day. Children were able to take a healthy breakfast to the start of class, or access fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the day. We also had healthy lunch options available when needed. Through our nutrition programming, we taught

children about healthy eating practices according to Canada's Food Guide. When children have access to healthy food, we can ensure they are ready and able to learn.

Another part of teaching about healthy life style practices was daily physical activity. Along with our Physical Education program, and extra-curricular sports opportunities, we offered Fit Club and Dance Club. Student leaders took on the role of promoting healthy lifestyle practices as Margaret Park's Health Ambassadors. A school-wide workout called "Health Hustle" continued each day after morning announcements. Margaret Park is a So Active, So Healthy (SASH) school.



When classes were suspended in March, we decided to take our nutrition programs to our community. With the support of our Division, we delivered food packages to a number of families on a weekly basis. Through this initiative, we were able to continue to provide healthy, fresh foods to our students in a particularly challenging time.

Our teachers continued to provide opportunities for students and their families to be active by designing and leading activities that incorporated physical activity and integrated it into other curricular areas. Mr. Leskiw also invited all learners to attend Weekly Zoom Gym classes on Wednesdays, leading two fun-filled, virtual hours of physical activity each week.

## Indigenous Education

Every day at Margaret Park, as part of our morning announcements, student readers recite a Treaty Acknowledgment to remind all of us about the history of the land where our school sits. We are dedicated to learning and teaching Indigenous perspectives, as they relate to equity, justice, reconciliation, the empowerment of Indigenous peoples and communities, and the wellness of our community as a whole.

We continue to work with Elder Theodore Fontaine and Morgan Fontaine on a weekly basis. This year the Fontaine's invited students to a Canadian Citizenship Ceremony where they were able to witness a group of new Canadians become citizens. Theodore and Morgan worked with classrooms around identity and belonging, and used the Anishinaabe language and stories of Theodore's childhood experiences in residential school to help children connect to who they are, and build an understanding of Indigenous culture and history in Manitoba.



Clarence and Barb Nepinak also continued to work with Margaret Park. They visited once a month to work with different classrooms around each of the Seven Teachings. Each classroom incorporated their learning into a presentation shared with the whole school community at our monthly assemblies. Clifford Spence also came to teach children drumming and song. At our Winter Storytelling Evening, Barb, Clarence and Cliff joined us to tell stories, drum, sing and share stew and bannock with much of our community. We also had a variety of winter activities outdoors for families to enjoy.

This year, we offered a twice weekly opportunity to smudge. Many students and staff attended regularly. Last spring we planted a Medicine Garden with the guidance of Elder Mary, and this spring, both sage and sweet grass are growing there. We plan to use these medicines for our smudge in the future.

We were unable to hold our Summer Feast and Giveaway this year, but look forward to the potential for a similar gathering in the fall to reset and put ourselves on a good path moving forward after a very challenging spring.





# Curriculum



## Literacy & Numeracy

We remained committed to our goals around literacy and numeracy this year at Margaret Park. We designed experiences for children to become accomplished as readers and to love reading, to feel purposeful and capable in their writing, to have access to rich and varied texts, to have power and agency in their ability to communicate and to receive information, and to engage with open-ended, deep-thinking math questions to apply and master learned skills.

In order to continue to provide our students with effective instruction and engaging learning experiences, we met regularly in teacher teams at a school and divisional level.



This regular collaboration ensures that we are bringing best practices in teaching to our students.

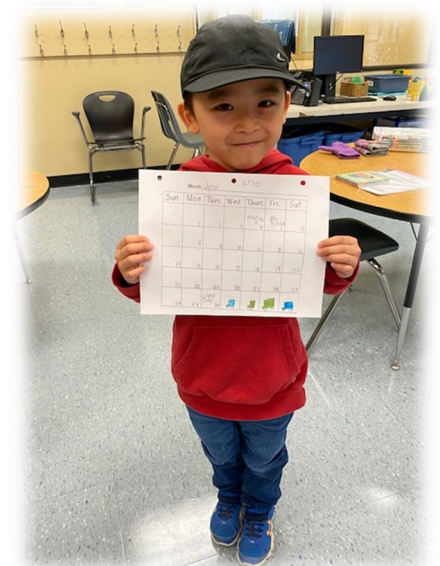
Our multi-age classrooms gave us the opportunity to know our learners well and to provide access points to the curriculum for diverse groups of students. The balanced school day also provided time for children to dive deep into learning, and become engaged in a sustained way.

This year, students were able to engage with curriculum outside the classroom through MYRCA Book Club, Forest of Reading Book Club, and Science Club among others. As always, I Love to Read Month was an exciting time at Margaret Park, with many students participating enthusiastically in school-wide, literacy-based activities.



Our arts program continued to flourish, with regular art classes and groups, Dee Barys visits through “Artist in the School”, “Bots! The Musical”, Dance Club, Guitar Club and Violin Club.

We were inspired by the creative ways both teachers and families, in collaboration, continued to engage children in meaningful learning during the suspension of classes. We are humbled by the incredible efforts of educators and families to serve the children of our community.





**Thank You,  
Margaret Park!**