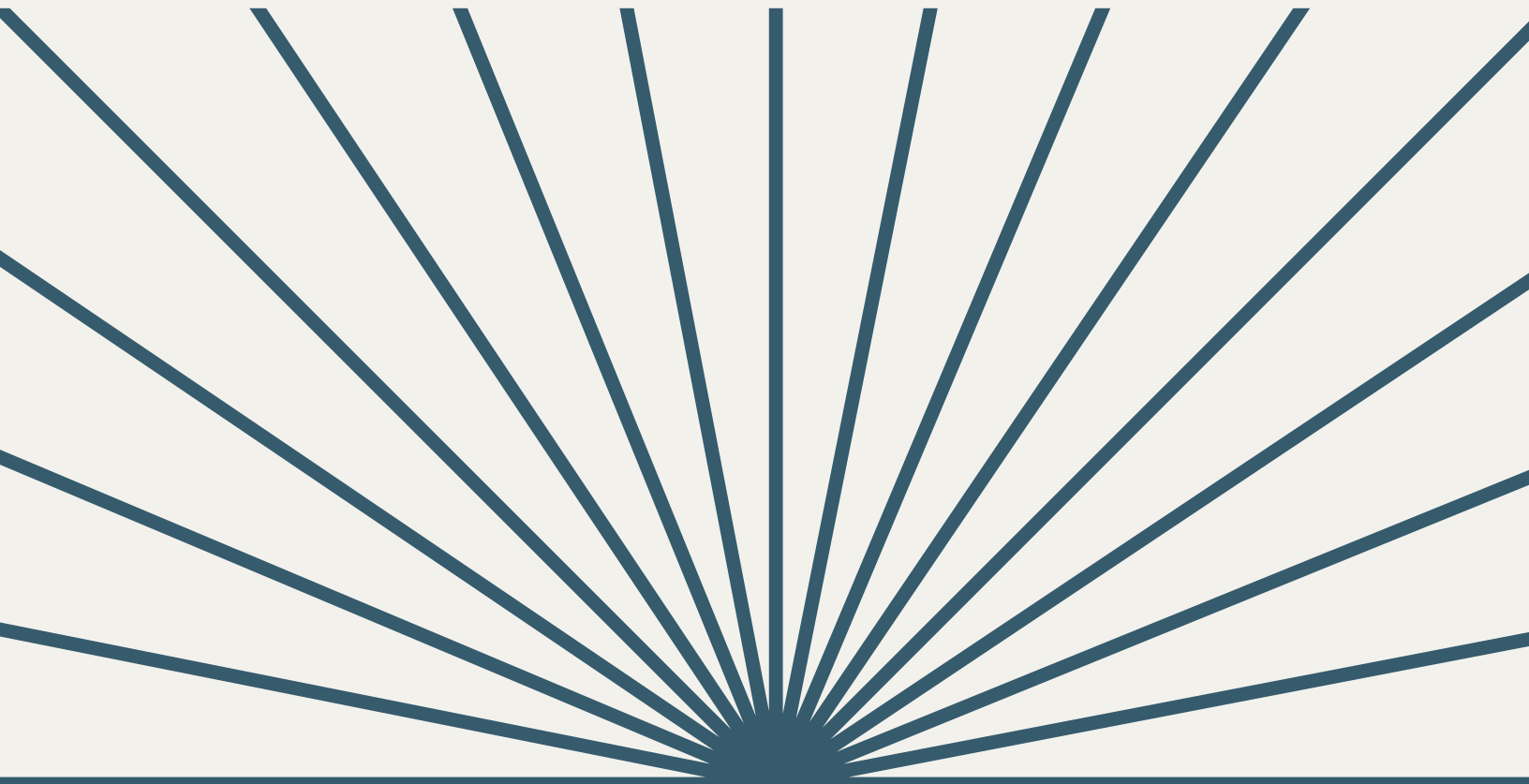


# EMCS Society

Annual General Meeting  
October 19, 2023



# Mission & Vision



It is the mission of Edward Milne Community School Society to partner with students, parents, and the community to build a safe, supportive, and challenging learning environment that enables people to make a living, make a life, and make a difference. A registered non-profit society and charity since June 1987, the mandate of the EMCS Society is inspired by the broad-based and diverse interests of the people of the region, and by the changing needs of the community.

## EMCS SOCIETY WORKS TO BUILD PARTNERSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT:

- Community Education
- Facility Rentals
- Health & Nutrition Programs
- Literacy Programs
- Youth Engagement
- Curriculum Enhancement

# Meet the Board

*Name*

*Role*

Willy  
Burrows

President

Kate  
Barton

Vice  
President

Susan  
Percival

Treasurer

Amy  
Harstad

Secretary

Loretta  
Deustcher

Director

Steve  
Anderson

Director

Andrew  
Donnelly

Director

We are so grateful to these dedicated community members who govern our Board!

# Meet the Team

*Name*

*Role*

Anne Bell & Ashley Green  
Community School Coordinators

Barb Dunn  
Office Assistant

Sue Flynn  
Duty Host

Dianne Chiasson  
Accountant

Amy Harstad  
Literacy Coordinator

Brian Kroeker  
Makerspace Coordinator

Matthew Kemshaw  
Garden Coordinator

Steve Anderson  
Theatre Coordinator

Denise Brown  
1000 x 5 Project Leader

## Summer Staff

Alison Hill, Marion Stupich & Rhys Pugh - Play & Learn Camp Coordinators

James Russell & Zoie Winstone - Play & Learn Youth Camp Assistants

Taiya Steel - Play & Learn Camp Mentor

Abigail Lamontagne & Robyn Yoshida - Garden Assistants

Alaa El Nisr - Youth Engagement Coordinator



# President's Message



We have had another year of post-pandemic challenges – re-growing the course and program offerings to the community. Thanks to the Program Office Staff and the Community School Coordinators, and the many others who work for the community school to succeed.

Thanks to those who volunteered to assist and have come on board as instructors, members, coaches, etc.

The Community School supports the community by:

- Renting facilities in all six schools in the region of Sooke
- Providing courses to community members
- Drop-in programs
- Assisting in the operation of the Sooke Community Theatre @ EMCS
- Supporting staff and students
- Fundraising
- Grant writing to support programs
- Providing Good Food Boxes to community members
- Running programs: Youth Engagement, Play and Learn Camp, Makerspace, Cultural Kitchen, Gardens
- Acting as Fiscal Host – Sooke/Westshore Literacy, 1000 X 5

*Willy Burrows*

# Coordinators Report

Anne Bell and Ashley Green continue to share the Community School Coordinator role with Anne focusing on administration and Ashley focusing on programming. Barb Dunn oversees the majority of the front office administration with evening and weekend assistance from duty host, Sue Flynn. Community education courses and participation saw an increase this year, and as a result, our office expenses have increased as well. Our drop-in programs have been very popular this year and gym space is increasingly competitive to schedule. We hired a new Makerspace Coordinator, Brian Kroeker, in spring 2023 and the space has re-opened. Our Garden Coordinator, Matthew Kemshaw, had another productive year and at the end of the year, left us to grow the school food program within the school district as a whole. We started a new program, Community Cultural Kitchen, in spring of 2023 and received grant money to help continue that program into next year. Amy Harstad started in the early summer of 2022 in the role as Westshore/Sooke Literacy Outreach Coordinator, and the Literacy Task Group is meeting regularly as the role is expanded. The new SD62 requirement of \$5 Million of liability insurance for user groups continues to be a source of notable tension within the community, and the EMCS Society Board is wrestling with the idea of 2M vs 5M coverage for lower risk activities. Our Accountant Dianne Chiasson, continues to work with us toward a more streamlined process for financial reporting. We continue to write grants to support programs, and are always thinking innovatively when opportunities present. We continue to work with the Governance Committee developing and revamping policies and procedures. Our Theatre Coordinator, Steve Anderson has been working with community groups to bring entertainment back to our community, and also working with staff, society board, our Theatre User Groups, and community members to ensure the theatre is up to date and equipment required is put forward to administration and the board for purchase.

*Anne Bell & Ashley Green*

# Principal's Message

This past school year we continued to see progress in the development of our culture of inclusiveness, belonging and sense of place while supporting student's social emotional development, health and wellness. Limiting personal devices during instructional time has encouraged students to engage in their learning and begin to address the growing dependence on technology and potential impacts on anxiety and mental wellness. As we all navigate through ever changing economic stresses, EMCS staff and students are committed to strengthening and expanding our food security network to support our immediate community. I am very proud of the work our team has done to set up universal and cost-free access to breakfast and lunch five days a week for students through the Feeding Futures Fund. Food security, paired with the Student/Family Affordability Grant allows us to reach students and ensure they are provided with the essentials to support their education.

Partnerships with the Community Programs Office have resulted in the purchase of a new metal plasma machine, solar panel installation and expansion of the school garden and a new lighting board for the theatre in addition to upgrades to equipment shared by community and school programs. This relationship exemplifies the importance of the community school in enriching the educational opportunities for our students in Sooke.

We have continued our work to modernize the Learning Commons space with new flexible furniture, movable book stacks and displays that make this space more effective for staff and students. The addition of the online learning HUB in the Learning Commons seminar room is also nearing completion to support students who are taking classes online.

I am very proud of how EMCS continues to serve our students, staff and community. Strong partnerships with the EMCS Society ensure we continue to enhance learning opportunities for students in Sooke.

With these initiatives in mind, we are set for another exciting year at EMCS and an opportunity to strengthen our connections with the surrounding community.

*Mike Bobbitt*



**8 Monthly Movie Nights** hosted - \$5 Fee

**3 Games Nights** hosted - Free admission & snacks

**Spring Break Camps:**

Basketball: 30 participants

Strength & Conditioning: 6 participants

These camps were free thanks to Washington Kids Foundation

**Rock Chops Band Camp (RC/BC):** 5 participants spent one week learning new repertoire, practicing rhythm, singing, and jamming together. Hosted by Makerspace Coordinator, Brian James Kroeker.

**Step Up Sooke:** On August 10th & 11th we partnered with several agencies in town to inspire compassion and action to address homelessness and domestic violence in Sooke.

# Youth Engagement

300

Program participants





# Play & Learn Camp



This was the 13th year of the Play & Learn Camp, and it was attended by twenty-five students aged 6 – 9 from all four elementary schools in the region of Sooke. This program aims to provide a rich play-based learning environment for four weeks, immersing children in literacy, numeracy, and physical literacy activities designed to foster their existing academic skills, and to improve the self-confidence and enjoyment in these subject areas.

This camp is provided for free to families and includes lunch, snacks, and field trips. The total cost of the camp was \$33,500 this year and was funded by the following:

- EMCS Society
- Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences
- Rotary Club of Sooke
- Excellence in Literacy Foundation
- Sooke Harbourside Lions
- Sooke Lions
- The Sooke Region Literacy Task Group
- HRSDC - Canada Youth Summer jobs
- SD62

+32%

Physical  
Literacy

+11%

Literacy

+5%

Numeracy

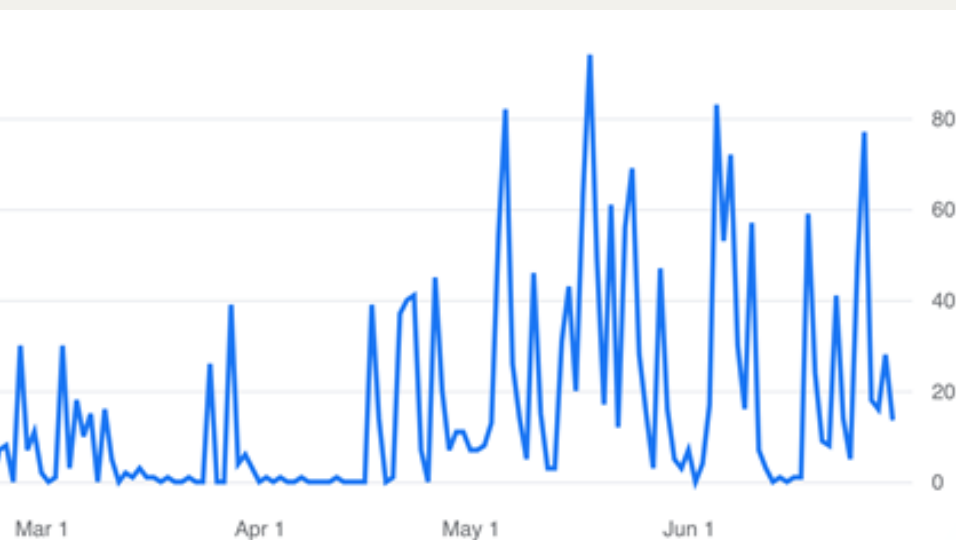


# Makerspace



- New Makerspace coordinator Brian James Kroeker hired in April 2023
- Brian has extensive experience in marketing, design and workshop facilitation
- Makerspace re-opened May 2023 with new branding, logo and graphics
- Created online resources for shop safety and tool training
- Updated website and refreshed Facebook group
- Significant increase in Facebook engagement and sharing
- Purchased metal plasma cutter in partnership with metal task and EMCS in February 2023
- Made a number of demo projects to share on social media
- Outreach and meeting with other Makerspaces on the Island

## Facebook engagement Feb - June 2023



# Garden Coordinator

We had a successful summer with 2 recent grads from Royal Bay working as Garden Assistants. They kept up the school gardens with routine maintenance, irrigation, harvesting, and also built an accessible garden box at the Royal Bay gardens.

## *Highlights from 2022/2023*

### **EMCS:**

- New garden shed and permanent fence installed around garden expansion.
- Fund-raised and installed solar panels. This will serve as a solar demonstration for students and also provide lighting for seedlings and pumps for irrigation.

### **Belmont:**

- New greenhouse installed with benches for plants
- Designed composting solution for Foods classes
- Invasive species removal

### **Royal Bay:**

- Got donations of soil, rocks, logs for garden
- Installed new in ground beds with irrigation lines
- Supported new composting systems
- Installed a greenhouse, further irrigation systems and large vegetable beds.

Culinary arts is regularly harvesting 4-6 bus bins of greens from the garden.



# Literacy Outreach



Sooke Region and Westshore Literacy Projects combined into one this year. Our combined task group met 4 times over the year in both Sooke and Westshore.

Several new members / organizations were added to our task group, and we continue to strive to have a representative from every community in the Sooke and Westshore Region on our Literacy Task Group. We have restored SD62 District representation to our group, and have received valuable feedback on our missions and goals from their perspective.

In the region of Sooke, 4 Books for Breakfast were created in this past year and held once a month in the following locations: East Sooke Community Hall, John Muir Elementary, T'Sou-ke Nation - Lazzar Building and the Health Centre, and Sooke Family Resource Society.

It was a fun year of reading books with babies, toddlers and young families, sharing healthy snacks, and providing each family a carefully selected new book. The programs attracted up to 11 participating families on any given session.

Two physical literacy events were held in the Sooke community this year. One at the gym at EMCS, the second at Ed MacGregor Park. Young families learned fun activities to promote the ABC's of Physical Literacy: agility, balance, coordination and speed.

## **Other Literacy Support:**

- In Westshore, we provided financial support and a Times Colonist grant for the well established "Books for Breakfast" program held at the Military Family Resource Centre.
- We provided wages and financial assistance to our partner program "1000 x 5", based in the Westshore
- We financially supported the Play and Learn Summer Camp with \$4,000
- We continue to search for quality books to keep all of our community book bins well supplied
- We regularly donate books to other "Tiny Free Libraries"



1000 x 5

Westshore 1000 X 5 Children's Book Recycling Project continues to move forward, distributing to Goldstream Food Bank, 6 Strong Starts, including John Muir, Journeys of the Heart and VIHA.

### Challenges:

- We are in dire need of volunteers.
- Donations are very low
- Purchase of recycled books at a reasonable price.

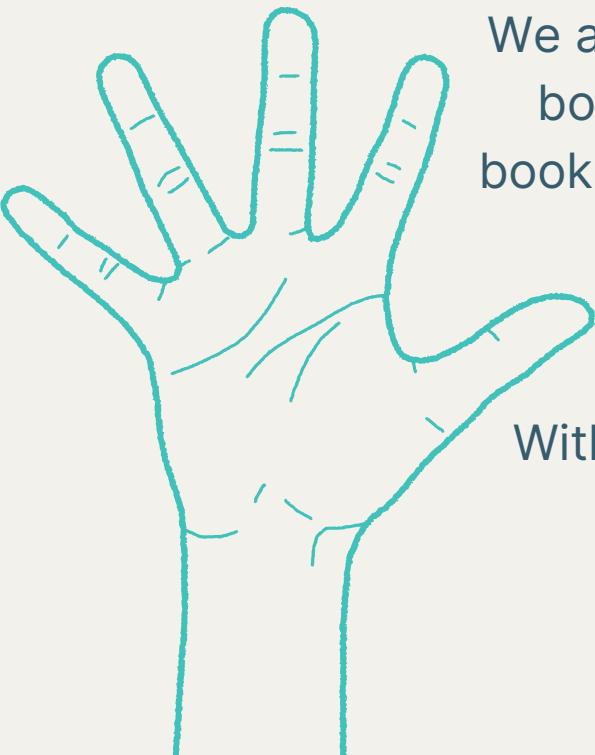
### Wins:

- We received a huge donation from Orca publishers of 2,266 books in January.
- We continue to receive books from friends and family members, many from teachers we have worked with in the past.

We are happy to report that we distributed 5,421 books this year, bringing our total number of books to 62,387 books since our project began in 2012.

With optimism we look forward to a successful upcoming year.

*Denise Brown*



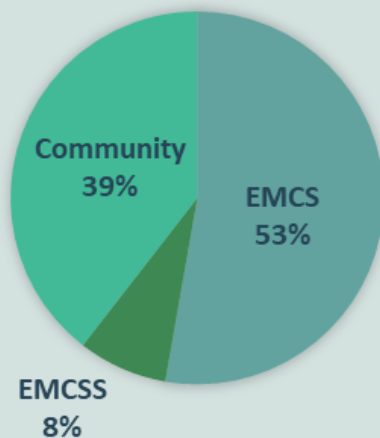
# Sooke Community Theatre at EMCS

835 Hours Booked

## Highlights

- Nov - Chamber of Commerce 'Gala'
- Dec - Sooke Harbour Players 'Camelot'
- March - EMCSS 'Chilliwack' Fundraiser - \$6000 split with Sooke Food Bank and the EMCS Society
- April - The Sutcliffes and Rock or Bust
- June - SYSC 'Annie'

## THEATRE USE



405

Participants

33

Courses Offered

27

Courses Run

920

Drop-In Sports

Lean Team

Kickboxing

Soap Making

First Aid

Food Safe

Budgeting Basics

Seaweed Foraging

Intro to Ukulele

Grid & Grisaille

Mushroom Workshop

Line Dancing

Make a Rope Basket

Seaweed Foraging

Drop-In Badminton,

Volleyball, & Basketball

# Community Education





## Supports

## Details

## Outcome

### Good Food Box

Local pickup for the boxes and 1 box provided for free to local family in need

Supporting healthy and affordable food options to the Sooke Region

### Bus Passes

\$270 spent on bus passes

120 passes distributed throughout the year to assist student transportation

### Play & Learn Camp

Contributed \$4,000 towards summer Play & Learn Camp

This educational camp is free to attend and also provides free lunch and snacks

### Wellness Centre

Provide snacks to the weekly Wellness Centre

Support food security within the school

# Support & Outreach

## New Program!

### Community Cultural Kitchen

Piloted April, May & June 2023  
Hosted by Patrick Gale

Supporting food security and healthy living, this program teaches cooking classes free of charge to community members. It focuses on food and cultural sharing. Integrate and educate.



WE  
COULDN'T  
HAVE  
DONE IT  
WITHOUT  
YOU!



*Thank you*

to all our donors, volunteers,  
instructors, and board  
members.

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