



This is Our Story:  
Fort Saskatchewan Elementary

*“When we stand together we will have good hearts. When we stand together we will have good minds. When we stand together we will have good spirits”.*

One Fire- Nakota School Song  
Fort Saskatchewan Elementary School Song  
Written by Elder Wilson Bearhead and Ella Mikulecky



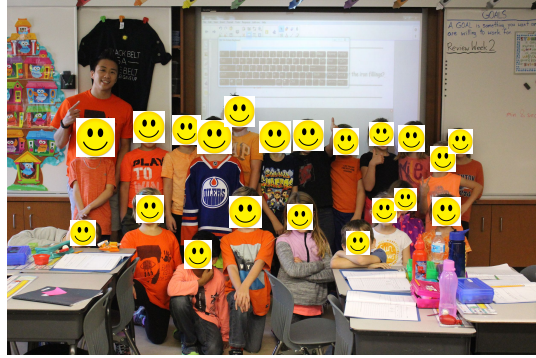




**Elder Wilson and Indigenous Education has had a monumental impact on our school. With Elder Wilson's guidance, our school has been on a journey to become more connected to each other and the land that we walk on.**





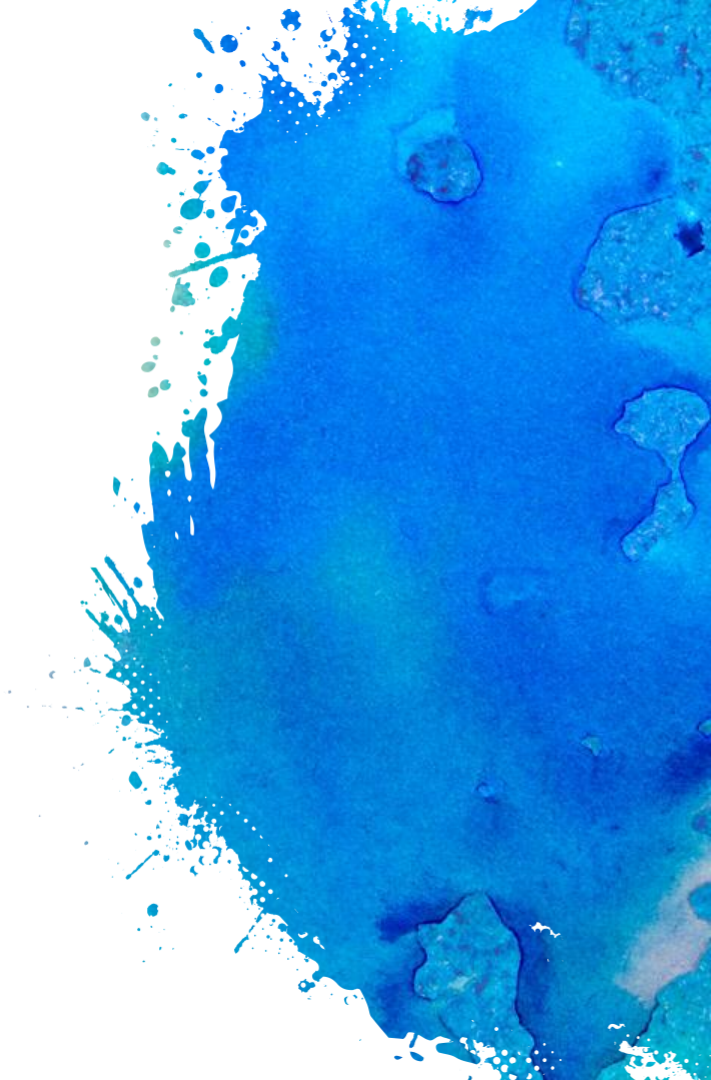
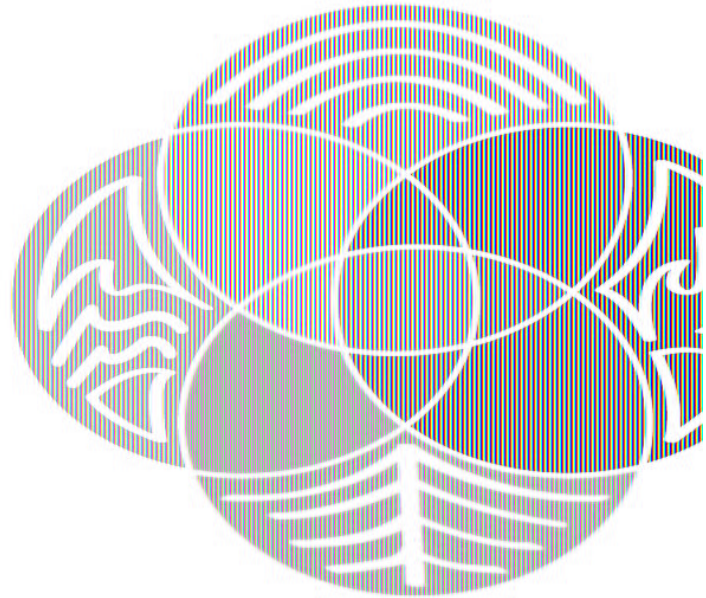


**In 2018, we recognized a need for our school community to connect to the land that we live on. Students were feeling disconnected from their community and school and we wanted them to feel a sense of ownership and pride. Our old school mascot no longer fit with the direction that our school was going in and we knew it was time for a change. With direction from Elder Wilson, the staff and students decided to choose four animals that were local to our area to represent us. Each animal is connected to an element- water, land, air and fire.**





# Our new identity



# Beaver- Water



OPPORTUNITY  
+ MASTERY

Our water animal is the beaver.  
The beaver is a builder and a creator.  
Elder Wilson told us that the beaver was  
the world's first architect. He taught our  
First People how to build the teepee.  
Lots of people identify with the beaver  
because they are creative or love to build  
forts or build with lego. The beaver also  
respects the land that it lives on, and  
only takes and uses what it needs.





# Deer- Earth



GENEROSITY  
+ KINDNESS

The deer is our earth animal. The deer takes what it needs from the earth and in turn helps to nourish the earth. The deer is graceful, calm and quiet, and embodies kindness. Deer also live peacefully together in groups.



# Eagle- Air



LEADERSHIP  
+ INDEPENDENCE

The eagle is our air animal. Elder Wilson says the eagle is the animal that flies the highest in the sky and sees everything that is around him. When we see the eagle in nature it is commonly seen alone as it is a solitary animal. The eagle is known to be truthful.





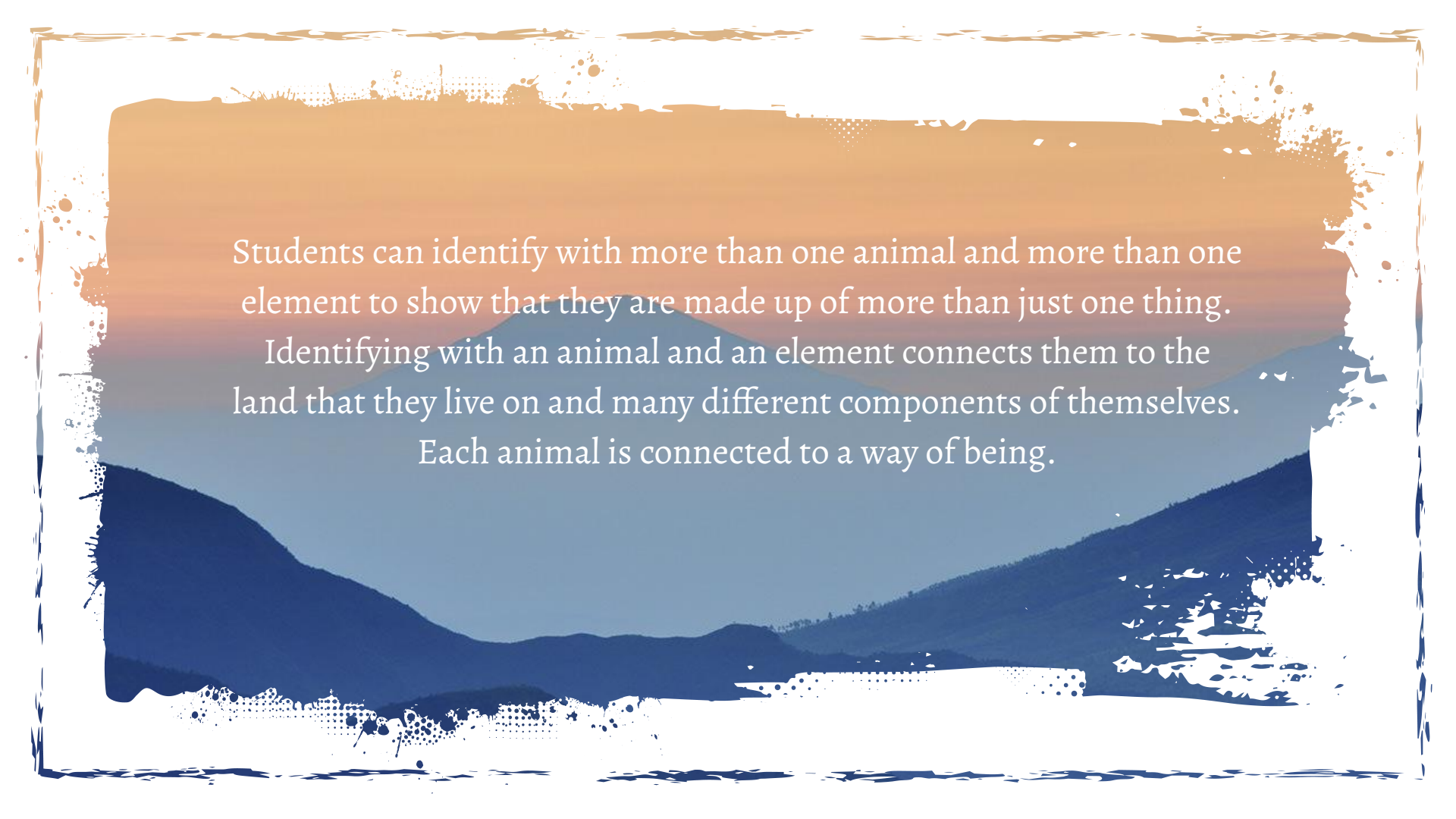
# Wolf- Fire



CONNECTION  
+ BELONGING

The wolf is our fire animal.  
The wolf is a pack animal. They stay together as a family and help to take care of each other. The older wolves take care of the younger wolves and the pack works together to accomplish goals.



A landscape photograph of a valley with mountains and a river, overlaid with a semi-transparent orange and blue gradient box containing text. The text is centered within the box.

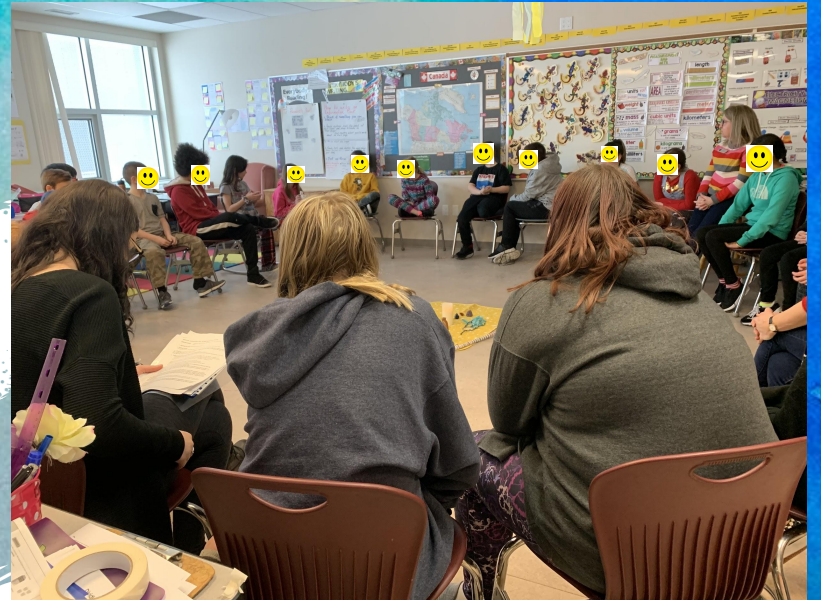
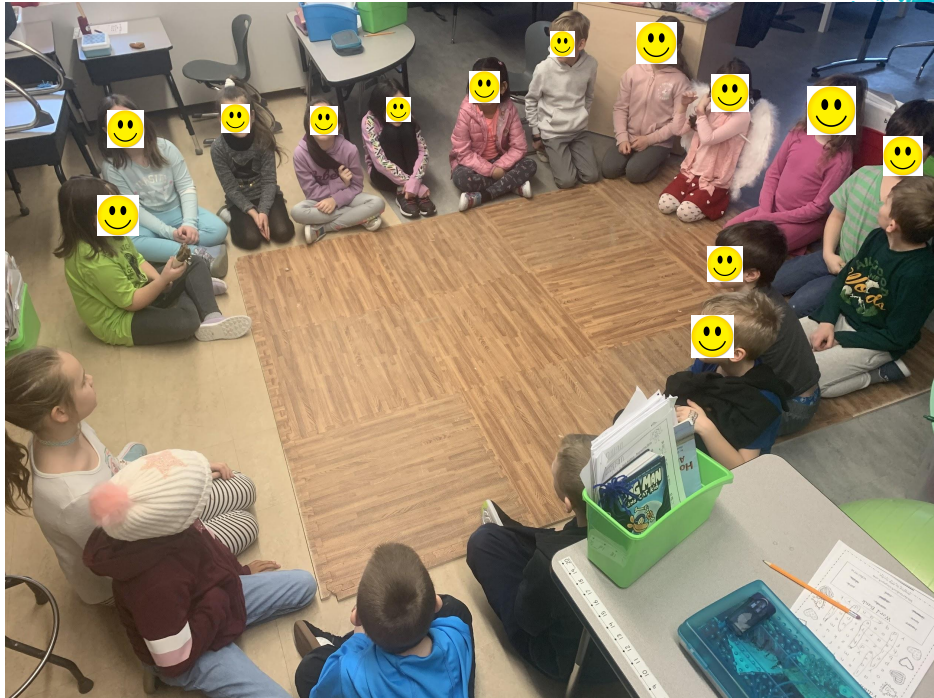
Students can identify with more than one animal and more than one element to show that they are made up of more than just one thing. Identifying with an animal and an element connects them to the land that they live on and many different components of themselves. Each animal is connected to a way of being.





# Our Journey...

**We have come together to create ethical spaces through sharing circles which has opened up our school community to build relationships and create a sense of belonging in our school.**





**Our students know that they have a safe space where their voices are heard and they can share without fear. We have learned to value everyone's contributions, and listen to each other with good hearts, good minds and good spirits.**



**FSE has chosen the Circle of Courage as our character education program. In the Circle of Courage, every person has four spirits- Belonging, Generosity, Independence and Mastery. We are our best selves when each of our spirits are fulfilled. The Circle of Courage is visually infused throughout our school, in the ways that we speak, and the in the values we embody. Each child is given opportunities to work on each spirit and successes are celebrated daily.**

Name: Cole W Class: 16S  
Date: Feb 4

Rooted In:

- Respect
- Belonging
- Independence
- Generosity
- Honesty
- Humility

For helping his friend  
off the bus.

Unbe-leaf-able!

Name: Chase Class: 6S  
Date: Feb 5 2020

Rooted In:

- Respect
- Belonging
- Independence
- Generosity
- Honesty
- Humility

Included all students in group  
discussions by asking those who may  
not have had a partner to join his group.

Unbe-leaf-able!

Name: Kate Class: 4/5S  
Date: Feb 5, 2020

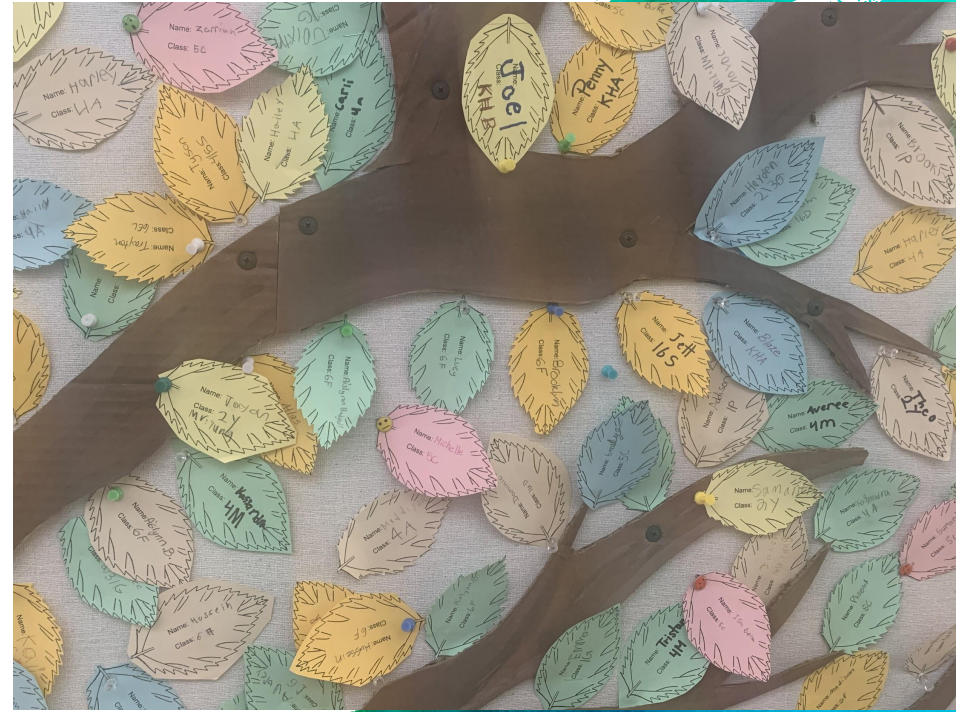
Rooted In:

- Respect
- Belonging
- Independence
- Generosity
- Honesty
- Humility

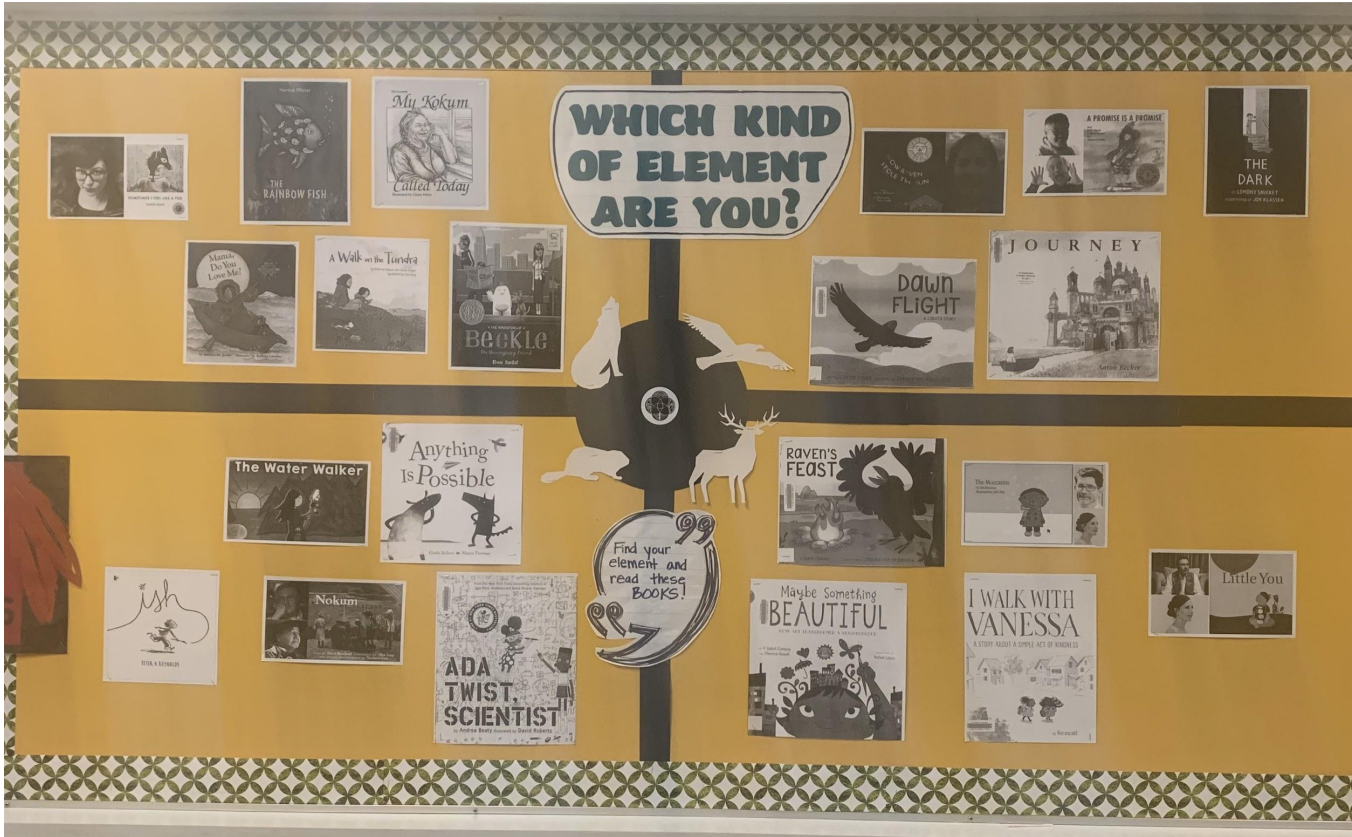
Kate's effort and willingness to  
try new things in gymnastics  
allowed her to grow her  
skills. Very proud of her work.

Unbe-leaf-able! ethnic









# Land Based Learning and the Fort Saskatchewan River Valley

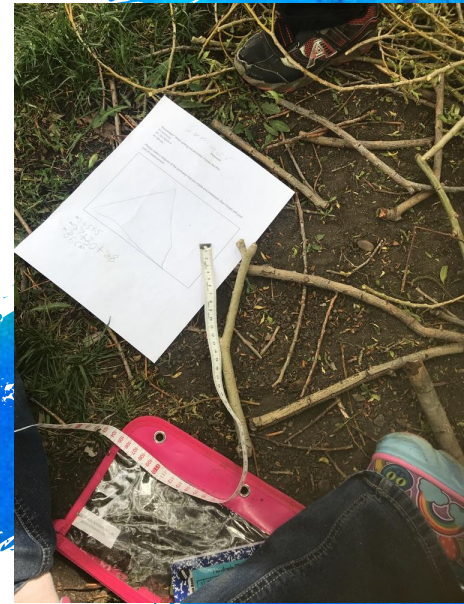




Last school year, both grade three classes decided to teach all grade three measurement concepts on the land. We took advantage of the river valley that is a mere 500 metres from our front door. Students measured grass, leaves, trees, branches and more in centimeters and metres. They used found objects to build shapes and measure perimeter. But we were not able to contain the learning to just measurement. We learned:

- How to enter and leave a natural space from Elder Wilson and Cheryl Devin.
- Trees and plants as food and medicine.
- Trees and plants Indigenous to our area.
- Plant and animals life cycles.
- We wrote poetry about nature, while in nature.
- Beaver's are architects.
- What paths look like today and what they looked like 200+ years ago.
- How to lay in the grass and look at the clouds.
- How to sit in nature and just be.

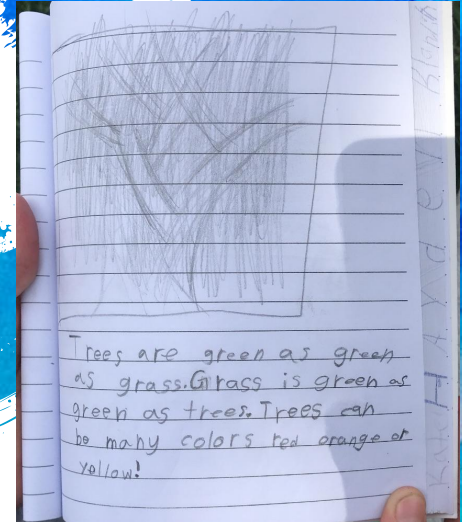
The learning was immeasurable.







Since then, the river valley has become a classroom to many other classes.





# Our outdoor classroom:

How it can teach us:

Sharing circles are so important in our school. We would like the main focus of our space to be a large sharing circle that will be accessible to all students in our school. We chose the tarmac outside of our back door because we want the space to be accessible to all of our students no matter their mobility. We would like plants and trees that grow naturally in the river valley to be in our outdoor space. We want the kids to see the plants in a domestic location and then identify them in our river valley. We would like to harvest our own plants to make tea, jam and other things to share with our community.

## Circle of Courage Connections:

- Sitting in circle gives us a sense of belonging.
- Students will feel mastery through taking care of our own space.
- Students will expand their independence by growing and harvesting our plants.
- Generosity will be shown when we use them to teach each other and make things for our community.

# Outdoor Learning Space

## Nature:

- Replace trees that are damaged
- Large flower pots on wheels
- Planter boxes on wheels
- Shrubs that bear fruit to be cared for and consumed.

## Structures:

- Large stones (25) to place in a circle for a sharing circle and outdoor lessons
- Pergola to provide shade
- 3 Pole structure over the sharing circle area

## Other

- Stamped concrete to mark a pathway to the sharing circle area.
- All the groundwork needs to be accessible for wheelchairs.