



## 2020: The year in review



Photos submitted

Despite a global pandemic being declared in March, Richmonddites carried on as best they could with their daily lives in 2020 while adjusting to wearing masks and practicing physical distancing.

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# 2020: Reflections of a year like no other

By DON FENNELL

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and HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Inspired by the dawn of a new decade, many Richmond community leaders and residents alike welcomed 2020 with optimism. But the promising future they envisioned was soon overshadowed by the devastation of a global pandemic declared by the World Health Organization in late winter. Since then, COVID-19 has without prejudice sadistically disrupted lives and taken others.

With the promise of first vaccines now cautiously being rolled out, the end may be nigh. Yet it will still be months if not years before things return to "normal."

## JANUARY

One issue that will continue to be front and centre locally is also a global priority: recognizing climate change and the environment. As a city, Richmond was already busy taking action as the calendar flipped to a new year. Richmond is believed to have been the first city in North America to implement an electric vehicle infrastructure requirement, an initiative that was recognized in 2019 with a Climate and Energy Action Award from the Community Energy Association.

Before Richmond residents celebrated the Chinese New Year with many special events befitting such an important occasion, they worked off some earlier holiday cheer by taking to the streets for the annual Steveston Icebreaker 8K road race. A cold snap that had gripped the West Coast thawed by race day (Jan. 19) to feature typical conditions with a forecast high of 7 degrees.

Anticipation was building among the hockey community as it prepared to gather in Richmond in March for a memorable showcase of global talent in the form of the CARHA Hockey World Cup. But the goals of the CARHA Hockey World Cup weren't limited to the ice. On Jan. 30, CARHA teamed with the Richmond Sockeyes Junior Hockey Club on a special evening dedicated to promoting acceptance and inclusion of autism through community engagement. During an intermission scrimmage, members of the Canucks Autism Network wore World Cup jerseys helping to remind fans of the upcoming tournament.

Richmond received more snow in January than it would normally get in an entire winter. Data from Vancouver International Airport's weather monitoring station showed that Richmond received 34.6 centimetres of snow from Jan. 10 to 18. That's more than the annual snowfall received each winter since 2008 (with the exception of 2017, when the city saw 43.4 centimetres). Despite the extensive snow dump over such a short period, crews worked



Photo by Chung Chow

**Symbolizing power, wisdom and superiority, the lion dance is one of the most important traditions at Chinese New Year.**

around the clock in back-to-back 12 hour shifts to keep up with evolving weather conditions. Crews attended to 22,818 kilometres of roadways, dispersing 1,434 tonnes of salt—the weight of almost three Airbus A380 aircraft—and used 746,000 litres of salt brine, equal to nearly 5,000 average-sized bath tubs.

## FEBRUARY

A decade after having the eyes of the world focused on it, Richmond marked the 10-year anniversary of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games with a special three-day family celebration Feb. 21 to 23 at the Richmond Olympic Oval. The oval was again abuzz as memories were exchanged of the 12 medal events we hosted as the venue city for long track speed skating.

"In the 10 years since Canada proudly united wearing the maple leaf, the Richmond Olympic Oval has become a living legacy of the games," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie.

Having printed our first edition in February 2017 (a cover story about a couple that made a multi-million dollar contribution to build a new acute care tower at Richmond Hospital), the *Richmond Sentinel* proudly began its fourth year sharing our community's stories.

Dynamo Fencing Club athletes returned from the Canadian championships in Gatineau, Quebec with 21 medals including nine national titles. The unprecedented success (the club placed more members on the national team than all of Que-

bec), caused club leader Igor Gantsevich to reflect, noting he was the only male athlete from Western Canada to make the national fencing team when he was growing up just a decade earlier.

Leilani Pearson, a Grade 12 student at Hugh Boyd secondary, became one of only 36 high schoolers across Canada to receive a Loran Award, valued at \$100,000. Over four years of undergraduate study,

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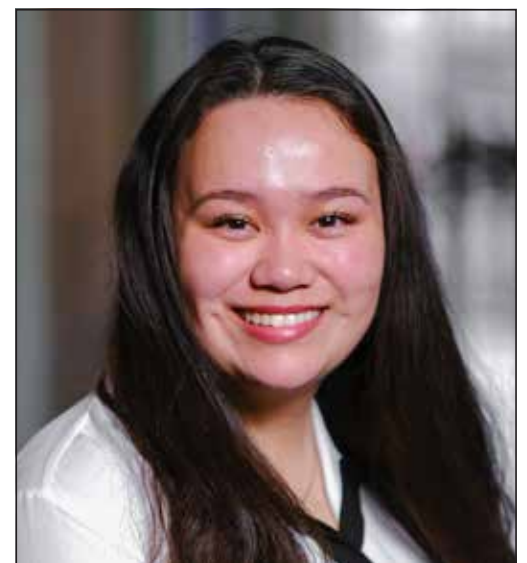


Photo by Eric Choi – Edge Imaging

**Boyd graduate Leilani Pearson was one of only 36 high schoolers across Canada to receive a 2020 Loran Award, valued at \$100,000.**



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*Photo courtesy City of Richmond*

**Richmond has 49 kilometres of perimeter dike and 39 drainage pump stations that provide the city with flood protection from ocean storm surges and freshets.**

each Loran Scholar also receives an annual stipend, tuition at one of 25 Canadian universities, mentorship, summer internships, and networking opportunities with other Loran Scholars. More than 5,000 students across Canada applied for the prestigious award, 500 were interviewed, and 88 made it to the National Selections process. The selection committee looks for students who exhibit qualities beyond academic excellence. Since 2015, Richmond has seen three other students become Loran Scholars: Palmer's Bonnie Zhang in 2015 and McNair's Cole Langer and Leon Picha in 2019.

Every year, the Richmond chapter of KidSport holds a banquet to ensure children are not left on the sidelines. And in keeping with tradition, the 2020



*Photo submitted*

**KidSport Richmond is introducing the Robert A Jackson Creating Community Champions Award to recognize individuals who emulate his commitment to be community champions.**

event on Feb. 28 was held at the Hilton Vancouver Airport Hotel which donates the room, food, and staff for the evening. Longtime volunteer Bob Jackson, who initiated the event, was recognized for his lifetime of service to others. The Robert A Jackson Creating Community Champions Award will pay tribute to the longtime Richmondite by annually recognizing individuals who emulate his commitment to "Champion for the Community."

In the fall of 2013, Sanjeet Sadana left a Richmond Sports Council Meeting feeling burdened. It was



*Photo by Don Fennell*

**KidSport Richmond's Community Champions Gala chair Steve Valenzuela (left) and honorary chair Bobby Singh spearheaded another successful fundraiser in February 2020. The event also marked the introduction of a new award recognizing the efforts of KidSport Richmond board chair Bob Jackson.**

reported that KidSport Richmond was struggling to provide funds to help kids play in organized sports. There was little money—so little that the grants had been reduced to \$150 per year. As well, cheques for approved funding would only be released when enough donations could cover the cheques. Sadana shared his burden with his boss Gary Collinge, general manager of the Hilton Vancouver Airport Hotel. After some discussion, Richmond Sports Council received an email with a generous offer. The Hilton was willing to donate a 200-seat fundraising dinner that KidSport Richmond could organize. All proceeds would go to the local chapter. All expenses including catering, service, hotel rooms for out-of-town guests, meeting rooms, a VIP reception and more would be donated by the hotel.

### MARCH

A Steveston landmark closed until summer as the Richmond Hospital/Healthcare Auxiliary Thrift Shop, on the corner of Chatham Street and Second Avenue, underwent work to strengthen its foundation.

"The building had wooden pillars and they rotted," explained auxiliary president Ursula van Duin, who noted the floor was so uneven that some areas were 20 to 30 centimetres (eight to 12 inches) higher than others.

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*Photo by Chung Chow*

**The Richmond Hospital/Healthcare Auxiliary Thrift Shop underwent renovation work on its Steveston building, originally constructed in 1894.**

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Less than three weeks from puck drop on the 2020 CARHA Hockey World Cup in Richmond, the largest international recreational hockey tournament on the planet that was set to bring together more than 140 teams from 15 countries, organizers were forced to cancel after the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic resulting from the spread of COVID-19. It was originally hoped the tournament could be held about the same time this year, but organizers later postponed it again until the spring of 2022.

With a little more luck, the McMath Wildcats could well have become provincial champions. As it was, they reached the Final Four at the BC High School



Photo submitted

**Ashley Specht and her Richmond Ravens teammates were able to celebrate winning the 2020 playoff title.**

Provincial 3A Girls' Basketball Championships—their outstanding season ending in a heartbreaking 75-70 overtime loss to North Vancouver's Argyle Pipers in the bronze medal game. The fourth-place result by the No. 3-ranked Wildcats marked only the second time in school history McMath has reached the Final Four. They placed second in 2016.

Ashley Specht and her Richmond Ravens teammates were able to celebrate winning the playoff title, but then denied the opportunity to add a provin-

cial banner following the cancelling of the BC Hockey Midget Girls' championships they were set to host.

The pandemic also caused organizations to cancel the 21st Pacific International Cup (PIC), an annual curling event drawing recreational curlers from around the world, that was scheduled to be held at the Richmond Curling Club from April 15 to 19. Organizers also later announced the cancellation of the 2021 event.

Established as a result of the pandemic, the Richmond COVID-19 Community Task Force held its first meeting co-chaired by Mayor Malcolm Brodie and the chamber's Fan Chun. Meeting once a week via conference call, the 30-person group, representing a broad spectrum of the community, aimed to provide information from various community institutions and keep the community informed.



Photo by Jaana Björk

**The COVID-19 pandemic turned everyday life upside down, including the mandated closure of local playgrounds.**

Following the closure of city hall to the public, city council allowed for teleconferencing and many meetings happened online.

### APRIL

With more residents having either had their work hours cut back or lost their jobs entirely, the Richmond Food Bank anticipated the number of residents using its services weekly to feed their families would swell. Food donations of nutritious, unopened, non-perishable items can be dropped off at the main location (100-5800 Cedarbridge Way) or in the food bank bin at your local grocery store. The food bank also welcomes cash donations.

The Reverend Paula Porter Leggett, vicar at St. Alban's Anglican Church in Richmond, offered reassurance to those struggling to deal with the pandemic.

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Photo by Keith Yee

**Volunteers enjoy a convivial atmosphere at the Richmond Food Bank.**

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*Photo from portofvancouver.com*

**City councillors voiced concern about possible environmental impact the proposed South Arm Jetty Tidal Marsh project might have on the Sturgeon Banks area. The photo is a rendering of proposed conditions at the site.**

"At our core we are a community of people who gather as we live out our love of God and love of neighbour. When someone is feeling low, or we can't get together, it (impacts) profoundly what being part of a faith community is all about." Also of paramount concern is the plight of those individuals who are

hungry and poor, and lacking access to usual services. "We have to trust in God and not be anxious or fearful because we are not alone in this. In the community of faith we are with one another," she said.

The RAPS Animal Hospital, a full-service, not-for-profit veterinary facility located in Richmond, offered financial supports for pets in households affected economically by the current health emergency related to coronavirus disease.

An important habitat for many species, Sturgeon Banks became a hot topic at city council as the proposed site of the South Arm Jetty Tidal Marsh project. The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority submitted an application to obtain a 30-year lease for the land in order to convert sand flat into marsh habitat. In an early March report, city staff recommended that council endorse the port authority's application. But upon discussion, many city councillors voiced their opposition to the project. Coun. Michael Wolfe noted that the area



*Photo by Chung Chow*

**Tourism Richmond's Nancy Small says ordering take-out or delivery supports local restaurants.**

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

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is designated as a Ramsar site—an internationally important wetland site—and was named Canada's No. 1 important bird area. He requested that the port authority consider an alternative site, since the area already provides a habitat for a number of species.

Among many who were exiled from Uganda in 1972, Pyrali Nanji and his family found a welcome refuge in Canada. They have been giving back ever since, stepping up in the spring to donate \$100,000 to Richmond Hospital, inspiring others to also give to the COVID-19 Response Fund.

Calling these "unprecedented times," Tourism Richmond CEO Nancy Small said the industry was hit hard by the pandemic. She noted the hotel association estimated two-thirds of the hotels in the province would be closed for months. As hotels closed, some were redeployed for emergency workers.

During the pandemic, Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives (RCRG) stepped up even more. The community's hub for volunteering and giving, RCRG was designated one of 24 agencies across the province to be a COVID-19 response for seniors. This means providing additional services, while continuing to upgrade existing services, according to RCRG president and CEO Ed Gavsie. "It's all part of the 2-1-1 plan," he explained.

A Richmond teen used his talents—and home shed—to print 3D face shields for use by doctors all over the United States. Burnett Secondary student Sean Uy's uncle is a cardiologist in California. Through his uncle, Uy heard about the limited personal protective equipment available in hospitals.

Richmond Public Library also made use of its 3D printers to collaborate with local 3D supplier shop3d.ca to get Richmond-produced face shields to frontline medical workers.

"Library staff are grateful to those working each day to keep our communities running and healthy," said Cindy Ho, head of digital learning services.

A brilliant star dimmed as longtime Richmond entertainer Sibel Thrasher died April 9 at age 70.

"Singing is good for the soul," Thrasher once said. "As long as I can make somebody smile, it's worth coming out."



Photo courtesy Rita Jin

**2020 Richmond High graduate Rita Jin is an all-around achiever, embracing many opportunities both academically and in the community.**

Originally from Cincinnati, Thrasher came to Vancouver in 1985 with the singing group The Platters, famous for songs such as "Only You" and "The Great Pretender." In a 2017 interview she said her stay was originally meant to be only a month, but she didn't want to leave. Ever elegant, Thrasher entertained across the Lower Mainland in many shows and enjoyed performing in local venues, like the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and the ANAF club in Steveston.

Richmond manufacturing pharmacist Darryl Segal welcomes the opportunity to give back, but didn't expect it to be on such a grand scale last spring. When the president of natural hair and skincare company Herbal Glo learned that local stores had run out of hand sanitizer he took it upon himself and his company to begin making their own.

Local seafood company Organic Ocean, created and run by experienced fishers, previously only sold their seafood to restaurants. But when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, they wanted to avoid laying off staff and shutting operations down. So Organic Ocean pivoted and began selling to the community—at the same wholesale price that distributors pay.

Even in these extraordinary times, the Richmond School District remains committed to ensuring its most vulnerable students and their families are fed through the Feed-U-Cate 38 program. Members of CUPE Local 716 were quick to answer the call, supporting the food program with a \$547 donation.

"This year we wanted to donate a little more because of the pressing needs in the community caused by the pandemic," said CUPE 716 president Ian Hillman. "Our district's program is important to students and families and we are pleased to support it."

### MAY

Richmond introduced a new resource guide for people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic. Developed in collaboration with various community partners, it is available through service providers across Richmond and online and includes meal programs, counselling, crisis lines, bathroom and shower facilities.

During her Grade 12 year at Richmond High, Rita Jin found time between her studies to play the piano and trumpet, serve as student council vice-president, play on the school's ultimate frisbee and volleyball teams, earn a Bronze Cross in swimming, fly a glider, and lead the Free the Children team at WE Day. Academically, she also completed three advanced placement courses on top of the challenging International Baccalaureate program, while maintaining a 90 per cent average. Her relentless pursuit of challenges earned her a Schulich STEM scholarship worth \$80,000. The prestigious leadership scholarships are among Canada's most coveted undergraduate honours.

Like other industries heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the fishing industry had to make some changes. Fisheries and Oceans Canada collaborated with the federal government to ensure Canadian fisheries and aquaculture sectors received necessary supports to continue providing food, according to department representative Lauren Girdler. In Steveston, a historic fishing village, commercial fishers are still heading out with their boats and selling their catch to people looking for local seafood.

As the COVID-19 crisis continued to dramatically impact the aviation industry, Vancouver International Airport was forced to make some difficult decisions. Forecasting less passenger traffic for some time, the airport's workforce was significantly reduced.

Reeling from the financial effects of COVID-19, the airline industry also sought government help.

"With respect to aviation and aerospace, the (federal) government continues to be committed to their top priorities of the safety and security of Canadians and Canada's transportation system," said BC Aviation Council chair Heather Bell. "That said, we are seeing a nimbleness and flexibility within government that is unprecedented."

Chris Lam has his sights set on a career as a paramedic. Right now, the Burnett secondary student's focus is on helping save lives another way—by making personal protective equipment. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic,



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*Photos submitted*

**Richmond came together as a community during the early days of the pandemic, which included showing support for frontline workers.**

Lam and fellow Grade 12 students at the Richmond school were kept busy—between online learning—churning out ear savers and protective face shields. Using futuristic 3D technology, Lam and his colleagues in the robotics club donated more than 300 of the highly-coveted PPE items to local care homes, Richmond Hospital, Vancouver General Hospital, Coast Mountain Bus Company and several care homes in Manitoba.

The founder of Canada's largest Canadian-Asian grocery retailer T&T Supermarket made an \$80,000 donation to Richmond Hospital Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund.

"I believe that human life is priceless. During this difficult time everyone should work together to contribute to their community in whatever way they can," said Cindy Lee. "From helping your neighbour to donating to the local hospital, we can overcome this crisis together."

Bayne Koen came full circle when he was introduced as the new bench boss of the Richmond Sockeyes, the same junior hockey team with which his coaching career began as an assistant in the early 2000s.

"It's exciting to be back where it all started," he said, taking a moment to reflect on the journey that began under the tutelage of Ron Johnson. "Ron was a big part of me getting into the coaching world. I also played for him, and one of the things he taught me was patience and process. He had a very unique way of looking at the game, the skills and tactics, and taught me a lot of the stuff I still used to this day."

The Richmond Music School hasn't stopped creating music during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has even come up with some new ideas. Since mid-March, the school began offering online lessons for many instruments, including piano, violin, guitar, ukulele, flute and voice.

"I hope that people will take this opportunity to connect with music, and to try something new, like learning an instrument," said principal Meghan Verdejo, adding that the convenience of learning from home can be an advantage. Online lessons can also provide some much-needed structure during these unpredictable times, said Verdejo.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Richmond city council began largely meeting via video-conference. Even with technical glitches, Mayor Malcolm Brodie said he though council was "still able to get through the business fairly efficiently."

Amid a difficult time for the aviation industry, Vancouver Airport Authority appointed a new president and CEO. Tamara Vrooman, who spent 13 years in the same role at Vancity, Canada's largest community credit union, took the post effective July 1, becoming the first woman to lead the organization. Prior to working with Vancity, Vrooman was BC's deputy finance minister. She was recognized with the Order of British Columbia in 2019.

Greta Thunberg may be the best-known of the young environmentalists, but she's hardly a lone wolf. All over the world, members of Gen-Z (those born after 2000) are dedicating themselves to finding solutions for a better tomorrow. Co-presidents of the Richmond High Green Team, Wonhee Choi and Edward Zhang guided their team of students in the installing of solar panels at the school, a project that included educating peers and the local community about sustainable energy. As part of renowned Canadian scientist and environmentalist David Suzuki's Butterflyway Project, the Green Team members also implemented a pollinator-friendly garden to provide habitat and food for bees and butterflies. In collaboration with Richmond High's life skills students, they also weaved nests out of invasive plants, and worked with the school's art club to paint murals spreading awareness about ocean sustainability.

On May 8, Quilchena elementary students were able to wave to their teachers during the school's "car parade".

"We have a small catchment area and a really tight community here," said principal Kirsten Wallace. A staff member proposed the parade after seeing something similar at her son's school. Kids were asked to stay on the sidewalk outside their houses, and staff arrived at the school in cars, some with their own family members. Of the 185 students, Wallace estimates that 50 live outside the catchment area—and those students were encouraged to stand along the parade route to cheer and wave from a distance.



*Photo from Wikimedia Commons*

**Vancouver Airport Authority named Tamara Vrooman as its next CEO—the first woman to hold this post.**

A new website launched May 14 to connect Richmond residents and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. WeAreRichmondBC.ca is a collaboration between Tourism Richmond, Economic Development Richmond and the Richmond Chamber of Commerce. It aims to drive economic recovery and encourage community support.

A longtime donor to the Richmond Hospital Foundation stepped forward yet again as the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation of Canada donated \$40,000 to Richmond Hospital Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund. Supporting healthcare in the community for the last 14 years, the foundation appreciated the urgent need due to the pandemic. The member funds will be used to help purchase two vital signs monitors. Earlier in the year, members also made a \$28,000 donation to fund the hospital's purchase of an external fixation for the orthopedic team. To date, the foundation has contributed nearly \$500,000 in support of local health.

### JUNE

Almost 60 city-owned playgrounds re-opened June 1 as part of the city's

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*Photos submitted*

**Richmond's major malls implemented new cleaning and distancing protocols.**

restoration plan. Users are expected to wash their hands before and after use, avoid gathering in large groups in or around playgrounds and stay home if sick. Reopened playgrounds included Terra Nova Adventure Playground, Garden City Play Environment, Flight Path Park playground and all school district playgrounds.

Like many in the hospitality industry, Shane Dagan faced an uncertain future in June. His restaurant, the Steveston Seafood House, moved to a takeout-only model in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic but a few months later was able to re-open its doors.

"Our staff did a great job of maneuvering to our new style of take-out," he said. "I'm also very grateful for the community support we received during those eight weeks. The response was overwhelming."

The Seafood House donated \$3,400 to the Richmond Food Bank to express



*Photo from City of Richmond Archives 2001 10 30*

**The Brighthouse Princess float from a Steveston Salmon Festival parade.**



*File photo*

**The province announced in July a "bigger, bolder plan for Richmond Hospital will bring the facility into the 21st century."**

Dagan's gratitude to the community that kept them going.

Responding to the impact of COVID-19 and guided by founder JinBodhi's spirit of compassion, Bodhi Meditation supported frontline heroes. Those recognized included Richmond Fire-Rescue first responders and healthcare workers. One thousand gowns, 500 pairs of goggles and 100,000 non-medical masks were donated to support health care workers' efforts to protect the public and themselves.

Recognizing the power of sport, plans were afoot for a safe return to play. At the request of the province, and following a review by WorkSafeBC, viaSport introduced return to sport guidelines in accordance with BC's phased-in restart program. They followed collaboration with the recreation sector and sport agencies.

The community mourned the loss of a respected community leader as Sardar Gurdial Singh Neel died June 7 at the age of 95. An extraordinary educator who gave freely of his time and helped to create cultural bridges, he resided in Richmond for the last 51 years.

A member of the Richmond Ravens family was named BC Female Coach of the Year. One of 17 individuals recognized nationally, Natalie Korenic was singled out by Hockey Canada for the honour. Coach of the Richmond girls' ice hockey Bantam A rep team, she was nominated by the association. The submission was enthusiastically embraced by players and parents alike. In a statement, the Ravens said the organization is "incredibly proud to have someone as dedicated and talented as part of our team of committed coaches. (Korenic) will surely inspire other girls to look to coaching in their future."

### JULY

COVID-19 forced the cancellation of Canada's Biggest Little Birthday Party, as for the first time in its 75-year history the Steveston Salmon Festival on July 1 was a no-go. Coinciding with Canada Day, organizers including the City of Richmond hosted a series of online festivities.

"The decision to cancel this year's event was not an easy one to make," Steveston Community Society president Alan Sakai said in April. "There are hundreds of volunteers, artists, vendors and support staff required to host this event that has been attended by up to 80,000 visitors in recent years. In light of the current COVID-19 protocols put in place by BC provincial health officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, cancelling this year's event was determined to be the most responsible decision to make at this time."

Richmond's major malls continued to welcome customers with enhanced cleaning and sanitization procedures. Although never fully closed, new protocols allowed more stores to open during BC's second phase of COVID-19 recovery.

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Photo by Hannah Scott

### Comet NeoWise was visible in the Northern Hemisphere, including from Richmond's West Dyke, in July.

Richmond received some long-awaited good news when the province announced a new state-of-the-art emergency department and intensive care unit for the community is on the way.

"People have been calling for a new tower at Richmond Hospital and our government took decisive action to make it happen," said Premier John Horgan. "We're proud to give the green light for a bigger, bolder plan for Richmond Hospital that will bring the facility into the 21st century and deliver the care Richmond needs."



Photo submitted

While saluting frontline workers, participants in Honk 2020 also donated to the Richmond Food Bank, showing their support for people in need.

The province originally announced its commitment to replace the patient care tower in March 2018.

Usually a blast of the horn in vehicle traffic is a sign of anger. But Honk 2020 was just the opposite. This unique drive-by event held outside Richmond Hospital June 20—the first day of summer—was a chance for locals to show their support for frontline workers. During the coronavirus pandemic, frontline workers' efforts and dedication have been unwavering. Organized by the *Richmond Sentinel*, *Skytalk Media* and *WesternDriver.com*, participants were also urged to further show their support by donating to Richmond Food Bank.

The Richmond Chamber of Commerce named lawyer Brian Corcoran as its new chair at its first-ever virtual AGM.

The Richmond Girls Soccer Association is no more after reorganizing and changing its name to Richmond United Soccer Club.

"Since 1974, we have been dedicated to helping Richmond soccer players reach their sporting potential. However, it had become clear that our name was not in keeping with the inclusive nature of our programming," said acting board president Marty Mueller.

Tourism Richmond launched an ambassador program for locals called "Pacific. Authentic. Locals." The program enabled residents to showcase the city to visitors from a unique perspective.

"Visitors are looking for an authentic experience. They want to do as the locals do," said Tourism Richmond CEO Nancy Small. "Now, locals have a chance to share their love of Richmond with future visitors. We're looking for residents to give a warm Richmond

welcome to visitors when travel restrictions are lifted."

Maggie Xiong had never been one to self-reflect. But in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, it became the source of inspiration. The recent Burnett secondary grad released her first book last year: *Trekking the Pacific: The Cornerstone of Two Cultures*.

"Writing was always an interest and passion when I was really young," said Xiong. "But by the time I got to high school I stopped journaling because I started comparing myself to other people."

Following the overwhelming success of the inaugural *One Book, Three Cities* community reading project, the second annual returned for an encore performance last summer. Through August, many literary enthusiasts in Richmond, Xiamen and Qingdao found themselves engaged in *Dear Life*, a collection of short stories by award-winning Canadian author Alice Munro. In 2019, *Life of Pi* by fellow Canadian author Yann Martel was the book of choice.

City council debated expanding a backyard chicken program at an early July general purposes committee meeting. But they ultimately approved a staff proposal in July enabling all residents on Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) property to keep backyard chickens—regardless of their property's size. Those who reside outside the ALR, in detached single family homes in residential zones, can also keep chickens—provided their property covers at least 2,000 square metres.

Richmond's economic development office released its response and recovery report, which highlights measures implemented by the office to assist businesses impacted by COVID-19.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on our economy as actions necessary to mitigate risks to public health forced businesses to close and people to stay at home," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "Along with ensuring public health and community safety, supporting local businesses and boosting economic recovery remains a top priority for the city."



## RAPS COMMUNITY REPORT Caring for the animals who care for us

# RAPS to open dog sanctuary



**Eyal  
Lichtmann**

Do you know the difference between an animal shelter and an animal sanctuary?

An animal shelter is a temporary place where animals are cared for after being surrendered, rescued while at large or apprehended from a situation of neglect or abuse. Ideally, the animal will spend as little time as possible at the shelter, being reunited with their people, or fostered, or adopted into a suitable forever home.

An animal sanctuary is quite different. While the term is often used flexibly, a true animal sanctuary is a place where animals that are unlikely to find a forever home live out their lives surrounded by comfort and all the care they require and desire. As a rule, sanctuaries do not adopt out animals. However, that rule can sometimes be broken. For example, the RAPS Cat Sanctuary is home to hundreds of felines who have been assessed as unlikely to find a forever home. This may be because of behavioural issues—a cat that cannot control its bodily functions or that simply can't seem to be trained to use a litter box has very little chance of being adopted, for example. More commonly, our residents have health issues, such as diabetes, FIV, leukemia or other factors. These animals are capable of living long, happy lives. But the plain reality is that, with the number of cats and kittens seeking forever homes, those with any sort of extenuating challenge face an uphill battle in being chosen by a family to come home with them. These cats would be euthanized in some jurisdictions, but not at RAPS.

Now, RAPS is planning to open a dog sanctuary, hopefully in 2021. This is an example of where the



RAPS is hoping to open a dog sanctuary in 2021.

Photo by Michele Wright

terminology gets blurry. By nature, cats can live very happily surrounded by hundreds of other cats and cared for by a staff of humans. Dogs are, by nature, far more dependent on human interaction and bonding with an individual or family. By and large, they are unlikely to find happiness in an institutional setting—no matter how pleasant. Our dog sanctuary will be a sort of hybrid. It will be a delightful, enriching beautiful place where dogs who are with us for extended period will receive all the care, socialization and rehabilitation they require. But the ultimate goal will be for them to eventually progress to a point where they can be adopted into a home or, at least, be fostered long-term. The dog sanctuary will welcome residents from jurisdictions where they might face euthanasia because of challenging health or behavioural issues. Just

like our cat sanctuary, this will be place of joy and comfort. Unlike our cat sanctuary, the end-goal will be to find the residents forever homes—even if that takes months or years.

We hope to open the RAPS Dog Sanctuary in 2021—with your support!

One thing that is inflexible: Our commitment to do the right thing for every animal in our care, no matter their special needs, issues or medical requirements. What differentiates RAPS is the collection of assets consisting of the RAPS Animal Hospital, the Cat Sanctuary and the soon-to-be Dog Sanctuary. We hope to make the community proud of our efforts.

Happy new year!

Eyal Lichtmann is CEO and Executive Director of the Regional Animal Protection Society.

## RATS

If you are a huge fan of rats, RAPS is the perfect place to be looking right now. We have adult and baby rats who are about 10 weeks old. Rats are a very misunderstood species, and they actually make great pets. They learn to be very sociable with their humans, are very smart, and are very fun to interact with. They have not been spayed or neutered, so if you are looking to adopt more than one, we will be adopting them out in same-gender pairs/groups.

**\*\*Due to COVID-19, all meet and greets will be by appointment only. Please call us at 604-275-2036 to set up an appointment.\*\***



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The RAPS Animal Hospital and Animal Ambulance are supported by Applewood Nissan





## 2020: REFLECTIONS

From Page 9

### AUGUST

Even before the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, cycling was on the upswing. By mid-summer it was in full-on boom.

"I think it can be attributed to a few factors—one being something to get out and do in a safe manner, whether by yourself or within your family, keep a safe distance, and be out in the fresh air," offered Brett Martyniuk of Village Bikes in Steveston. "With the pandemic shutting down gyms and, at the beginning, ski hills and even golf courses, cycling becomes a go-to option to get your fitness in."

Several public facilities re-opened during the summer with limited access. These included the Richmond Art Gallery (which encouraged pre-booking visits), as well as Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site (allowing a maximum of 30 people at a time), and the South Arm Outdoor Pool (through pre-registration only).

To better serve its clients living in the West Richmond area, the Richmond Food Bank Society opened an express food hub at Hugh Boyd Park. As of Aug. 10, a depot began operating in the parking lot off Francis Road every Monday (with the exception of stat holidays) from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

A bit of a perfectionist, Craig Johnston, 20, spent the previous two years bringing an idea to life but then wasted no time developing a brand identity. A new line of luxury streetwear, Unsighted Clothing's inaugural selection of hoodies and t-shirts is available through the company's website. The stretch materials are developed and sourced sustainably, and are free from harmful substances as well as being ethically traded and created under the most fair and socially responsible conditions for workers.



Photo courtesy Tourism Richmond

**Already enjoying a resurgence of popularity before COVID-19, cycling became even more a favourite pastime among Richmond residents in 2020.**

"I wanted to make clothing people could buy and still be able to go out and show off," says the young clothing designer. "Fashionable first, luxury in feel and quality second and affordability third."

When it comes to lottery luck in 2020, Richmondites fared pretty well. No sooner had Lisa Tsang stepped forward to collect \$1 million in the Aug. 22 Lotto

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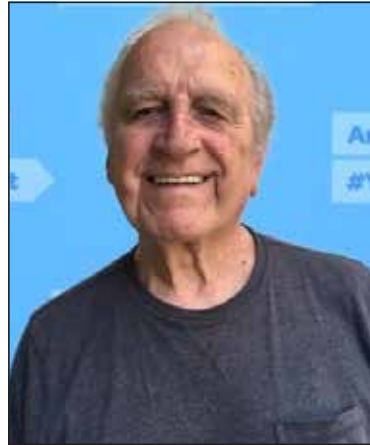
HAPPY  
2021

*From the Richmond Sentinel team*



## 2020: REFLECTIONS

From Page 11



*Photos courtesy BCLC*

After announcing that Lisa Tsang (above, left) had won the \$1 million winner in the Aug. 22 Lotto 6/49 draw, the BC Lottery Corporation unveiled another Richmond winner to kick off September. Howard Hepworth (above, right) won \$50,000 on the lottery's Super Crossword Scratch & Win ticket.

6/49 draw, than another Richmond lottery winner was confirmed as Howard Hepworth claimed \$50,000 on a Super Crossword Scratch & Win ticket. A frequent 6/49 player, Tsang initially heard there was a winner from Richmond and decided to check her numbers on the BCLC website.

### SEPTEMBER

Richmond students returned to in-person classes on Sept. 10 after deliberation by provincial authorities. The gradual restart aimed to allow extra time for students and staff to learn about new health and safety measures.

Though it took place entirely online, the Richmond Maritime Festival again paid tribute to Richmond's strong maritime heritage. Performers included local artist Marina Szijarto, singing quartet Serenata, and The Moccasin Dancers. Tuning in daily through Sept. 7, web visitors were treated to a compilation of music, hands-on activities, story-telling and history from great artists and performers.

After extensive delays, the Minoru Centre for Active Living opened its indoor aquatic centre on Sept. 21. The aquatic centre comprises six bodies of water including Canada's largest hot tub and the Polar Plunge, the country's only municipal cold plunge pool with a refreshing temperature of 15 degrees.

"The Minoru Centre for Active Living is a facility that everyone in the city can be proud of and we are delighted to finally be able to showcase its many fea-



*Photo courtesy City of Richmond*

**The Minoru Centre for Active Living opened its aquatic centre Sept. 21.**

tures," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "While we are only able to provide access in a controlled manner right now due to our COVID-19 safety protocols, we encourage everyone to take some time to come and experience the centre themselves."

The facility boasts a 650 square metre (7,000 square foot) leisure pool featuring a Mega Drop Bucket, a rapid flowing River Channel, a slide and an Errant Rain Cloud shower. Two 25-metre pools with 14 lanes provide a variety of opportunities for recreational and lane swimming, in addition to aqua fit classes, an over water climbing wall, drop slide and diving board.

Theatre lovers learned they will have to wait a bit longer to return to Gateway Theatre, with the cancellation of its 2020-21 season.

"With social distancing measures, and restrictions on gatherings of more than 50 people for the foreseeable future, we want to keep everyone safe," Barbara Tomasic, director of artistic programs, said in an update. But while the season can't be presented as originally planned, the Gateway team is adapting their offerings to the pandemic. Their upcoming re-envisioned season will include a musical retrospective, old-fashioned and interactive family-friendly entertainment, outdoor and digital events and community partnerships.

### OCTOBER

The Richmond Arts Council's annual exhibition looks a little different this year. While an in-person showing wasn't possible due to the COVID-19

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*Photo by Hannah Scott*

**Local political leaders gathered to show support for the Richmond Christmas Fund.**

## 2020: REFLECTIONS

From Page 12

pandemic, the council began preparing in April for the possibility of offering its *Midsummer Art's Dream* show virtually. "While we didn't want to give up on a physical show, we (also) didn't want to get to September and be forced to cancel," said council president Susan Ness. "So we decided to plan for two versions of the same exhibition, one physical and one virtual."

Amid an emerging trend in retail, another brick and mortar business prepared to shut its doors. But unlike many shops whose closures have been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, the Beat Merchant Record Shop in Steveston village—set to close March 31, 2021—is shifting its focus to the growing online market.

"I think to have lasted 15 years with a store is a major achievement, as we have had online shopping and streaming to compete with which is more convenient for a lot of people," said owner Frankie Neilson.

Growing up in the age of Twitter and Facebook, Lindsay Wong is at home online. And so while the opportunity to become Richmond's ninth annual Writer-in-Residence came amidst a global pandemic, the award-winning author of *The Woo-Woo: How I Survived Ice Hockey, Drug Raids, Demons, and My Crazy Chinese Family* eagerly shared advice to emerging writers through free virtual public workshops and conversations.

"The pandemic affects everyone differently," said Wong. "Some people are caring for sick or elderly family, and some parents weren't sure about sending their kids back to school. I hope our (conversations) will help bring people together to talk and write about our experiences and to put them into meaningful narrative."

Richmond city council approved a mandatory mask policy for civic buildings, including city hall and community centres. The idea was first presented by Coun. Bill McNulty, who said he wanted Richmond to "lead and set an example" when it came to measures that could help curb the spread of the virus.

A much-anticipated bus mall in downtown Richmond is now in operation. The Brighthouse loop, just south of the Canada Line Station at No. 3 Road and Buswell Street, opened Oct. 19 to replace the on-street exchange on No. 3 Road which has served 13 regular bus routes plus the N10 NightBus. According to TransLink, the previous on-street exchange served nearly 12,000 customers on an average weekday while providing access to local and long-haul bus routes as well as connections to the Canada Line.

In neighbourhoods like Hamilton, where agriculture continues to be a community identifier, one of the longstanding traditions is celebrating Halloween at the pumpkin patch. But in the age of the coronavirus, that simply wasn't deemed safe this year for students at the local elementary school. So on Oct. 30—they day before trick or treating—the pumpkin patch was



Photo submitted

**The Beat Merchant in Steveston village will close its brick and mortar store this spring to focus solely on its online operations.**

delivered to the kids. In a strong display of camaraderie and co-operation that helps define a community, Hamilton residents, parents and local businesses teamed up to make this Halloween as memorable—and joyful—as any previous.

"This year has been very challenging from the start, especially for the kids," says Mark McCallum, entering his second year as principal at Hamilton elementary. "We thought it would be a fun thing to do, adding to (the kids) coming to school dressed up in their costumes."

Cyclists and art lovers across Richmond were invited to participate in a cycling art tour developed by the city. Part of the #RichmondHasHeart campaign, the tour aims to bring Richmondites together safely while maintaining physical distancing protocols. City staff said the activity was developed during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic to invite community members to engage with and access the arts in meaningful ways—while staying safe. The program is free, self-guided and contactless, and is available to participants on their own or in small groups.

It was a unique environment with no fans in the stands, but the Richmond Sockeyes were back playing hockey in October. The perennial cup contenders again found themselves in a familiar place as the Pacific Junior Hockey League season (PJHL) got underway—atop the standings. Under the guidance of new head coach Bayne Koen, the Sockeyes won their first seven games before the season was again abruptly halted by health authorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Photos courtesy Angie Liu

**The Hamilton community came together to ensure the kids at its neighbourhood elementary school would have an enjoyable Halloween, and experience what it was like to visit a pumpkin patch—by delivering it to them.**



## 2020: REFLECTIONS

From Page 13

Perhaps best known as mom to two of BC's top swimmers, Barbara Johns, mother of Brian and Kevin and wife to Lawrie, passed away peacefully Oct. 24 at age 72. Johns was a pillar of the swimming community—and that's an understatement. Conservatively, she officiated at some 300 meets, and spent another 600 days (the equivalent of two years) on deck, loving every minute. Sports—swimming in particular—were a passion. Like family, she poured everything into sports.

### NOVEMBER

Each year on Nov. 11, Canadians gather to mark Remembrance Day, a chance to remember war, loss and sacrifice.

"People use this as a time to reflect back on the losses and sacrifices over time in the various conflicts that have occurred," said Sgt. Patrick Madderom of the 39 Service Battalion at Richmond's Sherman Armoury.

"Nowadays war and conflict do continue, they're present, and it's important to recognize the sacrifices that continue to this day, and recognize the tragedies that exist on a global scale such as the First World War and the Second World War so we can strive to avoid them in the future."

Unable to observe Remembrance Day with the usual school-wide assembly because of COVID-19, leadership students at McNair secondary came up with a novel way to pay their respects: via a commemorative video. Students brainstormed how they could get creative and mark the occasion while respecting COVID-19 protocols. Their video tells a story, beginning with a child who comes across a box of his grandfather's items from the war. The opening is used to link to the historical section of the video, which includes video clips, images and audio from the First World War.

Dorothy Barnes thought she was going to the store for cat food and toilet paper. Instead, she came home \$675,000 richer from a Set for Life Scratch & Win ticket. The Richmond resident, who claimed her prize using BCLC's alternate prize-claim process, stopped in at the Shoppers Drug Mart on Williams Road where she decided to purchase the ticket.

Richmond's temporary patio program—recently extended for another year—has been a big success for the businesses that implemented it, including Steveston's Shady Island Bar & Grill.

The temporary patio program was initially introduced by the city in May in response to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Shady Island opened its space in June, and it proved to be the restaurant's most popular area over the summer.

A historic result, the Oct. 24 provincial election saw three of Richmond's four



**Twelve candidates fought for four Richmond seats in BC's October provincial election.**

ridings flip from the BC Liberals to the NDP. The NDP's Aman Singh was officially elected in the Richmond-Queensborough riding with 47.65 per cent of votes after mail-in and absentee ballots were counted. In Richmond-Steveston, NDP candidate (and city councillor) Kelly Greene won the seat with 52.07 per cent of votes after final count. In Richmond South Centre, NDP candidate Henry Yao maintained his election night lead to win the riding by a margin of less than 200 votes—50.67 per cent to 49.33 per cent. Richmond North Centre incumbent Teresa Wat was the lone Liberal to win, holding her seat with 51.26 per cent of votes.

Across Richmond, voter turnout was low. Richmond-Steveston saw the highest turnout, with 55.95 per cent of registered voters casting a valid ballot, followed by Richmond-Queensborough with 49.61 per cent. In the other two ridings, only 40 per cent of registered voters participated in the election. After the final provincial count, the NDP holds 57 seats, the Liberals 28 and the Greens two.

### DECEMBER

Thanks to funding from BC Housing, the Salvation Army Richmond House Emergency Shelter on Horseshoe Way added additional 15 beds this winter season, bringing its capacity to 45 people. All 45 beds were full as of a Dec. 1 update. In addition, the temporary emergency response centre in the old Minoru

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**RICHMOND**  
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## RICHMOND AT A GLANCE

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## 2020: REFLECTIONS

From Page 14

seniors' centre is open through March 31 with 45 beds.

Almost 100 new rental homes are coming to Richmond for people with low to moderate incomes. BC Attorney General David Eby, the minister responsible for housing, said the projects will mean new, affordable homes for a wide range of people—from seniors on fixed incomes to growing families and people with disabilities.

While December is normally a busy time of year for the retail sector, this past holiday shopping season was a little more unpredictable for major Richmond malls.

"The prediction for retail is that people are starting their shopping earlier in the year," said Lansdowne Centre marketing manager Bronwyn Bailey.

While the usual surge in shoppers was less predictable this year, all four malls surveyed—Lansdowne Centre, Aberdeen Centre, Richmond Centre and McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Vancouver Airport—expected customer numbers to increase in December.

The City of Richmond announced operation of its animal shelter would transfer from RAPS to the BC SPCA as of Feb. 1, 2021. The new agreement with the BC SPCA coincides with the start of construction of the new Richmond Animal Shelter, which will replace the existing facility at 12071 No. 5 Rd. The new facility will be built on the same site, so the existing shelter will close from next spring until construction is complete in two years. "Continuity of care and service for stray, abandoned and in-need animals in our community is important, especially during this construction phase," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie.

Steveston's annual holiday tradition, *Winter in the Village* went ahead in 2020 with some changes. For the first time, people could vote online for their favourite tree in the *Festival of Trees*, where local merchants and organizations decorate trees that are then displayed inside Steveston's Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site. There were 15 trees decorated this year, said marketing and visitor services manager Mimi Horita. She added that, as expected, some groups cancelled due to different circumstances during the unusual year.

"We did not hold a 'decorating party' this year, and scheduled the decorating times over a one-week period to ensure safe distancing," Horita said of the changes to planning.

As the year wound down there were a pair of major contributions toward the new acute care tower at Richmond Hospital.

Local real estate developer Michael Ching donated \$200,000 to the cause



Photo by Hannah Scott

**With many holiday events cancelled because of the pandemic, Richmondites flocked to a house on Garry Street where the residents have created elaborate light displays for decades.**

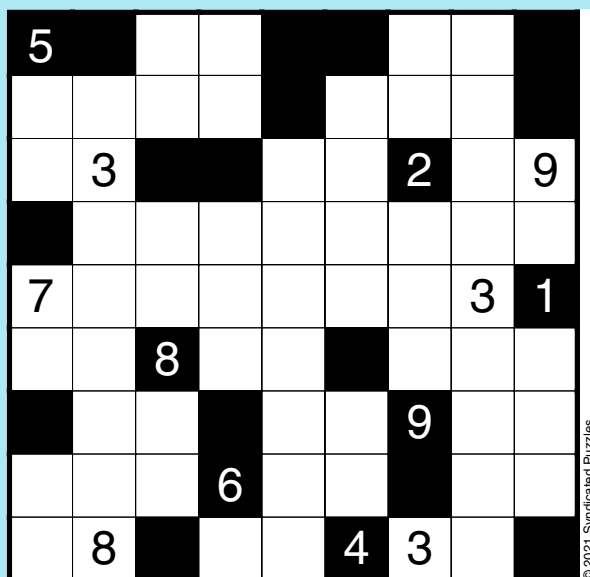
and also has partnered with South China Morning Post to donate \$50,000 towards Richmond Hospital Foundation's Surgical Restart Campaign. He also donated 25,000 masks to Vancouver Diamonds Lions Club as a part of its disposable masks fundraiser for the Richmond Hospital Foundation.

Longtime friends of Richmond Hospital, Johnny Fong and Rebecca Cheng donated \$1 million toward future projects. They collectively pledged \$700,000 to the new Yurkovich Family Pavilion (new acute care tower) and donated \$300,000 to the Surgical Restart campaign, committing to match further donations dollar for dollar up to \$300,000.

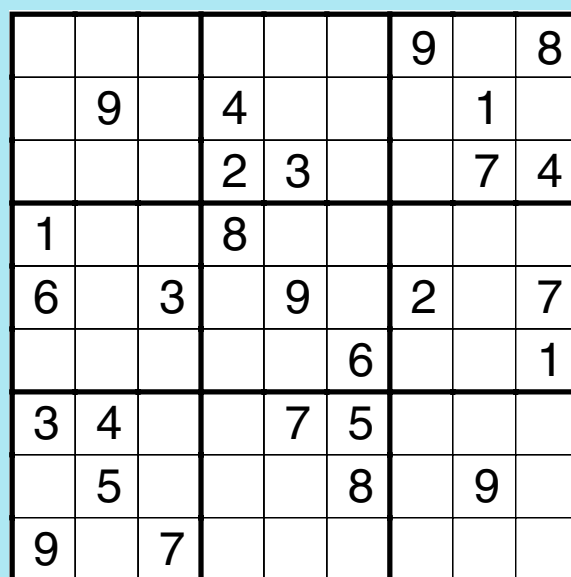
And the Richmond School District circulated students' art on greeting cards, choosing nine students and a 10th collaborative piece by a Grade 6/7 class thanks to an initiative thought up by district arts administrator Catherine Ludwig.

### STR8TS

No number can be repeated in any row or column. Rows and columns are divided by black squares into compartments. Each compartment must contain a 'straight,' a set of numbers with no gaps in any order, eg. [4,2,3,5]. Numbers in black cells are not part of straights but also cannot be repeated in their row or column.



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