



ENVIRONMENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Teen competing in
geography challenge



Photo courtesy Eric Li

Eric Li, a Grade 12 student at Richmond Secondary School, is one of the city's Green Ambassadors. Li is currently competing in the Canadian Geographic Challenge to see which students will represent Canada at the international competition.

Richmond shows support for Ukraine

The City of Richmond is flying the Ukraine flag at city hall in support of the sovereign nation and its democratically elected government, recently invaded by neighbouring Russia.

City council recently endorsed a resolution to fly the Ukrainian flag on the Richmond City Hall flagpole on No. 3 Road. The flag will remain in place until further notice.

"What we have all witnessed in Ukraine (recently) is alarming and devastating for the country, its citizens and democracy," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "The City of Richmond wants to show that it supports the people of Ukraine, its democratically elected government, as well as the residents of Ukrainian origin in Richmond and elsewhere."

Along with the raising of the flag, council will send a letter of support for the government and people of Ukraine to the Consul General of Ukraine in Vancouver.



Photo by Hannah Scott

The Ukraine flag is flying outside Richmond City Hall as a demonstration of support.

City provides update on five-year wellness strategy

The city recently released a progress update on its Community Wellness Strategy (2018-2023), which highlights achievements around Richmond.

Over 135 kilometres of walking trails, 80 kilometres of dedicated on and off-street cycling routes, more than 430 community garden plots, and extensive programming to foster social connectedness are just a few of the success stories showcased in the progress update.

Through the five-year plan, city council aims to invest in the health and well-being of its residents and the community. The strategy outlines a collaborative action plan developed in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond School District, to improve wellness and strive towards the vision for an active, caring, connected, healthy, and thriving Richmond.

While COVID-19 has challenged individual and community health and wellness, a B.C. Centre for Disease Control survey found Richmond residents actually used the pandemic to make positive changes to their health and well-being. For example:

- 35 per cent of Richmond respondents said they are walking, running or cycling more than before the pandemic.
- 28 per cent of Richmond respondents said they were eating more fruits and vegetables compared to before the pandemic.

The survey results show how the creation of community places and spaces that make it easier for people to choose healthier lifestyle options is a key to promoting wellness. Richmond's extensive network of walking and cycling trails, as well as its rich local farming community, encourage active choices.

The Community Wellness Strategy builds on Richmond's strong inventory of community amenities—complemented by programming and access to various resources—to enable residents to take action to continually improve their health and well-being.

Among some of the other highlights in the report:

- Walk Richmond continued to encourage residents to improve personal



Photo courtesy City of Richmond

Richmond's Community Wellness Strategy supports healthy, active, and involved lifestyles.

health and make social connections by participating in over 40 free guided walks in city parks each year.

- Richmond participants logged over nine million minutes of physical activity in the ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge in June 2021, reinforcing Richmond's status as one of Canada's healthiest communities.

- The Resilient Streets project provided micro-grants for residents to host neighbour-led events, helping to build social connections within their communities.

- The City Snow Angels Program continued to recruit volunteers who gave over 63 hours of their time to remove snow for residents with mobility challenges so they

could remain connected to their community despite heavy snowfall.

- Over 30 phone-in programs were offered for seniors to increase connectedness. The programs have had almost 150 participants to date.

- The city's Community Mural Program encouraged local artists to create engaging public spaces and fostered social connections through almost a dozen murals developed through collaboration and a shared community vision.

- Richmond expanded funding of the "Ride the Road" cycling education program to include all Grade 6 and 7 students in Richmond School District, providing lifelong knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to cycle safely for fun and transportation.

- The continued development of transportation infrastructure to encourage active transportation and improve equitable mobility and access.

- The city, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, Urban Bounty, and UBC Land and Food Systems, launched an online Food Asset Map to show where residents can grow, prepare, share, buy, receive or learn about food and how to support Richmond's local farm community.

A highlight video, updates on progress and future achievements will be shared online. The Community Wellness Strategy update can be found at richmond.ca/wellness

Richmond taking action to reduce poverty

By ANGEL ST. GEORGE
Reporter

Richmond is launching a new poverty action plan this month.

Poverty is a complex issue and requires a collaborative effort to address the numerous factors that affect the needs of those at risk of or living in poverty. The city's 2021-2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty aims to take on the issue.

The first step is to establish a Community Poverty Reduction and Prevention Table to support the implementation of further actions to improve the quality of life for people living in Richmond.

The members of the community table will work together to address the social and economic factors that contribute to poverty. Membership will be finalized this month and will consist of 12 people.

Members will include stakeholders, senior levels of government, non-profit community organizations, public-sector agencies, the business community, and residents—including those with lived/living experience.

Recognizing the unique strengths each individual and organization brings to the table is a core principal of the plan. Sub-committees may engage additional stakeholders and community members to support the implementation of specific initiatives.

Proposed non-profit organizations for the community table include the Richmond Food Bank, Chimo, and the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition. Public sector agencies like Vancouver Coastal Health and the Richmond School District will also be included.

Staff recommend that three positions be held



Photo via Wikimedia Commons

A new action plan aims to reduce and prevent poverty in Richmond.

by residents with lived/living experience, including one Indigenous community member. Residents with lived/living experience will hold a two-year term and will receive honorariums to recognize their time, effort, and commitment on the community table.

Strong leadership in effective and sustainable growth that supports Richmond's physical and social needs is a top priority. Growth includes supports and services for Richmond's vulnerable populations, including youth, seniors, individuals with health concerns, and residents experiencing homelessness.

In addition, the plan includes more public

engagement opportunities so that locals can be well-informed about city business and decision-making.

The activities of the community table will include hosting presentations from other groups in the community to learn about other initiatives and perspectives that relate to poverty reduction and prevention in Richmond.

Members will also provide input regarding the development of initiatives, pursue opportunities for collaboration between stakeholders, support data collection, monitor funding programs, and identify emerging issues, trends, and best practices relevant to poverty in Richmond.

City hall re-opening to public

Members of the public can again visit Richmond City Hall beginning on March 21.

The customer service area and cashier desks will be open for walk-in customers. Proof of vaccination will be required for entry, and all working city employees are vaccinated.

"The health and safety of the public and staff has been paramount since the pandemic began," said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. "Recent changes to public health orders and easing of restrictions means we can now welcome people back to city hall to safely conduct necessary business."

While city hall closed to the public when the pandemic began, customers have still been able to conduct a range of business transactions and

applications online. That high-level online service will continue, with customers encouraged to conduct business via the city website and MyRichmond portal if possible.

Safety protocols will remain in place to protect the public and staff including mandatory mask wearing hygiene practices, capacity limits and customer circulation routes.

The public can access council or committee meetings and public hearings in council chambers, although those meetings will continue to be available live online and the public is encouraged to attend virtually when possible.

Many other city buildings and facilities have been open, with safety plans in place, to the public for some time. These include community and

aquatic centres, libraries, the Richmond Museum, Richmond Art Gallery, and the City Recycling Depot. The city's Operations Works Yard offices remain closed to the public, although staff in these buildings continue to provide the public with prompt service via telephone and email.

For more information on the reopening status of city services, amenities and facilities impacted by COVID-19, visit richmond.ca/safety/COVID-19/covid-affected-services.htm

Richmond City Hall is located at 6911 No. 3 Road. Regular hours of operation are 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed on statutory holidays. The public can reach city staff at 604-276-4000, infocentre@richmond.ca, or by contacting a department directly.

Local non-profit supporting mothers in need

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The local branch of national non-profit Mamas for Mamas recently teamed up with McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Vancouver Airport to mark International Women's Day and encourage people to support mothers and caregivers in crisis.

"We envision a world where no mama, child, or family is left behind," says Celena Arthur, the director of funding development and community engagement at the local Mamas for Mamas branch on Horseshoe Way. "We love the Richmond community (and) want to be central to families that need us most."

Founded in a Kelowna garage in 2015, Mamas for Mamas aims to support mothers and use kindness as currency. The organization was given a boost when television personality Jillian Harris came onboard to help founder Shannon Christensen. Now there are 53 Mamas for Mamas chapters across Canada.

*If you feel
empowered, loved,
and worthy, there's
so many chances
you'll want to do
something for
another woman.*

— Celena Arthur

Services include programs for young mothers and people impacted by natural disasters, counselling sessions, an Indigenous support program, and a birthday party program that provides gifts for those in financial need. An in-office "karma market" offers essentials like formula, diapers, and clothing.

"The in-office experience is truly one of the things that we always say 'when in doubt, come to Mamas'," says Arthur.

There are no age or income barriers to access Mamas for Mamas' services—the intake form simply asks why someone is seeking assistance. Supports are also available for refugees and newcomers

to Canada.

As a non-profit, the organization is not funded by government, although it makes use of grants when they are available.

"We're mostly funded by grants, but there are lots of private donors and fundraisers that keep us going as well as our community that rallies and donates," says Arthur.

Mamas for Mamas seeks to spread support and empowerment, as well as showing love and self-worth.

"If you feel empowered, loved, and worthy, there's so many chances you'll want to do something for another woman," says Arthur. "We want ev-

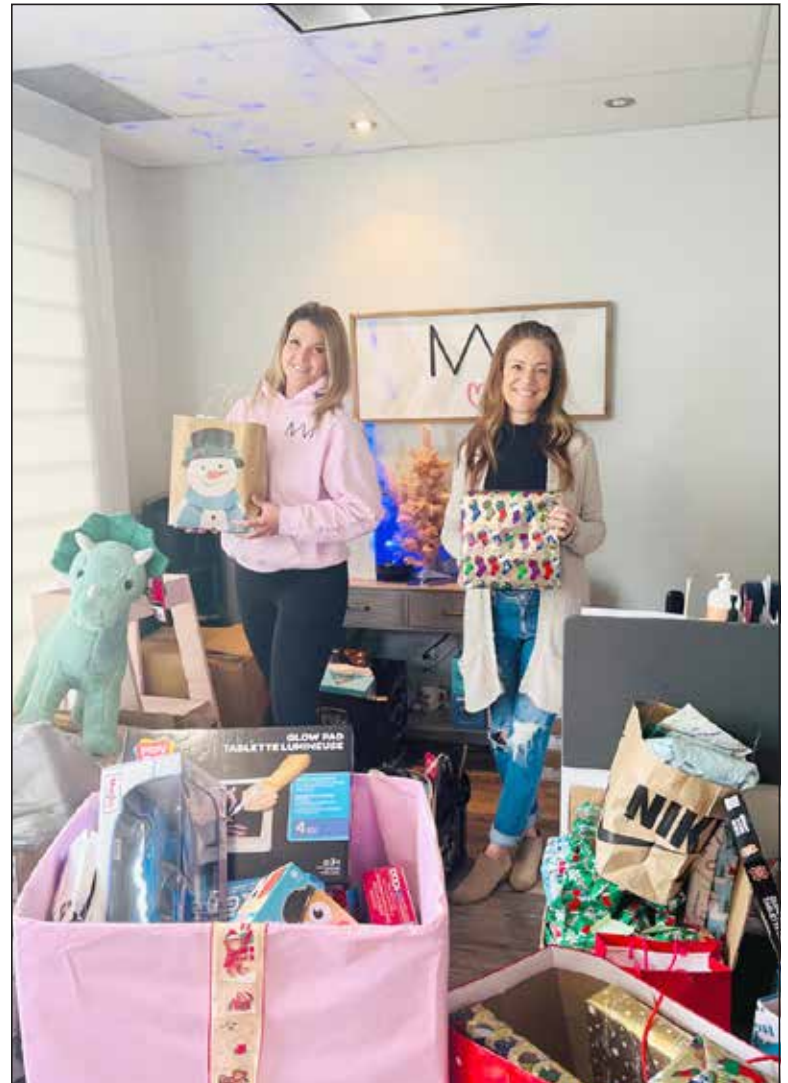


Photo courtesy McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Vancouver Airport
Non-profit Mamas for Mamas aims to make sure no mama, child, or family is left behind.

eryone to feel equal."

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the organization is standing strong and continuing to provide assistance to moms, kids, and families in need. Those who donate can choose which program they want to support.

While the event at McArthurGlen has passed, people can still donate funds or items to Mamas for Mamas at any time. To learn more, visit mamasformamas.org/

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Share memories with RCRG for 50th birthday

This year Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives is celebrating its 50th birthday. To mark the milestone, the organization—also known as RCRG—will be sharing memories in its newsletter and elsewhere. People are invited to share photos or stories by emailing rluetzen@rcrg.org.

RCRG's long-time partners at Opacity Design Group have also created a new anniversary logo that will appear throughout the year.

The organization got its start in 1972 when a group of individuals involved with the Richmond Savings Credit Union (the precursor to Coast Capital Savings) launched an information centre, which they ran out of a cloakroom in the Credit Union's main branch.

In 1986, then operating out of Richmond Centre mall, the information service merged with the Richmond Volunteer Centre and became the aptly named Richmond Information and Volunteer Centre.

In the following years, the organization continued to grow, adding a number of services for seniors including grocery shopping. In those early days, orders were filled at the Lansdowne Centre Safeway.

In 1994, the organization moved again, becoming one of the original tenants of Richmond Caring Place. This new beginning led to another new name: Richmond Connections.

Throughout the 1990s, the organization kept expanding and introduced programs like its child care resource and referral centre.

In 2001, the International Year of Volunteers, the organization renamed itself Volunteer Richmond Information Services and introduced the Volunteers Are Stars Awards. That was the same year it took over operation of the Richmond Christmas Fund.

The following decade culminated in the 2010 Winter Olympics. In the years leading up to the Games, RCRG partnered with the city to recruit, screen, train, and manage the volunteers who would staff the Richmond O Zone celebration site at Minoru Park. That was the biggest project in the organization's history,



Photo courtesy Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives

Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives has had many different names over the 50 years it has worked to serve the local community.

comprising 644 volunteers whose collective efforts made the O Zone a smashing success.

After the Olympics, RCRG laid the groundwork for a long-term collaboration with the Richmond Community Foundation. This came to fruition in 2015, when the organizations pledged to work together to expand the community's giving landscape.

This collaboration prompted one final name change, to Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives. Today, the organization operates as a hub for volunteering and giving, while working to connect Richmond residents to programs and services that will enhance their quality of life.

It's time for a
Shopping Spree

AT BLUNDELL CENTRE



**BLUNDELL
CENTRE**

42 Stores for Everything
Located at Blundell & No. 2 Road



Youths upcycling clothing for the needy

By **SAMUEL CHENG**
Reporter

Each month, the UpLift Canada Foundation chooses a different city to host its clothing upcycling program. Richmond was the foundation's pick last month.

UpLift is a youth-led, non-profit organization that was founded in January 2021. Its main initiative is to upcycle donated clothing and directly relocate items to local shelters across Canada.

The foundation was started by Tsawwassen's Maggie Larocque, who was inspired by a visit to a local landfill.

"Not only was it an environmentally disheartening place to visit, but I witnessed, first-hand, the sheer amount of clothing waste that is prevalent in my own backyard," says Larocque. "I simply couldn't believe my eyes, witnessing the piles and piles of perfectly good clothing that was going to waste."

Larocque chose to make UpLift a non-profit organization because of her previous experiences of working in shelter housing, which was chronically underfunded and understaffed. She decided that the "cost-free" model was the ideal approach to tackle the root of the problem.

"A non-profit organization was not only the right fit for us, but also for those we work with," says Larocque.

The mission of the organization is to improve sustainability across Canada, with the goal of having volunteer teams in each province and territory. This will help extend the reach and expand the positive impacts UpLift brings to each community.

Volunteers are tasked with picking up clothing donations from people's doorsteps. Clothes are then sorted, packaged, and relocated to various shelters to help those in need.

Establishing a strong identity within the communities in which it operates and finding funding have proven to be two of the biggest challenges for UpLift.

"This will take time of course, but it is our continued work with shelters and communities in the Lower Mainland that we hope will inspire more people to share the word and donate," says Maddy Huehn, one of UpLift's B.C. chapter heads.

UpLift plays a critical role in communities by supporting shelters, helping people in need, and reducing environmental waste.

"Through our monthly donation days, we've reminded our communities that there are people in our own communities we can support," says Huehn. "And we can do so by listening to them and giving them clothing items they truly need."

Establishing connections and creating awareness have been ongoing goals for the organization as it is still learning and growing.

"Connecting with individuals who rely on donations, building relationships, (and) taking time to



Photo courtesy Zoey Victoria Purvis

UpLift Canada Foundation volunteers collect clothing and give it back to those in need.

*I simply couldn't believe
my eyes, witnessing
the piles and piles of
perfectly good clothing
that was going to waste.*

– Maggie Larocque

understand what they need and how we can best support them has continually inspired our work here at UpLift Canada," says Huehn.

Founding the organization during the pandemic was also challenging. Following safety guidelines has made certain aspects of work more difficult, but it has also inspired the UpLift team to adapt and be more creative and innovative.

"To see UpLift so openly sharing our process, goals, and accomplishments facilitates an open dialogue between our team and the communities we support," says Huehn. "(It) engages neighbourhoods close to home and those across the nation."

Aside from transparency, UpLift also seeks to constantly change and enhance its work in order

to better serve the community. Ultimately, the foundation is hoping to be a permanent fixture within communities and to serve more people as well as operating its moving monthly program.

People can support the organization with clothing donations, which are always accepted and appreciated. Monetary donations are also helpful and effective as they help UpLift expand and reach out to more cities and communities.

"If you are unable to donate, simply discussing and raising awareness for the UpLift Canada Foundation helps immensely," says Rowan Melnick, UpLift's other B.C. chapter head.

Being a part of the UpLift team has created some of the most memorable moments in Melnick's career.

"If I had to isolate just one moment that has made a lasting impact on myself, it would be the drop-off day in August 2021," says Melnick. "I was able to have a conversation with one (of) the shelter workers who described the positive impact that UpLift had on their community."

Larocque shares a tip with future entrepreneurs planning to start their own non-profit organizations.

"Do it for the right reasons," says Larocque. "Follow good intentions with action and always be receptive to feedback, especially from the community members you work with."

For more information about the UpLift Canada Foundation, visit upliftcanadafoundation.org/

B.C. adding hundreds of new nursing training seats

By ANGEL ST. GEORGE
Reporter

The StrongerBC Economic Plan is working to address the growing demand for nursing services across the province.

More training opportunities are available in B.C. for people who want to work in healthcare. Last year the province invested \$96 million over three years to support expanded post-secondary education and training capacity for the health profession workforce.

A total of 602 new nursing seats will be added to the 2,000 seats currently available for nursing programs in B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions. Over half of the new seats are designated for registered nursing and a portion of the others will support health-care assistants and licensed practical nurses to move into careers as registered nurses.

The province is also working with post-secondary institutions to expand health-care assistant programs as part of the Health Career Access Program.

"Nurses are integral to healthcare," said Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training. "Apart from providing life-saving care, nurses monitor and assess patients' conditions, act as patient advocates, educate and inspire. Expanding the number of seats means more students can pursue their dreams and launch a career that makes a difference in people's lives every day."

Additionally, to help the next generation of nurse leaders and mentors grow,



Photo via news.gov.bc.ca/releases/

B.C. Jobs Minister Ravi Kahlon and Health Minister Adrian Dix recently announced new commitments to nursing in the province.

an initial \$475,000 will be provided to support graduate nurse education at the University of B.C., University of Victoria, and University of Northern B.C.

"Nurses are, indeed, the backbone of healthcare, but more often than not, their backs are breaking due to the staffing crisis," said Aman Grewal, president of the BC Nurses' Union. "We recognize this investment as a step in the right direction and look forward to working together with all parties to build on today's announcement for the future."

In all, there are about 40,000 registered nurses working in B.C. between 2017 and 2020. The number of registered nurses providing publicly funded health services increased by 2,259 or six per cent, while the number of licensed practical nurses increased by 1,141 or 12 per cent.

Asphalt Paving Advisory

February 1st to November 30th, 2022

The City of Richmond has contracted Lafarge Canada Inc. to grind and pave the following locations in Richmond from February 1st to November 30th, 2022:

PROPOSED 2021 PAVING LOCATION DETAILS	
Bridgeport Road to Knight Street	East north loop
Bridgeport Road to Knight Street	East south loop
Knight Street East South	50 m north of bridge deck
Knight Street to Bridgeport Road	Northeast off ramp
12000 - 13000 block Steveston Highway	Hwy 99 off Ramp – Palmberg Road
11000 block Bridgeport Road	Shell Road – No. 5 Road
No. 6 Road	Hwy 91 underpass – Maycrest Way
9000 block Cambie Road	Garden City Road – No. 4 Road
Great Canadian Way	Sea Island Way – Bridgeport Road
4151 Williams Road	100 m section
9000 block Francis Road	Garden City Road – No. 4 Road
Fraserwood Place	Westminster Hwy – Gordon Way
Vickers Way	Bridgeport Road – Sweden Way
Westminster Hwy	No. 8 Road – Nelson Road
Ferguson Road	Shannon Road – McDonald Road
Kwantlen Street	Alderbridge Way – Alexandra Road
Finlayson Drive	Gagnon Place – McLennan Avenue
5000 - 6000 block Granville Avenue	Railway Avenue – Gilbert Road emergency repairs
Burkeville subdivision	Roads impacted by Capital Projects only
No. 5 Road / North of Cambie Road	Mitchel Elementary School frontage
7411 No. 1 Road	South bound lanes only
Garden City Road – Cook Road	Intersection
No. 3 Road	Bridgeport Road – River Road
6000 block No. 1 Road	Westminster Hwy – Granville Avenue
3000 block Blundell Road	No. 1 Road – Seafair Drive

Work hours will be 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekends. Night time work hours will be from 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. (typically).

Traffic will be reduced to a single lane and there may be temporary lane closures. Delays may occur. The use of an alternate route is strongly encouraged.

This work is weather dependent and dates are subject to change without notice.

The scope of the advertised work may be adjusted or cancelled in line with available funding.

Questions may be directed to Wasim Memon, Supervisor, Engineering Inspections, at 604-276-4189, or visit the City's paving program webpage at www.richmond.ca (City Services > Roads, Dykes, Water & Sewers > Construction Projects > 2021 Paving Program).

Funds for food bank

The Richmond Food Bank has received about \$33,000 towards food for people in need following the conclusion of a month-long Lunar New Year event at Lansdowne Centre.

The event wrapped up on Feb. 15 with 168 kilograms (370 pounds) of non-perishable foods donated by T&T Supermarket. An additional \$5,479 in cash was raised.

"So humbled by the generosity of the Richmond community, and the incredible work of community groups like the Richmond Food Bank to support our neighbours who need a little help, especially in these tough times," says the mall's marketing manager Bronwyn Bailey.

The winner who guessed the weight of the packaged food was spot on and won \$388 in gift cards.

TransLink plan aims to revolutionize transportation

By ANGEL ST. GEORGE
Reporter

There are a variety of ways for people to get around, and TransLink's new regional transportation strategy aims to further diversify the available choices.

The Transport 2050 strategy was created as part of TransLink's largest-ever public engagement process and adopted on Jan. 27. Many innovations are being implemented over the next 30 years to ensure that people have safe, affordable, and reliable access to transportation.

The strategy aims to give everyone universally accessible choices to conveniently connect to opportunities without needing to rely on personal vehicles. Its goal is to make active transportation and transit competitive choices accounting for at least half of all passenger trips by 2050, with taxi and carshare accounting for most remaining trips.

Active transportation includes all human-powered forms of travel, although walking and cycling are the most common. Active transportation is low-cost, zero-or low-carbon, healthy, and efficient. The strategy aims to address affordability, accessibility, and safety concerns for human-powered forms of travel.

Rapid low-cost construction of a well-connected and continuous network of walkways and bikeways is a priority.

The plan intends to provide options that are physically accessible to everyone and physically available throughout Metro Vancouver and in on-reserve communities.

In 2020, 80 per cent of bus routes were slower than in 2015 due to traffic congestion and lack of transit priority. With increased accessibility and affordability for public transportation and an increasing number of car sharing options, including automated vehicles and robo-taxis, the time it takes to get from one place to another will be significantly improved because roads will be less congested. By 2050, people will hopefully spend 20 per cent less time stuck in traffic.

TransLink ranked Richmond's No. 3 Road corri-



Photo by Hannah Scott

The Transport 2050 strategy lays out a plan to improve transit options in Metro Vancouver.

dor 17th in a list of the top 20 corridors that generate passenger hours of delay, according to a 2019 report on bus speed and reliability. Over 65,000 riders are affected each day, amounting to just over seven per cent of Metro Vancouver's total bus ridership.

With significant expansion of transit across the region, nearly 55 per cent of people and 65 per cent of jobs would be within a 10-minute walk of the Major Transit Network.

In addition, nearly 90 per cent of people and jobs would be within a five-minute walk of frequent transit service.

Affordability is key to incentivizing use of public transportation. Metro Vancouver is an unaffordable region to live in by Canadian and North American standards, particularly for people with lower income.

According to Metro Vancouver's 2015 Housing and Transportation Cost Burden Study, nearly half of renter households—making up 31 per

cent of all households—earn \$50,000 or less per year. The result is that people in this group end up spending nearly 70 per cent of their household income on rent and getting around. Members of these households are left with difficult choices about how much to spend on food, clothing, child care, and other expenses.

Each year, more than 100 people are needlessly killed on Metro Vancouver streets, 40 per cent of whom were walking, biking, or rolling while they were struck and killed. Tens of thousands more people are seriously injured every year.

The key factor in these fatalities is speed. If a person is hit by a car travelling at 55 kilometres per hour, there is a 90 per cent chance of fatality according to data cited in TransLink's report. By reducing the speed to 30 kilometres per hour, there is only a 10 per cent chance of death.

The TransLink strategy aims to significantly reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries by at least five per cent annually, hopefully reaching zero before 2050. This will be achieved by transitioning away from roads designed for cars towards people-first streets designed for everyone. These roads will feature reduced motor speeds, greater separation of different modes and speeds, and increased automation.

Decreasing air pollution emissions is also a major factor in the plan. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions stemming from transportation is important and weighted equally with other health-harming air contaminants such as nitrogen dioxide, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter. This means that addressing climate change also supports better lung health, particularly for those who live on busy roads.



Photo by Jaana Björk

Founder Hirai opened Richmond Fujiya in 1989

In the second part of a series on Richmond's business roots, we share the story of Fujiya Japanese Foods.

By **SAMUEL CHENG**
Reporter

Specialty food store Fujiya Japanese Foods has been open in Richmond since 1989.

Fujiya specializes in imported Japanese grocery items as well as food made fresh daily including sushi, donburi, bento boxes, and more.

Prior to opening Fujiya, founder Shigeru Hirai opened Maneki Japanese Restaurant in the early 1960s. Maneki, an early pioneer of Japanese catering and fine dining experience, was also one of the first restaurants in the city that had a sushi bar and tatami rooms. A tatami is a type of mat used as a flooring material in traditional Japanese-style rooms.

The success of Maneki led to a busy schedule for Hirai. To stay within the food industry and the community, Hirai decided it was time to start an alternative venture—Fujiya.

The name "Fujiya" was inspired by Hirai's mother, whose name was Fujiye. The word "ya" means "store" in Japanese. By combining the two, the name Fujiya was born.

Hirai and his wife Akemi are both considered to be "Kika-nisei," a term used to describe Canadian-born Japanese people who moved to Japan during the Second World War and then returned to Canada after the war ended.

"Being Japanese-Canadian offers a different perspective on a Japanese food business as we focus more on celebrating and learning about Japanese culture together with the greater community," says Megan Matsuda, manager of Fujiya Japanese Foods and Hirai's granddaughter.

Fujiya has encountered numerous challenges over the years. Staffing, especially during the pandemic, proves to be one of the most difficult endeavours that the business has ever faced.

"Most companies we know are having to get used to working with a skeleton crew or being perpetually short-staffed," says Matsuda.

Aside from staffing issues, the business is also challenged by the skyrocketing costs of importing packaging and food ingredients as well as the unpredictability of sales.

"So many businesses are in the same boat with many struggling to (stay) operational," says Matsuda. "Government funding has been helpful but it makes you anxious about the future and whether this is the new normal."

Although Fujiya is fighting an uphill battle, it seizes every opportunity to im-



Photos courtesy Megan Matsuda

Fujiya Japanese Foods first opened in Richmond in 1989.

*We are all bound together with
the joy of Japanese food.*

— Megan Matsuda

plement changes that improve customer experience and satisfaction. Caring and looking out for its customers have always been top priorities for the family-owned business.

"We are always looking to change and improve," says Matsuda. "The challenge is always how we can continue improving and innovating to ensure the business pushes forward."

After more than 30 years in business, Fujiya has created deep ties with the Richmond community, particularly the Steveston neighbourhood which has a rich history of Japanese culture.

"We are all bound together with the joy of Japanese food," says Matsuda. "Being able to discuss Japanese ingredients (and) culture with customers is very rewarding."

To keep its employees and customers satisfied, the key is to build a positive and harmonious relationship.

"Relationship building is very important," says Matsuda. "As the business grew over the years, we had to find a way to continue building strong connections when the amount of staff and customers grew with it. This is an active focus for us right now."

There isn't a single, one-size-fits-all answer on how to retain returning customers.

"We just try to hit on the major points that customers are looking for—variety, food quality, availability of items, price point, customer service, etcetera," says Matsuda.

A tip for future entrepreneurs and business owners is to follow the KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid) principle and to maintain a "dogged" determination and fighting spirit during times of hardship.

Nevertheless, Fujiya continues to serve the community with authentic and genuine Japanese items and food products.

"We try our best to offer the best quality and consistent sushi and bento at an affordable price," says Matsuda. "Having a good variety of items that are ready to eat is convenient for people on the go."

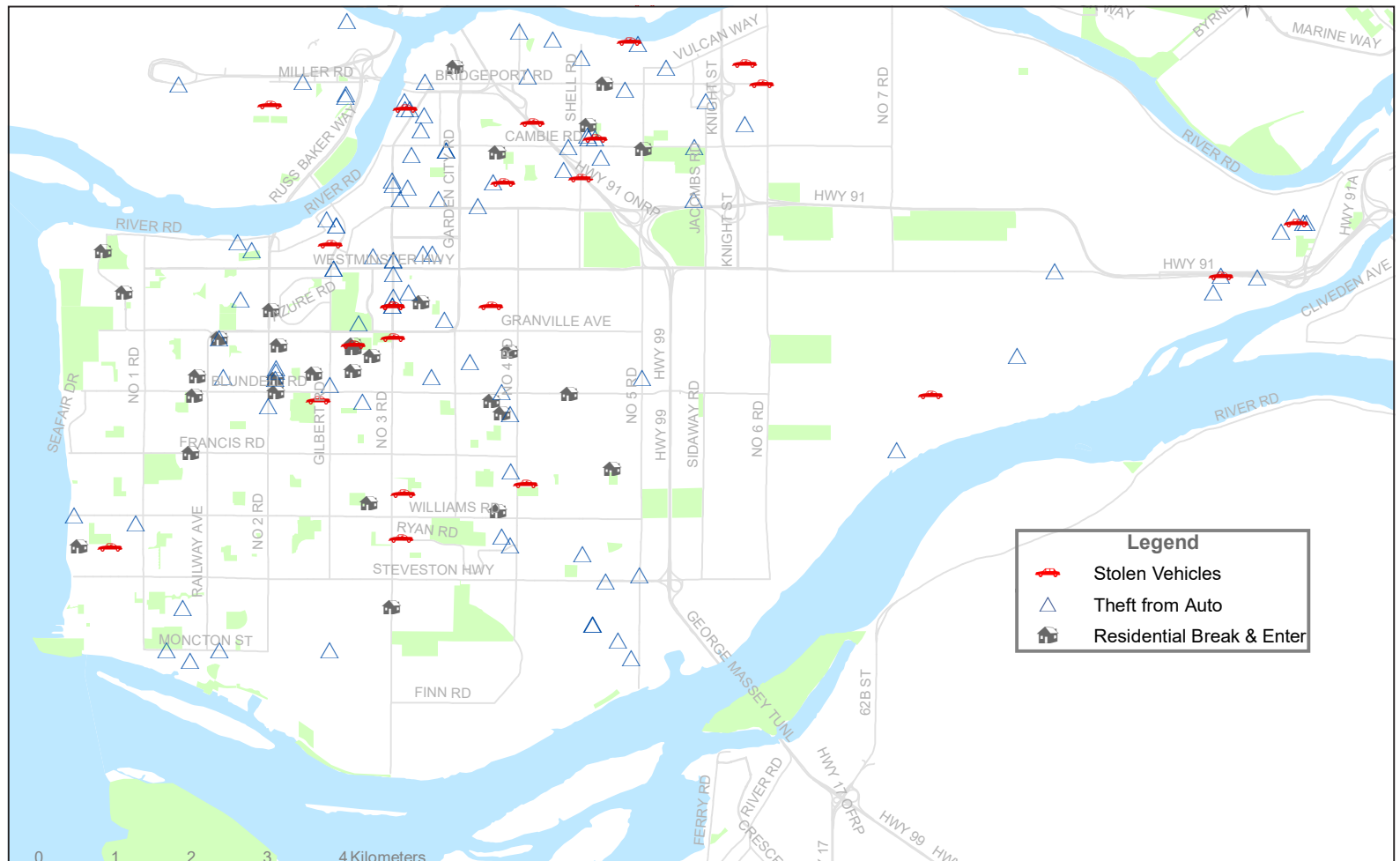


Fujiya founder Shigeru Hirai previously owned a Japanese restaurant.



RCMP

Crime Map Feb. 1 - 28, 2022



Massey replacement moving forward

By HANNAH SCOTT
Local Journalism Initiative reporter

The long-awaited replacement of the aging George Massey Tunnel is progressing with nine contracts awarded last month for technical and engineering expertise.

The contracts have a total value of \$56.7 million.

"These companies are going to provide government with expert advice and support to be able to get the projects completed quickly and at a very high standard," says Richmond-Steveston MLA Kelly Greene.

A team was also chosen recently to design and build the Steveston Interchange Project.

Work is ongoing to improve the Bridgeport connection, with a new bus connection and active transportation infrastructure planned. During construction, northbound bike and pedestrian access on the Oak

Street Bridge is unavailable through September.

Greene says the bus lane improvements will help make transit a better option for people going forward.

"More reliable transit means that more people will choose it, and that takes cars off the road," says Greene. "That's a real benefit for many people."

Meanwhile, the environmental assessment process is ongoing. That process includes studying things like air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, soil, aquatic habitat, marine wildlife, and more. Working on other elements of the project simultaneously will help bring it to completion more quickly, says Greene.

Whenever possible, work will be done at night to minimize disruption. Updates are posted on Drive BC's website drivebc.ca/ and Twitter page twitter.com/DriveBC

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Photo submitted

Richmond-Steveston MLA Kelly Greene says the current transit upgrades on Highway 99 will help take cars off the road.

In their own words...

Power of the volunteer



Carol Day
Councillor

People power is needed now more than ever. Richmondites have always stepped up and volunteered when they are needed. They work at YVR International Airport helping people find their way; they work at the seniors centre, at community events, on community committees, shovelling snow, driving cancer patients and so much more.

Richmond is a better city because of the caring and compassion that we show each other and now we need to go beyond the city limits and help others. The citizens of Ukraine need our help now. We can donate money, clothes and our expertise. I attended the rally and march at City Hall on March 6 and we all enthusiastically chanted, "Stand with Ukraine". Soon Ukrainian refugees will arrive in Canada and the families will need housing and essentials. We can host fundraisers, donate clothes, toys or what ever is needed.

So many of us have families that came

from another part of the world and we know how hard it is to settle in a new country.

As the daughter of Danish immigrants who lived through World War II, I have heard the stories of what it was like to live in a occupied country. Watching soldiers buy up all the food while they stood in long lines, only to be told there was nothing left when they finally reached the store was a horrible experience. Making homemade bombs to scare their aggressors and help with the resistance was their focus everyday. Trying to live a normal life while friends who disobeyed the curfew where shot in the street was a major challenge.

The Danish King was a true leader telling his people that even though Denmark was occupied they would be raising the Danish flag every morning. He was told that any soldier that raised the flag would be shot. The King then informed the General that the soldier raising the flag each morning would be him so they did not dare to follow through with the threat. The King also



rode his horse through the streets each day to raise morale in Copenhagen.

The City of Richmond raised the Ukraine flag when we learned about the invasion and offered support to the Ukrainian people. I encourage the citizens of Richmond to volunteer in a way that suits your lifestyle. You will find the experience extremely fulfilling.

Under Council's strategic plan, we focus on many priorities including "One Community Together", and a "Safe and Resilient City". With our collective resources, let's all welcome new arrivals to Richmond and offer the many support networks already in place. A critical piece of this network is volunteers. Let's show the world we care and step up and donate our time as well as resources.

The Power of the People will again be the key.

City of Richmond Council Meetings Calendar

The City of Richmond Council and Committee Meetings are available online. Watch live or view previous meetings by visiting: richmond.ca/cityhall/CityCouncil.

For further information, meeting schedules and assistance in participating either virtually or in person, please visit richmond.ca/cityhall or contact the City Clerk's Office at 604-276-4007 or CityClerk@richmond.ca.

Mar 15 | 4:00 p.m.
Community Safety Committee

Mar 16 | 3:30 p.m.
Development Permit Panel

Mar 21 | 4:00 p.m.
General Purposes Committee

Mar 21 | 7:00 p.m.
Public Hearing

Mar 22 | 4:00 p.m.
Planning Committee

Mar 23 | 4:00 p.m.
Public Works & Transportation Committee

Mar 28 | 7:00 p.m.
Council Meeting



For meeting agenda and reports visit www.richmond.ca. Meeting schedule subject to change

Visit www.richmond.ca/watchonline to link to live streaming or watch archived video.



Branscombe artist-in-residence returning home to B.C.

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

B.C.-born and raised performing artist Krystal Kiran is coming full circle.

This year's Branscombe House artist-in-residence, Kiran is returning to B.C. to run a year of programming for Richmondites. Branscombe House is an early settler home that hosts an artist annually as part of the city's arts and culture line-up.

"For me, the world of art and theatre really feels like home," says Kiran. "I was fortunate to get my start quite early on in life. I started dancing when I was three, and theatre when I was 12 or 13. Art imitates life and life imitates art, and it's all connected for me."

Born in Penticton, Kiran also spent time in India visiting her father's family. After graduating high school she moved to Toronto.

"I never really felt like I fully belonged in one place," says Kiran. "I felt like I belonged either nowhere or everywhere."

Her big break came early, at age 19, when she performed on Broadway in the musical *Bombay Dreams*. Working with Indian composer A.R. Rahman, who penned the show's music, had been Kiran's dream since childhood.

She's grateful that the Branscombe House residency allows her to work with community members with no cost barrier, as audiences are often limited to those who can afford tickets. And returning to her home province where she got her

**For me, the world of art
and theatre really feels
like home.**

— Krystal Kiran

performing start—as a dancer at the Pacific National Exhibition—is something Kiran also appreciates.

Programming runs through December and includes a combination of weekly classes, bi-weekly events, and monthly workshops. Kiran also hopes to run some lengthier summer sessions leading up to the creation of a piece of community theatre.

"I really want to engage the community in creating a piece of theatre, and for that to be a community project," says Kiran. "Everything leading up to that is helping people, giving them the skillset, the tools, and the experience of what that's going to entail."



Photo submitted

Performing artist Krystal Kiran is this year's Branscombe House artist-in-residence. (Photo taken prior to COVID-19 pandemic.)

Through dance classes, wellness classes, workshops, writing sessions, acting classes, and open music-making rehearsals, Kiran wants to meet community members over the coming months. And after two years of the pandemic, she hopes to create a space of healing for people.

"My programming is going to attract people that are processing a lot of stuff, so I want to be gentle in that process, bringing people back together and really creating a space of support," she says.

And as the first Branscombe House artist-in-residence who's a performer, as well as the first artist-in-residence of colour, Kiran says accessibility is an important factor.

"When I look at the spaces, I think of who's being invited in and who feels like they belong in a space," she says.

Kiran wants her offerings to be accessible to a variety of different people and also plans to offer guest workshops with other artists.

"I've been thinking about how do you create a space of cross-cultural allyship amongst communities," she says. "Richmond is very diverse (with a) lot of different communities of people. My real curiosity is, how do we get people engaging with each other through these practices?"

And although Kiran's residency won't culminate in a mural or statue that can serve as a physical reminder of her time at Branscombe House, she wants to impact the community in another lasting way.

"The one really big thing I hope after my residen-

cy is over is that (the city) gets a lot of applicants for future residencies who are from BIPOC communities who haven't been represented in the space," she says. "If I've been able to bring those people into the space (and they) think it's something they can do too, that's something tangible to me."

Kiran also hopes to create opportunities for joy through her sessions. Safety measures and precautions will be taken so that people feel they're in a clean and sanitized space.

"Taking the first step, coming out of a different circumstance, especially (one) that we've been in for so long—I can understand how that's going to be a bit daunting," says Kiran. "People should know they are supported, we've got an open space, I hope to see them there and create with the community of Richmond."

At the same time, she's at work on a one-woman show that she plans to finish during her residency and perform in the fall.

After her residency, Kiran says her bucket list includes performing in *Hamilton*. Pre-pandemic, she was planning to move to India and had hoped to work again with Rahman. And she'd love to have a teaching space to continue to offer programs for kids and adults.

To learn more about Kiran, visit krystalkiran.com. To learn more about the Branscombe House artist residency, visit richmond.ca/culture/sites/branscombehouse/branscomberesidency.htm

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Vancouver's Chris Buck Band relocates to Nashville

By JIM GORDON AND LEETA LIEPINS
Contributors

Chart-topping Canadian country music star Chris Buck recently chatted with the *Our City Tonight* team from his new hometown of Nashville, Tennessee.

In 2017, Buck and his band debuted their self-titled album *Chris Buck Band* and rapidly climbed the charts with the billboard hit "That's When You Know." The album accumulated seven million streams as well as a CRIA-Gold certification plus a Canadian Country Music Association Award nomination for Video of the Year.

Despite being sidelined from performing live, Buck has made huge strides in his music career with many exciting announcements.

Tell us what has been happening since we last sat down for an interview with you.

While I was living up in the Okanagan, a weird number came up on my phone. I was so glad that I answered as it was an incredible opportunity. I was invited to come to Nashville and signed a worldwide-publishing deal with Anthem Entertainment. At the same time, I signed a brand-new record deal with Sakamoto Music/Warner Music Canada. I couldn't be happier and now I have a new single coming out: "Can't Beat the View."

Last time we visited with you was back in April 2020, just as the pandemic was shutting down countries around the world. We talked about the future of bands like yours and artists touring. Now it is so apparent that musicians really had to find a way to reach their fan bases other than live performances. How have the last two years been for you and how (have they) affected your loyal and devoted fan base?

I'm not going to lie—it has been tough. Thank God I write my own songs and songs for other artists as well, so that has kept me going. I think that when live concerts fully return, people are going to be even more excited than ever (to attend shows) and I am excited to perform in Canada again.

You have had 13 million streams and five top 40 hits to date. It is obvious that something is definitely going right for you. Having signed with Anthem Entertainment, you are now part of a very talented roster of singer-songwriters. Tell us a few of the names you are in the company of in Nashville.

I am one of a handful of Canadians here at Anthem including Gord Bamford, Meghan Patrick, and Kelly Archer to name a few. This publishing company is very well known and (it has) had number one hits with the likes of Taylor Swift,



Photo by Emma Lee

The Vancouver-based Chris Buck Band has recently relocated to Nashville.

Jason Aldean, and Luke Bryan.

Being part of big American acts gives me the opportunity to write for some extremely significant (and) talented performers. I am embracing it all, taking it all in, and it is a dream come true to be working with this team. If you love live music, Nashville is the place to be. Live music is happening seven days a week—some of the best live musicians in the world perform or live in Nashville.

Chris Buck Band's new single "Can't Beat the View" is now available on streaming platforms, with a full album coming out later this year.

For the video interview, visit richmondsentinel.ca/videos

Jim Gordon and Leeta Liepins are contributing writers to the Richmond Sentinel.

Global music competition accepting entries

By ANGEL ST. GEORGE
Reporter

The Fo Guang Shan Vancouver Temple, located in Richmond, is inviting people to submit their own musical renditions of Buddhist poems (Sutras) to the Sounds of the Human World global music contest.

Contestants are asked to modernize one of 88 Buddhist poems by creating original melodies to accompany them.

The poems are the cherished works of the Venerable Master Hsing Yun, who founded the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist order in 1967 and the Buddha's Light International Association in 1992.

Buddhism is an ancient philosophy that aims

to lessen the burden of life's hardships by encouraging practitioners to adopt virtues like optimism and patience.

Master Hsing Yun teaches "Humanistic Buddhism" with the aim of preserving traditional Buddhist philosophy while modernizing it for future aspirants seeking peace of mind.

The organizers of the global music contest want artists to be innovative and playful with their approach to creating original music for the poems. They are looking for avant-garde ideas.

The poetry has deep philosophical connotations and is intended to uplift people by inspiring introspection and a sense of calm.

The deadline for submissions is April 30. The preliminary winners, representing the top 30 per

cent of entries, will be announced in June. Finalists will be announced in August, with an awards ceremony in mid-September.

The first-place winner will receive a \$3,000 USD prize.

Information about submission requirements and terms can be found on the Buddha's Light International Association website (blia.org)

Excerpt from Poem 16:

*The mountain is exquisite, the water is gentle
The purple-coloured dew presents a hazy view*

*A clear sound peals the morning air
Life is finite, work is endless
Learn to treasure the good times*

High school senior competing in geography challenge

By HANNAH SCOTT

Local Journalism Initiative reporter

Reaching for the stars in the Canadian Geographic Challenge—and he wants to spread the word so other local students can do the same.

The competition has three levels based on student age. Li competes in Level 3, for ages 16 to 19.

"I only heard about (this competition) in my 11th grade year," says Li. "That's something I hope to change; I hope to get more people to know about these competitions earlier."

Li was recently named a top 10 finalist, advancing to the next round to see which students will represent the country in the International Geography Olympiad.

"Geography has always interested me because it can help solve real-world problems," says Li. "Everything from climate change to political division can be better understood through geography."

He adds that geography is also linked to his interest in local government, and can be used to solve some problems including the issue of affordable housing.

With the help of an academic sponsor—a librarian, teacher, or high school administrator, for example—interested students begin by completing a multiple-choice test. The top 20 then move on to a written test, which narrows the pool down to 10 students who are tasked with a fieldwork project.

"There are not many parameters, and you can explore your interest in anything geography-related," Li explains.

Last year, his fieldwork project explored the topic of cycling to school and whether more students would be interested if there were tools

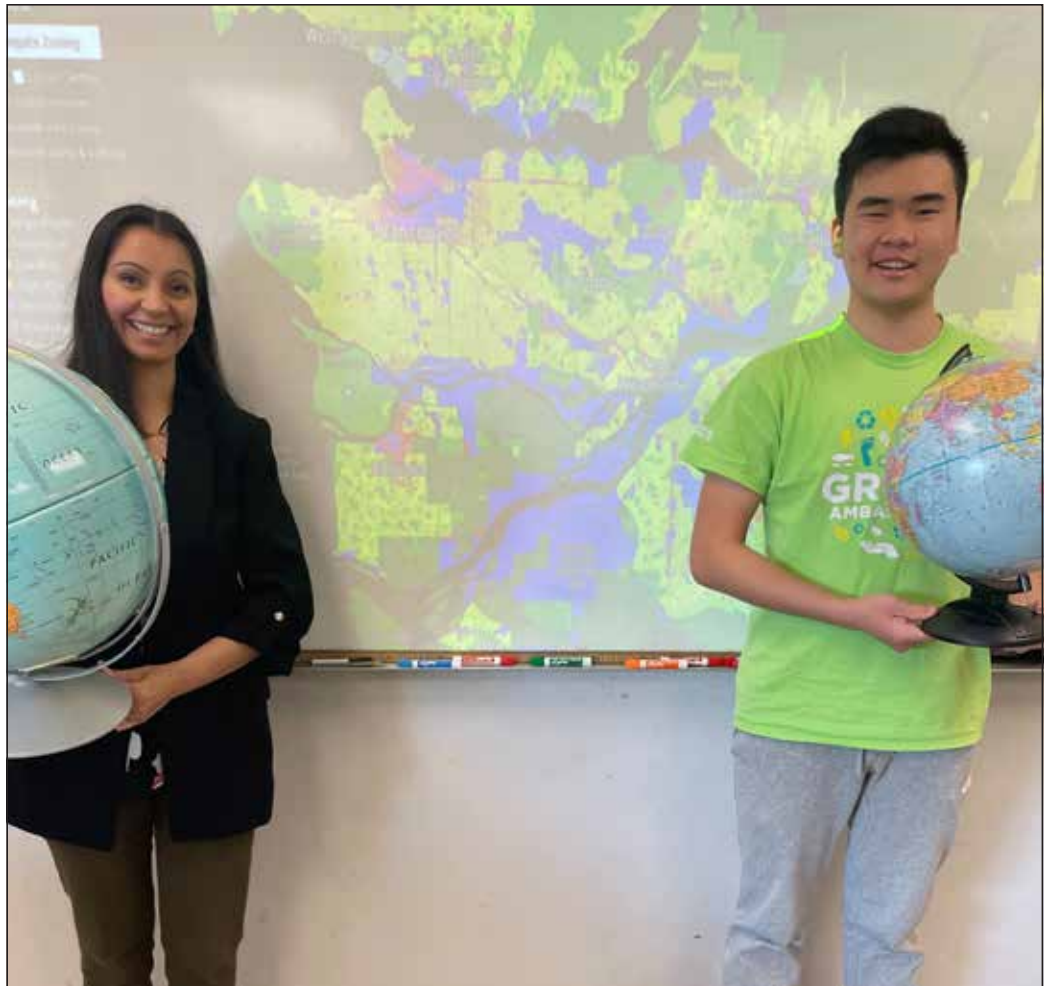


Photo courtesy Eric Li

Eric Li (right) is grateful for the teacher sponsor of his school's environmental science club, Rakshin Kandola.

Geography has always interested me because it can help solve real-world problems. Everything from climate change to political division can be better understood through geography.

— Eric Li

available to fix their bikes. He hasn't decided on this year's project yet.

"At first I was quite anxious—(this was) one of the first academic competitions I did. It was kind of a challenge to set all of this up by myself and getting a teacher sponsor. This year I was able to get more people at my school excited about it," he says.

Li explains that most of the student participants are from eastern Canada and many attend private schools. He wants other public school students to have the same opportunities.

Geography is a passion of Li's, and he spends about 20 to 25 hours a week studying. He's also the president of his school's environmental science club and expresses gratitude for the support of his geography teacher Rakshin Kandola.

"We mainly prepare students to compete in environmental competitions—this is one of them, along with the Envirothon," he says. "Ms. Kandola has helped by lending us her room and giving me a lot of advice on how to teach people effectively. I'm thankful that she's there to help me."

Outside of school, Li is part of the city's Green Ambassadors program, which also ties into the

environmental elements of the geography competition.

"Through participating in the Green Ambassadors program, I've been able to learn a lot about our city's environmental initiatives and speak to local officials about what the city's going to do in the future to combat climate change," says Li. "It's very fulfilling to know that I am contributing to something bigger than myself and helping combat climate change. It really is the tribulation of our time, and I'm proud to say that I'm doing everything I can."

Li also plans to pursue post-secondary education in geography, and wants to work in local government and urban planning in the future.

Should he move on to the top six round, Li will be interviewed to see if he is chosen as one of the top four students who represent Canada at the international competition. The deadline for the fieldwork project is in late March, and the top six students will be interviewed in early April.

To learn more about the Canadian Geographic Challenge, visit challenge.canadiangeographic.ca/en

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B.C. expanding Indigenous learning in schools

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), is implementing a new graduation requirement.

Expected to take effect in the 2023-24 school year, this requirement will ensure all secondary students complete Indigenous-focused coursework before they graduate from B.C.'s K-12 education system.

"We are deeply committed to lasting and meaningful reconciliation in B.C.—guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples while working co-operatively with Indigenous Peoples across the province to address the knowledge gaps in our K-12 curriculum," said Education Minister Jennifer Whiteside. "This new requirement will deepen students' understanding of the experiences, cultures, histories and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples. This will help us to understand the truths of our shared history, while also building knowledge so all students feel a sense of responsibility for our collective future."

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action No. 62 includes a call to make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for kindergarten to Grade 12 students. In November 2019, B.C. became the first jurisdiction in Canada to formally adopt the internationally recognized standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through legislation with the passing of the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

The province's redesigned K-12 curriculum was fully implemented in 2019, and explores Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, cultures and histories across multiple grade levels and a range of subject areas. While more than 90 per cent of B.C. students graduate with more than the required number of credits (80) for a B.C. Dogwood Diploma, only about five per cent have com-



Photo via Wikimedia Commons

Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, all B.C. students will complete Indigenous-focused coursework, said Education Minister Jennifer Whiteside.

pleted any of the provincial Indigenous or First Peoples grades 10 to 12 courses.

For many years, FNESC, First Nations and our partners in the public education system have advocated for this important change to the B.C. graduation program," said FNESC president Tyrone McNeil. "Building awareness and understanding of First Peoples' perspectives, cultures and histories among all B.C. students will serve as an important step toward reconciliation and an effective strategy to combat racism within the province to the benefit of all British Columbians."

Last week, the Ministry of Education launched an online public engagement to gain feedback on the proposed approach to implementing the new graduation requirement, including what related information and resources students, parents and schools may need. The ministry will also consult with Indigenous communities

and K-12 partners throughout the spring. FNESC will facilitate information sharing with First Nations. The proposed model would allow students to meet the new requirement through a variety of existing and new course options.

Under the proposed model, students who are currently in Grade 10 would be the first group to complete this new requirement, starting in September 2023. The new requirement will apply to all students in B.C. public, independent, and offshore schools. B.C. is the first Canadian province or jurisdiction to implement this type of requirement.

The new Indigenous-focused course requirement is one of the actions identified in B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Draft Action Plan, as part of a broader Indigenous-specific anti-racism and discrimination strategy for the K-12 system, on which First Nations were consulted in 2021.

The online engagement website is available at engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc

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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Richmond's single-use plastic ban starts March 27

Richmond's Single-Use Plastic and Other Items Bylaw No. 10000 bans:

- foam food service ware
- plastic straws (including biodegradable and compostable plastic)
- plastic checkout bags (including biodegradable and compostable plastic)

Here's how you can help

- Bring reusable bags when shopping.
- Bring a reusable cup when picking up a coffee, tea or other beverage.
- Bring your own reusable straw or simply avoid using straws.

Each year, at least eight million tonnes of plastics leak into the ocean – which is equivalent to dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean every minute.

Learn more about Bylaw 10000 and how you can help reduce plastic waste and pollution.

richmond.ca/SingleUse

