

STÓ:LŌ XÁY:YXELEQ HÁ:KW'ELES SWÁYEL

Indigenous Veteran's Day & Remembrance Day Ceremony



- ✓ Human & Social
- ✓ Collective Responsibility



"I love being able to drum in front of our school!"

~ Grade 1 student

Central Elementary Community School

With intention, and careful consideration Central Elementary gathered to honour veterans on National Indigenous Veteran's Day (Nov 8th, 2023). With great care, two grade five students elevated the voices of Indigenous peoples, and the experiences of Indigenous veterans during war time in Canada, in hopes to share the often-untold stories of Indigenous veterans, and the very diverse experiences.

To begin the ceremony, grade 1 students drummed together to welcome the school and parents, singing Ey Swayel tel Siyaye. Another class made wreaths, and students laid boughs of cedar to honour and share remembrance, learning the importance of cedar, and Stó:lō teachings of commemorating our ancestors and the principle of Tómiyeqw (past and future generations) guiding this work.

A kindergarten class shared a poem "Poppy, Poppy" and a grade 1/2 class shared feelings of peace.

Preceding our moment of silence a Stó:lō song was shared in acknowledgement of Stó:lō veterans that made sacrifices during war. Intentional connections to community memorial sites, and the Stó:lō house post were made.

To close the ceremony, families and Central students shared a final Stó:lō song. Further to the ceremony, one student speaker, who is a community member from Soowahlie First Nation, made personal connections to family names shared during the presentation of Stó:lō Veterans. Another student speaker from Squiala First Nation shared a heart-warming experience of being gifted an honour blanket by family members following the ceremony. Filled with pride, this story was shared back to us at Central.

"My wife had to film it all because this has never happened before. My granddaughter was so proud to be able to be up there. I will remember this. Thank you for making it possible." – Grandparent



"That was so meaningful as someone who is Indigenous" – Central Staff Member