



You are: [Home](#) » [Culture in the School, A Class Act](#) » Arts and Culture in Québec Schools



# Arts and Culture in Québec Schools

## In This Issue

[By Way of Introduction](#)

[Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File](#)

[Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil](#)

[The Culture in the Schools Program](#)

[Profiles in Arts and Culture](#)

[Arts in Action](#)

[Credits](#)

[Archives](#)

[Français](#)

Volume 17

Number 1

December 2008



## The Esplamago Project

Musical Comedy: It's Elementary!

## Subscriptions



## Profiles in Arts and Culture

Cécile Brodeur: A Visual Arts Teacher on a Quest for Innovation and Meaning



## Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil



You are: [Home](#) » [Culture in the School. A Class Act](#) » [Arts and Culture in Québec Schools](#) » By Way of Introduction



In This Issue

**By Way of Introduction**

Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File

Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil

The *Culture in the Schools* Program

Profiles in Arts and Culture

Arts in Action

Credits

Archives

Français

Subscriptions



## To Our Readers,

As members of the editorial board, we are pleased to present the first issue of the *Arts and Culture in Québec Schools* magazine for the 2008-2009 school year.

October 7 marked the launch of a new season of cultural activities in the schools. Honorary chairs Christine St-Pierre, Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women, and storyteller Alain Lamontagne, spokesperson for the *Culture in the Schools* program, presided over the event, which took place at École secondaire de la Cité de Québec. The theme of this year dedicated to the arts is innovation, particularly with regard to activities organized under the Agreement on Culture and Education.

The event, which presented cultural activities planned in the schools for the current year, coincided with the awarding of the Essor prizes for the Capitale-Nationale region. The Minister took the opportunity to announce additional funding of \$600 000 for the *Culture in the Schools* program to increase the number of cultural outings for elementary and secondary schools and to organize cultural activities at the secondary level. The Minister also reported on the renewal of the \$300 000 incentive allocated for cultural outings and for making available online the *Répertoire de ressources culture-éducation*, which contains a significant number of new cultural resources for schools. In our next issue, we will tell you more about some of the new activities planned for the 2008-2009 school year, including Cultural Activities Month at School.

Members of the education and cultural communities will be interested to know that for the third consecutive year, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, in collaboration with the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, will provide suggestions for activities in all subjects of the Québec Education Program as well as access to student projects illustrating various ways of integrating the cultural dimension in the classroom. These productions will be accessible very soon on the [MELS](#) Web site.

In this issue, we report on a number of experiments that the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport has promoted with respect to the evaluation of learning in secondary-level Arts Education. This work was carried out in secondary schools as part of the competency report dossier, in accordance with the requirements of the certification of studies process in Secondary IV Arts Education.

You can also read about the 20th anniversary of the arts and culture educational project at École Coeur-Soleil and two school projects carried out with the collaboration of professional cultural resources: the musical comedy project *Esplamago* and a project on the history of Beaconsfield by École primaire Saint-Rémi, under the Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys.

In the *Profiles in Arts and Culture* section, we present Cécile Brodeur, a visual arts teacher who has produced dynamic and meaningful projects with her students. In addition, the *Arts in Action* section will introduce you to the *Via Musique* ensemble. For 15 years, this organization has helped make classical music, ancient music and the lyrical arts accessible in the schools and to young audiences in the general public.

We hope you enjoy this issue and encourage you to submit ideas for future articles.

**Georges Bouchard, Denis Casault and Diane Shank**



---

[Linguistic Policy](#) | [Confidentiality Policy](#)



© Gouvernement du Québec, 2008



You are: [Home](#) » [Culture in the School. A Class Act](#) » [Arts and Culture in Québec Schools](#) » Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File



In This Issue

By Way of Introduction

**Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File**

Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil

The *Culture in the Schools* Program

Profiles in Arts and Culture

Arts in Action

Credits

Archives

Français



## ARTS EDUCATION

### EXPERIMENTING WITH THE LEARNING AND EVALUATION FILE

Marie-Josée Lépine

Since September 2007, 26 teachers have been testing evaluation tools with their students in order to facilitate the process of developing the end-of-year competency report for Arts Education. Their work has made it possible to adapt the learning and evaluation file to the realities of the classroom and to gain a better appreciation of the learning progress of each student.

Starting this fall, and for the first time in the history of the Québec education system, arts courses in Secondary IV will be included in the secondary school diploma certification process. To this end, an evaluation file has been developed, tested and adapted by teachers and students in Secondary III who are already familiar with the education reform. The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport has lent its support to the process.

#### Testing

Early in the 2007-2008 school year, Manon Côté, coordinator of the field-testing process and an Arts Education consultant, met with the 26 teachers—experts in the four arts subjects—from public and private schools in Drummondville, Montréal and Trois-Rivières.

“Every year, 50 hours are allocated to Arts Education programs subject to the certification process,” explains Côté. “Developing a competency report requires sound, comprehensive planning and a thorough understanding of the program. You almost have to start evaluating in September.”

Teachers lost no time in explaining to their students the tools contained in the learning and evaluation file and the role they would be expected to play. Since the file consists of both group and individual components, all students had to take responsibility for recording evidence of their progress and expressing a personal opinion

Subscriptions



on their work.

Throughout the year, meetings were held, either with the entire group or in subcommittee, to allow teachers to take stock of the field-testing process. Their observations made it possible to restructure the learning and evaluation file and to streamline the content in order to make it easier to use.

Teachers made adjustments for each arts subject, particularly in the sections of the file that concern the teacher's annual planning (procedures for comprehensive planning), the teacher's evaluation of students (learning and evaluation situations) and student self-evaluation.

Although the suggested tools are not prescribed, they provide very meaningful reference points for guiding teachers in the evaluation process.

### **Impact: Recognition and collaboration**

The fact that Arts Education courses are subject to the certification process will undoubtedly give them a more precise structure in terms of evaluation but, above all, teachers who participated in the experiment find that this change will give greater recognition to the entire Arts Education program.

Another positive outcome was that teachers were able to share their experience and assess the benefits of cooperative work during the testing. "The teachers noted the importance of creating a network, exchanging views and receiving reassurance."

Since the start of the 2008-2009 school year, the 26 Arts Education teachers have been teaching arts courses to students in Secondary IV. They are confident that this rich, comprehensive framework will make it easier to evaluate students by involving them more closely in the evaluation process.





In This Issue

[By Way of Introduction](#)

[Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File](#)

**[Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil](#)**

[The Culture in the Schools Program](#)

[Profiles in Arts and Culture](#)

[Arts in Action](#)

[Credits](#)

[Archives](#)

[Français](#)



ÉCOLE CŒUR-SOLEIL

## TWENTY YEARS OF ARTS AND CULTURE AT ÉCOLE CŒUR-SOLEIL

Francine Gagnon-Bourget

### Background

In September 1987, the new arts programs for elementary education were organized around four specific areas. Jocelyne Cloutier, principal of École Cœur-Soleil, proposed an educational project focused on arts education and culture to the school's teachers and the parents' committee.

Under this educational project, the teaching of the four arts subjects is assigned to visual arts, drama and music specialists who work closely with homeroom teachers. Each week, students receive one hour of instruction in each of the arts subjects. Dance was entrusted to one of the three specialist teachers.

### Project orientations

"We want to introduce all elementary school students to the world of arts and culture and to raise their awareness so that we can give them a basic level of arts and culture education, within the parameters of the Basic school regulation."

Two orientations have been approved by the project coordinators:

- Have all students in the school participate.
- Help young people to take part in artistic activities and aesthetic experiences.

### A project in progress

From the outset, the educational project at École Cœur-Soleil was designed to be innovative and a forerunner of the orientations and aims of the Québec Education Program, since the QEP favours projects as a meaningful teaching tool, interdisciplinarity and the transfer of learning to other areas.

Subscriptions



Over the years, the educational project has been enriched and has evolved, integrating the different styles of participating teachers and stakeholders. Nevertheless, it has preserved its educational mission and continues to offer students diversified paths that call for creativity, the development of artistic competencies and the integration of the cultural dimension.

### **Positive impact**

The educational project at École Cœur-Soleil has shown that the time devoted to Arts Education enriches learning in other subjects and fosters the consolidation of knowledge. Indeed, arts and culture education at École Cœur-Soleil has clearly contributed to academic success. It is a source of motivation and commitment for students and fosters the development of a sense of belonging to their community.

### **A unifying project to underline 20 years of artistic and cultural life**

In September 2007, École Cœur-Soleil decided to mark the 20th anniversary of its educational project by organizing a project to unite the school community. Throughout the school year, students worked on interdisciplinary learning and evaluation situations centred on respect for the environment. The project culminated in an ambitious production showcasing what participants had learned. The theme *Ma planète, j'en prends soin!* (I'm taking care of my planet) rallied students and teachers alike.

### **Drama**

Guided by their teachers, kindergarten students were asked to think about the importance of the four elements (air, water, fire and earth) in their lives. They invented short scenes, including a choreography on the theme of fire featuring a mischievous little devil. These scenes were accompanied by poems and rhythms produced by percussion instruments. The presentation was enhanced by costumes and props.

Other students in the school planned the various steps involved in staging the show. They created various characters who promoted respect for the environment. During the performance, they paid particular attention to projecting their voices, enunciating clearly and portraying their characters through gestures.

### **Visual arts**

Working with the themes of water, earth and air, students had an opportunity to critique Frédéric Back's film, *Illusion?* Then they put together a set representing a polluted planet and a healthy planet. In addition, artist Zoran Krstic, who is registered in the *Répertoire de ressources culture-éducation*, helped students to produce animated films.

### **Music**

The students composed a song to illustrate one of the chosen themes. After defining the phases in the creative process, they harmonized the performance with the music. Next, they recorded the musical sequences they created using objects in their environment or percussion instruments. The final step involved editing the sequences to create a soundtrack for the show.

### **A successful show, in every respect**

The show, which was presented on April 11, 2008, in the auditorium of École Saint-Maxime, involved the participation of all students, teachers and other members of the school team, including the administration. Everyone demonstrated cooperation, initiative and autonomy.

For more information, visit the Web site of [École Cœur-Soleil](#).

### **Source**

Mélanie Boudreault, Marc-Antoine Chammah, Véronique Ouellet, Diane Forget, Caroline Labbé and Francine Auger, at the Commission scolaire de Laval



Ministère

Élèves et étudiants

Parents

Réseau scolaire

Loisir et sport

You are: [Home](#) » [Culture in the School, A Class Act](#) » [Arts and Culture in Québec Schools](#) » The Culture in the Schools Program



In This Issue

By Way of Introduction

Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File

Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil

**The Culture in the Schools Program**

Profiles in Arts and Culture

Arts in Action

Credits

Archives

Français

## THE CULTURE IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

- [The Esplamago Project—Musical Comedy: It's Elementary!](#)
- [The City of Beaconsfield, Past and Present](#)

Subscriptions





# Arts and Culture in Québec Schools

## In This Issue

[By Way of Introduction](#)

[Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File](#)

[Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil](#)

[The Culture in the Schools Program](#)

**[Profiles in Arts and Culture](#)**

[Arts in Action](#)

[Credits](#)

[Archives](#)

[Français](#)

Subscriptions



## PROFILES IN ARTS AND CULTURE

### CÉCILE BRODEUR: A VISUAL ARTS TEACHER ON A QUEST FOR INNOVATION AND MEANING

Francine Gagnon-Bourget

For 33 years, Cécile Brodeur has taught Visual Arts at Collège Saint-Maurice, a private secondary school for girls, in Saint-Hyacinthe. Her main goal in teaching is to spark her students' creativity and encourage them to give the best of themselves through innovative art projects.

#### Dynamic, meaningful projects

Cécile Brodeur designs art projects that reflect the concerns of today's adolescents, encouraging students to engage in a unique process of reflection and to take unusual positions. The projects draw inspiration from the work of both contemporary artists and artists from other eras or cultures. Moreover, they call on students to work on new skills and acquire new knowledge, in developing the competencies associated with creating images and appreciating works of art.

#### Diversified materials

Brodeur believes in offering students a wide variety of materials in visual arts classes in order to promote a range of possibilities and develop different skills. Traditional art materials, recycled objects and technological resources and tools are all part of the arsenal that allows students to create and appreciate images.

#### Individual and group productions

Although the visual arts are usually practised on an individual basis, group productions draw on other dimensions of creative activity, such as cooperating, harmonizing skills, and being respectful and open to others while dealing with a shared challenge. The installation *Se tenir debout*, which deals with self-assertion through the assembly and combination of several spinal columns, is a good example of this type of work. For this project, each student was asked to represent a spinal column using paper mâché and to integrate it with

the others in a harmonious, balanced way. The combined work was evocative of a forest in autumn.

### **Tools that develop student autonomy**

Through her professional approach, Brodeur has discovered new tools and integrated them into her teaching with regular classes. For example, for over 10 years, her students have been using a notebook to document their progress during the creative process.

In addition, Brodeur helps them learn responsibility and develop autonomy by having them take care of the art supplies case, which contains basic materials such as pencils, pastels, brushes and scissors. The portfolio, in traditional or digital format, is another tool, a compilation of the student's productions from Secondary I to Secondary V. It charts the student's artistic path and skills development.

### **Ties with the cultural community and the larger community**

Cultural outings and meetings with artists are an integral part of Brodeur's teaching practices. Thus, she makes good use of galleries and art centres in the region in addition to organizing regular visits to the various museums in Montréal and Québec City.

Artists' visits to the school are another means of promoting art and culture and demystifying the artistic process. This activity in particular promotes special contact with creators, who then become inspiring models for the students.

In her efforts to provide students with an opportunity to form ties with the community, Brodeur has involved them in some unusual productions: creating murals on the sides of buildings in a bid to counter graffiti, building a climbing wall for young people, painting people's cars upon request, etc.

### **Exhibiting the students' creative work**

Exhibiting her students' productions is an important part of Cécile Brodeur's teaching practice. In addition to regular exhibits that are replaced every two or three weeks, the school year concludes with a major show. This three-day event, held in the cafeteria, attracts many enthusiasts to its opening. The students are entrusted with mounting and arranging the exhibits, which helps them develop an essential aspect of artistic practice: staging their work.

The municipal library, the hospital lobby and the local Caisse populaire Desjardins are other possible venues for exhibitions of the students' creative works.

You can visit the virtual gallery on the [Collège Saint-Maurice](#) Web site.





In This Issue

[By Way of Introduction](#)

[Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File](#)

[Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil](#)

[The Culture in the Schools Program](#)

[Profiles in Arts and Culture](#)

**Arts in Action**

[Credits](#)

[Archives](#)

[Français](#)



ARTS IN ACTION

## VIA MUSIQUE CELEBRATES HISTORY AT ÉCOLE DES QUATRE-VENTS

Sébastien Boulanger

For over 15 years, Via Musique has helped make classical music, ancient music and lyrical music accessible in the schools and to young audiences in the general public. Via Musique, which is listed in the *Répertoire de ressources culture-éducation*, has participated in the *Culture in the Schools* program for several years. Over time, the artists associated with the organization have reached thousands of students, using an approach based on plain language and a passion for history, period instruments, forms of ancient music and the periods in which they developed.

### History through music at École des Quatre-Vents

Depending on the ages of the students they work with, the artists present Amerindian legends and musical tones, medieval music or musical life in French America.

School principal Yves Amyot and Elementary 6 teacher Annie Talbot of École des Quatre-Vents, in the Commission scolaire des Navigateurs in Saint-Apollinaire, had an interest in the music played in New France by the first explorers who settled in the St. Lawrence Valley. As part of an educational project begun at the school in 2008-2009 on the theme *Nos ancêtres*, students at all grade levels were invited to attend two concert-workshops by Via Musique.

Working from a script, the costumed musicians put on interactive concerts filled with comments and anecdotes about the era, the long sea voyages and the place of music in day-to-day life in the colony. Calling to mind the life of the First Nations, festivals, the dances popular with the *habitants* and the entertainments of the aristocrats, these period pieces helped students to discover a variety of unusual instruments used by their ancestors: bowed vielle, lute, percussion instruments, flute, viola da gamba, baroque guitar, harp, etc.

Subscriptions



During the rest of this year, the *Nos ancêtres* project will continue to look at various themes linked to the social sciences with the help of a historian and a specialist who will introduce students to the history of Saint-Apollinaire and to the different facets of traditional trades practised in Québec in different eras. At the same time, students at École des Quatre-Vents will prepare an exhibition of old objects, found either at home or in their grandparents' homes.

### **Via Musique and the 400th anniversary of Québec City**

As part of the festivities surrounding the 400th anniversary of Québec City, Via Musique brought musical theatre with an educational twist to a number of schools throughout the province. The show, intended for adolescent audiences, traced the life and times of Québec City's founder, Samuel de Champlain. The educational content of the presentation was enhanced by continual interaction among musicians, actors and students.

### **About Via Musique**

The organization's founder and artistic director, François Leclerc, long ago combined his interest in working with young people and his passion for ancient music, in particular works from the Renaissance. His research in history and music led him to develop thematic workshops for students of all ages and, today, Via Musique offers educational workshops and shows on historical and heritage themes that complement the Québec Education Program.





Ministère

Élèves et étudiants

Parents

Réseau scolaire

Loisir et sport

You are: [Home](#) » [Culture in the School. A Class Act](#) » [Arts and Culture in Québec Schools](#) » Credits



In This Issue

[By Way of Introduction](#)

[Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File](#)

[Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil](#)

[The Culture in the Schools Program](#)

[Profiles in Arts and Culture](#)

[Arts in Action](#)

Credits

[Archives](#)

[Français](#)

Subscriptions



## ARTS AND CULTURE IN QUÉBEC SCHOOLS

is produced by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine in collaboration with the professional associations of Québec arts teachers (AQÉSAP, ATEQ, FAMEQ, RQD) and the Association québécoise des comités culturels scolaires (AQCCS).

**Editorial Board:**

Georges Bouchard, Denis Casault, Amélie Cauchon, Carmen Imbeau, Martine Labrie, Diane Shank

**Coordinators:**

Martine Labrie, Diane Shank

**Contributors:**

Georges Bouchard, Sébastien Boulanger, Denis Casault, Francine Gagnon-Bourget, Marie-Josée Lépine, Diane Shank

**Translation and Revision:**

Direction de la production en langue anglaise, Secteur des services à la communauté anglophone, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

**Graphic Design**

Bleu Outremer

**Web Design**

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

**Production:**

*Arts and Culture in Québec Schools*, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Direction générale de la formation des jeunes, Édifice Marie-Guyart, 1035, rue De La Chevrotière, 17<sup>e</sup> étage, Québec (Québec) G1R 5A5, with the participation of the Secteur des services à la communauté anglophone, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 600, rue Fullum, Montréal (Québec) H2K 4L1



You are: [Home](#) » [Culture in the School. A Class Act](#) » [Arts and Culture in Québec Schools](#) » [The Culture in the Schools Program](#) » The Esplamago Project—Musical Comedy: It's Elementary!



# Arts and Culture in Québec Schools

## In This Issue

[By Way of Introduction](#)

[Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File](#)

[Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil](#)

**[The Culture in the Schools Program](#)**

[Profiles in Arts and Culture](#)

[Arts in Action](#)

[Credits](#)

[Archives](#)

[Français](#)



## THE CULTURE IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

# The *Esplamago* Project

## Musical Comedy: It's Elementary!

Sébastien Boulanger

Some 12 years ago, musical comedy came to École primaire de l'Escale et du Plateau, under the Commission scolaire des Premières-Seigneuries in Québec City. Created specifically for the students in these schools by music and dance specialist Luc Bernard and special education teacher Pierre Simard, this extracurricular project brought together about 40 young participants. With the support of the *Culture in the Schools* program, the undertaking garnered so much interest that neighbouring school École Maria-Goretti signed on in 1998.

### An evolving project

Given the performance quality, widespread participation and obvious pedagogical impact of the musical comedy project, steps were taken to include it in the regular school schedule.

From that moment on, not only did more students become involved in on-stage performance, but many others were introduced to theatre-related arts through production workshops. Costume, set design, make-up, photography and a variety of artistic workshops (drama, children's literature, drawing, painting, comic strips, etc.) were added to theatre, voice and choreography workshops.

Serving as a unique example of permanent musical comedy in Québec's elementary schools, the troupe finally adopted a name in 2004-2005: *Esplamago* (**ES**cale, **PLA**teau and **MA**ria-**GO**retti). Since September 2005, all activities related to musical comedy and creative classroom workshops have been combined as the *Projet*

Subscriptions



### **The 2007-2008 project**

In 2007-2008, the Esplamago project allowed over 70 students to mount a stage production with the off-stage collaboration of about 100 other students who took part in some 20 preparatory workshops. The musical comedy *L'amitié, c'est tout un cirque!* was successfully performed 10 times in May 2008 for more than 3 000 spectators. Three performances of this original creation took place at the Musée de civilisation de Québec, a major cultural partner in this project for over four years. The event was sponsored by artist Bruno Pelletier.

The tireless passion of the students, the major involvement of the school teams, the contribution of devoted parents, resource persons, artists, volunteers and the essential support of many donors, agencies and sponsors made it possible to ensure the continuity and development of this great unifying project again last year.

### **A major project with outreach**

Through its originality and quality, the Esplamago project significantly contributes to the outreach of participating schools and their students, the community and the school board. Since the beginning, nearly 30 000 spectators have attended performances of the musical comedy. The project has been awarded two Essor prizes by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine du Québec and also won a Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence in 2008.

### **Educational goals and impact**

The Esplamago project aims at the overall development of students by focusing on the personal, social and cultural aspects of their education. It calls in particular on a spirit of cooperation among students, staff and the whole education community, while giving students the chance to improve their self-esteem and their level of comfort with performing in public.

The implementation of this project drew on the following competencies:

- exercises critical judgment
- adopts effective work methods
- uses information and communications technologies
- uses creativity

The principle of integrating classes for the creation workshops also makes it possible to involve all students from both schools in the project, including students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities.

The participation of students in this kind of creative process allows them to benefit from the resources available to them in order to improve their knowledge in several areas and develop their interest in the arts and culture on a daily basis. The project's creators and coordinators firmly believe that over time, Esplamago will help reduce the number of students who drop out of their schools, while allowing the schools to develop a partnership with families and the community.

Source: Luc Bernard, coordinator of Esplamago



You are: [Home](#) » [Culture in the School, A Class Act](#) » [Arts and Culture in Québec Schools](#) » [The Culture in the Schools Program](#) » The City of Beaconsfield, Past and Present



In This Issue

[By Way of Introduction](#)

[Arts Education: Experimenting With the Learning and Evaluation File](#)

[Twenty Years of Arts and Culture at École Cœur-Soleil](#)

**[The Culture in the Schools Program](#)**

[Profiles in Arts and Culture](#)

[Arts in Action](#)

[Credits](#)

[Archives](#)

[Français](#)



## THE CULTURE IN THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

### THE CITY OF BEACONSFIELD, PAST AND PRESENT

Sébastien Boulanger

For over two years, students from kindergarten to Elementary 6 at École primaire Saint-Rémi, under the Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys, worked together on a unique multidisciplinary project focusing on the magical world of giant marionettes. The history of Beaconsfield provided the theme for the various activities carried out in collaboration with teaching staff and the Théâtre de la Dame de Cœur and culminating last May in the presentation of three exciting shows under the big top.

On May 13, 14 and 15, 2008, after two years of work and creative effort, three major shows were presented under a circus tent in the school yard before hundreds of students, teachers, parents and members of the school board. In addition to marionettes, drama, music and dance, various multimedia aspects were integrated into this unique event.

Audience members also had the opportunity to view an exhibit of photographs, films, text and marionettes explaining the process and steps involved in putting on this historical, dramatic, musical and folklore production. Highlighting the history of Beaconsfield through the arts, this major multidisciplinary event presented in the heart of the community allowed students to make close connections between the arts, history, the school and their community.

Produced with the support of the *Culture in the Schools* program and initiated by school principal Geneviève Alain and preschool teacher Sylvie Drouin, this cultural enrichment project allowed the students to work on a variety of skills, such as writing scripts, designing giant marionettes, narrating, creating sound effects and making traditional music.

During the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years, over 500 students from all grade levels were immersed in culture through an interdisciplinary program that included dance, music, visual arts, drama, history, the French

Subscriptions



language and writing. Based on the theme *Sur la route du savoir, j'ai rencontré Beaconsfield d'hier à aujourd'hui* (On the road to knowledge, I encountered Beaconsfield, past and present), students participated in a variety of creative activities that were designed around giant marionettes.

From the outset, École Saint-Rémi joined forces with the Théâtre de la Dame de Cœur. The renowned theatre company shared its art and enthusiasm for giant puppets by holding workshops to introduce students to the world of marionettes and to teach them how to make puppets out of recycled materials and to manipulate them.

In the first year of the project, several integrated activities helped students discover the history of their region via different themes, in particular through a history fair produced in collaboration with the Beaufort-Beaconsfield Historical Society.

On this occasion, each class was asked to do creative activities on specific historical subjects: Amerindians, their lifestyles and customs (kindergarten), the train and its impact on commercial and resort development (Elementary 1), school life at Saint-Rémi (Elementary 2), pioneers (Elementary 3), the rural community (Elementary 4), the services provided to the citizens of Beaconsfield in different periods (Elementary 5) and the arrival of electricity (Elementary 6).

The students were then invited to present the results of their historical research and their creations to their peers: dances and traditional music, model displays, dramatic sketches, posters, sculptures, etc. These historical building blocks formed the basis for the staging of the final grand event at the end of the second year of the project.

Starting in the fall of 2007, students and their homeroom teachers worked closely with Marie-Danielle Flibotte, the project coordinator for the Théâtre de la Dame de Cœur. Flibotte offered support to the students and their teachers by coordinating and facilitating the various steps in creating a script and characters, making marionettes and staging the final productions presented to the public.

All the students took part in writing the scripts and dialogues, designing and making sets, scenery and marionettes, and creating dances and pieces of music. They were also introduced to puppeteering and the art of narrating a story.

The school's music and dance specialists did an exceptional job with their students on the musical arrangements and choreographies related to the various scenarios and the historical aspects intrinsic to the shows.

