Beta

**FRONT**

**Outdoor & Ecological Learning Department (SD47)**

The Outdoor & Ecological Learning Department is dedicated to providing students with educational opportunities that reinforce their connection to the natural world and foster sustainability. We focus on giving students the necessary skills to think critically about personal choices and the relationships between society, economy, culture and the environment. Through action leadership, skill development and inspired experience, our students are empowered to make positive change in their communities. We offer numerous programs and have highlighted a few in this document.

"The Outdoor & Ecological Learning Programs in School District 47 help to fill a huge void in modern society: the void between what’s taught in the classroom and the day-to-day miracles happening outside. I can think of no better way to close this gap than to get kids into wild areas where Nature does the teaching, affecting students in ways that stick with them for the rest of their lives."  
- Karsten Heuer, Explorer, Wildlife Biologist, Author

**INSIDE PANELLS**

**Panel 1** Leadership Ecology Adventure Program:

“I have never experienced a sensation like this before and at first, I could not put my finger on what it was, but then I realized it was bliss. “ – Miranda (LEAP Alumni)

“In finding the gifts and potential of others, we discover and unleash a deeper appreciation for ourselves.” – Sarah (LEAP Alumni)

LEAP offers secondary students an applied field-course in Leadership Studies. During this 9-day summer outdoor immersion, students will develop their Action-Centered leadership skills. The climax of LEAP is the Journey, which is taken through a modality of choice (Aboard, Voyageur, SUP). LEAP is a transformative passage where learners develop a deeper relational understanding of themselves within the greater cultural and biological ecology of the Pacific Northwest.

**Panel 2** Coast Mountain Academy:

“Not only was the Coast Mountain Academy program the most engaging educational experience, it also inspired me to look at my community and our environment in a profoundly new light. – Tom (CMA Alumni)

The Coast Mountain Academy (CMA) is an enriched outdoor education program which  
focuses on character development through Leadership, Citizenship and Outdoor Adventure. This semester-long program offers students a unique opportunity to obtain high school credits, hard-skills, and outdoor certifications that prepare students for future careers and studies. The program often includes an international service project and a practicum delivering a overnight environmental education program for all grade seven students in the district.

**Panel 3** Sustainability Toolbox:

“Inspiration: It comes to me when I realize that big problems have simple solutions that are within reach and already exist.” – John (STB Alumni)

The Metro Vancouver Sustainability Toolbox is a unique and experience-based youth leadership program that brings together students who are passionate about influencing sustainability in their schools and school communities through action, collaboration, and leadership. This action-packed credit course takes includes a 8 day field camp in August and a number of weekend sessions throughout the fall. The course features a wide range of fun and experiential learning and leadership development opportunities designed to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to take action for sustainability

**BACK PANNELS**

**Ways to Get Outside!**

With over 80% of Canadians living in urban areas, our feet are more familiar with concrete than they are with the forest floor. Canadians spend over 90% of their time indoors and on average, six or more hours a day in front of a screen. This disconnection from the natural world is called Nature Deficit Disorder and is correlated with the increased incidence of obesity, heart disease, asthma, depression, and stress.

Fortunately, the anecdote to this modern-day ailment is just beyond our front doors. Take time every day to take your vitamin O(utside)! Here is how:

·      Explore the wild places in your neighborhood.

·      Rediscover and reclaim your childhood wild places with your children.

·      Commit to sitting still in nature daily for a minimum of 20 minutes, and then share this experience with others by telling them about your solo time.

·      Find a local group that engages its members in outdoor recreation; meet new friends to get outdoors with!

·      Discover the names and uses of local flora and fauna in your region by investing in a plant or animal guidebook. You’ll be guiding interpretive walks in no time!

·      Get dirty, play in the mud, and jump in puddles!

·      Use nature as inspiration to create art, or better yet make natural art installments outside – think Andy Goldsworthy!

·      Create a garden, and enjoy the plethora of fruits born of this labor.

**Why is it important to spend time outdoors? Well, here is what the research says!**

Regular contact with nature promotes healthier social behavior and lessens social dysfunction, helps alleviate stress, improves resilience, promotes optimal psychological functioning, improves recovery from physical trauma, and reduces mortality.

A child’s time in nature provides the benefits of creating sacred places, development of self and greater independence.

Children with ADHD who regularly play in green settings have milder symptoms than children who play in built outdoor and indoor settings.

School gardens positively impact children’s learning and behavior.

Pregnant women living in areas with more trees had better birth outcomes.

Outdoor experience for teens has self-reported life-changing results.

Children’s emotional affinity towards nature is a strong predictor of their willingness to protect the environment.

All research summarized & provided by the Child and Nature Network <http://www.childrenandnature.org/>