

MECCS

A newsletter for Mother Earth's Children's Charter School to share its successful traditional and innovative programming.

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A Visit From Book and Hockey Superstars

One of our school's long-time sponsors, TransAlta, recently sponsored a visit for our students from Canadian author Sigmund Brouwer and Hockey Hall of Fame member Bryan Trottier.

Sigmund Brouwer is a best-selling author of nearly 30 novels. He was born in Red Deer in 1959, and now splits his time between there and Nashville, Tennessee.

Sigmund has close to four million books in print for adults, young readers, and children, including the popular Timberwolf series. These early chapter books focus on the adventures of Johnny Maverick and his teammates on a fictional peewee hockey team from the small town of Howling. He has also co-written four of the Timberwolf books in French with former Montreal Canadiens defenceman Gaston Gingras.



Teacher Maxine Hildebrandt and Hockey Hall of Famer Bryan Trottier trying on several of Bryan's seven Stanley Cup rings during his recent visit to our school.



In addition to writing, Sigmund also devotes time to encourage literacy and a love of reading and books in children. Each year, he travels across North America to talk to children at their schools as part of the Rock and Roll Literacy campaign.

For nearly 15 years, Sigmund has been joined by Hockey Hall of Famer Bryan Trottier at hundreds of these school visits. The two combine their love of hockey and books to inspire students to see reading and writing as the foundation for success.

Bryan Trottier has been a Stanley Cup champion seven times: four times playing for the New York Islanders, two times playing for the Pittsburgh Penguins, and once as an assistant coach with the Colorado Avalanche. In 2017, he was named one of the NHL's Top 100 Players of All Time. He is considered the most decorated Indigenous athlete in all of sports history, and belongs to an elite



Above: Award-winning author Sigmund Brouwer posing with his book Canadian Treasures in front of principal Erin Danforth's personal hockey hall of fame.

Above right: The multilingual welcome sign created for Sigmund and Bryan's visit to our school.

Left: Erin trying on a few of Bryan Trottier's Stanley Cup rings.

Below: Our staff posing with hockey legend, author and literacy advocate Bryan Trottier.



group of only five NHL players who have each won the Stanley Cup, the Calder Memorial Trophy, the Art Ross Trophy, the Hart Memorial Trophy, and the Conn Smyth Trophy.

Bryan grew up in Saskatchewan in the small village of Val Marie, the son of a Cree/Chippewa/Métis father and an Irish-Canadian mother.

During his school visits, he shares his hockey journey from the beaver ponds at home to the Hockey Hall of Fame. He includes stories about family, friends, and hockey teammates, opponents, and coaches, and the lessons he has learned from each of them that have shaped him into the person he is today.

Some of the incredible real-life hockey characters featured in Bryan's talk with our students include his father Buzz (his favourite coach), legendary Islanders coach Al Arbour, Islanders teammates Clark Gillies, Denis Potvin, Billy Smith, and Mike Bossy, and Penguins teammate Mario Lemieux.

Bryan is also an author. His memoir *All Roads Home: A Life On and Off the Ice* was published in October 2022. During his visit to our school, he spoke about his former high school English teacher and guidance counsellor who helped him develop his self-confidence and who encouraged him as a writer: Governor General's Award-winning poet Lorna Crozier.

When he was asked about his favourite teammate, Bryan chose Mike Bossy. He maintains Mike would have been the top goal scorer of all time had his career not been cut short by a severe back injury. He says his favourite defenceman was teammate Denis Potvin. There's no surprise that his favourite goalie was Billy Smith.



Above, clockwise from top left: Students Boyce Littlejohn-Tremblay, Olyn Baynes, Tyrell Baynes and Devonte Bearhead lining up for their turn to meet Bryan and have him autograph their copies of Sigmund Brouwer's book Canadian Treasures.

Below, right: Bryan signing Maxine's copy of his memoir All Roads Home.

Below, left: A close-up of Maxine and Bryan displaying some of his Stanley Cup rings.





Above, left to right: MECCS staff Mark Ehnes, Christie Strong and Naomi Anderson meeting a hockey hero.

Left: Bryan signing Maxine's copy of Canadian Treasures.



Students also asked about the toughest opponents he faced on the ice. He said there were many, but Darryl Sittler of the Toronto Maple Leafs stood out as did Larry Robinson of the Montreal Canadiens. Bryan also talked about his lifelong friendship with Dave "Tiger" Williams from his days playing junior hockey in Swift Current.

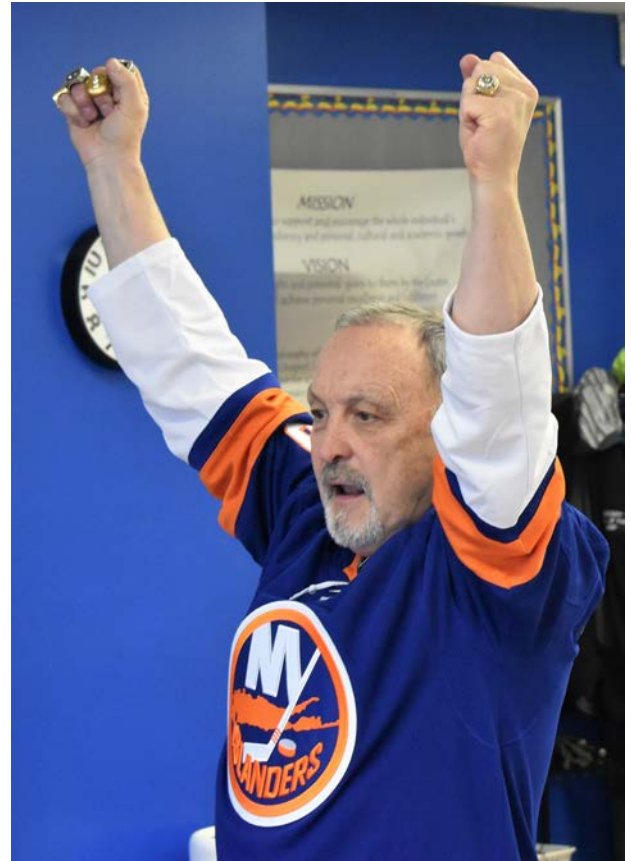
Below, left: Students Tyrell and Ollyn Baynes getting a close look at Bryan's Stanley Cup rings.

Below: Bryan willingly signing everything during his visit.





Bryan Trottier visiting with MECCS students (above) and demonstrating how he lifted the Stanley Cup (right).



Below: Bryan with Riley Baker and Zack Baker, TransAlta reps.

Our staff and students were thrilled to see and even try on Bryan's Stanley Cup rings. We all received copies of Sigmund's book *Canadian Treasures*, which Bryan autographed. This is a collection of stories about seven famous Indigenous athletes from Canada, including Bryan. Sigmund's story "Hitmen Triumph" also appears in the book.

We were fortunate to have these two superstars spend time and share stories with us. Thank you, Sigmund and Bryan!



Bryan with Tyrell Baynes (above), who also plays hockey, and Nancee Tompkins-Bird (below).



MECCS Superintendent Honoured

We are proud to share the news that MECCS superintendent Ed Wittchen recently received the prestigious Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal. He received the medal from Alberta Education Minister Adriana LaGrange at a ceremony held in Edmonton.

This commemorative medal was created by the Government of Alberta to mark the 70th anniversary of the accession of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to the Throne as Queen of Canada.

Several other provinces, including Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, have also created Jubilee Medals.

The medal is a tangible way to honour the late queen for her life of service to Alberta and to Canada. It also serves to honour significant contributions and achievements by Albertans. Ed has been working in public education in Alberta since 1971 and this school year marks his 29th year as a superintendent.

In a letter from the Honourable Salma Lakhani, Alberta's Lieutenant Governor and the monarch's representative in our province, she noted, "In granting you this honour, I thank you for your dedicated service to your peers, to your community, to Alberta and to Canada. The contributions you have made to our province are highly commendable and deserve our praise and admiration."



Alberta Education Minister Adriana LaGrange presents our superintendent Ed Wittchen with the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal.



Right: The Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal.

Left: The certificate that accompanied the medal.

