

School Archives Program reaches the 100 per cent participation mark

The support of the educational community in welcoming the School Archives Program (SAP) into schools has been excellent, say organizers.

As of April, every district school has made a commitment to take part in the program, and many schools have already started collecting the items that will become part of their documentary heritage. By the end of June SAP coordinator, Suzanne Mathieson, expects to have collected archives from every school.

Hatzic elementary's division three, a class of Grade 5 and 6 students, recently visited the archives. These SAP students took the opportunity to look through photographs and documents from the turn of the last century. They quickly grasped the value and significance that records of daily activities can have in informing us about how the people of Mission lived at specific times in history.

The students were most inquisitive. Questions ranged from the practical, "why do you wear white gloves?" and "how do you get things?" to the sensational, "do you have records about crimes?" They were most impressed by the enormous climate controlled vault where their school archives will be preserved. Division three learned first hand the important steps involved in safekeeping a variety of valuable items.

Each school has a distinct setting, and a unique school community. Through this partnership with the schools, the archives will be

able to preserve and make accessible both the school's history and the history of education in Mission at the beginning of the second millennium.

SAP's success has led to the formation of a School Archives Program Task Force (SAPTF) to advise and assist the Mission Community Archives, an operation of the Mission District Historical Society.

Task Force representatives are: Valerie Billesberger, archivist and records manager; Suzanne Mathieson, SAP coordinator; Bill Dickson, principal; Shelley Clarkson, school board trustee; Sharyl Samodien, president, District Parent's Advisory Council; and Leadership students, Vanessa Harvey, Hatzic secondary, Anne Pinder and Brandy Larsen, Mission secondary, and Bryan Salsbury, Heritage Park Secondary.

Members offer a representative voice given their various and specialized information and experiences within education, archives, and the school district. The program is the first of its kind in B.C. and the SAPTF will assist in making it one that advances both education and the preservation of our school's legacy.

The success of the SAP is made possible by the Vancouver Foundation and the Mission Foundation, with support from the District of Mission.

If you would like to sponsor the School Archives Program please contact the Mission Community Archives at 604-820-2621.