

MECCS

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

Mother Earth's Children's Charter School

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Beloved Author David Bouchard at MECCS

Our school's superintendent Ed Wittchen has been friends with author David Bouchard for nearly 20 years. During that time, they have shared many experiences at school events, system professional development days and conferences. It is that personal relationship that has led to Mother Earth's Children's Charter School becoming one of David's favourite places to present and work with students.

"What an amazing experience for learners and for teachers," he commented during his most recent visit. "I now have this story to share with the rest of Canada."

David reflected on the remarkable community that exists at MECCS.

"This is not normal, boys and girls. You need to know that I travel across Canada and the world and what I am seeing here is not normal. You have a great and unique and very special place here," he said. "I see what an opportunity you are being given to succeed."



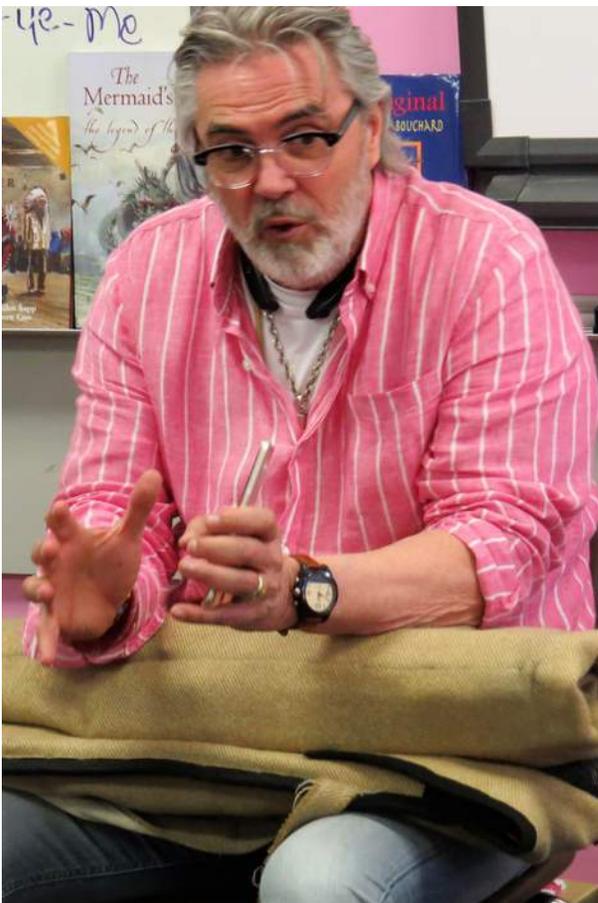
Students listening attentively to David Bouchard. From left: Kenlee Paul, Jayden Lewis, Zaida McLean, Alexy Rain-Kootenay, Shelby Bull and Shallyss Bird. Visiting adults in the back, from left: Candice Amber, Cathy Duquette and Kookum Jane Callioux.

Teacher Maxine Hildebrandt and teacher assistant Lorraine Regamy started using David's books with their class last year. They asked Mr. Wittchen if there was any



Above: Teacher Maxine Hildebrandt getting ready for David's visit.

Right: One of the many displays created by students in preparation for David's visit.



Above: David sharing his stories and adventures.

Above right: David with Kookum Jane and the grade 8/9 class.



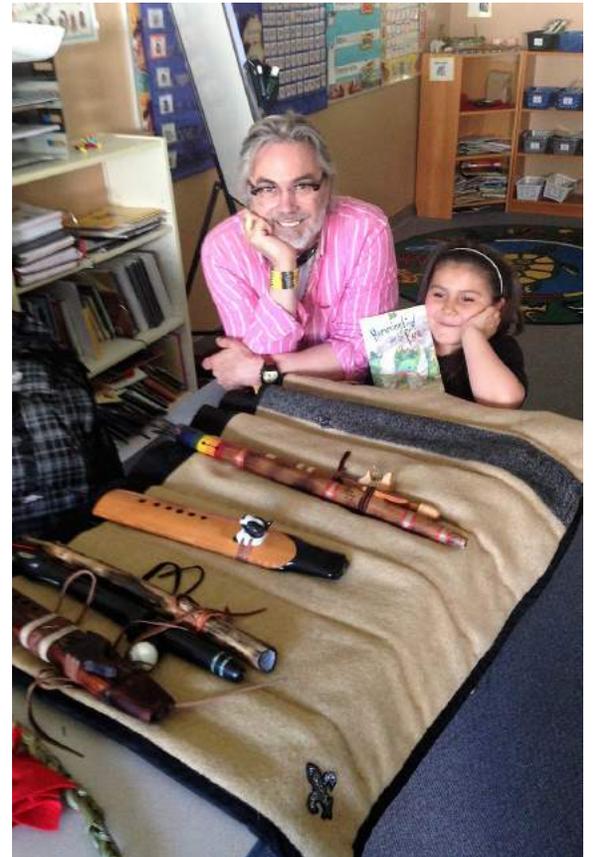
way to get David to come to the school and work with their students. A quick phone call to Chris Patrick, David's friend and longtime agent, resulted in David's visit last year.

That visit inspired Mrs. Hildebrandt to do even more work on David's books. This year, the class studied a number of David's books and worked on projects about them. They wrote stories, created dioramas and learned songs. They even turned two adjoining classrooms into a montage of David's books.

Mrs. Hildebrandt's grade 3/4 class raised \$3,000 to cover the cost of bringing David to their room for a day. The money also allowed them to supply lunch for guests from the community and to have each student receive an autographed copy of one of David's books. Principal Erin Danforth liked the idea



*Above: David and guests join the grade 3/4 class in a round dance.
Left: David plays one of his flutes for the students.*



*Above: David shows his flutes to Jorja Block-Potts.
Above left: David with Mr. Tang's grade 5/6/7 class.*

so much that she provided the money from the budget to have David spend a second day with the rest of the students. Mrs. Hildebrandt is already making plans for another visit from David next year.

David Bouchard calls his passion for creating stories and for the power of reading a gift from his great-grandmother. He is devoted to enriching the lives of children, parents and educators across Canada. In captivating presentations, he discusses the environment, history and traditions of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. He also talks about his own Métis heritage and plays the Métis flute.

David, who now lives in Victoria, BC, but was born and raised in Saskatchewan, is a former teacher and principal. He is also a Member of the Order of Canada, one of many honours he has received over the years.



Superintendent Ed Wittchen welcoming renowned author David Bouchard to Mother Earth's Children's Charter School once again.

During his presentations, David also reads from his more than 70 books and tells students how reading will open new worlds and bring them success.

David's books have focused almost entirely on Aboriginal themes. Thanks to his publisher, Red Deer Press, several of his books have been translated into Aboriginal languages. Typically, each book comes with an audio CD that combines reading and music.

David has collaborated with famous musical artists on many of his book and CD projects. For example, he worked with Northern Cree on *Nokum Is My Teacher* and *The Drum Calls Softly*. He worked with Susan Aglukark on *An Aboriginal Carol* and with Buffy Sainte-Marie on *Long Powwow Nights*.

He likes to call his publications "cultural books." With poetic language and beautiful pictures provided by several well-known Aboriginal artists, his books are created to be compelling and accessible to readers of all ages—and particularly to students who are struggling.

"What I write are books from my heart that will touch people."



Left: Students Murray Bull and Jaeris Arcand-Burnstick singing a round dance for David.

Top right: David joining students Katerie Bull, River Rain-Kootenay and Amber Anderson for lunch.

Middle right: David has the full attention of Zoey Bird, Jalen Paskemin, Tyrrel Bigchild, Storm Mackinaw and Serenity Bird.

Bottom right: David with Mr. Ehnes's grades K-2 group.



PHOTOS IN THIS NEWSLETTER BY ED WITTCHEM, CANDICE AMBER AND FRED DeKLEINE