



# BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Media Information

February 6, 2008

### **Inaugural Harmony Day for School District No. 23**

**Kelowna, BC:** On February 11, School District No. 23 celebrates its first “Harmony Day – Promoting Mutual Respect and Saying No to Discrimination!”

“Harmony Day recognizes that citizens of the Central Okanagan come from all over the world,” says Director of Instruction Terry-Lee Beaudry. “It is an opportunity for the school community to celebrate diversity and commit to harmonious working and learning environments that foster mutual respect.”

A highlight of Harmony Day is a student video contest. “We had a large number of student entries and many were excellent so we decided to have three winners. Rose Valley Elementary, Dr. Knox Middle School and KSS have been recognized this year for outstanding video productions,” says Beaudry. The winning videos will be shown at all schools and work sites on February 11.

Lesson plans for teachers, creative ideas for student projects, a “living bibliography” for librarians, a message board, and parent resources have also been created by the District’s Harmony Day/Racism-Free Committee. (These items are available in the District’s First Class system under “All Staff”.) Co-chairs of the Harmony Day Committee, Michelle Hewitt (Principal of Oyama Traditional School) and Pam Samaddar (Grade 7 Teacher at Dorothea Walker Elementary School), have taken a lead role in originating this year’s Harmony Day activities. Harmony Day events and projects will take place at all District schools.

The Board of Education has supported the Racism-Free Committee in its efforts to provide each elementary school librarian \$100 to purchase books and multimedia educational materials that promote social justice.

Reaching out to the local community has also been an aspect of planning this new school event. Committee members have worked closely with Kelowna Community Resources and the Intercultural Society of Kelowna ([www.interculturalkelowna.com](http://www.interculturalkelowna.com)) to gather resources and speakers for schools. On February 11th, the middle school conference “Student Creating Opportunities for the Promotion of Equality” (SCOPE) will kick-off the Millennium in Motion Speaking Tour February 11 - 18, 2008. The Millennium in Motion, an initiative of Free the Children, is an inspiring youth speaking tour and leadership program aimed at motivating and educating youth on their role in creating their ideal world.

On February 11th, staff and students will be asked to review the District’s current Racism-Free Declaration. Feedback will be provided to the Racism-Free Committee and new declarations will be drafted for Harmony Day 2009.

The current Declaration includes six points:

1. Treating people of every race, creed and colour with respect.
2. Feeling safe and cared for in our school community
3. Recognizing freedom of expression that does not hurt others
4. Celebrating diversity
5. Preventing the use of statements or symbols of discrimination
6. Ensuring that the Code of Conduct promotes a racism-free environment

School District No. 23's Racism-Free Committee will be challenging other districts in the province to join with them for Harmony Day 2009.

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For comments, please contact:

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