

## Building Partnerships for Healthier Schools

### *Hillcrest Middle School and Simon Fraser University*

*Each month, we highlight a story from the Healthy Schools BC Stories Map. Click [here](#) to view the map and read more stories. Have a healthy school story to share? DASH wants to hear from you!*

Partnerships are a key component of creating healthier schools and they can occur in many different forms. One unique community partnership is between Hillcrest Middle School in Coquitlam and students in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University.

The partnership between Simon Fraser University (SFU) and SD43 has provided health sciences students with the opportunity to engage in a hands-on learning approach to health promotion. The multi-week service-learning project partners students in the Faculty of Health Sciences with a community-based partner – in this case, Hillcrest Middle School. With a focus on community partnerships, health promotion, reciprocity and sustainability, students undertake an inquiry-based learning approach to addressing school health at Hillcrest. Essentially, each SFU student is paired with a classroom at Hillcrest to take part in service-learning through asking an inquiry question related to school health.

The principal of Hillcrest Middle School, Nadine Tambellini, has opened her school doors to SFU students for five semesters. The partnership between SFU and Hillcrest has consistently been win-win. Students at SFU have the opportunity to apply their education in a 'real world' setting, and are challenged to step outside the comfort of traditional academia. Engaging with the community allows them to foster new relationships, engage with youth and bring meaning to the knowledge they have gained in their undergraduate classes. Hillcrest Middle School and its community gain from having additional help in the classroom, innovative ideas and projects that are embedded within the school, and role models for the student body to look up to.

The service-learning projects vary in topics, such as healthy eating, physical activity, art, dance, student engagement, school connectedness, positive mental health and wellbeing, and more.

To read the healthy schools stories posted by SFU, click [here](#).