
Township of Langley

NEWS RELEASE

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Second-Grade Students Share Kudos with the Township

Langley, BC – It's no surprise the natural beauty, scenic landscapes, and thriving wildlife habitats found throughout the Township of Langley make a positive impact on residents and visitors alike. Recently, however, a surprising act of gratitude proved even some of the youngest residents notice the effort that goes into making the Township a special, sustainable place to call home.

Throughout the spring, the Township hosted several sustainability-focused programs and events. The initiatives invited residents to get involved in making the community more environmentally friendly and to have fun while doing so. From Clean Up Langley Day to the Township-Wide Garage Sale, there was something for everyone who wanted to take a step toward going green. In celebration of Earth Day, the Township created a self-guided Neighbourhood Nature Tour that encouraged community members of all ages to explore the parks and trails found in their own backyard. It made for a busy season, but the events were well-received by residents and staff were invigorated by the enthusiastic public response.

One particularly unique piece of feedback made a lasting impression: "Imagine my delight when I came into work and found a stack of beautifully-decorated thank-you letters," recalls Mallory Palliyaguru, Sustainability Programs Specialist at the Township of Langley. Penned by the students of a second-grade class led by educator Tracy Dionne at Donna Gabriel Robins Elementary School, the handmade letters illustrated appreciation of the Earth-friendly actions taken by the Township. Palliyaguru shared the kind words and drawings with her colleagues in the Sustainability Department, and all agreed it was more than just an acknowledgement of a job well-done – it was encouragement to keep going. "We always want to make sure residents of all ages learn about the importance of being sustainable, and to receive personalized mail from little ones in our community tells us it is important to them, too."

In response to these letters, Palliyaguru reached out to Dionne to share a thank-you on behalf of the municipality and set up a time to visit the class in person. During the conversation, she learned more about how the letters came to be. Earlier in the school year, Dionne's class began a kindness and gratitude community challenge. During the challenge, students would find words or signs in the community they believed promoted these values and address letters to the business or organization in charge. These letters were then sent as a token of gratitude to let the owner know their outlook had a positive effect on the community. Dionne notes the children's letters were always met with appreciation and that it was exciting to see her students light up whenever they received a message in return.

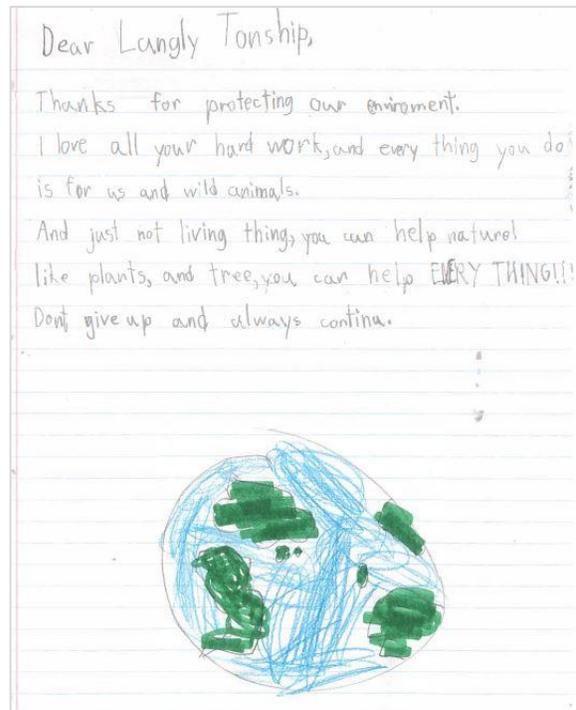
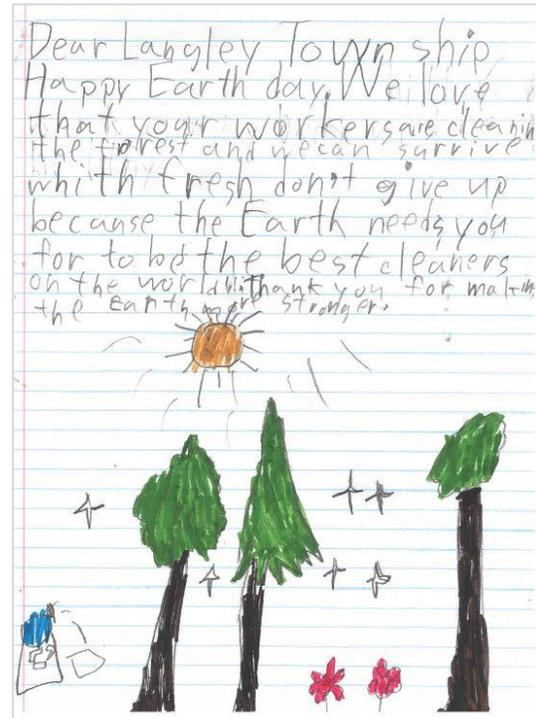
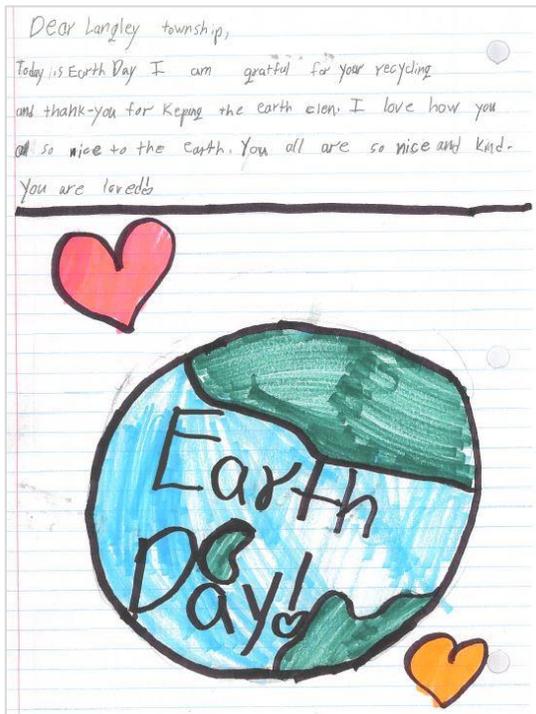
For Dionne, the idea of a gratitude challenge had a personal origin. "Last July, my best friend of over twenty years lost her short battle with cancer," she explains. "She taught me to be thankful, as even in her weakest moments, she always chose to show gratitude." It was the selfless outlook of her friend, she says, that spurred her to express appreciation of all the wonderful things the world has to offer and to inspire others to do the same. "The promise I made to myself – and to her – changed my life in more ways than I ever thought possible," Dionne adds. "Instilling this practice in my students is rewarding. I am grateful for my role as their teacher and could not be prouder of them, and my school, for what we've achieved together."

When members of the Sustainability team visited the class to teach them how they could become more sustainable at home, they were met with unbridled excitement from the students. With that, Palliyaguru and her Sustainability colleagues look forward to bringing more events, initiatives, and programs to the Township in the near future: "We're already thinking of new ways to engage and encourage our residents of all ages to become more eco-friendly and are so thankful for everyone who has taken part so far."

To learn more about the work underway by the Township in support of the Climate Action Strategy, visit tol.ca/climateaction.

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Photo outline: A handful of the letters penned by second grade students of Donna Gabriel Robins Elementary School.



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