

# MECCS

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

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**Find driving directions and more at [www.meccs.org](http://www.meccs.org)**

## MECCS Develops School Partnerships

Noted Canadian author David Bouchard has developed a relationship with the staff and students at MECCS that grows stronger every year. That relationship has its roots in the nearly 20-year friendship between David and MECCS Superintendent Ed Wittchen.

MECCS grade 3/4 teacher Maxine Hildebrandt has her students focus on David's books all year. These books form the basis for class literacy projects. This year's curriculum even included some math projects, as students developed math games with themes from David's books. They presented Readers Theatre projects on various books to other students and other schools, too.



*David Bouchard joins a Round Dance with MECCS and Wildwood students and guests.*

Maxine's class is so involved with their study of David's books that they even helped raise the money to have David work with their class for a full day each of the last three years.

David's gift is storytelling. Through the stories he writes and shares and the music he plays on Native flutes, he teaches and inspires students, parents and educators alike. David teaches that reading is a necessary, wonderful and achievable skill for all of us.

In his student presentations, David shares the history of his flutes and of his Métis sash. He shares his Aboriginal culture. Through stories, he demonstrates the power of the spoken word. David teaches the importance and value of culture and reading. He uses his flutes extensively in his presentations. David often begins by playing an honour song for his Kokum, his Grandmother.

David's work touches all listeners: strong and beginning readers, readers with learning disabilities and readers from various cultural backgrounds.

In April 2009, David was named a Member of the Order of Canada "for his contributions as an author of children's books and an advocate who has championed the cause of reading and writing, and who has shared his pride as a member of the Métis community through his stories."



Above: David Bouchard spends time with the MECCS Board Chair Brenda Nelson.  
Left: David talks to MECCS students about his book I am Raven.  
Below: Student projects.

### School Partnerships

MECCS has established two school partnerships this year. As part of our charter, the school shares our knowledge and experiences about First Nations culture and understandings.

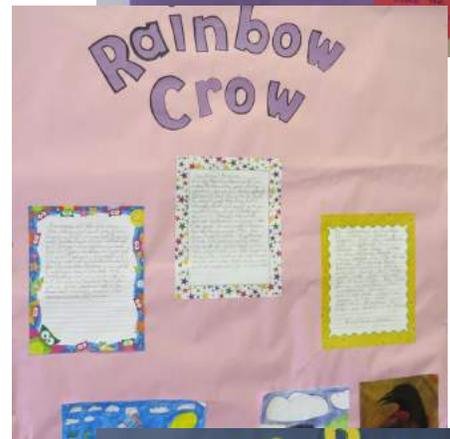
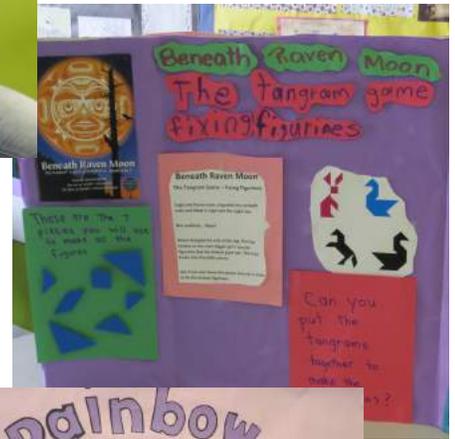
Maxine Hildebrandt and Lisl Gunderman, a grade 4/5 teacher at Wildwood School, applied for and received a Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation grant. This grant promotes understanding through a student

exchange by having a school that serves Aboriginal students partner with a non-Aboriginal school.

Students wrote letters to each other and are participating in exchange visits at each of the

schools. One of the shared experiences of this exchange was having Lisl's class join Maxine's class for David Bouchard's visit. Students from both schools will be creating a memory book chronicling their experiences.

The second school partnership has been with the Academy at King Edward School in Edmonton. This partnership started with a dinner conversation between Superintendent Ed Wittchen and his son-in-law Nyles Varughese, who teaches grade 7 at the Academy at King Edward School. The Academy at King Edward sent its grade 4 class to spend the day with Maxine's grade 3/4 class. The MECCS





*Clockwise from top left: David demonstrates one of his flutes; Wildwood and MECCS students and guests listen closely; a student shares lunch with David; Wildwood parent Jody Nero and MECCS friends Fred DeKleine and Candice Amber listen to the presentation; students try stew and bannock; Academy at King Edward grade 7 teacher Nyles Varughese and some of his students; Maxine Hildebrandt prepares students to lead Readers Theatre.*





*Clockwise from above: The grade 4 class from the Academy at King Edward School visit MECCS; David awards a prize; students and teachers learn Aboriginal hand games; Academy at King Edward School and MECCS students prepare to work on Rainbow Crow; new friends.*

class presented some of their work on David's books. Then the group did some joint Readers Theatre projects and heard a presentation from David. To close their day together, they shared a traditional stew and bannock lunch.

The Academy at King Edward grade 7 class joined Erin Danforth's junior high group for a presentation by David, followed by the stew and bannock lunch. Afterward, they learned to play an Aboriginal hand game. Erin's class made a game for each of the Academy at King Edward students to take home.

The grade 7 and 8 students from Academy at King Edward will be coming back to MECCS to take part in a Cultural Infusion Day to learn about drumming, beading, oral Stoney, Aboriginal land pursuits, Aboriginal hand games and traditional dancing.

