

Sun Peaks Education Society

2020

Annual Report

The Sun Peaks Education Society (SPES) is in its 11th year of successful community funded school operations in Sun Peaks. Growing from an initial classroom of 19 students in 2010, we now have 140 students attending schools here in our community. This has only been possible through the dedication and generous support of parents, volunteers, area residents, local businesses, Sun Peaks Resort LLP, and the Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality.

The SPES operated Sun Peaks Secondary Academy (SPSA) continues to provide excellent academic programming through our teaching staff and partnership with our chosen education provider, the SD73 @KOOL program. Our SPSA students are heavily involved in educational activities, volunteering, and sports in the community. We have participated in many events and initiatives to enhance the educational experience of our students and give back to the community. Ensuring a balance of time for students to focus on academic courses along with additional programs, many of which are also curricular, is a focus for the education team and SPES Board when planning the year's programming and schedule. Some of the activities and events attended over the past year are listed as follows:

- Art at 4 Cats Studio
- Science Labs at TRU for grade 11 & 12 students
- Science field trip to the Big Little Science Centre for grades 8/9 (Cancelled due to COVID-19 Pandemic)
- Junior Achievement BC at TRU for grade 10
- Applied Design Skills and Technology
- Volunteering at Sun Peaks Elementary (Christmas Concert Support)
- Yoga
- X-country biking, hiking, climbing, tennis
- Cross fit training/Alpine fitness at Black Beaver Athletics
- Alpine skiing, snowboarding, Nordic skiing, ice skating (affected due to COVID-19)
- AST 1 Course (Avalanche Skills Training 1)
- Student led fundraising endeavour ("Dogs of Sun Peaks" Calendar)
- WE Day - Vancouver
- Volunteering at fundraising events
- Rotary Interact Club

Some of these programs will take place again for the 2020/2021 year along with additional programs included as Outdoor Education credits.

The 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic not only canceled all in person learning effective 16 March 2020, it affected our spring enrichment activities as well (noted above). The last three weeks of Alpine Ski program were cancelled as well as the Nordic and skating program. Big Little Science Centre activities were cancelled as well. All year end celebration activities, including the graduation ceremony, were also cancelled.

The staff and students of SPSA were commended for their ability to swiftly transition to learning from

home on 16 March 2020 when the resort and community shut down and went into an isolation period due to the COVID-19 world wide pandemic. After one week of re-grouping, the teachers continued programming by hosting regular teleconferences on zoom with students, keeping them on task with their learning from home. Fortunately for SPESA, with the @KOOL curriculum, our students were not as affected as many in-person learning classes. Most of the students and families adapted well to the transition. By 1 June 2020, skeletal staff and students were permitted back into the classroom for optional in-person learning support. Many tests were administered by zoom teleconference with the parent support/supervision. The experience of staff and students returning in the spring better prepared staff, students, and the SPES Board moving into the fall school year in the classroom.

During the 2019/2020 school year, the SPES board held 3 socials and 2 opportunities for community consultation. This was seen as an opportunity for members to become more engaged and informed about the goals and projects of SPES. The socials were not well attended, however, consultation was attended by approx 4% of the membership. These will continue over zoom for the next season.

Over the summer, SD73 placed a new portable for the Grade 8/9 class next to the Municipal owned large classroom portable used by SPES. The renamed Sun Peaks School (SD73) took over the full programming for the Grade 8/9 students, operating five days a week in a more traditional in-class learning environment. The Gr. 8/9 staff and students use the washroom facilities of the smaller portable (previous health centre building) since the SD73 portable did not come with washroom facilities.

SPES now focuses on Grade 10-12 with a total of 21 students enrolled. We are now operating mainly in one double-wide portable, adjacent to the Sun Peaks Alpine Club, and use the smaller portable for a greatly needed break out space for activities such as: teacher admin, test admin, private parent teacher meeting space, as well as project break out space.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the Ministry of Education put many protocols in place for public school systems, including grouping staff and students into learning cohorts, and implementing more rigorous cleaning and hygiene standards. The SPES Board, after consulting its membership, decided to maintain a 6ft spacing for all students learning at their desks, and implement a mask wearing policy for any staff/students coming into closer contact with one another. New Health and Safety Policies and Procedures have been put in place and continue to be assessed for improvement. As of 3 November 2020, there have been no positive tests for COVID-19 in SD73.

Based on enrollment, @KOOL provides an SD73 teacher to be on site for 2 full days, and 2 partial days per week. The SPES has one part time teacher administrator providing support two half days per week. In total between the SPES and SD73 teachers the school week is now covered by one teacher on site daily. The SD73 support is critical, enabling the SPES to operate one classroom without a significant increase in fundraising.

After learning that many of our students excelled in the spring learning from home, the SPES board implemented "priority learning days" whereby students now have the option to work from home two days a week. This has enabled a more flexible learning environment for students and comfort that students would not be missing out on any learning opportunities, testing days, or enrichment activities. Programming is managed with these learning days in mind so that weekly routines can be maintained.

There are now approximately 21 students enrolled in the SPSA with a large grade 10 cohort of approximately 12. Enrollment is projected to continue growing with a large Grade 10 cohort entering in the fall of 2022. Planning to accommodate growth has been a major focus for the SPES Directors and will continue to be a priority. Through continued engagement with the Municipality and SD73 we will be looking for the support necessary to accommodate growth and offer quality schooling to the secondary students in our community. The SD73 Steering Committee is working on both short- and long-term plans for the Sun Peaks School.

As always, fundraising is a critical underlying priority for the SPES and since our incorporation in 2010, over \$860,000 has been raised to support our educational mandate. With the support of our community and effort of many volunteers, our fundraising efforts continue to be successful. The financial position of the Society remains healthy as detailed in the financial statements. Funds raised are used to cover the operational costs of the SPSA classroom, including the salary of our teachers and other classroom operational expenses. Although our cash position is sufficient, continuing efforts are needed to ensure our revenues meet our increasing operating costs. A reserve is being established to assist with the planning of more facilities anticipated for 2022. Major fundraising events/sources over the last year are noted below.

Major Funding Sources and Approximate amounts raised (Aug 2019-Jul 2020)

- 2019 FF Gala \$14.7k
- 2019 Sotheby's Art Auction \$12k
- 2020 Symphony in the Snow \$8.4k
- 2020 Telus Nancy Greene Alpine Classic \$30k
- 2020 (Spring) Nancy Green Big Little Golf Tournaments \$0 (Cancelled due to COVID)
- WE Day Fundraising \$5.7k
- Returnable Bottle/Can Depot \$6k
- Personal Donations \$8.5k
- Student fees \$7.2k

Fortunately, through the support of Nancy Greene, the SPES is now a primary recipient of the funds raised through the Telus Nancy Greene Alpine Classic - which will be newly termed TELUS Alpine Classic 3 Mountain Tour. In 2020, the event raised \$30,000.00 for the SPES which provided funds for a significant reduction in student fees from \$750.00 in 2018, \$250 in 2019, and \$0 in 2020. Nancy has also agreed to coordinate additional fundraising that should, combined with the race, begin to build a fund that can be used toward enhancing an eventual K-12 school building. This major commitment is greatly appreciated, thank you Nancy!

Volunteers continue to be essential to the success of the Sun Peaks Secondary Academy. Without the strong support of all volunteers, including all parents and community members, our operation would not be possible. The SPES will continue to require and encourage 100% participation from SPSA Parents to help ensure the sustainability of the SPSA. We also would like to recognize community members, Ruth Wiebe and Sue Price, for their time and commitment on the Disciplinary Committee this past year.

The SPES looks forward to a bright future for the students of our community, thank you for your ongoing support!

Respectfully,

Jenny Hawes,
President, Sun Peaks Education Society
3 Nov 2020