



St. Bernadette Elementary School  
13130 65B Ave. Surrey BC V3W 9M1

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December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Dear Parents,

Our theme for this school year is “Care for Everyone in Our Common Home”. It is a theme that is build upon last year’s theme of a similar title “Care for Our Common Home”. Our theme this year stresses that the call to stewardship is a call to care for those who are affected most when we don’t consider the environmental issues at hand.

As a school and a community, we stress the importance of the care for the environment and its effect on the marginalized and the poor. It is a call that embeds itself in the Catholic Social Teachings of the church. Our support for Covenant House, Holy Childhood, Chalice, St. Vincent de Paul Society and Development and Peace (to name a few) show our commitment to serve those who need our help the most. We believe that our school is special and inspiring in its efforts throughout the year.

Once again, the Christmas spirit is alive and well at St. Bernadette Elementary this year! Our third annual Lights of Hope Fundraiser and Celebration was successful on many different levels. Firstly, we were able to raise the much needed funds for our new Library Learning Commons. Secondly, it brought the community together to honour our intentions and pray for those in our community. Lastly, it gave our students and their parents the opportunity to be proud of their faith and to share their faith with others.

I want to thank you for your outstanding contributions to our school through your own charity and works of service. We have seen a greater involvement by parents in the many events and tasks in the school. It is a blessing to have parents in the school and working in the classrooms. We value our relationship with you and look forward to seeing many of the familiar and new faces working and volunteering in the school come the new year.

In reflection of the year thus far, I am thoroughly impressed with the education our children are receiving from the excellent teachers, educational assistants and support staff. The teachers are doing fantastic and amazing work with the children in and out of the classroom. They have spent countless hours ensuring that the learning at St. Bernadette’s maintains its high standards while continuing to introduce new methods, assessments and designs into their pedagogy.



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The school continues to make advancements in increasing student learning. Through extensive research and professional development the school is adding a Library Learning Commons for the students. It is part of an overall investigation into how learning environments can increase student achievement. Last year we looked at how we could change the learning environments to the classroom to increase student learning and now we are applying the same research and methods to our existing library. It is through the fundraising efforts of our community that we are able to make learning at St. Bernadette's the top of it's class in British Columbia.

As I look ahead to 2018 I quite often think of how blessed we are to be part of this school and its community. I will always see my position as principal of St. Bernadette's as a wonderful privilege. It is such a joy to be present and participate in the educational, social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth of your child. It is with great care and attention that I, alongside the teachers and staff, seek to continue to make St. Bernadette the best school for all the students.

On behalf of the teachers and staff at St. Bernadette Elementary, I would like to thank you for being such a generous and precious gift to our school. You are an important and vital part of the education of all the children at our school. Our prayer for you and your family is that you may know the joy, faith, love, and hope of the Nativity of our Lord this Christmas Season.

May you have a safe and blessed Christmas and a joyous New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Michael van der Pauw  
Principal

*"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified. But the Angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.'"*