

Four Montreal teachers honoured with annual EMSB recognition award



"Allowing the students to learn who they are and to be comfortable with who they are," is of utmost importance says teacher Klara Bourne, who along with three others was honoured with an EMSB Teacher Appreciation Award. Fariha Naqvi-Mohamed...

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By News Staff

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A Montreal teacher with 43 years' experience is among the educators who were recognized by the English Montreal School Board for their accomplishments and dedication to teaching as part of the EMSB's "Teacher Recognition Day."

Klara Bourne (James Lyng High School), Holly Commeford (James Lyng Adult Education Centre) and Jon Stein and Lara Belinsky (Willingdon Elementary School) were also among the honorees.

The four award winners were among a slew of nominations from parents. They were honoured at a ceremony Monday at the James Lyng auditorium.



(Submitted by: Nur Erdem, EMSB)



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Klara Bourne

Bourne, a teacher for 43 years, has been shaping young minds at James Lyng for the last three decades. She says becoming a teacher was an "unexpected and happy accident."

"I was invited to replace a teacher for a few months, and the rest is history," said Bourne.

She says the best part about teaching at James Lyng is guiding and supporting the teenagers and celebrating their victories.

"Sadly, social media is chipping away and the student's self-confidence, their realistic, possibly realistic view of the world, and they are addicted to it. And instead of reading what would help them to identify who they are, they're trying to live up to five-second images," She added.

"Ms. Bourne is and has been a well-respected teacher and colleague to many during her years at James Lyng High School," said principal Giovanni Iammarone. "She is a source of inspiration and strength to our students and teachers."

Holly Commeford

Commeford, a teacher at James Lyng Adult Education Centre for 25 years, offers mainly computer-based classes and social science courses like budgeting, leadership or team building.

Commeford says she comes from a family of teachers; her father was the former principal of James Lyng High School and Adult Education Centre.

"I was surrounded by a great amount of insight, notably the fulfillment of interacting and impacting students of diverse needs and goals," she said.

"And I'm grateful for working with such a wonderful team every day that it humbles me, that it was I was chosen when many should be candidates for the same award.

"The biggest challenge was to have all the students feel accepted in the classroom environment where they wanted to come to class on a regular basis, because in adulthood there's more opportunity to come and go if you choose, and it's a question of keeping the classroom happy," she added.

Lara Belinsky

"After this class, I knew I wanted to be a phys ed teacher and I have never looked back since," she said.

Belinsky says one of her proudest moments as a teacher was when Willingdon raised \$25,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation.

"We had several rewards for different money markers, but our final goal was when I had my head shaved in front of the entire school and community," she recalled. "It was a beautiful day to share with everyone."

Adding, "Don't stop playing because you get old. You grow old because you stop playing. So I get to play with the kids every day. We get to laugh and get to have fun."

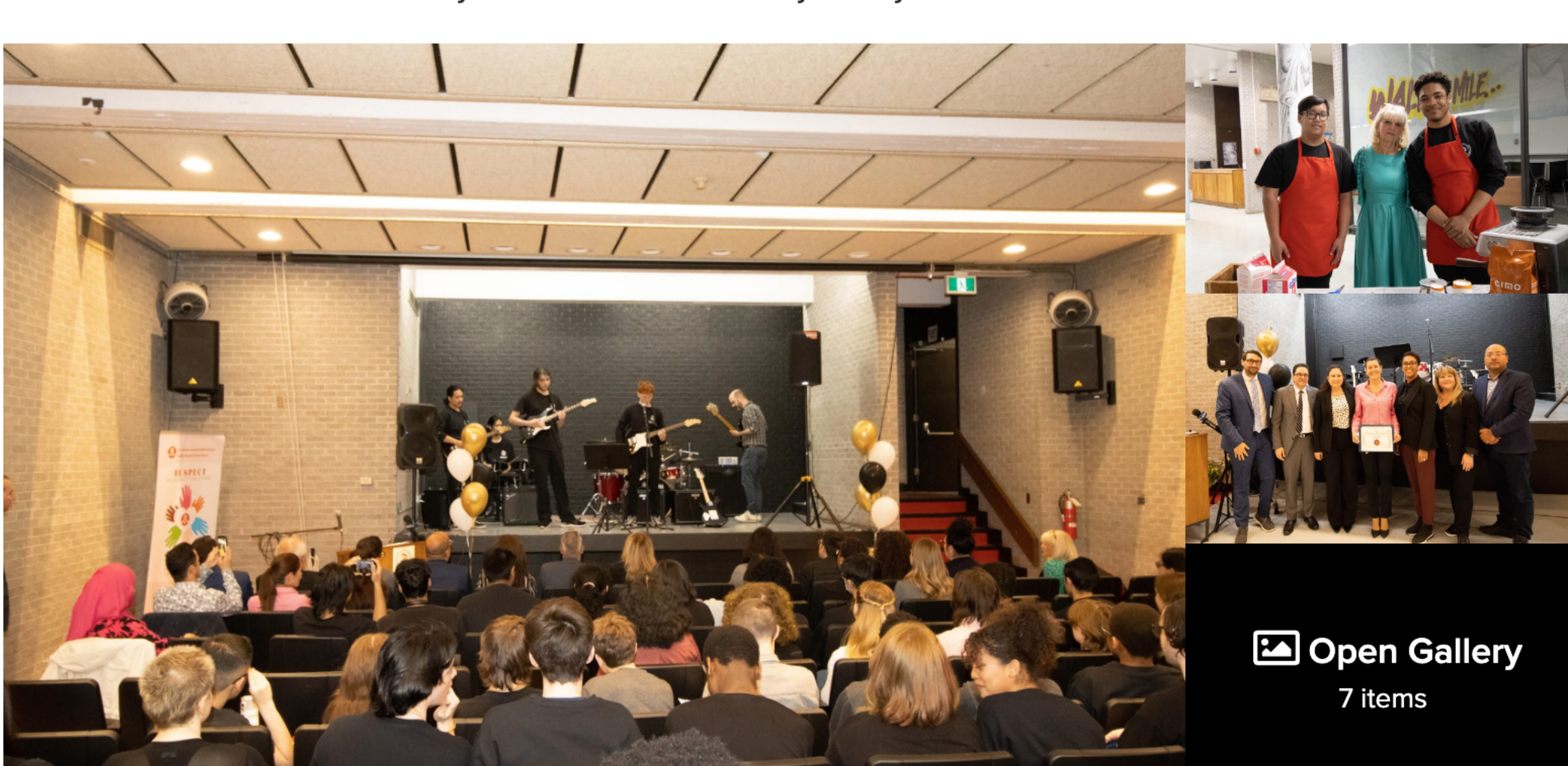
Jonathan Stein

Stein, a phys ed teacher for the last 17 years, has been at Willingdon for the past seven. He spent a lot of time growing up coaching sports and working as a camp counsellor.

"I always enjoyed working with children and helping them develop new skills," he said. "Becoming a teacher and having the opportunity to help people learn every day seemed like a great fit."

Stein says he enjoys helping students discover new sports and physical activities.

"I could not be happier to see this recognition go to Jon and Lara," said Katherine Baker, the EMSB pedagogical consultant for physical education and health. "I thank them for all they do, of course primarily for their students, but also all the contributions they make to the community of Physical Education teachers around them."



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