

Stories from Burnaby

Burnaby is home to one of the most culturally diverse populations in the world, bringing together people from all walks of life, ethnicities and cultures and it continues to welcome people from across the globe. It is a city where more than a 100 languages are spoken and where residents in all their diversity find ways to connect, build relationships and form bonds of kinship creating an inclusive environment where everyone can live in harmony.

To celebrate and embrace this cultural diversity in Burnaby and to engage residents in building cross cultural understanding and relationships we invited nine Burnaby residents to share their stories with fellow Burnaby residents. This event was held in partnership with the Burnaby Public Library and the Edmonds Community School on Wednesday, March 1st, 2017 at the Tommy Douglas Library.

Our storytellers were identified by Burnaby Community Partners. They came from a range of ages, with our youngest being 7 and the oldest almost 70. They came from different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds and were new as well as established residents. They shared their journeys and life experiences with an audience of twenty five fellow residents. This was an opportunity to learn about one another and discover commonalities that help us understand ourselves and how we make true connections with one another.

About some of the storytellers

- A lady of Egyptian descent who moved to Canada in 2001 – she wants people to benefit from her experience and likes to share how she overcame cultural differences and challenges when she moved to Canada
- An Aboriginal Canadian working, living, and volunteering in the Burnaby community for over 20 years - she is passionate about community building and likes the sense of community that Burnaby offers.
- A Syrian refugee who arrived in Canada two years ago who thinks it is very important to build cultural bridges to strengthen our communities and appreciates that Burnaby has the best community centres in the lower mainland!
- A Burnaby born resident who has seen Burnaby undergo many changes, a very active member of the Edmonds Community who started concerts at the Edmonds Community Centre.
- A lady of Peruvian descent who left her country sixteen years ago in search of a safe place to raise her family. After facing many challenges she is now settled in Burnaby and is a contributing member of our society and is actively involved in projects that help build community.
- Four amazing students between the ages the ages of 7 and 12 from the Edmonds Community School, who shared their dreams and their experiences of living in Burnaby.

Their heartwarming and uplifting stories reflected a welcoming and positive sense of community in Burnaby, and the audience expressed they would like such an event to be held again.

Such events highlight that differences can be celebrated and can enrich our lives and communities.

We are grateful to Burnaby Public Library (Tommy Douglas Branch) for hosting this event and the Edmonds Community School for their support and participation.