

BASC donation to green-up Coe Hill Public School outdoor space



By Chris Drost

It was good news for Coe Hill Public School on the afternoon of April 12 as Bancroft Area Stewardship directors Sheila Currie, Fred Werner and chair, Ian Hendry, met with school staff and announced the donation of a butterfly garden kit and 10 oak trees.

"We are so pleased they reached out and showed such interest in our school projects, our community, and the environment. The teachers are motivated to give kids a nature bathing experience," says principal Rob Lake.

Lake further explained that the students are very engaged. "It is exciting to improve our yard. Last year we were happy to receive one apple tree as a donation. The staff was floating on hearing we will be receiving 10 trees and pollinator plants to expand our existing butterfly garden. This will catapult us into another category," adds Lake.

"It is great for BASC to work closely with the students and staff at Coe Hill School. It speaks closely to the BASC mission of engaging, educating and empowering. It is an opportunity for future educational opportunities around plants, trees, pollinators, and eco-systems. As the trees grow, they will be enjoyed in the future by students, families, and the community," says Currie.

"You must give the teachers a lot of credit for the outdoor space they have already developed. The donation from BASC will help expand their existing pollinator garden (important to the food supply) and will complement their other outdoor classroom space," adds Currie.

While plans still must be confirmed and approvals given, there was some discussion about a longer-term vision of BASC assisting with the creation of an arboretum at the school. "This could include such things as native plants in clusters, a pathway experience and native trees," says Lake. A plan would have to go through the school board's Facility Services before being given approval to proceed.

Part of the longer-term vision to be discussed over the next year, includes BASC donating enough trees, so every child gets one to plant. The planting area would be away from the sports field. "They were very excited about this concept. I was very impressed that they already have a butterfly garden, and the kids take part in watering. They also have some raised food beds," says Hendry.

"They have a lot of things started and we will be able to help them expand on it. It is great to reach out to the children at such young

age,? he adds.

The plants and trees are part of BASC's annual Tree and Shrub Program which is still available on the www.bancroftstewardship.ca website.