

# École James Nisbet gets a little greener

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## THE MAPLES

Students at École James Nisbet School will be able to enjoy a little shade for generations to come thanks to the work of today's generation.

The school was named the City of Winnipeg's Arbor Day School for 2019, a title bestowed by the City's urban forestry department. The honour came with some improvements to the school's playground.

Following conversations between the school and the City's Urban Forestry department, 15 trees were planted at the playground.

Martha Barwinsky, city forester for the City of Winnipeg, said during a May 22 Arbor Day ceremony at the school that among the trees planted were resilient species such as willow, poplar, and American elm. Barwinsky said the trees "can take the challenges of an urban environment."

Barwinsky said the students can look at this initiative as the start of their journey as they work to become "caretakers of your environment and caretakers of trees in your community."

During the ceremony, students heard remarks from principal Michelle Jean-Paul, Dale Willson (who spoke on behalf of Old Kildonan Coun. Devi Sharma), Barwinsky, and representatives of FedEx, a sponsor of the initiative. Students Mankirat, Agamjaap, Gurseerat, Manmeet and Japjot (last

names were not provided) emceed the occasion, and student Jaezelle was named the winner of an Arbor Day poster contest.

A copy of the poster, which shows a happy tree alongside a young child, and the message "Help the world to be a better place," adorned the speaker's podium.

The poster will also be used on Arbor Day T-shirts at Trees Winnipeg's Arbor Day celebration, set for June 1 at St. Vital Park.

Members of the school's choirs performed for the crowd, with songs performed in both English and French.

Jean-Paul told the gathered crowd that the actions of the students would have a beneficial effect far beyond the school.

"Our students did an act of kindness for our community," she said.

It came about after students at the school, particularly its Enviro-Club, noticed that they and people in the surrounding community liked using the playground but had little relief from the sun or wind.

Multi-age teachers Alice Sherwin and Kirstine Reyes aided the students in a letter-writing campaign to Sharma, who was moved by the students' eco-consciousness and desire to help their community. She directed them to a Trees Canada grant, which the students received, which led to the planting of the trees in collaboration with the forestry department. The department, inspired by the students' community spirit, decided to give the school its Arbor Day honours for the year.

Sharma was unable to attend the May 22 ceremony but passed along her congratulations via Willson.



Photo by Darren Ridgley

École James Nisbet teachers Alice Sherwin and Kirstine Reyes pose for a photo with Arbor Day poster contest winner Jaezelle with one of the school's new trees, following an Arbor Day celebration at the school May 22. More than a dozen trees were planted at the school's playground as part of the school being named the City of Winnipeg's Arbor Day School.

"I want to say I'm so proud of you for taking the time to write to me," said Willson, reading from a statement prepared by Sharma. "This is happening because of your effort."

As the students left the assembly, each was given a white spruce sapling to plant at home. They were then invited outside to see the new trees although, as it was raining, many soon went back indoors, where treats awaited.