SWIS Summary of Activities
September—October 2026

School District 43 (Coquitlam)

Welcome to Heritage Woods!

Building Connections: Information Session for Korean Parents







It was a warm and exciting start to the school year as Korean parents of new students gathered at Heritage Woods Secondary School for an information session on September 15. The Principal, two Vice Principals, and the Post-Secondary and Career Advisor warmly welcomed families, introduced their roles, and shared helpful information about school programs, expectations, and supports. Parents had a great opportunity to ask questions, connect directly with school staff, and learn more about their children's new school.

A special highlight was meeting the new Principal, who shared his vision of building accountability and meaningful connections for every student. He also shared his personal connection to Heritage Woods, where he previously worked as a teacher before returning as Principal. Korean parents warmly welcomed him back to his "home school" and enjoyed hearing about his hopes and goals for the school community.

The session was filled with positive conversations, enthusiasm, and a strong sense of community. Parents were excited to support their children and stay connected with the school throughout the year. The event concluded with a school tour, giving families a chance to become more familiar with the school environment. It was a wonderful first step toward building strong connections and a supportive partnership between Korean families and Heritage Woods!

Funded by: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Financé par : Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

From Survival to Success: My Journey in Canada

For many, Canada is a land of promise. But for an immigrant woman arriving with little more than a dream, that promise often only manifests after a season of immense hardship.

My name is Zebo and I arrived in Canada from Uzbekistan in January 2023. My journey here has been a testament to the power of resilience and the transformative impact of community support. Through the darkest periods of my life, the Government of Canada, dedicated organizations, and my settlement worker didn't just provide services—they provided the foundation for a new life.

My story began with a painful sacrifice. Shortly after arriving, I had to flee an abusive relationship and start over with nothing. I found myself in a women's shelter, separated from my two young sons who remained in my home country. For two long years, the ache of their absence was my constant companion. However, I refused to let despair take root. I knew that to bring my boys to a safe home, I first had to build one myself.

I turned to education as my catalyst for change. Drawing on my background as a teacher, I enrolled in the Inclusive Education and Disability diploma program at Douglas College. This path was made possible by the YWCA Single Mother Scholarship, which offered more than just financial aid—it offered a belief in my potential. Their support allowed me to maintain high academic standing while navigating the complex sponsorship process. In January 2025, the dream that kept me going finally became a reality: I was reunited with my sons in British Columbia.

While I am now building a career as an Educational Assistant and a youth support worker—with plans to pursue a Bachelor of Education at SFU—much of our family's stability is thanks to my settlement worker, Nina Bobrova.

When my sons started school, I was overwhelmed by the intricacies of a new country. Nina became our navigator, guiding me step-by-step and helping me feel that I was not alone. The impact of our partnership was immediate and life-changing.

She transformed our daily lives through practical connections. She arranged free school lunches to ease my financial burden and secured a $1,000 grant through KidSport for my son's badminton classes. She even helped us acquire mountain bikes and a television and directed me to Quest for affordable groceries. Yet, Nina's most profound impact was emotional. She was the bridge between isolation and belonging.

Starting a new life can feel incredibly lonely, but her support gave me hope. In the difficult moments of single motherhood, she was a source of constant encouragement, reminding me of my own strength and treating me with a kindness that restored my confidence. Today, I am no longer just a newcomer trying to survive; I am a mother, a student, and a professional contributing to my community.

My success is a shared one. It belongs to the organizations that invested in me and the settlement workers who walk alongside families during their most vulnerable transitions. I am living proof that when we support immigrant women, we aren't just helping one person—we are building the future of Canada.

Community Connections

We recently had the pleasure of visiting ***Foundry Tri-Cities*** **and** ***SHARE Family & Community Services Early Years Community Program (ages0–6),*** and we were warmly welcomed at both sites. Our visits included guided tours that gave us a firsthand look at the incredible work being done to support children and families in our community. From inviting spaces to dedicated staff, both centers showcased a strong commitment to early learning, connection, and care. These visits were a wonderful opportunity to strengthen community relationships and celebrate the shared goal of helping children and families thrive.





A Small Moment, A Big Confidence Boost



One newcomer student has been facing many challenges. Her father is sick with cancer and cannot work, and her family is going through a difficult time. Thanks to support from the school and SWIS team, she is now receiving free lunches at school. The student was worried about her English and felt nervous about giving presentations in class. One day, we made a clay picture together and then shared it with the SWIS team. Everyone admired her artwork and cheered for her. As she answered questions about her creation in English, she showed great courage and confidence. When we finished, we told her, “You just gave a presentation, and you can do it!” This was a wonderful reminder that with encouragement and support,

SWIS-Led Grade 9 Information Session

Centennial Secondary School | September 2, 2026

SWIS workers hosted a Grade 9 Information Session for newcomer students and their families at Centennial Secondary School to support a successful transition to secondary school.

The session covered key topics including:

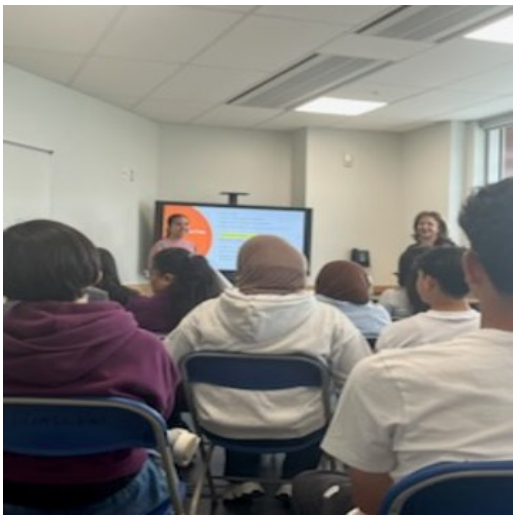
- What to Expect in Grade 9
- Academic Expectations
- School Supports and Resources
- Student Life and Extracurricular Opportunities
- Student Leaders Sharing Their Experiences
- Tips for Success
- Q&A Session

School Tour

The event provided students and families with valuable information about high school expectations, available support, and opportunities for engagement. Student leaders offered peer perspectives and practical advice, while the school tour helped families become familiar with the school environment.

SWIS Impact

SWIS workers coordinated and facilitated the session, engaged newcomer families, promoted family-school connections, and helped participants access information and resources needed for a successful transition. The event strengthened newcomer families' understanding of the secondary school system and fostered a greater sense of belonging within the school community.





SWIS Services between September 8 – October 27, 2026

577 clients received 860 support services

Client Type	Service Type	Sessions/Services	No. of Clients
Parent/Guardian	SWIS Intake	42	42
Student	SWIS Intake	27	27
Parent/Guardian	School Oriented	370	222
Student	School Oriented	409	332
Student	Settlement Oriented	12	10

Words of Gratitude

I've had the extraordinary pleasure of working with Roya over the years at many different levels. Whether at elementary, middle or high school, having her available to support students and families new to Canada is essential in our collaborative work to ensure everyone feels success even through challenging times. At school, her interpreter skills and ability to build strong relationships with staff, students and parents based on trust, compassion and professionalism are invaluable. When they see her, families always have a smile on their faces, and you can immediately see the relief and comfort come over them just knowing that she is there. SWIS workers are the bridge between family, school and community and integral to our system of support.

~ Martin Bozic, Ecole Irvine Elementary School