

# The IHLA Newsletter

Volume 18 Issue 1 Editor: Trudie Aberdeen

## President's Message

Dear heritage language school leaders, teachers, and professionals,

This past year has been, without a doubt, the most challenging year of the twenty-first century. We are amidst the battle with COVID-19, unsure what the future brings for us. Since the pandemic outbreak in March 2020, some of our heritage language schools closed their doors, some transitioned online, and some opted for a hybrid approach in heritage language teaching. It was amid this torrent of changes and uncertainty that I faced an uneasy decision to take on the responsibility of the IHLA presidency. I knew that taking on this critical role in unprecedented times will not be easy. At the same time, I was confident that our heritage language schools are resilient and resourceful and will be able to get through any challenges ahead. Heritage schools' principals and teachers have been working under challenging conditions before the pandemic outbreak. Many of us are immigrants who have already experienced long term isolation from our loved ones. Many of us started heritage language schools from scratch, with no help or assistance and zero funding. Despite this hardship, all of you managed to build sustainable heritage language schools and have been reaching out and assisting your respective communities for years and decades. Your selfless dedication to heritage language teaching and cultural preservation is genuinely inspiring. I am taking this opportunity to assure you that I will do my best to ensure that heritage language schools' work is valued, recognized and appreciated by the broader community in our city, province and beyond.

I would also like to express my deepest thanks to former president Dr. Antonella Cortese for her unwavering support of heritage language schools and her leadership. During Dr. Cortese's presidency, IHLA's membership grew, and IHLA became internationally recognized. I am confident that together with Antonella's ongoing support and IHLA board members' valued input, we will be able to sail the IHLA ship through the challenges ahead of us.

Nina Paulovicova, PhD, IHLA President



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## Message from the Past President

Antonella Cortese, PHD

Dear Esteemed IHLA Colleagues and Members,

My hope is that this transition to Fall has been as easy and healthful as possible, welcoming back to on site and online heritage language school. It has been wonderful to hear what so many are doing and have been able to do in order to continue teaching and nurturing our heritage languages with our students and families.

During the 2019/2020 IHLA Year, we experienced growth and change beyond what any of us expected. We helped each other with encouraging notes and calls, and thanks to Alberta Education funding, we were able to assist in what we hope has been a good start to the new school year that will continue in a positive way.

Being IHLA President since 2015 has been an incredible experience that has permitted me to learn and grow professionally and personally thanks to all our IHLA Member Schools, Teachers and Directors. Without all of you, IHLA would not be what it has been and what it continues to be: A vibrant and well-respected heritage language organization with international reach and recognition. I have been and am very proud to be a part of IHLA and more importantly, to be connected with you all.

With all organizations, in order to continue to flourish and continue to develop and grow new ideas change is necessary and welcomed. In August 2020, with the support of IHLA Vice President Renata Krawczyk and IHLA Board Members, I asked that Nina Paulovicova take the role as IHLA President to finish out my term, ending in 2022. With the IHLA Board's support, Nina has accepted. Her knowledge, professionalism, and ability to collaborate with different stakeholders within the heritage language community and beyond will take IHLA to the next level, the direction IHLA has been moving toward as it continues to grow on an international stage with its strong roots at the local level.

As Past President, I will continue to serve on the IHLA Board and will assist in all ways needed and useful to ensure a smooth transition and to provide any aid as we all continue to make our way through the 2020/2021 IHLA Year full of new opportunities and change.

Thank you all for your support and care during my tenure as IHLA President and I look forward to continuing to serve you all in the role of IHLA Past President.

Respectfully,

Antonella Cortese

## IHLA Professional Development

One of IHLA's main goals is to provide information to its members through meetings and professional development sessions. We are bringing knowledge to our members and representing IHLA around the world in academic conferences. Recordings of these sessions can be found on the [ihla.ca](http://ihla.ca) website.

## The 2019-2020 AGM

On September 29, 2020 IHLA held the AGM for the 2019-2020 school year. The meeting was delayed due to COVID. We postponed the meeting in case we would be able to host the meeting face-to-face. It was not possible to bring everyone together so the AGM was held virtually.

In the meeting we announced that IHLA was waving membership fees for the 2020-2021 school year. Schools were still required to complete a membership online. In addition, IHLA had a small video which showcased its' annual year in review.

There were quite a few changes with the IHLA executive. Dr. Antonella Cortese took on a new role of past president, leaving space for Dr. Nina Paulovicova to step into the role of president. Anupama Deshpande took on the role of secretary. We added two more board members-Krishna Gupta of the Edmonton Hindi Parishad and Gina Barata of Gil Vicente Portuguese School. Welcome to the board!

Other topics covered were IHLA's finances. IHLA is still awaiting news from Alberta Education. Every year we receive an operating grant from the province.

IHLA also discussed the mentorship program. Schools are encouraged to register. The final date to apply is December 10, 2020.

## Upcoming Professional Development

### **Creating Positive Work Environments**

Thursday, December 3, 2020 6:30-7:30 PM

*Renata Krawczyk*

Renata will be sharing her experience with us on creating positive and healthy work environments. During her talk she will be sharing how to recognize implicit bias and micro-aggressions within an organization and how to counter them with micro-affirmations. While this knowledge base comes from the corporate world, she will be sharing how to use this knowledge in schools and other

## Lights, Camera, Action!

On October 29, 2020 IHLA welcomed Sofia Eigueta Duplancic & Zuzana Buchanan to share with us their presentation on using self-created videos in the heritage language classroom. They shared with us important considerations when creating videos. Important themes were technology considerations, making informed decisions about lighting, sound, and editing. Furthermore, our presenters shared how the videos we can make with a bit of practice can be used for lessons and school promotion.

## Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

On October 7, 2020 IHLA was pleased to introduce Dr. Aga Palalas to our membership with her PD session titled Mobile Assisted Language Learning. Her co-edited book titled International Handbook of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning was published in 2017 and shares interesting and practical information about how to teach with mobile devices.

Her talk about using mobile devices covered a great deal of information both theoretical and practical. She shared some of the tools that can be used from podcasts and audiobooks to YouTube videos. She covered many language learning apps that are available for free or for a low cost.

educational settings. This knowledge is useful for those working with boards and withing heritage language communities.

### **Learning about Inuit Culture**

Monday, December 14, 2020 7:00-9:00 PM

*Goota Desmarais*

Did you know that teachers in Alberta are required to infuse their curriculum with information about First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people? Did you know that public school teachers are evaluated on their knowledge of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people?

It is hard to teach what you don't know. Our presenter, Goota Desmarais, will be sharing with us her knowledge about Inuit peoples in Nunavut. She describes growing up in a community in Baffin

Island. She will teach us about Inuit culture and share about indigenous ways of knowing. Please note that this presentation will **NOT** be recorded and shared on the ihla.ca website.

## What's new at IHLA?

### A new member school

IHLA is super excited to introduce a new school to our organization- the Bangladesh Canada Association of Edmonton's Bangla School! We are so excited to finally have them among us! They are currently teaching online. Students take language and music classes at the school on Sundays.

Did you know that IHLA's most important celebration- Mother Language Day- was brought to us by the Bangla people? Mother Language Day is the result of protests by university students in the 1950s for the right to speak and learn the Bangla language which was then banned by the government who wanted all people to speak Urdu. Mother Language Day is a national holiday in Bangladesh and we are so honoured to share a piece of it at IHLA!

### The IHLA Principals' Meeting

IHLA will be holding a principals meeting on December 1, 2020. At this meeting principals will be learning about what recent public school closures mean to heritage language schools, how we will be managing Mother Language Day, and the Mother Language Day book. We look forward to seeing you there!

### IHLA supporting the Alberta Association for Multicultural Education

IHLA has always been a supporter of AAME. Likewise, they have always been a great fan of ours. They have always donated to us generously so that we are able to publish our Mother Language Day book. In October IHLA was able to support AAME in return by volunteering and filling 7 shifts for their casino. IHLA extends a very special thank you to Jaspal Bansal, Suzanne & Douglas Aberdeen who filled shifts and those at Henryk Sienkiewicz who volunteered.

## What is happening at IHLA Member Schools?

Outdoor Learning at Henryk Sienkiewicz

*Bozena Gaciag, Grade 2 teacher*



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Henryk Sienkiewicz Polish School has been trying to implement more outdoor educational experiences into its curriculum.

For some time, the grade 2 students have been observing the environment and learning to describe changes in the weather and seasons. In early October, the children went on a fieldtrip to the University Botanic Garden to see the beauty of nature. It was a very warm and sunny day, perfect for a walk in a serene setting. The children

were mesmerized by the beauty of the garden and season making discoveries with each step. The highlight of the fieldtrip was the Kurimoto Japanese Garden with beautiful plants, fish, lanterns, and viewing shelters. The University Botanic Garden provided not only a meaningful educational experience but also an opportunity to relax and refresh all senses.



How the Edmonton Slovak School moved online

*Dr. Nina Paulovicova*

Slovak Heritage School transitioned online in September 2020 as a result of the pandemic. We introduced a flexible program to meet the needs of our students and their families. Firstly, we introduced a synchronous



online program taught by an experienced teacher of the Slovak language from Bratislava, Slovakia. The online classes run every Sunday, and since the virtual world does not have any boundaries, we co-joined classes with a Slovak school in Montreal. We even received registrations from two students from Ireland and two students from Toronto. Yep. Our small school is connecting nationally and transnationally!



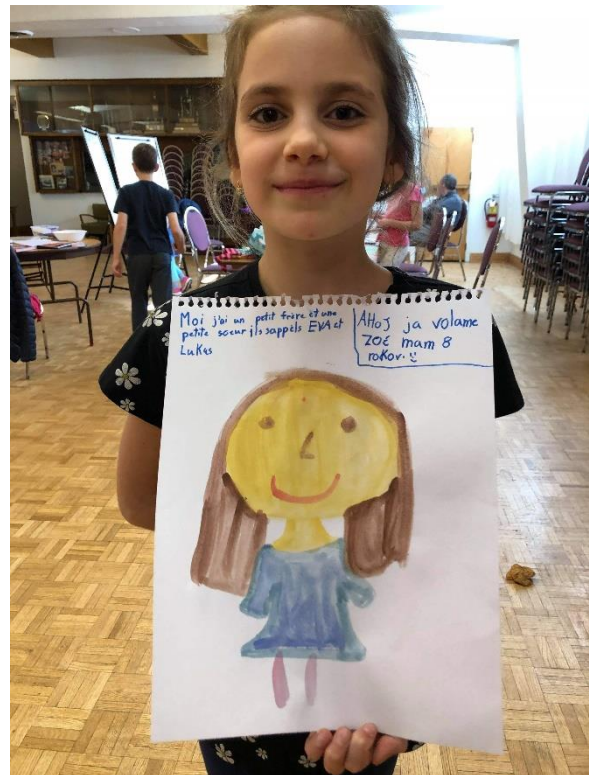
We also introduced an online asynchronous learning program for kids. Our students can participate in online activities at their own pace and time. Students can submit their work ideally within a week, or even later, any time before the end of the course. The children will receive two Jánošík (famous Slovak historical figure) electronic coins for each submitted activity.



The kids will have to collect the following amount of coins to receive the Certificate:

- Children ages 3 – 5 ..... 10 Jánošík coins
- Children ages 6 – 8 .....15 Jánošík coins
- Children ages 9 – 11 ..... 20 Jánošík coins
- Children ages 12- 18 .....30 Jánošík coins

The activities within the asynchronous program vary. For example, children love our online series [“Stories with Grandma Zuzana,”](#) which we make available on YouTube. Our babka Zuzana is the grandma of two of our students. Babka Zuzka comes from Slovakia and lives in town Nitra. Children listen to her stories and answer babka Zuzka’s questions at the end of each video. Online teaching of Slovak has been fun so far 😊



Filipino Canadian Saranay Association of Alberta sings the National anthem in English and Filipino at the Alberta Legislature Assembly

*Grace Alarcon-Isla*

The Filipino Canadian Saranay Association of Alberta lead the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in singing Canada’s National anthem before the House proceedings on Monday, November 16, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. The warm invitation was extended to the group by the Alberta House Speaker, Honorable Nathan Cooper. Saranay is honoured to represent the Filipino community before the Assembly, and for the rare opportunity to perform the anthem in both English and Filipino languages. This is believed to be the first time that “O Canada” will be sung in both English and the Filipino language in the Alberta Legislature Chamber. Due to COVID-19 guidelines, a smaller than usual ensemble represented the full Saranay Rondalla and Choral group experience. The presentation was represented by youth, adult, seniors performed by singer, Sharmaine Pagtakhan and five Rondalla 14-string instrumentalists including Simeon Butch Ylagan (Music director -guitar), Mike Lopez (Rondalla pioneer- Sr. Banduria), Gemikalyn Isla (youth Octavina), Zaidrian Isla (youth Banduria) and Thelma Araja (Music director- Sr. Octavina). They were accompanied by Saranay administrators, Dr. Josephine Pallard and Grace Alarcon-Isla, who were seated in the Speaker’s Gallery.



**Mother Language Day**

This year Mother Language Day is going online. While it is sad that we cannot all be together, we can still be together virtually! We will be asking schools to create a small video of a performance and bringing them together to create a memorable keepsake that can be enjoyed for many years and can be used for school promotion.

This year’s them is Creation Myths and Legends. It is an excellent theme which allows us to learn more about each other. Schools are asked to create a virtual performance about some aspect of how something got created in their heritage language country. This could be the story of the flag or country name, the legend of a mythical animal or even how children are named.

Schools are asked to submit their videos by January 21, 2021. Please email [coordinator@ihla.ca](mailto:coordinator@ihla.ca) for more information. Information about the MLD book will be given to you soon.

## Mother Language Day Book

Our Mother Language Day Book is rolling full steam ahead as usual. For schools that are unable to get students together for an in-person performance, the book might be a better option for you. Schools are allowed to submit as many submissions as they like; however, there is still a 7 page limit per school. Schools with multiple submissions will have the students work reduced in size. Please bear this in mind when collecting work from your students.

The date for submission is February 1, 2021. Please email all work to [coordinator@ihla.ca](mailto:coordinator@ihla.ca) with MLD book in the subject line to ensure that your submission is properly collected.

## IHLA at Conferences

IHLA has been active this year spreading the word about IHLA all around the world.

**O**n October 12, 2019 IHLA representatives were in Washington, DC as keynote speakers at the 2019 Community-based Heritage Languages School Conference. We shared our insights about language learning in Alberta and told of how our organization has survived and thrived for over the past 40 years!

IHLA attended many interesting talks on a variety of topics that were applicable to the Canadian context as well. These included information about setting up email servers for promotion of schools using services such as Mailchimp, the Global Seal of Biliteracy, and differentiated instruction in heritage language schools.

The global seal of biliteracy is an area which may be of interest to heritage language schools in Alberta. Students are able to sign up for specific administered tests which can then be used to prove biliteracy in English and another language. Students can examine their literacy skills in over 100 different languages. More information can be found at <https://theglobalseal.com>.

Other topics included a workshop by Maria Carreira about how to make classes more responsive to students' needs. She said that student work could be differentiated according to the content, the process, the pacing, or the product that students are expected to do. With the diversity that students are expected to achieve in a heritage language school,

she also listed instructional methods which could support teachers in ensuring that students get the information that they need in a lesson. These methods included exit cards, checks for understanding, agendas, flexible grouping, and centres. Understanding how to use these teaching methods in the classroom supports students in learning the material that they need.

FHSS Symposium: COVID-19 and Equity: Adjustments, adaptations, or total game changer? Athabasca University. October 6-7, 2020

**D**uring this digital event, Dr. Nina Paulovicova and Dr. Trudie Aberdeen spoke to participants about current research that IHLA is conducting about heritage language schools' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. She was able to inform conference attendees about how our schools were thriving despite the many challenges that they face. We look forward to learning more about this research

The Coalition of Community-based Heritage Language Schools Annual Conference, American University. October 9-10, 2020

**M**embers of IHLA found out that while COVID-19 has closed many doors, it has opened a few windows. One positive event that has happened as a result of the pandemic is that the annual conference of the Coalition of Community-based Schools was moved online. As a result, IHLA was able to offer two presentations and



was able to pay the conference fee for IHLA schools interested in attending.

IHLA's first shared presentation was titled "**Engaging city, state, and national organizations; consulates and embassies; and boards of education.**" This presentation shared by Trey Calvin of the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Professor Marta McCabe as well as IHLA's very own Nina and Trudie! They discussed different ways that individual heritage language schools could make connections with bigger institutions. Participants were able to draft a letter introducing their school.

IHLA's second presentation was "**Hiring, training, and retaining effective teachers at community-based heritage language schools in the USA and Canada.**" This presentation was offered by Renate Ludanyi, Sigrid Hass-Belluz, and Trudie Aberdeen. Participants were treated to a lively discussion about the realities of finding excellent teachers. They also looked at the processes that schools need to follow. After that they learned about non-monetary rewards that could be offered to teachers to encourage them to stay.

40<sup>th</sup> German Language Schools (GLSC) Professional Development Conference. German Consulate General. November 13-15, 2020

**O**n October 14, 2020, IHLA and Móðurmál (Iceland) partnered together to share our knowledge and expertise about developing

plurilingual students. The workshop titled "Critical pedagogy: Creating identity texts" was shared with German heritage language teachers all across North America. Teachers learned why they should engage plurilingual education with their students and how they might promote pluralism through meaningful activities.

Móðurmál's Heritage Language Education Conference. Reykjavik, Iceland. November 20-21, 2020

IHLA was honoured to be able to share about our organization with our sister umbrella organization, Móðurmál. IHLA partnered with them in 2017 and we have never looked back! This year we were able to attend their annual conference which was held online this year! We shared about the history of IHLA and benefits of being a member.

Special Invited talk for the Coalition of Community-based schools. Resilience and Creativity during COVID-19, November 30, 2020

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of November IHLA will be presenting on how our schools have been doing since the start of the pandemic. This qualitative presentation will be shared alongside of quantitative research conducted in the United States on the same topic. Heritage Language schools across the globe are learning how to navigate through this pandemic. We are excited to learn from one another.

## Being a member in good standing

**T**o be an IHLA member in good standing your school needs to a) complete a registration form, b) pay IHLA membership fees, c) participate at MLD through a table (and a book or presentation), d) volunteer at IHLA fundraising events, and e) participate in at least 3 IHLA sponsored professional development sessions.