

# Friends of Simon Evaluation Report 2020/21

**M NINOW CONSULTING**

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## Draw Forth All...

We ourselves learn as we teach, and we redesign Friends of Simon in light of our experience conducting instruction. Our mission is summarized by the phrase, **Draw Forth All**, which combines the Latin root of the word education ("to draw forth") with the moral commitment of Nobel Laureate and SFU honouree, Bishop Desmond Tutu, specifically his call to serve and honour all people.

Teaching is often seen as the transmission of knowledge, in the manner of filling up empty minds. *Education, however, is a process that builds on the prior experience of the learner and evokes new learning through engagement, questioning, and acknowledgment of the individual.*

– Paul Shaker, Professor emeritus; founder of Friends of Simon

I moved to Canada in 2008. I didn't speak any English; we were new in the country, and we had nothing. My parents both worked as we had bills to pay, so I would come home to an empty house. I joined Friends of Simon to learn English, make friends and for company after school. Having Friends of Simon, as a newcomer, was a very big deal because you feel like you're in this new environment where you don't belong, taking up space that's not yours. So, when someone makes you feel like you do belong, it makes a huge difference in the way you view yourself, your education and society.

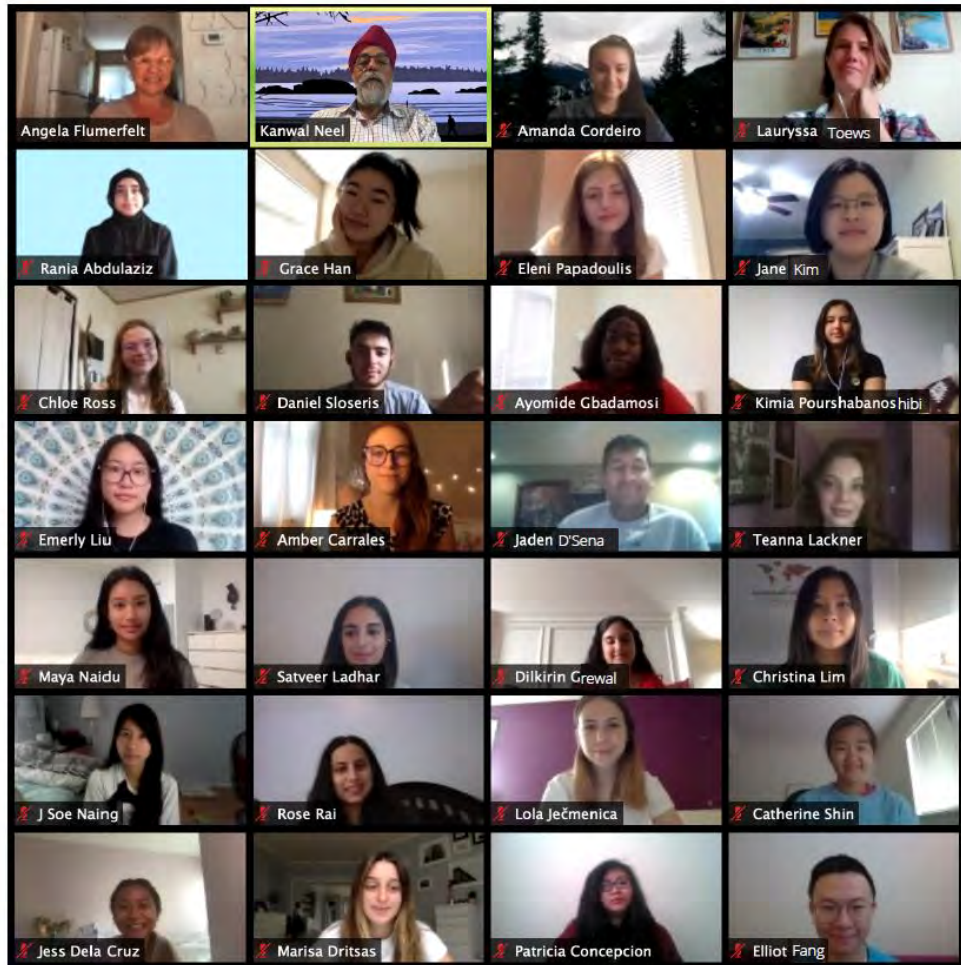
- Former Friends of Simon student

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# Friends of Simon

## Evaluation Report 2020/21



“This program is a wonderful opportunity to build leadership skills and problem-solving skills. It also made me feel much more connected to my university’s community.”

2021 FOS Tutor

## INTRODUCTION

The Friends of Simon (FOS) program recruits, prepares, and assigns university students as mentor-tutors in partnering public schools and libraries in the Lower Mainland. FOS works to increase school success through after-school programs in small group and individualized settings. This year, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the FOS program continued in an online format (a change which was initiated in March 2020).

The FOS program is based on the premise that students in the elementary and high school grades who are struggling to achieve because of a range of challenges such as recent immigration, refugee experiences, poverty and learning disabilities can benefit from after school tutoring provided by university students. The tutoring, often one-to-one, is relationship based and focuses on the unique needs of each student. The goal is to support parents and teachers in helping their children/students achieve their full potential. Tutoring is provided free of charge to the students, many of whom would not be able to attend if their families had to pay for the afterschool program.

Instruction is based on current trends in pedagogy and tutors receive training and supervision from members of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University (SFU) who themselves are involved in education research. This year was the fifteenth consecutive year of operation for FOS.

Funding for FOS from major donors for the 2020/21 year was provided by The Gadhia Family, the Mowafaghian Foundation, The Paleologous Family (George & Joelle), Rogers, and SFU-Surrey TD Community Engagement Centre, United Way of the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Foundation (listed alphabetically). Private anonymous donors also provided program funding through the SFU Advancement office.

## Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation Report

This evaluation will report on the process and outcomes gathered for the Friends of Simon Program for the 2020/21 academic year. The report consists of three main sections: the introduction, the program overview and, beginning on page 16, the annual evaluation.

Annual evaluations are conducted for the FOS Program to assess the provision of literacy and numeracy tutoring and mentorship at sites in Burnaby, Port Moody, and Surrey; and to support continuous program improvement.

The evaluation has five objectives:

1. To provide an overview of 2020/21 FOS program implementation.
2. To identify FOS inputs, outputs, and outcomes.
3. Provide funders and other relevant community stakeholders with a clear picture of the impact that the FOS Program has had on participants and tutors.
4. To analyze the strengths and challenges of the FOS Program.

- To provide recommendations that will assist with future planning decisions and increasing the efficiency and impact for the FOS Program.

## Scope

This evaluation covers the period from September 2020 to June 2021. It includes information about each site, the online platform, the students enrolled in the program, the staff members who coordinate the program and the tutors engaged in supporting the students.

## Methodology

This evaluation was created in collaboration with FOS staff and tutors who played a role in data collection. Research methods were designed to be consistent with the objectives stated above.

The evaluation data collection methodology included a mix of qualitative and quantitative data. As the FOS program is an after-school literacy program, it is difficult to determine a fully causal effect between this program and a quantitative increase in literacy levels in participants - it is for this reason that an emphasis is placed on the collection of qualitative data (with associated quantitative data where it was available). The following table presents the data collection methods employed for this evaluation report.

**Data Collection Methodology for the 2020/21 Program Evaluation**

Stakeholder Info	Data Collection Method	Assessment
Students	Review registration and attendance	Program size and attendance tracking
Students	Tutor focus groups and site coordinator surveys	Characterization of student demographics
Students	Student satisfaction survey	To assess program outcomes - <i>56 elementary and 51 secondary and middle school students completed surveys</i>
Students	Parent Survey	To assess program outcomes from the parent's perspective. - <i>36 surveys completed</i>
Students, tutors, and sites	Site Coordinator Survey	To assess program outcomes - <i>10 surveys completed</i>
Tutors	Tutor focus group	To gather feedback and stories on program outcomes - <i>10 participants in 2 groups</i>

Stakeholder Info	Data Collection Method	Assessment
Tutors	On line survey - (UWLM/RBC Future Leaders Online Survey)	To gather information from tutors about demographics, skills, networks, and job readiness - <i>25 surveys completed</i>
Former tutors	Unsolicited communications from former tutors	To determine longer term benefits of being a tutor for Friends of Simon

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Friends of Simon Program is offered to elementary, middle, and high school students generally aged 6 -15. The program targets refugee, immigrant, or ELL (English Language Learner) children and those who face barriers to learning and academic achievement. FOS tutoring sessions offer a combination of homework assistance, engaging literacy and numeracy exercises, and social and physical activity (physical activity limited this year due to online format of program).

FOS programming was offered at 11 public schools and one library in the region this year. When COVID 19 caused FOS to become an online program. The Surrey Libraries, City Centre Library, TD Community Engagement Centre site represents an alternate program format that is funded through the SFU Surrey TD Community Engagement Centre and serves elementary and high school aged students.

## FOS Program Logic Model

The following logic model shows inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes for the FOS Program in 2020/21.

Friends of Simon Logic Model	
<b>Inputs</b>	<p><b>Major Donors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitas - COVID bags for participating families</li> <li>• The Gadhia Family</li> <li>• The Mowafaghian Foundation</li> <li>• The Paleologous Family (George &amp; Joelle)</li> <li>• Rogers</li> <li>• SFU- Surrey TD Community Engagement Centre</li> <li>• United Way of the Lower Mainland</li> <li>• Vancouver Foundation, and</li> <li>• Private anonymous donors through the SFU Advancement office</li> </ul> <p><b>Tutors, Staff &amp; Consultants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 25 Tutors</li> </ul>

<b>Friends of Simon Logic Model</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 Program Director</li> <li>▪ 2 Program Coordinators</li> <li>▪ 3 Program Assistants</li> <li>▪ 1 External Program Evaluator</li> </ul>
	<p><b>On-Site Contributions</b> At 12 sites the following are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supervisory staff (site coordinators)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>In Kind Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rogers donated 10 data-enabled tablets for students</li> <li>▪ Donation of 4 used Apple desktop computers for students</li> <li>▪ SFU legal, human resource and budgetary support</li> <li>▪ SFU program support</li> <li>▪ SFU Financial Aid</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After-school homework (in person or online) programs with academic, physical, and social activities provided by tutors to support immigrant, refugee and at-risk populations.</li> <li>2. The team of tutors (with youth, multilingualism, and diversity as assets), develop mentoring relationships with the students to support their learning goals, cultural transitions, and personal development.</li> <li>3. Tutors provide targeted and personalized assistance on site and on-line with academics, literacy, and numeracy.</li> <li>4. Tutors model a strong academic self-concept and provide linkages to the post-secondary environment.</li> <li>5. Tutors receive innovative training to equip themselves with the pedagogical skills required for FOS work.</li> <li>6. Tutors work in a team environment that supports experiential learning and increasing effectiveness.</li> </ol>
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of children participating in Friends of Simon Programs</li> <li>• Number of tutors participating in Friends of Simon Programs</li> <li>• Number of sites offering Friends of Simon Programs</li> <li>• Number of tutoring sessions and contact hours per year</li> <li>• Attendance rates at each site</li> <li>• Ratio of students to tutors at each site</li> <li>• Number of tutor training sessions offered per year</li> </ul>



<b>Friends of Simon Logic Model</b>	
<b>Immediate Outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students who participate in FOS can make constructive use of their afterschool time.</li> <li>2. FOS students build healthy relationships with young adults.</li> <li>3. FOS students improve their self-esteem and become more optimistic</li> <li>4. FOS students improve their academic achievement, academic self-concept, and school engagement.</li> <li>5. FOS tutors develop skills and knowledge through training and experience to support vulnerable students academically, socially and emotionally.</li> </ol>
<b>Intermediate Outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FOS students respond positively to tutor role modeling, which is reflected in their decision making about their future.</li> <li>2. Families feel supported in helping their children achieve their maximum potential and become productive engaged citizens</li> <li>3. Tutors develop a sense of belonging on campus and clarity about future professional pathways</li> </ol>

## FOS Core Principles and Values

The following core principles and values have been developed for the Friends of Simon Program.



## FOS Sites

This year the Friends of Simon Program operated at 12 sites in the municipalities of Burnaby, Port Moody, and Surrey, all located in the Metro Vancouver region. The Friends of Simon sites

are carefully chosen to ensure that limited program resources are being allocated to the municipalities, neighbourhoods, and schools with the highest need.

The Program is delivered in three terms at most sites: fall (September to December), spring (January to April) and summer (May to June).

## Site Coordinators

Each FOS site is supported by a staff person, called a site coordinator, who provides program supervision, and when the program is in-person, provides snacks and ensures that the environment remains safe and welcoming. It is often the site coordinators who share background information about students (when relevant and appropriate) and handle discipline issues. This year as Friends of Simon continued online tutoring, it was the site coordinators who facilitated the virtual connections between students and tutors. These site coordinators can be school English Language Learner teachers, youth workers, principals, vice principals, or agency program managers.

## Program Staff & Operations

The Friends of Simon Program is supported by a team of highly qualified staff based at Simon Fraser University. Generally, the staff members administer and provide quality control and improvement to the FOS Program. FOS currently has the following staff positions and personnel:

- Program Director: Kris Magnusson - Former Dean of Education, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University
- Program Coordinators: Angela Flumerfelt & Kanwal Neel
- Program Assistants: Grace Han, Maya Naidu and Amanda Cordeiro



ANGELA FLUMERFELT, KRIS MAGNUSSON, AND KANWAL KNEEL

These staff members undertake the following responsibilities to ensure efficient and effective program operation:

### Friends of Simon Staff Responsibilities

Responsibility	Details
Selection, scheduling & training of tutors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising for, screening, selecting, and training suitable tutors</li> <li>• Placing tutors in sites</li> </ul>
Liaising with partner agencies and sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selecting program sites</li> <li>• Meeting with and gathering feedback from site coordinators and sponsoring agencies</li> <li>• Addressing emerging issues, problems and questions related to the program</li> </ul>
Managing budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutor payment, travel reimbursements, meetings, and resources</li> </ul>
Program quality control and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-going site visits (currently online) to observe and report on site and tutor quality</li> <li>• Ongoing support to encourage the uptake of online tutoring</li> <li>• Gathering feedback and information to improve services to sites</li> <li>• Contracting with an external evaluator to design data collection methods and report on program impact and improvements</li> <li>• Assisting with data collection and data dissemination to the external evaluator for analysis</li> <li>• Evaluating effectiveness of training sessions</li> <li>• Ongoing formative assessment of tutor effectiveness</li> </ul>
Education and sharing of best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizing and delivering tutor training sessions and gathering suitable resources for tutors</li> <li>• Maintaining an online tutor site/community for tutors to interact, share and provide feedback on their experiences within the FOS Program</li> </ul>
Program outreach & sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying funding sources for program sustainability</li> <li>• Identifying opportunities to expand and enhance the program to meet the needs of additional communities and/or target groups</li> <li>• Outreach to the media and community partners to increase the FOS profile in the community</li> <li>• Managing FOS website and social media accounts</li> </ul>

## The Tutors

The tutors are undergraduate students attending Simon Fraser University. They are recruited on campus from a range of faculties including English, Health Sciences, Humanities, History, Sciences and Business. On average, tutors work two sessions per week. They are paid \$14 - \$16/ hour. They also receive compensation for travel and training.

The tutors aid with homework and support activities for improving literacy and numeracy skills, along with supportive mentoring, role modeling, and providing a connection to Canadian culture. The tutors gain valuable experience in the teaching environment working with vulnerable students who are facing a range of barriers to literacy and numeracy.

## Tutor Preparation

Over the course of the academic year tutors are typically offered a series of 9 in-person training sessions. This year there were 11 online sessions which were two hours in length, with an additional 30 minutes with lead tutors. They occurred on Saturday mornings. The topics covered in training sessions this year include:

- tutoring code of conduct
- pedagogical documentation
- understanding career development: tutors as agents of change
- numeracy and literacy strategies
- child protection
- reflective practice
- working with students with special needs
- understanding the Impact of trauma on the brain
- tutoring multilingual students
- managing challenging behaviours and situations in the classroom
- Understanding mental health

During the sessions tutors are encouraged to share their experiences and learn from their peers. Each training session also includes a segment for warm-up, announcements, and feedback from lead tutor reports. The latter usually provides an opportunity to deal with a behaviour management issue at each session.

Some regular segments included in all the sessions were “Read Aloud”, Doin’it Right (excerpts from Lead Tutor reports), and Stealworthy Ideas (tutors share their best literacy and numeracy strategies).

The tutors are required to attend the training sessions, and most are appreciative about having the training opportunity. During the tutor focus group, the tutors say that the training helps prepare them for what they will face in the classroom and that the sessions also provide an opportunity to connect with their peers and learn from each other’s experiences. This year, due to COVID 19 all training sessions were held by Zoom.

## Literacy and Numeracy Activities

The FOS tutors prepare literacy and numeracy activities for every tutoring session they lead. These activities are varied, multi modal, student centred and adaptable. They involve a range of approaches to support the development of all forms of language, literacy, and numeracy, and encourage movement and expression. They involve the students' active use of the language. The approach to working with newcomer, ELL and underachieving students is consistent with current literature and with the strategies recommended by the BC Ministry of Education. Literacy and numeracy activities include group games, facilitated discussions, and board/card games. The tutors must ensure that they are well prepared for a variety of scenarios during the sessions including having appropriate activities for smaller and larger than expected groups of students. The tutors also spend a significant amount of time during each session on homework assistance. Due to COVID 19 changes which led to a shift to the online programming there was much less of a physical activity component to the tutoring sessions.

## Ongoing Tutor Support

All FOS tutors receive ongoing support through:

- An SFU Online Canvas Site where tutors can find up to date posted information such as necessary forms, readings, schedules, and training session dates. Tutors can also communicate with each other and staff members; find replacements when they cannot work on a specific date and plan social events. Lead tutor reports are also submitted through this site.
- Peer support at training sessions and online through the Canvas Site
- FOS staff site visits - online
- Connecting in person or via email and telephone with staff
- During preparation and debriefing sessions before and after the tutoring sessions, and
- From the lead tutors at their tutoring sites.

## Lead Tutor Reports

After each FOS session, lead tutors are asked to capture attendance numbers, emerging site issues and other feedback from their experiences and submit this information in a lead tutor report. Staff members often respond to these reports. For the most part, these responses are to acknowledge some of the positive strategies the tutors were implementing. When a lead tutor remarks on something particularly effective that one of the tutors in their shift did, staff members often send these comments on to that tutor. This promotes a sense of teamwork with the tutors. Additionally, staff members monitor tutor attendance using the information from these reports. If staff members see a pattern emerging, they contact that tutor individually to see if something can be done to rectify the situation.

## Site Visits

The program coordinators conduct many site visits throughout the course of the year. Site visits are helpful for monitoring tutor performance, connecting in-person with site coordinators, understanding challenging situations, and conducting informal assessments about student needs and tutor/student ratios. The program coordinators make sure that they visit each tutoring time slot at least once each term, and they visit problematic sites more frequently. They try to ensure that each tutor on the roster is observed at least once each term. This year during the on-line programming all site visits occurred virtually.

## Changes at Friends of Simon

### COVID 19 Pandemic

The biggest change to the FOS program this year has been the COVID 19 pandemic, and the lockdown procedures implemented by Public Health in BC. In response to the outbreak in March 2020 all in-person tutoring was cancelled but Friends of Simon was able to pivot quickly and begin online tutoring for students who were enrolled in the program. This continued for the 2020/21 year. FOS offered on-line tutoring for groups of students at all sites. The Zoom platform allowed the tutors to meet the students as a group (in the same time slots as regular face-to-face sessions) and then divide into break out rooms.

FOS has created an abridged version of the Student User Manual that gives concise easy to follow instructions on how to install and log on to Zoom. FOS multi-lingual tutors have translated this document, with infographics, into 12 languages that are needed in the community (Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, Greek, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, Serbian, Somali, Spanish and Tagalog). FOS has produced a short video on uploading and installing Zoom and it is offered in multiple languages

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryKh11Uo-4k>).

Before the pandemic we had way more energetic kids that were talkative to each other and wanted to be part of everything. During COVID-19, we sometimes hear from kids that they haven't spoken to anybody all day. A lot of them are insecure about their living situation or the technology available to them, or just their technical skills. We've changed our session structures to help as much as we can. We have a breakout room just for technical support where a tutor will help you set up or better understand how to use zoom, and we've provided some technical equipment to kids in need as well as zoom manuals in many different languages. When kids see their friends in the virtual lobby they get excited. Being able to provide that social place for them to learn, talk to friends and feel good about themselves is so important. The usual question we get at the end of a session is "When are we going to see you all in-person?" It's honestly heartbreaking because we all wish we could see them in-person too.

2021 FOS tutor

FOS was able to procure some devices from the SFU Tech Collection and Distribution Initiative, as well as Rogers, for newcomer families in the community. FOS was also able to successfully apply for COVID Relief Funds from the Vancouver Foundation, which resulted in a grant of \$46,000.

FOS was well positioned to continue with on-line tutoring in September 2020. Support documents and videos were tested and ready to use, and tutors were experienced with online tutoring from last quarter of the 2019/2020 season. The SWIS partners in both Burnaby and Surrey have keenly connected FOS with newcomer families, and program coordinators. SWIS are getting many requests for tutoring and English help. Finally, due to COVID 19 FOS was not able to hold its annual April field trip to Simon Fraser University for FOS students this year.

## Equitas Project

### Community Action Project: COVID-19 Goody Bags

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, FOS tutors at Edmonds School in Burnaby who worked on this project decided to focus on the rights to safety and healthcare, while also promoting kindness in their community. Through Zoom brainstorming the tutors and their students decided to make COVID-19 Goody Bags to provide relief to families in need who have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as newcomers and refugees in the community.

A total of 220 Goody Bags were created with two versions: 100 adult bags and 120 child bags. The adult bag contained a reusable mask, a bottle of hand sanitizer, and an Emergen-C (Vitamin C) packet. The children's bag contained a reusable mask, a bottle of hand sanitizer and a small toy. Within both bags a kind note is also included; each note was written by a student and was translated into the most commonly spoken languages in the community (Tigrinya, Dari/ Farsi and Arabic).



To get the Goody Bags out to the families which needed them the most, Friends of Simon collaborated with Edmonds School which hosts a Food Hub program.



# THE 2020/21 FRIENDS OF SIMON PROGRAM EVALUATION

This section will provide a detailed evaluation of the Friends of Simon (FOS) Program for the 2020/21 year. The evaluation begins with contextual information and outputs for the program this year and then focuses on outcomes for student participants, FOS sites and FOS tutors.



## Context: The FOS Program This Year

### Cumulative Enrollment Data

Friends of Simon had a total of 173 registered participants at tutoring sites during the 2020/21 academic year.

### FOS Student Participant Enrollment Data

Program	Number of enrolled participants in 2020/21
Elementary & Middle School (including library)	96
Secondary School (8 -12)	77
<b>Combined Total</b>	<b>173</b>

### Site Information

The following table describes the basic program outputs at each of the 12 FOS sites this year: including enrollment, attendance, and number of tutoring sessions.

#### Friends of Simon 2020/21 Program Outputs

Site	No. of students enrolled	Average no. of students /session	No. of tutors/ session	No. of tutoring sessions/ week and duration	No. of 2020/21 sessions (Fall & Spring)
<b>Burnaby School District</b>					
1. Lochdale Elementary	10	8	5	1 (2 hrs)	27
2. Edmonds Elementary	8	6	3	1 (1.5 hrs)	28
3. Cariboo Hill Secondary	20	6	3	1 (2 hrs)	21
4. Burnaby North Secondary	16	6	4	1 (2.25 hrs)	22
5. Morley Elementary	12	9	4	1 (2hrs)	27
6. Gilmore Community School	6	6	4	1 (2hrs)	26
7. Moscrop Secondary	11	11	5	1 (2hrs)	28
8. Burnaby Central	10	7	4	1 (2hrs)	25
<b>Port Moody</b>					
1. Moody Middle School	14	8	5	1 (2hrs)	22

Site	No. of students enrolled	Average no. of students /session	No. of tutors/ session	No. of tutoring sessions/ week and duration	No. of 2020/21 sessions (Fall & Spring)
Surrey School District					
2. Kwantlen Park Secondary	20	9	4	1 (1.75 hrs)	25
3. Green Timbers Elementary	16	4	3	1 (1.5 hrs)	17
SFU-TD Bank/Surrey Library - CEC					
4. Surrey Libraries, City Centre Library, TD Community Engagement Centre	30	26	6	1 (2.25 hrs)	28

## Attendance

Attendance data collected for the FOS online site programs over the course of the academic year shows there were average fluctuations in attendance for most sites. Due to the COVID 19 outbreak, attendance was fully online this year.

*Total number of FOS tutoring sessions for 2020/21 Academic year = 296.*

*Total number of individual student tutoring sessions for 2020/21 Academic year = 31,376*

*Based on average student attendance for each site, the tutor to student ratios varied from a minimum of 1 tutor to 1 student to a maximum of 1 tutor to 4 students. 11 FOS sites had ratios of 1 tutor to 2 students or less.*

Attendance rates as presented in the table above speak to the participants' satisfaction with the FOS programming. The interest and willingness to move to the online tutoring platform also demonstrates the strength of the relationships between the tutors and the students and the need for this type of support. The numbers also bode well for an ongoing online component for the program when sessions are returned to in-person.

## Student Demographics

Due to School District policy about disclosing students' personal information and the reticence of the students themselves to disclose personal information, detailed demographic information is no longer collected for FOS. We know from conducting surveys with site coordinators and speaking with the tutors that most of the students who participate in FOS are from families who have recently moved to Canada as immigrants or refugees (government assisted and refugee claimants). They are often English language learners (ELL). They are

usually Permanent Residents or are recent immigrants who have Canadian citizenship. In 2020/21 these students were from a range of countries including Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Mexico, Palestine, Iran, Eritrea, and Turkey.

Some of the FOS students are from families which are no longer defined as recent immigrants or refugees; however, the students have spent their early years somewhat isolated in their new Canadian homes with caregivers who did not speak English with them. As a result, their English language skills are limited when they start school. Some International students also attend FOS programming, especially at the Central Library program.

Additionally, some of the students have socio economic challenges at home which have had an impact on their ability to learn at school. Others have a variety of learning challenges and disabilities as well as social-emotional challenges. Some sites also report Indigenous student participants.

During regular school hours, some FOS students are participants in supportive learning classes and English Language Learner classes, while others are participants in mainstream classes.

## **Tutor Demographics and Characteristics**

In the 2020/21 year 25 tutors were employed in the FOS program. The majority of tutors indicated in their application forms that education or teaching was one of their career goal choices. Similar to the students they assist; FOS tutors have diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and speak a variety of languages. Many are newcomers to Canada and/or identify as a visible minority. The majority of tutors are female. Most tutors are between 19 and 24 years old.

## **Key Activities**

Over the years, site coordinators and tutors have identified the top activities for achieving positive academic, social, and emotional changes for the FOS students. These activities are:

1. Developing a mentoring relationship: this is especially important when working with vulnerable students who may take some time to develop trust and open up to learning.
2. Encouraging group learning and activities for verbal, social, mental and physical engagement: FOS tutors recognize that the afterschool program needs to incorporate a range of activities to keep students engaged.
3. Individual one to one tutoring time: the potential for effective individualized assistance increases when tutors have time to work regularly with students one at a time.
4. Providing the opportunity to practice English in a safe environment (reading and conversation): tutors make a point of creating a safe zone where the students can practice, make mistakes, ask questions and learn without fear.

5. Numeracy and literacy activities: tutors work hard to prepare a variety of activities for their sessions every week.
6. Providing support and the right environment to get homework done: For a number of students their time at FOS is the only time they have to focus on their homework.

Site coordinators emphasized that it is the blending of the various activities listed above that is most important in making the program as effective as possible.

## What three skills are important to be a tutor with Friends of Simon?



## The Results: FOS Student Participants

This section provides data and analysis from a range of sources regarding participant outcomes for the FOS programs. Feedback from the students themselves is highly valuable when assessing the impact of the program. We conduct a student survey at the end of the school year to get feedback on the program directly from the students receiving tutoring. This year, we conducted the FOS secondary student survey. Elementary students used the United Way School's Out survey.

Generally, students seem to value FOS because of the regular assistance they receive with their homework and other academic support provided by the tutors. When students are asked what they liked about the FOS afterschool program and how it could be improved they are usually very positive about their experiences; most say they like the tutors and the activities, which include literacy and numeracy games, sports and physical activities, and assistance with homework and school lessons. They seem to appreciate both social group activities and individual assistance time with the tutors. Often, they also speak about the friendships they

have with the tutors and other students, and they talk about the fun activities and opportunities for meaningful conversations.

### **Student Surveys: Elementary Student Feedback**

For 2020/21 the regular FOS survey tool was not used for evaluation of outcomes for FOS elementary students, rather the United Way of the Lower Mainland's School's Out evaluation survey was employed. 56 Elementary school program participants completed the UWLM survey. In the survey students were asked to rate a series of statements reflecting their connectedness, health and wellness, interests and competencies, service to community, and social and emotional development. Copies of the survey tools and a summary of responses are in the appendix.

**Highlights from the survey include:**

- A cumulative improvement in all areas over the course of the year.
- The three areas of most significant change were connectedness, social and emotional development, and health and wellness.

### **Student Surveys: Middle School and High School Feedback**

In 2021, 51 Middle and High School program participants completed year end student surveys<sup>1</sup>. The students were asked to rate their learning skills, their confidence levels and sense of belonging (not okay, okay, or great) both before starting friends of Simon in 2020 and towards the end of the year when the survey was administered. There are eight areas where students were asked to rate themselves:

- Classroom participation
- Reading and understanding everything received in class
- Doing the math assigned in class
- Finishing homework
- Marks for assignments and tests
- Feelings about continuing education after graduation from high school
- Feelings about the connection to the school community (friends and teachers)
- Feelings about the future

**Highlights from the survey include:**

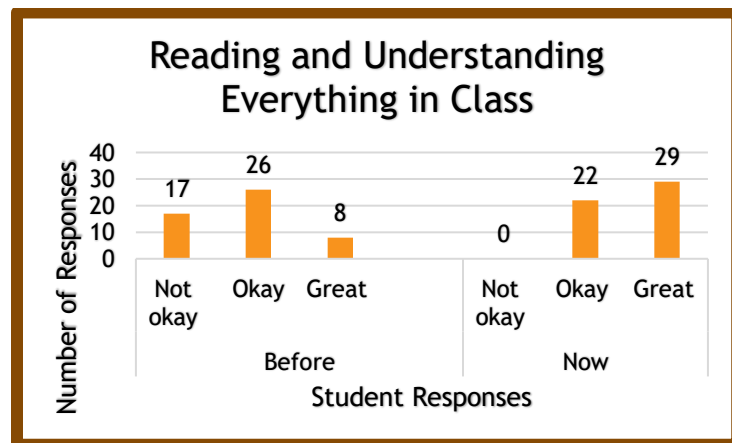
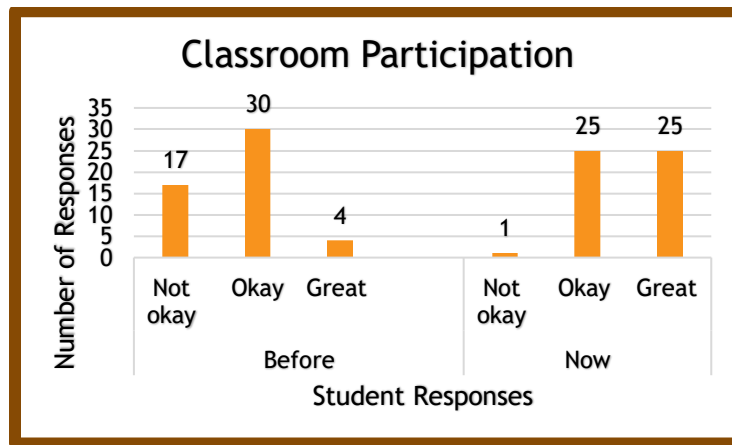
- There was a cumulative improvement in all areas over the course of the year.

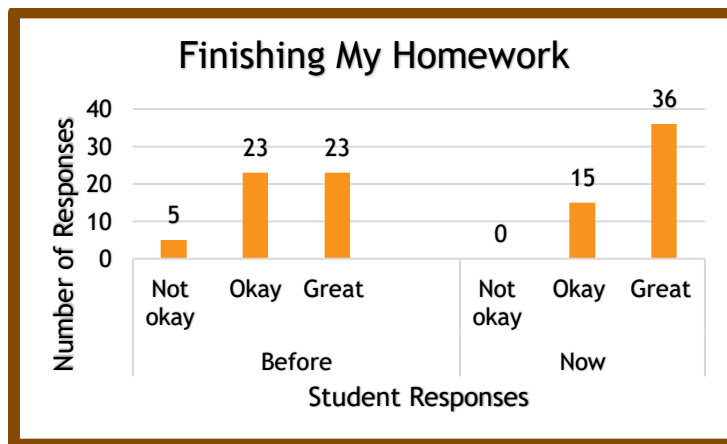
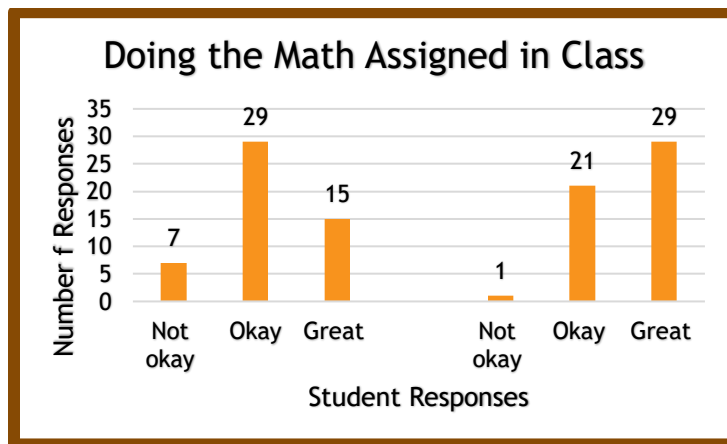
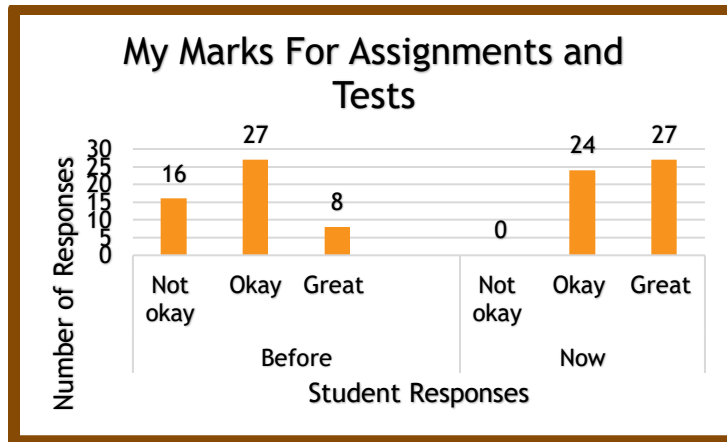
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<sup>1</sup> The survey tool used was a pre-post survey, which was based on a survey methodology developed by Magnusson and Hiebert (2014). It is administered once at the end of the school year to assess improvement in the student's learning skills over the year.

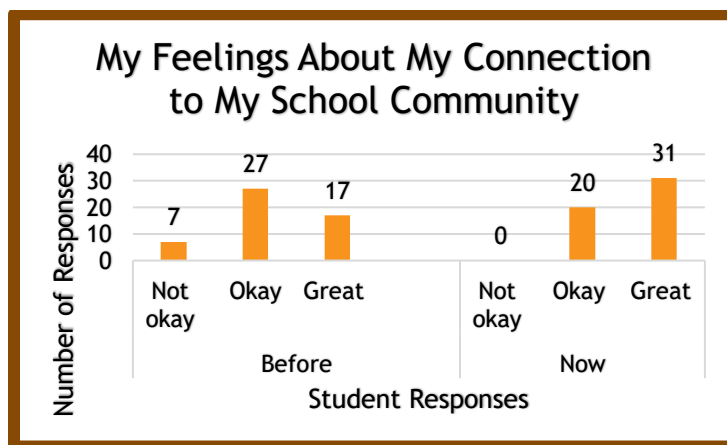
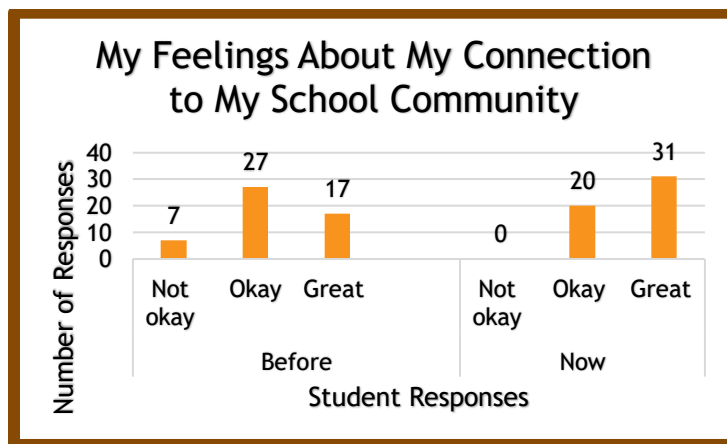
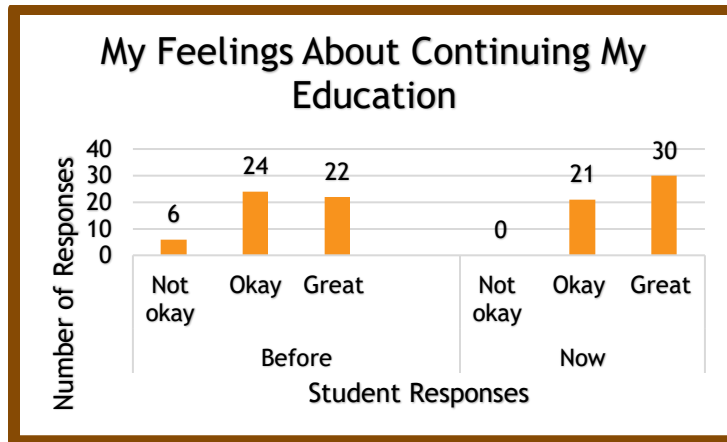
- The three areas of most significant change were “reading and understanding everything in class”, “classroom participation”, and “my marks for assignments and tests”.
- 92% of middle and high school students who completed the survey said that FOS tutors helped them (“a little”, or “a lot”) to achieve these positive changes listed above.

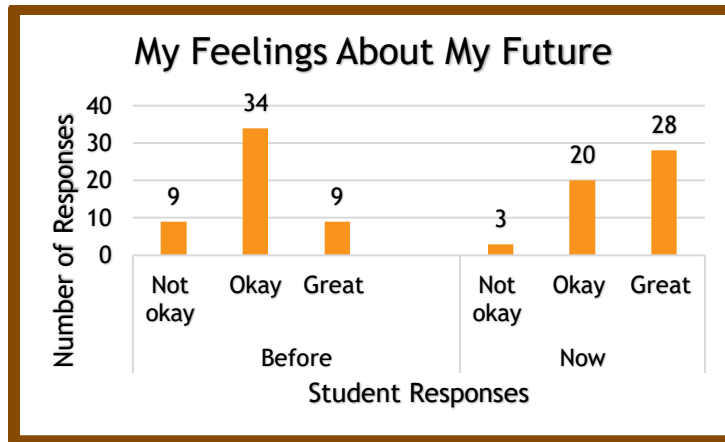
The following bar graphs depict some of the changes that the middle and high school students reported in the surveys. The “Before” graphs show how the students rate their learning skill at the beginning of the year before they started FOS and the “Now” graph shows how the students rate their learning skill at the end of the school year.











When the students were asked, in the same survey, if FOS tutors had helped them achieve the reported changes depicted in the graphs above, 92% responded positively (“a little”, or “a lot”).

### Parent Perspective

One of the intended outcomes for the Friends of Simon program is that “families feel supported in helping their children achieve their maximum potential and become productive engaged citizens”. Because of this, the parent perspective is always valuable when evaluating the program. This is even more the case during COVID 19 when all tutoring is online, and parents may see firsthand how their children interact with and learn from the tutors. This year we were able to collect 36 completed parent surveys from several FOS sites.

I would like to thank and appreciate hard work and support of all members of the good and useful program.

2021 Parent of FOS student

92% of the parents who responded to the survey indicated that they think that their child likes going to the FOS program. 97% of the respondents also felt that the FOS program was helping their child to do better at school.

When asked how FOS helped their children most parents indicated that their children received help with their reading and math, and that FOS tutors helped their child become more confident at school. Another top answer was help with homework.

When parents were asked how Friends of Simon could be improved most said the program was fine or offered no suggestions. There were a few responses which suggested a parental preference for homework or reading assignments from the tutors.

My child is quite fond of the FOS program.

2021 Parent of FOS student

## Tutor and Site Coordinator Perspective

FOS tutors provided input for this year's evaluation through a focus group. Site coordinators provided input through an online survey.

Tutors report that the most gratifying part of their work is seeing the positive changes that occur in the student participants over the time that they participate in FOS programming. The changes they see in the students are both social-emotional and academic. Site coordinators say that having consistent tutors and consistent attendance on the part of the student helps improve the student outcomes. Comments from site coordinators and tutors this year have been clustered below under headings which correlate to the key stated outcomes for the program.

### Constructive Use of Afterschool Time

Site coordinators speak of the positive fun environment that the tutors create for the students to learn and build social connections. They say this has been even more important this year as students have had to deal with increased isolation because of COVID 19. Even with online programming students were still excited to attend. The site coordinators also emphasize that the program is offered free of charge, this makes it possible for students whose families could not afford to pay for tutoring to participate. These are students who may not have anyone at home who can help them with their academic work. FOS provides a stress-free zone for learning about a new culture and language.

The program compensated for the lack of in-person connection that was missed because of the pandemic. Chatting and working with a tutor for two hours decreased the sense of isolation that many students experienced and contributed to increased well-being.

2021 FOS Site Coordinator.

### Building Health Relationships with Young Adults

FOS tutors see themselves as role models for the students they tutor. The tutors point out that it is **the relationships between the tutors and students that**

**are the most valuable component of the program.** For the students - knowing that there is someone who knows about their schoolwork and cares whether they pass an exam or learn a new skill is a very powerful motivator. Students often do not want to ask their teachers about something they do not understand in front of the other students. Being able to ask a tutor privately allows them to find the answers they seek and overcome their challenges.

### Building Self Esteem and Confidence

FOS tutors help build self-esteem and confidence in their students by taking time to develop positive mentoring relationships. They work with the students as they are, building off what the students bring to the program and using personalized encouragement. They get to know their students and let them know when they see them growing, excelling, and improving.

Site coordinators agree that the FOS program helps participating students to build their self-esteem. The safe environment, which is created by the tutors, allows students to ask questions and try out new skills. The learning relationships between the tutors and the students allows for an exploration of new activities and skills. The students come to understand that they are not alone in their challenges - they see their peers in the program who also have struggles and they learn about their tutors and the struggles they may have had as newcomers growing up in Canada or as a person with academic challenges in school.

With tutoring assistance, students may become more confident in the classroom setting and be willing to answer questions. Simply having homework completed allows students the opportunity to participate more confidently.

### **Engagement in the Learning Process**

FOS helps students engage in their learning process first and foremost by making the tutoring sessions fun. The tutors also model how to learn and how to be excited by learning. When they can, they take the students farther in their school assignments - showing them what is possible. They connect the learning to the everyday lives of the students. The tutors also take time to understand where the learning challenges really lie; for example - it may not be in understanding the math or science concepts - it may be primarily an English language challenge. While each site is different and some site coordinators cannot draw a direct correlation between participation in an FOS program and better classroom engagement, some site coordinators enthusiastically agree that the tutoring program improves classroom participation for FOS students.

### **Academic Improvement**

According to the tutors the FOS program can help students improve academically through individual attention and mentoring relationships. Site coordinators are also reporting academic improvement in FOS students, especially when their program participation is regular and consistent. Tutors will go over class notes with students and reteach material when students did not understand what their teacher was saying in class. Tutors sometimes use multiple methods and styles to communicate the material and to support the learning. Tutors model the learning process so students can see what it looks like, and they encourage the students to get comfortable asking questions when they do not understand something. Online programming this year continued to include reading, writing, and math activities.

### **Transition to a New Culture**

FOS helps with a transition to a new culture for newcomers by introducing the students to everyday life and how things work. Many of the tutors relate to their newcomer students because they were once newcomers themselves. Tutors regularly ask their students about their culture and language of origin. They encourage the students not to lose their own cultural roots - there is no pressure to assimilate.

The online environment, while not optimal for socializing, still allowed newcomer students to get to know each other while enjoying fun activities and receiving assistance with their homework.

When asked if the FOS program meets the needs of refugees and immigrants, site coordinators who are at schools and facilities with this population are enthusiastic about the program. They strongly agree that the FOS program supports immigrant and refugee student needs and assists them in their transition to Canadian society and culture. Playful and interactive teaching encourages students to use their new language openly and effectively.

I was anxious before but training online and Zoom manuals created were very helpful - I referred to those manuals a lot.

2021 FOS Tutor

For more on the tutor perspective on the impacts of the FOS program on students see the online collection of stories from this year entitled “A Year in Zoom” <https://www.sfu.ca/fostutor/tutor-writings.html> .

## **The Future for On-line Tutoring at FOS**

In 2020/21 the FOS program was conducted online for the full year. Tutors found the transition to online tutoring challenging but with support at the training sessions and technical support for the Zoom platform, along with manuals in multiple languages for the students and their families to get set up on Zoom the transition happened relatively smoothly.

In a 2021 survey of tutors, conducted for planning purposes for the FOS program, tutors indicated that they prefer in-person tutoring to online tutoring. This is primarily because they can develop better relationships with students and communicate more easily with them. There is also less opportunity for one-to-one tutoring and socializing between students does not happen either in the online sessions. Internet service challenges also make the online format challenging. Most do qualify their preference by saying that the pandemic needs to be controlled first before going back to in-person tutoring. A few tutors saw some benefits to on-line tutoring such as not having to travel or being more time efficient.

I also wanted to say a HUGE thank you to both of you (FOS Program Coordinators) for all your hard work this semester! I know that transitioning from in person tutoring to online tutoring was scary unknown territory, but we did it! All thanks to your efforts, thoughts, and considerations we made online tutoring happen! Now I feel that all the tutors are well versed on Zoom and ready to take on challenges head on from the way that we were able to overcome this pandemic.

2021 FOS Tutor

One of the things they thought could be continued from the online format are power point presentations. Tutors found some students took in information better when multiple formats are used such as the oral in combination with a visual presentation. The students like using technology in their learning and can be useful for some games such as Kahoot and jeopardy. Reading online was also popular because there are many online books which are always available, and the students learn where to find them. Some could see a partial role for online tutoring next fall.

Some site coordinators liked the ability of the online format to include some students from sites which do not have an FOS program. They also feel the online format has also helped students become more technologically savvy and comfortable with online formats such as Zoom. Overall site coordinators feel a return to in-person tutoring would be best for the students in the fall. They do see a potential for keeping a portion of the program online, especially to reach students at schools which do not have an in-house FOS program. One site coordinator suggested surveying parents to determine the need for an online component.

The tutors are very sensitive to students' emotional needs, especially the ones related to isolation, anxiety, lack of in-person social connections, and family relocation in some situations caused by the pandemic.

2021 FOS Site Coordinator

For tutor training most tutors indicated that they would prefer in-person training sessions, primarily for the social interaction, the improved learning format and the free breakfast. There were, however, several tutors who preferred on-line training because it involved no travel, and it was time efficient. The tutors also said that they communicated almost more easily through social media than in person and that FOS staff were very easy to communicate with through email. Some suggested a hybrid model for training including both in-person and on-line sessions.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

This academic year was a challenging year for both students and tutors. FOS staff recognized this and added additional supports for the tutors during training. The tutors said that they felt the mindfulness sessions were very helpful. They learned how to talk with their students about mental health, emotions, and well-being. They learned how to support mental well-being with brain breaks and meditation. The mental health focus in the training sessions not only helped the students but also the tutors.

## **The Results: FOS Sites**

In the annual survey, site coordinators have described the FOS impact on their organizations and schools as highly positive. They say that FOS extends the participating students' schooling day and provides them with stimulating afterschool programming. The students have opportunities for one-on-one learning, consistent homework time and extra assistance when

Please pass along gratitude to the tutors- Friends of Simon really does make such an impact on our students. Knowing that they are supported and connecting during a year when so much has been restricted (extra-curricular sports teams, field trips, after school programs) is a really good feeling. The protective factor for students' mental health that tutors provide, especially this year, is so important. I know that many tutors are likely struggling with all of the lifestyle changes (who isn't!) it's just nice to know that there are happy, kind, caring individuals striving to connect with students through the FOS program!

2021 Teacher at an FOS school site

needed. The tutoring is free for families so the students have access to a program which they otherwise could not afford.

Some site coordinators say that FOS tutors can help the school become a positive experience for the participating students. FOS creates an inclusive environment where all students are welcome and cared for; students are accepted unconditionally. Site coordinators say that FOS programs can add to the sense of community for participating students.

FOS can attract students who like the program because it is fun and because they can develop strong connections with the tutors. The tutors are close in age to many of the students and many have shared similar life experiences. This allows them access to the trust and acceptance of the students and their positive role modeling, advice, encouragement, and motivation are often highly impactful.

Site coordinators have pointed out that some newcomer parents, either because of their lack of formal education or their negative experiences with formal education in their country of origin, may initially exhibit a distrust of the school system and programs like FOS. This can change over time and parents can come to view FOS tutors as part of the team that is helping them support their children to achieve their potential.

## The Results: FOS Tutors

The FOS program provides a challenging and rewarding experiential training opportunity for undergraduate university students, many of whom will pursue teaching or working with young people in the future. It allows the university students to gain leadership skills and see firsthand how they can positively impact the lives of vulnerable children and youth. The program also provides these undergraduates with a means to gain employment income during the academic year.

Most tutor feedback indicates a positive experience with the FOS programs. This year the tutors used words such as growth, creative, adapting, heartwarming, different, unique and experimental to describe their tutoring experience. In past years words such insightful, rewarding, inspiring, engaging,

I look back at the anxious person I was at the start of my FOS journey 2 years ago and can truly say that I have grown both personally and professionally as a result of this experience. ...As a soon-to-be elementary school teacher, my learning experiences as a tutor have been invaluable.

2021 FOS Tutor

My group of tutors are AMAZING!!! They are very approachable, understanding and respectful to the needs of our students. They pay extra attention to every detail of these sessions. Our students feel comfortable enough to talk with them about their issues. They have a great way of communication with me as a site coordinator and with our students.

2021 FOS Site Coordinator

inspiring, challenging, exciting, and enriching were used to describe their tutoring experiences.

Over the years tutors have identified several benefits associated with FOS program employment. They enjoy being in a role that is part teacher and part friend. Tutors feel that the students can open up more with them than the teachers and confide in them when they are struggling at school. This allows for real change to happen in the students' lives which results in a rewarding tutoring experience. Many of the tutors speak about the value they place on being able to contribute and have a positive impact on the students' lives. The tutors also feel that the FOS program provides invaluable preparation for becoming a teacher and for other professions which involve working with, or understanding, vulnerable populations. In a survey conducted by one of the program funders this year, 96% of tutors surveyed strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I feel better prepared for the workforce after participating in this program".

Both in-person and online FOS has a positive workplace culture.

2021 FOS Tutor

In a 2019 online survey, FOS tutors were asked a series of questions about their tutoring experience.

**Here are the highlights of the survey:**

- **100% of respondents said they see themselves as a role model for the students they tutor.**
- **81% said that they feel adequately prepared (skills and knowledge) to support vulnerable students academically and socially and emotionally**
- **86% said that their work as an FOS tutor gives them clarity about their future goals.**
- **95% said that their work as an FOS tutor gave them a stronger sense of belonging at SFU.**

Tutors report that they feel the program is well organized and they feel well supported by FOS staff. Tutors have regular opportunities to talk with staff and their peers about challenges they may be facing. Tutor teams have 15 minutes (paid time) before and after their tutoring sessions to brief and debrief with their colleagues at the site. They feel this helps them to address issues at the site in a coordinated fashion.

The tutors also feel that the training is very helpful in preparing the tutors for their work with the students. The topics covered are useful and interesting. Site coordinators who responded to the question "Do you think that FOS tutors have adequate training and experience to support vulnerable students academically, socially and emotionally" felt that the training they have received is excellent and goes a long way in preparing them for the tutoring work with vulnerable children and youth, including refugees. Some recognized that



the skills and abilities of the tutors varied with some being stronger on the academic side while others excel in the social and emotional area.

Tutors indicated that the training topics they found the most interesting this year were mental health, mindfulness, anti-bullying, physical literacy, child protection, emotional learning, self-care and resilience.

The site coordinators also provided positive feedback about the tutor's ability to shift to online tutoring. They praised the tutors for their ability to solve technical issues quickly and efficiently and to find creative ways to engage with the students in a new format.

The training sessions are suited to fit not only for students we teach but ourselves as well - I always see our training sessions together as personal growth workshops too.

2021 FOS Tutor

## Conclusion

The Friends of Simon program continues to offer highly effective mentor-tutor support to elementary, middle, and high school students who face a range of learning challenges. This support allows the participating students to build healthy relationships with young adults, improve their school engagement, self-esteem and academic achievement, and to make constructive use of their afterschool time. The program has also successfully transitioned to an online tutoring format this year to adhere to public health orders and maintain student and tutor health.



Friends of Simon tutors are developing skills and knowledge to support vulnerable students academically, socially and emotionally both now in their current role as tutors and later in their professional work. Their tutoring experience helps these SFU students to feel a sense of belonging on campus and clarity about their future professional pathways.

**APPENDIX 1**

**United Way School's Out Survey Responses**



United Way  
Lower Mainland

## School's Out Program Survey Results

Grade 4-7

Grade K-3

30

Respondents

Organization

Friends of Simon - Burnaby

Region

All

Reporting Cycle

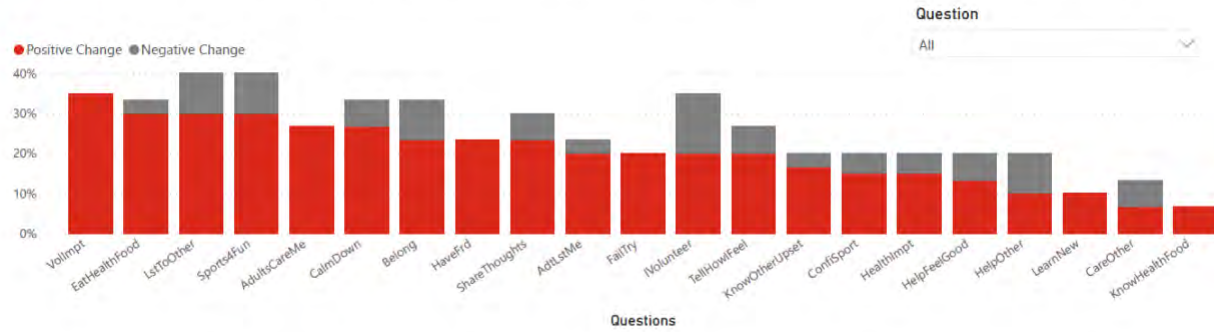
All

Survey Date

1/1/2020

5/3/2021

Connectedness	Health & Wellness	Interests & Competencies	Service to Community	Social & Emotional Development
79.47%	82.50%	93.33%	85.00%	79.17%
Positive Responses	Positive Responses	Positive Responses	Positive Responses	Positive Responses
21.58%	16.67%	15.00%	20.00%	20.00%
Positive Changes	Positive Changes	Positive Changes	Positive Changes	Positive Changes



United Way  
Lower Mainland

## School's Out Program Survey Results

Grade 4-7

26

Respondents

Organization

Friends of Simon - Surrey

Region

All

Reporting Cycle

All

Survey Date

1/1/2020

5/3/2021

Connectedness	Health & Wellness	Interests & Competencies	Service to Community	Social & Emotional Development
76.92%	80.77%	80.77%	76.92%	82.69%
Positive Responses	Positive Responses	Positive Responses	Positive Responses	Positive Responses
39.10%	38.46%	26.92%	30.77%	38.46%
Positive Changes	Positive Changes	Positive Changes	Positive Changes	Positive Changes

