

No lines, all laughs: École Fox Run students find fun and friendship in improv



École Fox Run School is offering a new opportunity for students interested in drama. The school has partnered with a community organization called Improv Jelly to offer improvisation as an after school experience for interested students during February and March.

[One theatre group](#) defines improvisation as “the art of making things up on the spot - characters, song lyrics, situations, whole scenes”.

It might sound terrifying to be on stage making things up as you go, but for students who are trying improv for the first time, it's a lot of fun.

“I like acting and already do it [in community theatre],” said Vinessa Sommerfeldt, a Grade 7 student. “I’ve never done improv before, so I wanted to try it. It has been nice to try something new. I like the fun games and the skits we do.”

“I joined because I wanted to improve my acting skills,” said Anne Swainson, a Grade 8 student. “It’s been really enjoyable. I like coming because people are so energetic and happy.”

“One of my dreams is to be a Broadway star,” said Onyxia Carriss, a Grade 8 student. “I think the chance to do improv is great. It’s cool that you can make stuff up on the spot.”

“I have a passion for drama,” said Elijah Carlson, a Grade 8 student. “I wanted to be involved because I like anything theatre related. I am really enjoying it - and the chance to meet new friends.”

The connection between Improv Jelly and Fox Run occurred thanks to a Town of Sylvan Lake staff member making the introduction.

“This has been a great opportunity for our students,” said Don Rattray, Principal of École Fox Run School. “We appreciate that students have had fun and found an environment to build and strengthen social skills and build positive relationships. Thanks to Improv Jelly for taking the time to create this experience for our students!”



Improv creates opportunities to build social skills and friendships

More than having fun, improv is about social acceptance and engaging with people in positive ways.

“We work really hard at the beginning to create a safe space,” said Nicole Leal, a co-founder of Improv Jelly. “That’s the most important. Once we build that, we also build awareness of basic improv skills through games and scenes. From there the students create their own fun. It’s wonderful hearing students laugh and be themselves.”

“Middle school is a great age to introduce improv,” said Hayley Nieth, who works with Improv Jelly. “I look back at myself at that age, and it was the most anxious and insecure time of growing up. Improv gave me a safe place to be - to look stupid, and have fun and be silly. It also gave me a way to meet friends and feel accepted. I’m excited to be introducing improv to these students.”

One example of an activity students participated in was called “advance and expand”. Students were put into pairs. One partner started telling a story. The other student could ask the storyteller to “expand”, which meant the speaker would have to add more details about that part of the story.



Or the listener could ask the speaker to “advance”, which meant to continue on with the story. Students leave the experience not only with a stronger ability to accept someone else’s improvisation ideas, but also with the ability to be a better listener and communicator in their personal relationships.

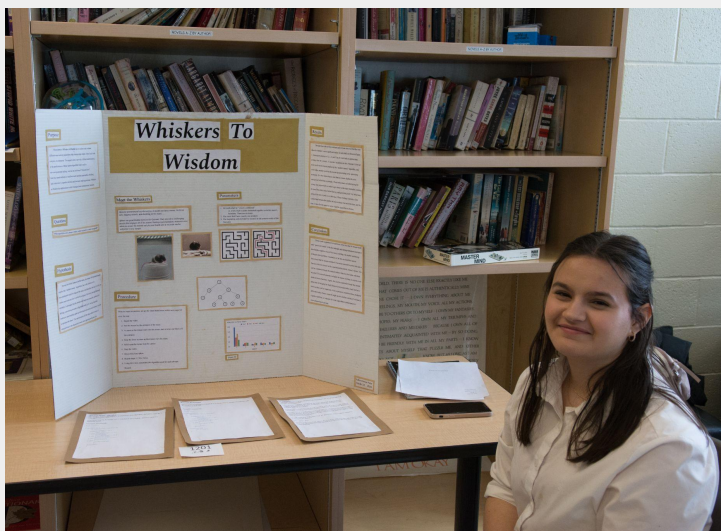
“Improv is about so much more than theatre,” said Nieth. “It’s about helping people connect with creativity, strengthen their friendships, and become better people.”

“Improv helps people engage with each other in natural and authentic ways, and with a lot of laughter,” said Leal. “I find it incredibly healing and relaxing, and it’s one way we can help to build a strong community.”



Mountainview Science and Technology Science Fair encourages creativity and innovation in science

Dozens of students from Chinook's Edge participated in the Mountainview Science and Technology Science Fair on March 2, 2024, at École Olds High School. All students, in Grades 5 to 12, who received medals move on to the regional science fair in Red Deer on April 6, 2024. Here are a few highlights:



Best of Fair and Gold Medal for the Grade 10 to 12 category went to Jules Owen-Pole, a Grade 12 student from Hugh Sutherland High School, pictured above. Her project is called "Whiskers to Wisdom".



Best of Fair and Gold Medal for the Grades 7 to 9 category went to Claire Friesen, a Grade 8 student from Cremona School. Claire's project is called "Predicting Flow Separation."



Two Best of Fair Winners in the Grade K to 2 category. Zoey (right) is in Grade 1 at Carstairs Elementary School, and her project is called "Magic Milk". Marin Bell (left) is in Grade 2 at Ross Ford Elementary School, and her project is called "Hydrophobic Fun".

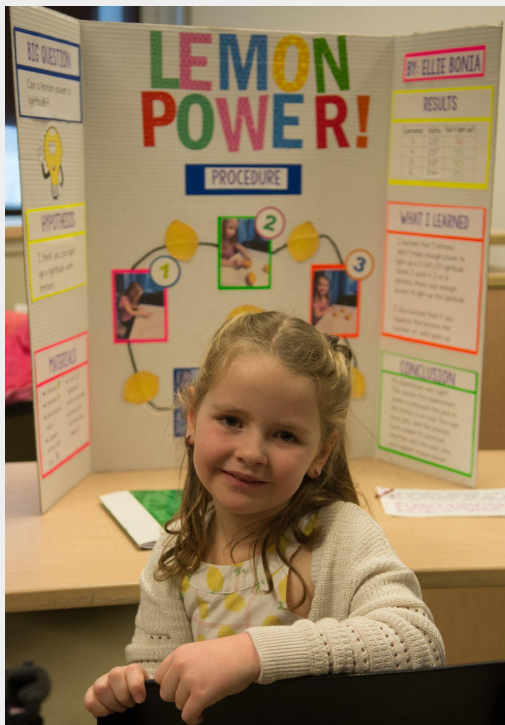
Other Best of Fair winners (not pictured):

- Norah Campsall, a Grade 3 student at Ross Ford School for "Safe for Consumption"
- Kaylee Pierre, a Grade 4 student at Cremona School for "Identifying my Rock Collection"
- Eli Bird, a Grade 5 student from Cremona School for "How do metals affect memory?"





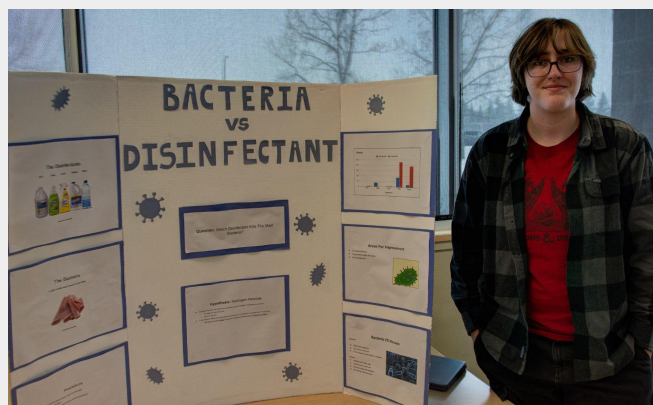
Maverick Jansen, River Valley School



Ellie Bonia, Carstairs Elementary School, bronze medal



Rory Crone, Carstairs Elementary School, bronze medal



Left: Emmeline Wells, Ecole Olds High School



Middle Rae Cameron, Carstairs Elementary School, bronze medal

Other medal winners from Chinook's Edge

Grades K-2

1st runner up / Gold: Myles Poland, Gr. 2 Carstairs Elementary

2nd runner up / Silver: Miller Forster and Sawyer Forster, Kindergarten, River Valley School

Silver: Colby Poland, Gr. 2 Carstairs Elem.

Bronze: Rory Crone, Gr. 1 Carstairs Elem.
Rae Cameron, Carstairs Elementary
Isaac Klippert, Gr.2 Carstairs Elementary
Ellie Bonia, Gr. 1 Carstairs Elementary

Grades 3-4

1st runner up/ Gold: Heath Poland, Gr. 4, Carstairs Elementary

2nd runner up / Silver: John Hook: Gr.3, Olds Koinonia Christian

Silver: Aridai Luna, Gr.3 Carstairs Elem.
Presley Elliott, Gr.4 Ross Ford Elementary

Bronze: Elsa McIver and Ellie Engel, Gr.3 Olds Koinonia Christian
Cale Copley and Decker Clough, Gr.4 Carstairs Elementary
Aubrey Mikal and Isabelle Brink, Gr. 3 River Valley School

Lyla Dunn and Everly McCreadie, Gr.4 Carstairs Elementary
Anneliese Minnes and Emily Trip, Gr.3 Olds Koinonia Christian
Oliver Windsor, Gr.3, Olds Elementary
Anna Squire and Cara Fraser, Gr.4 Ross Ford Elementary

Grades 5-6

1st runner up/ Gold: Kyla Ball, Gr.6 Hugh Sutherland School

2nd runner up / Gold: Hailey Sikstrom, Gr.5, Hugh Sutherland School

Silver: Alex Ikenaga, gr.5 Ecole Deer Meadow

Ayaan Hossain, Gr.6 Ecole Deer Meadow
Natalie Conrad, Gr.5, Olds Koinonia Christian
Abigail Minnes, Gr.6, Olds Koinonia Christian

Bronze: Nick de Groot, Gr.6, Hugh Sutherland School
Abby Fisher, Gr.5, River Valley School
Leanne Conrad, Gr.5, Olds Koinonia Christian

Grades 7-9

2nd runner up/ Silver: Gavin Cutting, Gr.8, Cremona School

Bronze: Jillian Reid, Gr.7, Cremona School
Madeline Palyga, Gr.7, Hugh Sutherland School

Grades 10 to 12

1st runner up / Silver: Tess Parker and Keiara Lewis, Gr. 11, Olds High School

2nd runner up/ Bronze: Aida Hingst, Gr. 11, Olds High School

