



### Kids Envisioning a Better Future for Whales

The mysterious-looking large brown envelope that arrived from Captain John Palliser School in Calgary, Alberta, gave no indication of what might be inside. But it turned out to be a real treasure trove!

First was a stack of hand-written letters to the Whale Sanctuary Project from 65 young students writing about what they'd learned about whale captivity and how they would pledge to no longer support it.

Second, copies of letters from these 5th and 6th graders to Marie Holer, the owner of Marineland Ontario, politely asking her to let Kiska the orca and the 50-plus beluga whales be retired to a seaside sanctuary.

Third, several large-scale blueprints for a seaside sanctuary, based on criteria set by the Whale Sanctuary Project on our website.

And finally, a scrapbook of photos, designs, diagrams, collages, testimonials and all kinds of ideas.

#### So, how did all this come about?

It turned out that three 5th- and 6th-grade teachers at Captain John Palliser School in Calgary had put together a [fascinating project](#) for their young students. After sharing an article with them about our work, the teachers used the Whale Sanctuary Project as the subject of a reading comprehension project designed for the students to demonstrate their understanding of the article, and to make further connections to the topic.

The students then watched the [TEDx talk](#) "Whales Without Walls" by Executive Director Charles Vinick and wrote letters to him expressing their understanding of our work. They also pledged to not go to "trick shows" and "tank shows," as they called them, but to try to see whales in their natural habitat. Each of them also wrote to the owner of Marineland, sharing their reasoning for the release of Kiska and the belugas to a sanctuary where they would have a chance to thrive.

Given the high engagement of the students, their teachers decided to take it a step further. They created small groups of four-to-five students who worked together to design architectural blueprints of a sanctuary. These unique designs included innovative features like helipads, wind and solar powered facilities, a whale-shaped submarine for underwater viewing in a whale-shaped sanctuary, electric vehicles for staff, veterinary areas, staff facilities, an amphitheater for documentaries, and a cannon for fish feeding.

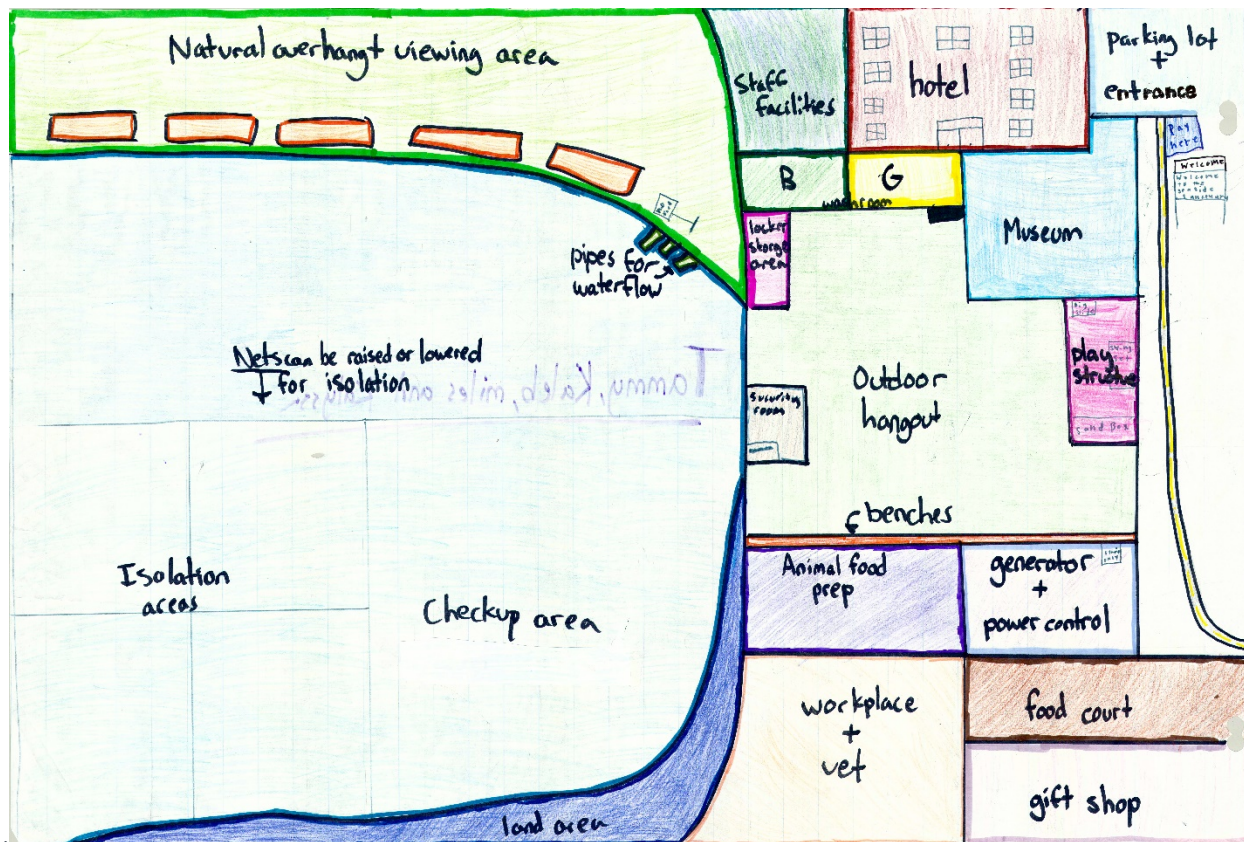


*Students in Room 15/16 at Captain John Palliser School explore the work of the Whale Sanctuary Project.*

# The Blueprints

Here's a selection of the blueprints from the 5th- and 6th-grade students at Captain John Palliser School in Calgary. We love the creative ideas in these designs and plan to include several of them when it comes to building the sanctuary itself.

Note, however, that except for a nature trail with viewing from a distance, facilities for visitors that several of the students have included (like a museum, gift shop or domed video room) will be at a separate location off-site in order to minimize intrusion on the whales.



Above: This design features solar panels and other environmentally friendly features and several facilities for visitor experience that will, in fact, be located off-site.

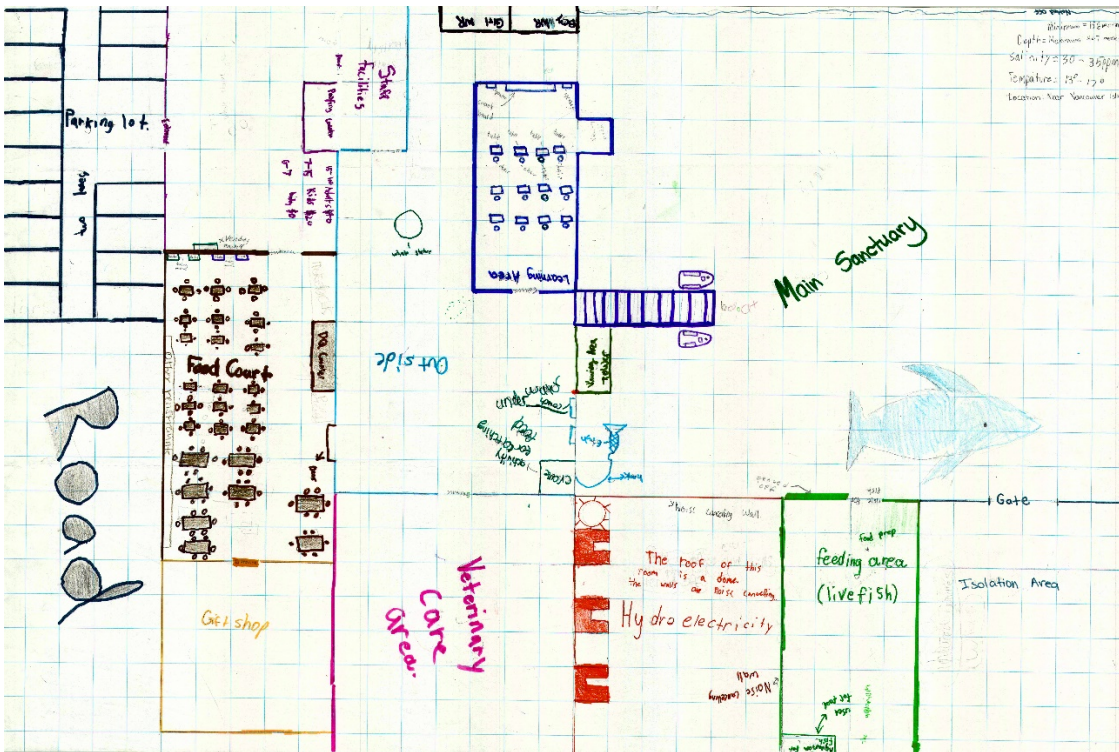










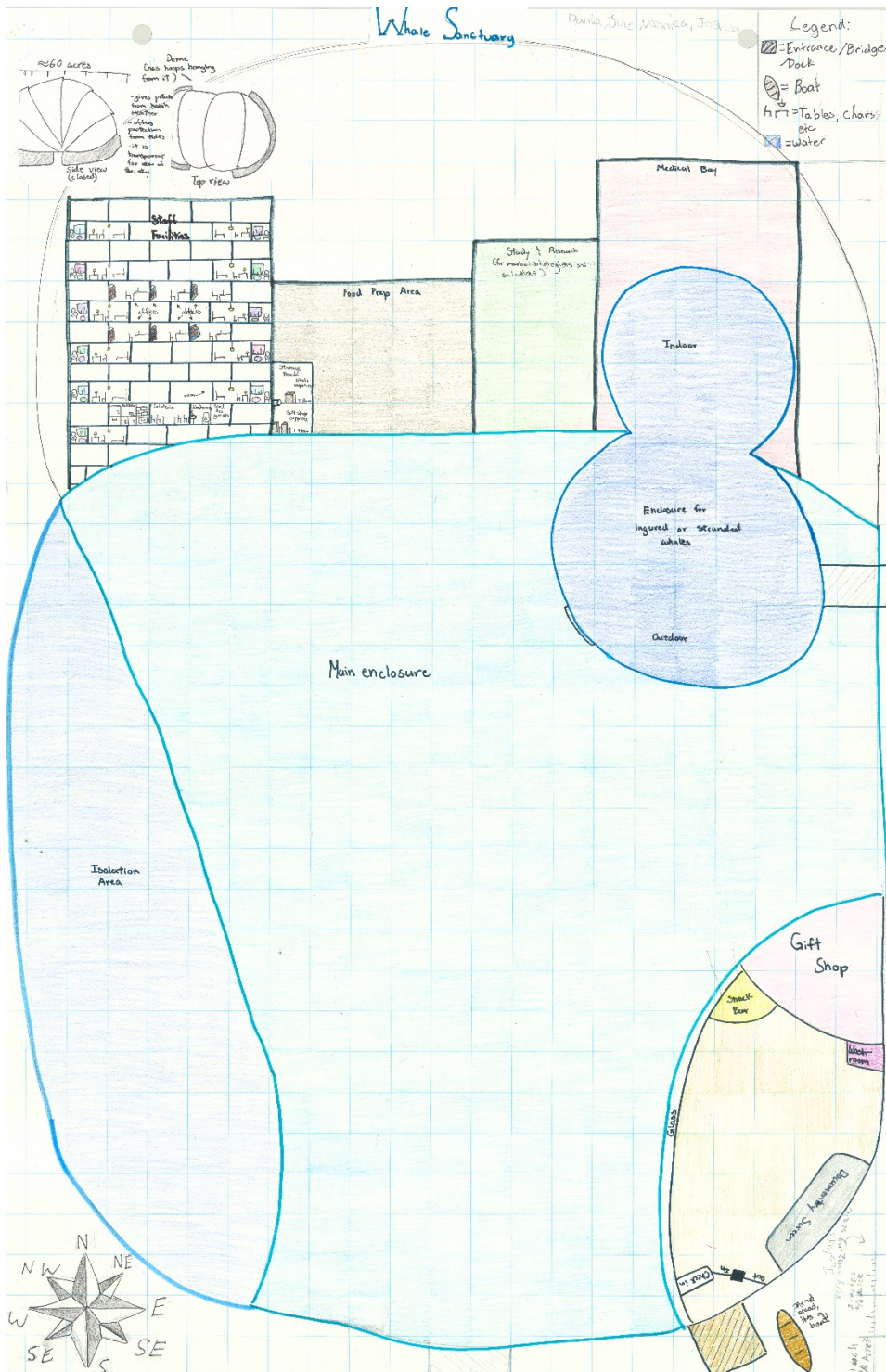


Above: This design, conceived as being on the coast of Vancouver Island, is well-laid out. It adds the idea of a domed roof over one of the rooms, and with noise canceling walls so as not to disturb the whales – an innovative concept.



Above: This sanctuary at "Simon's Island" features triangular shapes for the main enclosure and veterinary areas, and a "fish cannon" to feed fish to the whales.



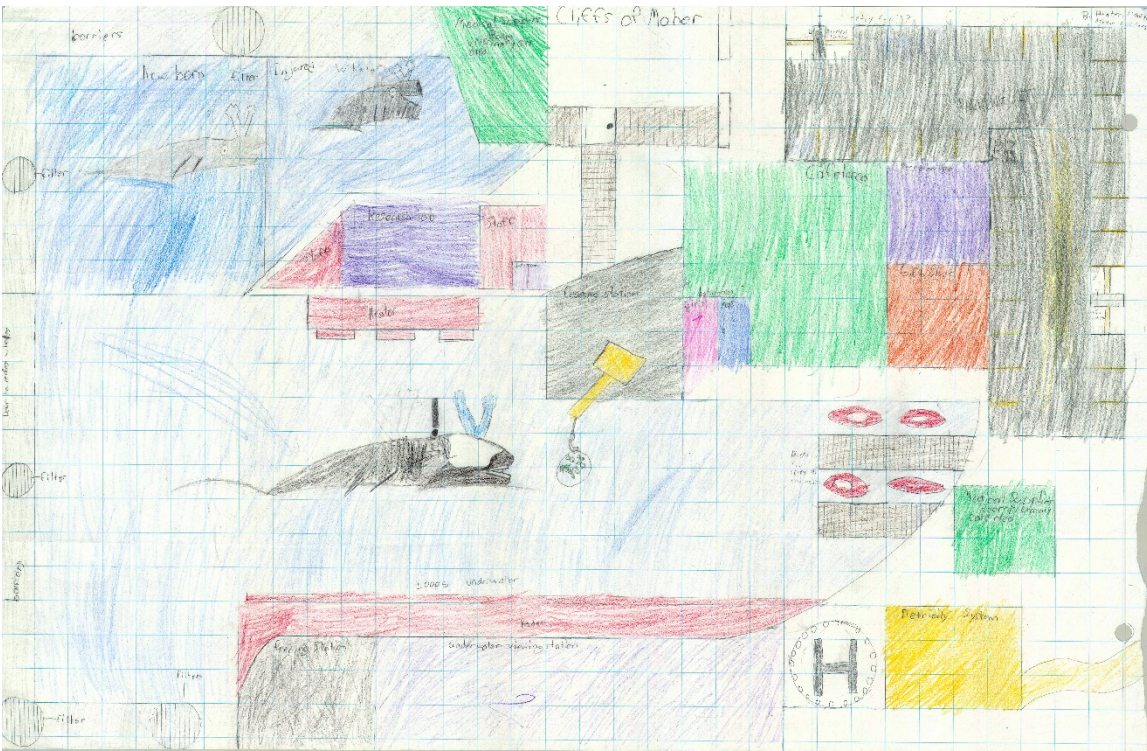


Above: We like how the medical bay is half indoors and half outdoors in this design. And while we wouldn't have a dome, however transparent, over the whole sanctuary, it's something to think about in terms of the medical bay.



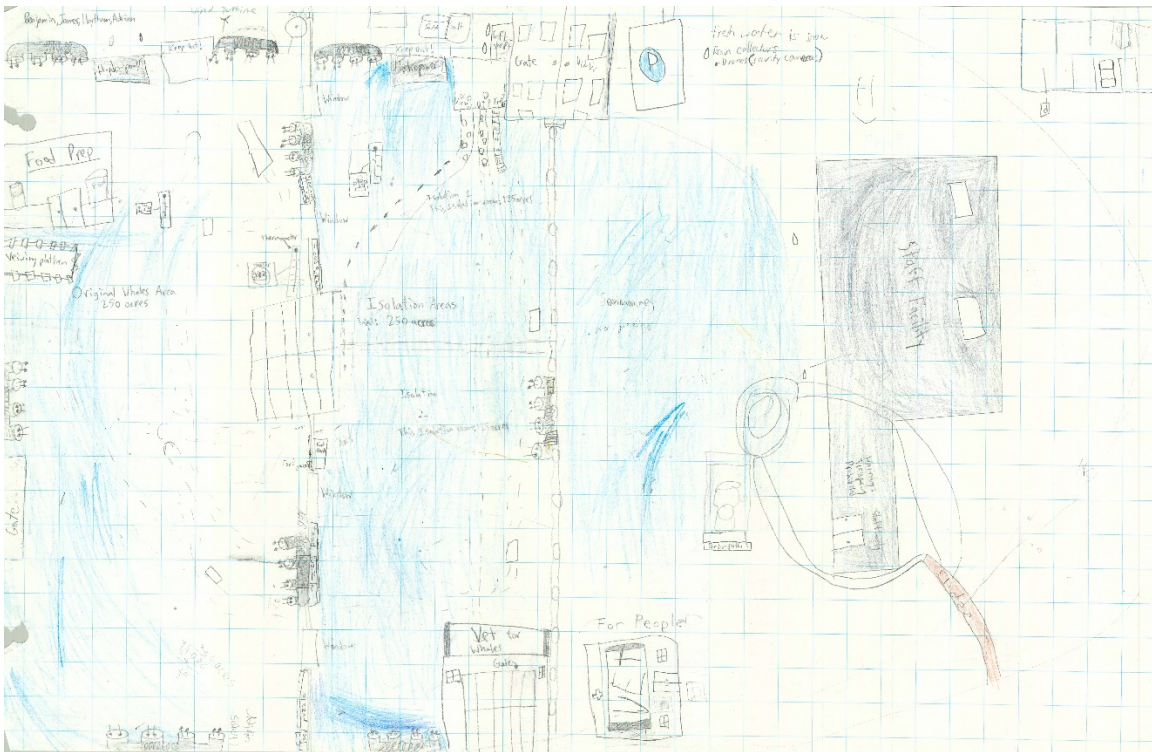


Above: This sanctuary seems to be home to a happy, whale family- mom, dad, sister and brother, and even a baby sister and brother. Note that none of the whales will be having babies at the sanctuary because we don't want to be raising any more whales in any kind of captivity. Meanwhile, the whales depicted here are clearly all smiles in their sanctuary home!



Above: At the "Cliffs of Moher" Sanctuary we find docks for scientists and medics, a research lab, an underwater viewing station, and a \$7.00 entry fee.





Above: Isolation areas, veterinary areas, wind turbines, rain barrels, and drones for security are the highlights in this design.



# Letters from Students to the Whale Sanctuary Project

All 65 students wrote a letter to our executive director, Charles Vinick.

"Thank you all so much," Charles said. "I've never before had so many letters in one day. And I've read every one of them."

Some of the letters had questions or comments on Charles's TEDx talk, which the students had all watched. Others wrote about how their thinking about whales had been transformed by what they'd been learning. And many of them wanted us to know what they were going to do to help bring an end to keeping whales in captivity.

Here are just three of those letters:

Hi I am Veronica, an student from Capitan. John  
paliser (CJP) and we are doing an project  
"no more whales in captivity" I'm very impressed by  
your work, and I like that you teach me something  
new today.

I didn't now that born whales in captivity live for  
20 years in captivity...  
is really easy to take... it's hard to give back.

you have transform my thinking, I though that they  
treated well the animals... but I found out is the  
oposit,

my pledge to create change, I will tell all my family,  
friends all the new people that I will meet on my life

I think your work is inspiring because you speak  
for others who need it, and I will try to follow your  
steps, to help the ones who need it

Sincerely, Veronica



02/28/19

Dear Mr. Vinick,

My name is Daniel, and I'm a Grade 6 student at Captain John Palliser school in Calgary, AB. I am writing because my class is working on a project about "No More Whales in Captivity", and our Canadian Reader Article mentioned "The Whale Sanctuary Project". This morning, we watched your TED Talk about "Whales Without Walls". I didn't know how small the concrete tanks were. My pledge to create change is to not go to any whale entertainment shows, and to maybe just go whale watching instead. I think your work is inspiring because you want to build a habitat 100 times larger than the largest concrete tank. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,  
Daniel  
D. Daniel

Feb 28 2019

Dear Mr. Vinick

My name is James from CJP in grade 5. We have this project to ban whales in captivity. We used a Canadian reader article that talks about the sanctuaries.

I didn't know that 3000 cetaceans are in captivity all over the world.

My pledge to create change is to go whale watch rather than go to marine parks like you said in your TED talk.

Your work inspires me because it makes me care more about animals & that all animals can't be pets.

Sincerely

James



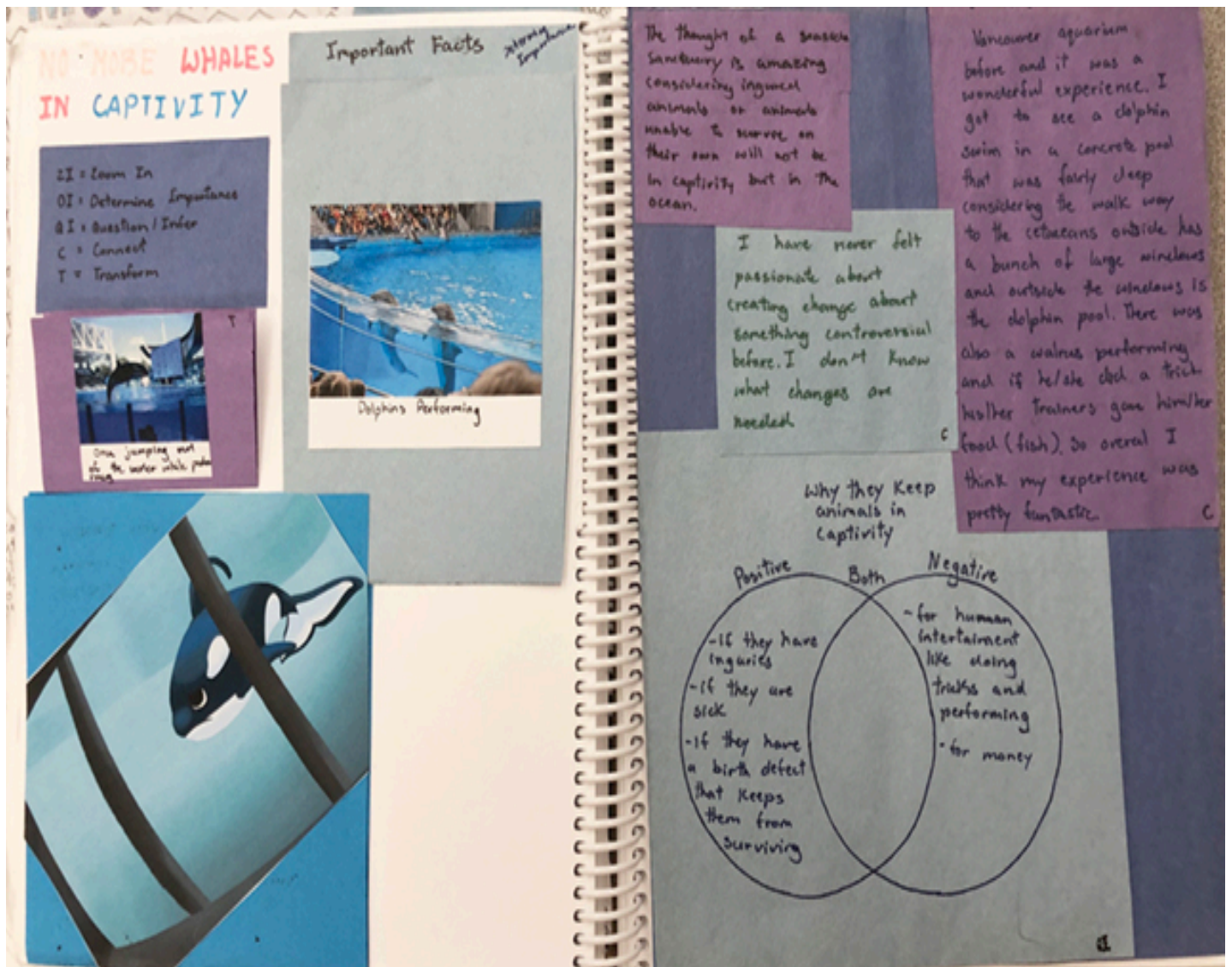
# Pages from the Scrapbook

These scrapbook designs explore the many facts and facets of whale captivity and look at the alternative that sanctuary can provide.

One student, for example, contemplated what it must be like for an orca living in a concrete tank:

*"If I was trapped in a room filled with mirrors, I would get dizzy. Since I mainly use my sense of sight, I would get confused. Imagine if you were an orca with a sense of echolocation, everything would reverberate around you. This is what it feels like being in a concrete tank alone."*

Here are some of the pages.









# No More IN CAPTIVITY.

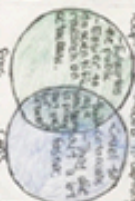
Have you been to an aquarium before? If you have, it's also likely that you've seen the whale and dolphins. Didn't they look happy and playful, performing cool tricks? That's what they want people to think. But sadly, it's not actually like that. Currently, there are 2 aquariums in Canada housing cetaceans. Unlike what the aquariums tell the public, cetaceans actually usually live a lot better out in the wild than in captivity because they get depressed and die when trapped for years in their tiny tanks. On the other hand, whales in captivity serve a scientific and educational purpose. What do you think?

SOME BODY (the stakeholder)	WANTED (what they're trying to achieve)	BUT (what is in the way of achieving their goal?)	SO (what do they do to achieve what they want?)	THEN (what events follow?)
The Canadian Senate	To pass a new bill that bans aquariums from keeping intelligent aquatic creatures and breeding them.	This is a controversial issue.	3 years of debate.	The bill was passed in October 2018 and is waiting for approval from the House of Commons.
Aquariums	To keep the animals for scientific research and display.	It's cruel to the cetaceans.	Try to convince them to not pass the bill.	They will have to slowly close down.
Activists	To release the animals in a safe way such as into a sanctuary.	It'll be harder to educate the public and research them.	Put pressure against keeping cetaceans in aquariums.	The cetaceans will go to sanctuaries and over time and on back to the wild.

## GLOSSARY

**Cetacean** - a fishlike mammal that lives in the ocean, such as whales and dolphins.  
**Captive** - a person or animal taken and held against their will.  
**Sanctuary** - a place of refuge.  
**Activism** - action that draws people's opinion on an issue, for helping bring for a change.  
**Sanctuary** - a place of refuge.

# Cetaceans



Why do you think people are so engaged and interested in seeing marine animals compete tricks and other entertaining things?

A: I think it's because humans like being physically entertained and it's the most exciting thing to watch with cetaceans, perform cool tricks.

B: Explain your opinion of animals that are used to be regarded as the wild being moved to a captive situation? A: I fully support this because that's the best option for the cetaceans. Also, I think it's fair for us to have them in captivity.

Canadian Senate: the Upper House of the Parliament of Canada.

Bill: a proposed law proposed to the Parliament for debate and/or discussion.

to finally stop cruelty, but just

Q: Have you ever been to an aquarium before? What was your experience?  
 A: Yes, I have been to an aquarium before. It was a few years ago. At the time, I really enjoyed the shows because I didn't know that the cetaceans were sad.

Q: Have you ever felt miserable about creating change with something you love?

A: Not that I really thought about something like that. I do feel passionate about the global warming. I think the world is changing and it's not a good thing.

Q: What do you think about a person who is a scientist and is trying to change the world?

A: I think it's a good thing. I think it's important for the world to be a better place.

5 Important Facts  
 - There are 2 cetaceans in Canada.  
 - They could be found in the wild.  
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What are cetaceans? The different kinds of cetaceans.

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## DOLPHIN

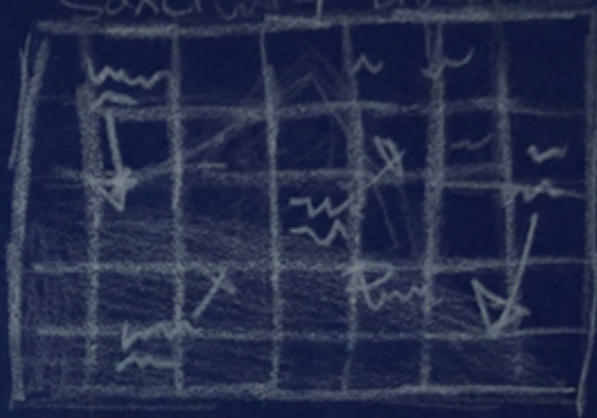




"If you were trapped in a room of mirrors"

IF I was trapped in a room filled with mirrors, I would get dizzy. Since I mainly use my sense of sight, I would get confused. Imagine if you were an orca with a sense of echolocation, everything would reverberate around you. That's what it feels like being in a concrete tank alone.

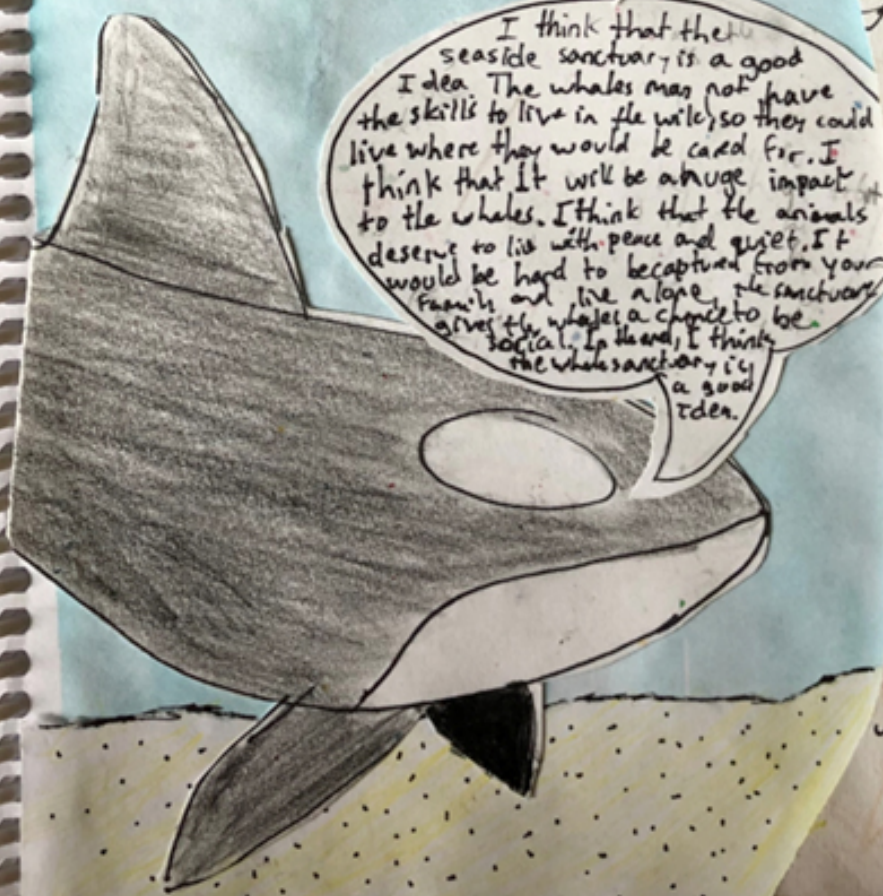
Sanctuary Blueprint



## Sanctuary Thoughts

I think that animals unable to be released into the wild should move to a seaside sanctuary. Firstly, it is cruel to the animals to be kept in small concrete tanks to rehabilitate. In addition, the animals may not live through the healing process. I think it is a good idea to move the animals to a sanctuary. Then, they will be able to socialize with other whales. Plus, they will live in an environment close to what they would of lived in the wild. In addition, the space of the sanctuary may be large enough for the animals. In conclusion, I think that the seaside sanctuary would benefit the animals.

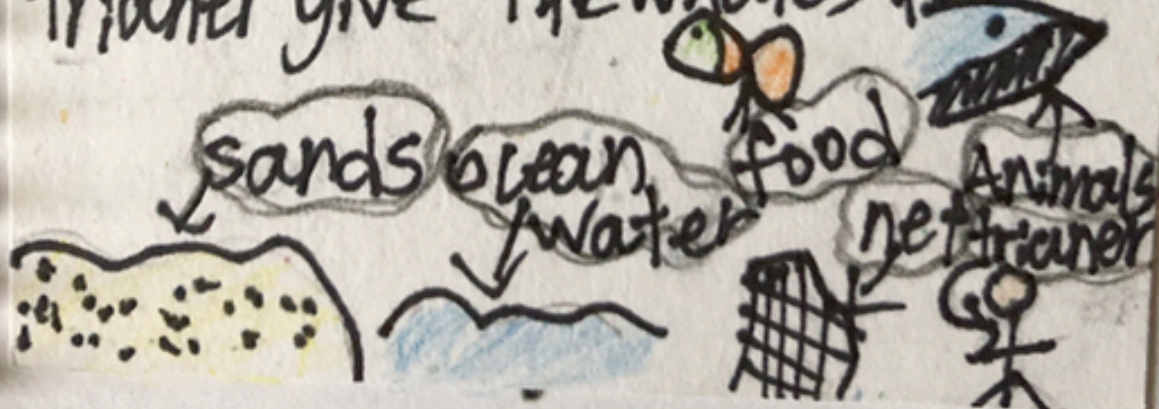
I think that the seaside sanctuary is a good idea. The whales may not have the skills to live in the wild, so they could live where they would be cared for. I think that it will be a huge impact to the whales. I think that the animals deserve to live with peace and quiet. It would be hard to be captured from your family and live alone. The sanctuary gives the whales a chance to be social. In the end, I think the whale sanctuary is a good idea.





# Designing Sanctuary

Sanctuary should included  
Sands, ocean water, animals,  
food, net to make sure  
whales don't get hurt by  
other animals, trianer to protect  
the whales. why we need these  
because whales in capitivity  
they don't know how to hunt  
because the trianer tell the  
whales do tricks and then  
trianer give the whales food

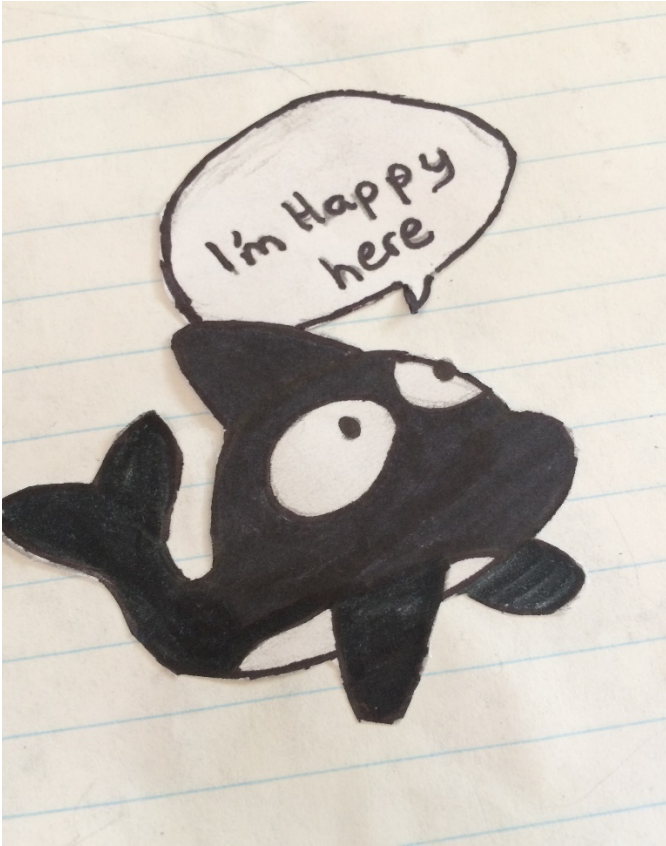


This is the

Why do some

Thank you to all the students for your remarkable commitment, creativity and vision, and to your teachers for the care and guidance you put into this unique project. We look forward to welcoming you all to the sanctuary.

And we'll give the last word to this delightful character:



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