



# Rapper Annakin Slayd has emotional return to Souvenir Elementary School



Mike Cohen

It was more than a year ago that Annakin Slayd, born and raised in Chomedey as Andrew Farrar, released his video tribute to baseball great Jackie Robinson. Around the same time got a call from sportscaster Matthew Ross, host of TSN 690's *Weekend Game Plan*, and then Annakin himself about a possible tour of schools to educate youngsters about the man who broke Major League Baseball's colour barrier.

Via my day job as communications and marketing specialist at the English Montreal School Board, I arranged for a Black History Month school tour in February facilitated by Annakin. It was a huge hit! I then contacted my colleague Maxeen Jolin at the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board, encouraging her to bring Annakin back to his old school. A few weeks ago that did indeed occur and he was greeted with a hero's welcome at Souvenir Elementary School.

Slayd is a rapper, actor and videographer. His video tributes to the Expos, Canadiens and now Jackie Robinson have all gone viral. "In the profile of my Grade 6 graduation yearbook, under ambition, I wrote 'songwriter,' and on the last page of said yearbook, one of my teachers wrote 'I believe one day you will



Annakin Slayd and Ms. Varadi.

become a great writer.' That was My Grade 4 English teacher, Polly Varadi," Slayd shares.

Well wouldn't you know it, there was Ms. Varadi waiting for Annakin as he stepped into the Souvenir Elementary School gymnasium. "I was thrilled to see her," he said. "It was beyond special to have her there after all these years. This is why I believe so much in our educators. Who knows if I'd be doing what I do today without Ms. Varadi?"

Slayd said that he got the star treatment by the teachers, members of the school board and the kids themselves. "It actually got me a little choked up," he said. "And to top it all off, they gave me a plaque, a copy of which will be put up in the gym where it will remain for a long time."

PHOTO VIA ANNAKIN SLAYD

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