

Director's Christmas Bulletin



Director's Message

The Christmas season is a special time here at York Catholic. Our staff, students and parents know that Christmas is not just about receiving—it's the giving that's truly important. As a community guided by the example of Jesus, our school communities and our staff here at the Catholic Education Centre have been busy with many fundraisers to benefit those in need of a helping hand this season. I hope you will enjoy reading about a few of our schools' recent charitable events and activities in this special bulletin.

At this time of year, we also continue to benefit from our partnerships with parishes and Catholic community organizations. Many of our schools have worked with their local parishes to distribute household necessities and special Christmas gifts to families in need in our own communities.

I am proud to be part of a community of students, parents and staff working together to brighten the Christmas season for others. May the light of God shine on you and your family this Christmas.

Susan LaRosa
Director of Education
York Catholic District School Board



Pictured, St. Benedict students Jamie Eleccion, Tanya Aziz and Rachel Kwong.

Paper Angels Bring Joy to Kids

St. Benedict CES student council/Luke 4:18 members eagerly assisted the local St. Vincent de Paul Society with their "Neighbours in Need" campaign to help those in their community. The students created an abundance of pink and blue paper angels to decorate the tree in the school foyer. Each angel was marked with the gender and age of a child in need. During parent/teacher interviews, families were encouraged to take an angel home and then purchase and return a wrapped gift with the angel attached to be put under the school tree. Student council members bought the first item—a large, stuffed bear—and attached a pink angel for a three-year-old girl. "We are extremely proud of our student council for their hard work in initiating and organizing an event which helps families in our community in need at Christmas," said Principal Laura Sawicky. "As a result of their hard work, a child's Christmas will be a little brighter this year." Over 70 gifts in total were collected for children aged six months to 17 years.



Prayer for Advent

Lord God, You have sent us a messenger announcing the Good News of your coming. John the Baptist was a herald proclaiming the need for preparation and repentance. John heard Your Word in the desert. Draw us into the desert in the midst of our busy lives. May we find you in the quiet spaces of our heart. May we hear you speak to us in this Sacred Space and draw ever closer to you. Help us to remember that we do not enter Advent, but that Advent enters us and we can be changed forever, just as the promise of Jesus' coming changed Mary's life. Amen.

January is Kindergarten Registration Month

During the month of January, 2009, the York Catholic District School Board welcomes registrations for Junior and Senior Kindergarten. Parents/guardians can register their children at their local school or at the Admissions Office, Catholic Education Centre, 320 Bloomington Road West in Aurora.

For further details, call your local school or call the Admissions hotline at 905-713-1211 or 416-221-5051, ext. 7450.

St. David Launches Project Christmas Joy

The St. David CES community participated in their first annual Project Christmas Joy, where teachers, parents and students worked hard to fill shoe boxes for boys and girls in Colombia. The student members of the Luke 4:18 Social Justice Committee filled close to 70 shoe boxes with the donations. The project, led by Grade 1 teacher Louisa Mirabelli, asked for donations of school supplies, hygiene products, toys and clothing. Student members of the Luke 4:18 committee were proud to be a part of such an important event. Student Laura Faccin said, "We are so happy to be helping others have a special Christmas. We wake up on Christmas morning with many gifts; often children in other countries wake up with little or nothing."



Pictured (l-r): Ally Tiano, Erica Sturino and Laura Faccin help package items into shoe boxes for transport to Colombia.

Bountiful Donations Support Rose of Sharon

San Lorenzo Ruiz CES Grade 4 teacher Gina Creta, and the Junior Division students, spearheaded two fundraising initiatives—a food drive and a collection of items for Rose of Sharon, a charity that provides services for young mothers. Students in all divisions were overwhelmingly generous for both causes, noted Principal Teresa Lombardo. "We have been extremely touched by their generosity of spirit. More and more boxes were filled up daily with bountiful donations." As part of the Rose of Sharon campaign, the school also held two staff soup lunches. Secretary Odette (Lourdes) Katugampola donated her time and culinary talent to prepare delicious lentil/vegetable/chicken soup. All staff enjoyed a bowl of this comfort food with a fresh bun for \$2.50, with proceeds going to the campaign.



SLR students participate in a charitable food drive.

Secondary Students Shed Light On Needy

Recently, several students from the York Secondary Catholic President's Council (YSCPC) helped to collect and ship clothing for the Good Shepherd Centre, which serves people struggling with poverty and homelessness. The group filled half of a small bus with the clothing, and transported it to the centre in downtown Toronto. "This experience has truly been a huge eye-opener for a student living in such a well-off area," notes YSCPC president Colleen Oag. "I feel as if I just participated in one of the most rewarding, heart-warming experiences of my life."

Organizers collected donations from each of our high schools and from Catholic Education Centre employees. Vice-principal advisors Joe Servidio and Doris Calderan supervised the journey and were proud to recognize the efforts of the students. "As a YSCPC community, we bring the schools together to shed light on those who are in need of love, warmth and care during this Christmas season," noted the organizers.



YSCPC members load clothing on to a bus for their visit to the Good Shepherd Centre in Toronto. (L-R): President Colleen Oag (St. Theresa of Lisieux CHS); publicity officer Trevor Coll (St. Elizabeth CHS); equity officer Marcia Accardo (Brother Andre CHS); representative Samantha Ciccirella (Cardinal Carter CHS); and staff advisor Doris Calderan.

Gingerbread Creations Raise Funds for Sick Kids

Grade 6 students in Nick Foti's class at Light of Christ CES (Aurora) painstakingly created five detailed gingerbread houses, which were then raffled off, with proceeds going to The Hospital for Sick Children. "The class felt strongly that they wanted to help children who are suffering," said Mr. Foti. He added that the fundraiser was motivated by the wish to follow the example of Christ and give back to the community.



Pictured, Grade 6 students Melena, Angelo, Michael, Stefano and Alessandro selling raffle tickets to benefit Sick Kids.

'Tis the Season



Here is a look at a few more of the charitable events our schools have been busy with this season:

- **Notre Dame CES** in Newmarket supported the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, collecting funds to buy winter boots for children in need.

- **St. Francis of Assisi CES** (Woodbridge) staff and students raised money for The Hospital for Sick Children's Rachel's Rainbow Fund. They sold bracelets throughout the season, including at their Breakfast with Santa event.

- **St. Joan of Arc CHS** (Maple) students supported St. David Church's food drive to benefit the Good Shepherd Centre, as well as participating in a clothing drive for Yellow Brick House, Good Shepherd Centre and Rose of Sharon.

- **St. Clare CES** (Woodbridge) raised \$7,500 for the Make a Wish Foundation, which will sponsor the wish of four-year-old Vaughan resident Isabella, who would like to visit the Sesame Street Resort in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

- **Our Lady of the Lake CCS** in Keswick conducted a Christmas food drive and contributed through Operation Christmas Child to the "Samaritan's Purse".

- **St. Edward CES** (Markham) proudly sponsored three foster children living in the Philippines, Sudan and Bolivia. The school pledged to raise \$1,200 to help support and educate these children, and collected coins throughout the month of December.

- The Luke 4:18 club at **St. Julia Billiard CES** (Unionville) organized a food drive, through which 500 kg of food was collected and donated to the Markham Food Bank.

- **The St. Gregory the Great CES** (Woodbridge) Catholic School Council members organized a drive collecting hats, gloves and socks for the St. Clare Parish.

- **Blessed John XXIII CES** (Unionville) set up its annual Mitten Tree, with students, teachers and parents donating a pair of new mittens or gloves, for distribution to those in need through the Knights of Columbus.

- **The Father Michael McGivney CA** (Markham) school community participated in fundraisers for Rose of Sharon and the Ayni School in Peru. The school also joined the Holiday Hero campaign, which collects food and toys for those in need.

- **St. John Bosco CES** (Woodbridge) held a fundraiser for the CHUMCity Christmas Wish. The school asked students and parents to donate new toys, and for every toy received, a red ribbon was added to the Christmas tree.

For additional copies of this publication, please contact the Communications Department, York Catholic District School Board, communications@ycdsb.ca or 905-713-1211, ext. 3020.

For more inspirational fundraising stories from our schools, visit our website at www.ycdsb.ca.