



The Catholic Monitor

Easter 2007

Director's Message



Three of our Catholic elementary schools have just been recognized by the Fraser Institute as being among the top one per cent in the province at the annual Garfield Weston Awards for Excellence in Education. St. Patrick (Markham), St. Angela Merici and St. Justin, Martyr were each awarded Honourable Distinction in the category for Overall Academic Achievement that recognizes schools whose students have achieved remarkable, ongoing academic success over the last five years. At the secondary level, we also congratulate St. Augustine CHS for being named tops in the GTA for Overall Academic Achievement, and Our Lady of the Lake Catholic College for being recognized for their amazing improvements in student achievement over the last five years.

I am very excited about an upcoming project that will see internationally renowned artist Farhad Nargolwalla create a sculpture for the foyer of our Catholic Education Centre. Farhad is a St. Robert CHS graduate who has exhibited his work throughout the world and now creates sculpture for the architectural and interior design market. With the help of selected YCDSB students, Farhad will produce a faith-based sculpture that will become the visual centre-piece of our Catholic Education Centre. The project will be financed entirely through donations. We are planning for an unveiling of the sculpture in December, and will keep everyone informed throughout the process.

As Easter approaches and we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, I pray you have a blessed Easter.

Susan LaRosa

Susan LaRosa
Director of Education



Easter Prayer

Loving and Glorious God, we praise you with Easter joy because Christ is our redeemer. Christ has broken the power of sin and healed an injured world. Christ has made us whole again. Bless our celebrations and our joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Students from five YCDSB schools carry Ark on walk to St. Justin, Martyr Catholic Church



About 150 students from All Saints CES, St. Justin, Martyr CES, St. Matthew CES, St. Monica CES, Blessed John XXIII CES and St. Augustine CHS gathered at Blessed John XXIII CES for a welcoming before processing on a two kilometre walk to St. Justin, Martyr Catholic

Church. The Ark of the New Covenant is a hand-carved wooden replica ark with eight pictures of icons from the New Testament. It is being carried in processions at Catholic churches around the world leading up to the International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec City in June 2008.

Community Mourns Respected Educator



On February 21, we learned of the unexpected death of Paul Marchesini, Principal of St. Emily Catholic Elementary School and husband of Ada Marchesini, principal of St. Padre Pio CES. As a long-time school administrator with our Board, Paul's influence will be felt in many school communities for years to come. Director of Education Susan LaRosa said that "the Catholic community has lost a devoted, caring and highly respected educator, friend and colleague."

Our thoughts and prayers go to the Marchesini family, and to the school communities of St. Emily and St. Padre Pio.

OUR SHARED VISION

We are a Catholic Learning Community of collaborative partners called to serve one another by being committed to and accountable for quality learning by all, with Jesus as our inspiration.

Breaking Down the BARRIERS



Our YCDSB Accessibility Working Group works to identify, remove and prevent barriers in our school system. The group is currently focusing on increasing attitudinal awareness of the challenges faced by newcomers to Canada when they enrol in our schools. Here is one story...

Nine-year-old Eddie Morales enjoys dancing to the sounds of “La Bamba”. He also likes tacos, spicy foods and speaks fluent Spanish. The articulate young man also acts as a teacher to his mom, Elizabeth, who, after arriving in Canada four years ago from Mexico, values his help as she struggles to speak perfect English. Eddie came to Canada halfway through Junior Kindergarten, speaking very little English. It wasn’t easy, but today, his confidence shines through as he describes his new class, teachers and friends at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Elementary School in Keswick.

He lists gym as his favourite subject, and he considers spelling his worst. Eddie’s daily routine includes English at school and mostly Spanish at home. He needed some extra help when he first enrolled at St. Thomas Aquinas, saying he often “mixed up some of his letters”. But overall, Eddie and his family have adjusted very well to their new home.

The York Catholic District School Board recognizes the challenges that newcomers to Canada face. Our Board partners with the Settlement Workers in Schools Program that helps newcomer students and their families adjust to their new culture, community and education system. Several of our high schools have also established newcomer welcoming clubs for students. And, our Board also hosts information sessions and parent-teacher interviews in a variety of languages.

It takes a lot of strength to move from another country—away from family, friends and everything familiar. Eddie Morales and his family have gone back to visit Mexico, but Eddie is starting to like more and more things about Canada—like hockey. “I tried it the other day, and I liked it!” he says.

Sport Shorts

- 1 The **Sacred Heart CHS Crusaders senior boys basketball team** are the York Region Athletic Association (YRAA) champs. Led by **Patrick Au** and **Mike Woodrow**, they will be competing in their first Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) quad-A championship in late March.
- 2 The **Sacred Heart CHS girls varsity hockey team**, coached by **Rob Adduono** and **George Smith**, is competing in the OFSAA triple- and quad-A girls finals in Ottawa in late March. The team won a silver medal in last season’s provincial championships.
- 3 The **Father Bressani CHS wrestling teams**, led by coach **Mario Raponi**, dominated at the YRAA championships. Both the boys and girls teams came out on top in the competitions and the Bressani group won the overall team title. Gold medallists in the boys’ field included **Daniel Leon, Andrew Arce, Alex Franchuk, Stephan Gatti-Cavanagh** and **Walter Duque-Raad. Alessandra Seca, Elianna Voskakis, Julia Carere** and **Natasha Mantione** were winners in the girls’ division.
- 4 **Sacred Heart CHS** Grade 11 student **Caleigh Whitaker** was named a 2006-07 YRAA volleyball all-star at the senior Tier 1 level.
- 5 **St. Agnes of Assisi CES** boys, led by coaches **Joe Suppa** and **Anny Serkhanian**, came out on top in the YCDSB’s **boys basketball** championships. The **St. Joseph (Markham) CES girls basketball team**, led by **Eileen Jung**, emerged victorious in the girls tournament.
- 6 **St. Agnes of Assisi CES** has had a successful year in sports—their **boys volleyball team** also took the Board championship. Congratulations to the team and coaches **Marisa MacGillivray, John Koci** and **Anny Serkhanian**.



Our Catholic Schools 2006-07: A discussion on Ontario's Catholic Schools and Their Future

Our York Catholic District School Board is participating in the Institute for Catholic Education’s province-wide initiative called **Our Catholic Schools 2006-07: A Discussion on Ontario’s Catholic Schools & Their Future**. This initiative will ask our Catholic communities to talk about the distinctiveness, value and future of Catholic education in this province. ICE will collate this input and prepare a provincial report to help form the basis for clear messages about



Catholic education and its future—so that our Catholic community can stand up and speak out for Catholic education whenever the opportunity or need arises.

For further information, contact the Institute for Catholic Education at iceont@rogers.com.

St. Augustine Legal Eagles Win Mock Trial Tournament



A team of St. Augustine CHS students proved to be legal eagles, beating out 23 other York Region schools to win the 2007 Judges Cup mock trial tournament, held in February at the Newmarket courthouse. The event allows high school students to act as lawyers and witnesses in a mock criminal proceeding. The 24 participating schools included eight YCDSB schools. St. Augustine defeated Markville HS in the finals, which were adjudicated by justices from the Superior Court. “Our students’ performance was truly deserving of championship recognition,” says St. Augustine teacher Vince Tomei. “Their legal expertise, enthusiasm and passion were clearly evident.” Congratulations to team members **Alexandra Celebre, Evan Cinq-Mars, Marina Guirguis, Aram Kerkonian, Lindsay Sullivan** and **Jennifer Tabar**.

The St. Augustine team also emerged victorious in the regional round of the Ontario Bar Association’s provincial mock trial tournament. The team competed against 23 other schools from York Region and Durham Region. They are now among the final six schools that will compete for the Ontario championship later this spring.

Students Go Wild for Reading

Students at St. Justin Martyr CES in Unionville went wild for reading recently, during an eventful literacy week. In keeping with the theme "wild about reading", each class authored and illustrated a book about wild things. All classes also had daily "Drop Everything And Read" time, wearing wild slippers and carrying wild reading creatures. Special guests included Tessa Benn-Ireland, author of *Black Women: Profiles of Black Women in Canada* and Karen Levine, author of *Hana's Suitcase*. Parents also shared their favourite childhood stories with students. The week's finale was a school birthday party celebrating Dr. Seuss. Students dressed up as characters in Dr. Seuss books, munched on birthday cup cakes and listened to the song "Wild Thing" by The Troggs.



Students Compose Original Music With Orchestra Pro



Students in Diana Blasutta's class at St. Joseph the Worker CES were involved with the "Adopt-a-player" program sponsored by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO). The students and teacher worked with a musician from the TSO to compose an original piece of music. The musician came to the school for several sessions, and the class visited a rehearsal and a concert of the TSO. The students later performed with three Toronto schools at an evening concert hosted by St. Joseph the Worker.

Schools Share Anti-bullying Message

In February, the St. Gregory the Great CES school community hosted a "Huddle Up" assembly in partnership with the Toronto Argonauts. Students, staff and parents viewed student-led skits with an anti-bullying message, and then listened to Jason Colero, the Argonaut's community relations manager, who talked about his personal experience being bullied as a teen. John Williams, an Argonauts running back, gave an inspirational speech on how he overcame his insecurities and rebuilt his self-esteem. The program also made stops at St. Clement CES and San Marco CES.



Toronto Argonauts running back John Williams speaks to St. Gregory the Great students.

Principal Honoured for Changing Lives



St. Matthew CES principal Veronica Robinson has received a Black History Community Appreciation Award from the Markham African Caribbean Association (MACA). The award honours outstanding African-Caribbean-Canadians who have made an enduring imprint and whose contributions to society have changed the lives of many. Robinson has been a principal for eight years, and also served the YCDSB as race and ethno-cultural equity supervisor. "My belief is all students can learn given a supportive environment," Robinson says. "It has always been paramount to me." The award was presented at the Markham Civic Centre during Black History Month.

B-ball Game Nets \$1,000 in Memory of Davis Ahlowalia

A recent charity basketball game held in honour of York Regional Police officer Davis Ahlowalia raised \$1,000 for Friends of the Poor (Canada) Inc. Members of the Ahlowalia family were on hand to watch as the boys and girls senior basketball teams at St. Joan of Arc CHS joined together to compete against a team of teachers and York Regional Police officers. The teacher/police team won with a score of 58 to 41. Students purchased \$2 tickets to attend and donations were accepted at the door. Constable Ahlowalia was killed in a motor vehicle collision in January. His family has requested that donations in his honour be made to Friends of the Poor, a cause dear to him.



IN BRIEF

St. Angela Merici Wins Spirit Award



St. Angela Merici CES has won the United Way of York Region's 2006 Student Campaign Spirit Award for their creative Christmas fundraising activities. The United Way recognizes one elementary and one secondary school whose students develop an innovative and successful fundraising campaign. Congratulations to Mrs. Romualdi and student council members.

PHOTO (L-R): Maria Alati, superintendent of schools; Maria Romualdi, international language instructor; students Krista Tatangelo and Steven deBoyrie; St. Angela Merici principal Classford Johnson.

St. Catherine of Siena Recognized

St. Catherine of Siena CES Grade 8 students received an award from World Vision in January. They were recognized for their leadership and efforts in Christmas fundraising for World Vision. The students, through their Luke 4:18 committee, raised \$1,045.

St. Theresa Raises Funds to Build School

Over the course of the first semester, the Social Justice Club and the Free the Children chapter at St. Theresa of Lisieux CHS raised the \$6,500 needed to build a school in Sierra Leone. A local businessman was so inspired by the efforts of the students that he provided a matching donation of \$6,500. The school community presented Free The Children with the donations in January.

Teacher Wins Nutrition Innovation Award

St. Anthony CES teacher Laura Hardychuk is the winner of a Nutrition Innovation Award for Ontario Teachers from teachnutrition.org. She was recognized for her proposal for the creation of a cookbook embedded with daily physical activity challenges. Her class won \$100 to publish the book.

Student Crops Hair for a Cause



Michael Di Matteo, a Grade 5 student at St. Anne CES, grew his hair for two years, and recently had it cut and donated to an organization that makes wigs for children living with cancer.

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www.ycdsb.ca

We are pleased to accept articles and photos about activities occurring throughout our system. We reserve the right to edit and determine which material is appropriate.

Chris Cable, *Managing Editor*
chris.cable@ycdsb.ca
Joann MacDonald, *Editor*
joann.macdonald@ycdsb.ca
Leo Zini, *Designer*
leo.zini@ycdsb.ca

Susan LaRosa, *Director of Education and Secretary*
susan.larosa@ycdsb.ca
Elizabeth Crowe, *Chair of the Board*
elizabeth.crowe@ycdsb.ca
Carol Cotton, *Vice-Chair of the Board*
carol.cotton@ycdsb.ca

TRUSTEES:

Micheal Carnovale
micheal.carnovale@rogers.com
Teresa Ciaravella
teresa.ciaravella@ycdsb.ca
Dino Giuliani
dino.giuliani@ycdsb.ca
Theresa McNicol
theresa.mcnicol@ycdsb.ca
Marlene Mogado
marlene.mogado@ycdsb.ca
Mike Rizzi
mike.rizzi@ycdsb.ca
Victor Schiralli
victor.schiralli@ycdsb.ca
Ann Stong
ann.stong@ycdsb.ca

STUDENT TRUSTEES:

Melissa Kostanecki
melissa.kostanecki@ycdsb.ca
Kristine Soufian
kristine.soufian@ycdsb.ca

Recent Board Meeting Highlights

- 1 The Board approved the formation of a steering committee with the objective and mandate to facilitate and develop the required Pupil Accommodation Review Policy.
- 2 Members of the Environmental Committee outlined a number of recycling and environmental issues, including: our schools' blue box recycling status (which differs in each municipality); waste audits; procurement initiatives to include environmentally appropriate products and services; recycling practices; recycling computers and future YCDSB environmental initiatives. The Board's existing recycling policy will be revised to reflect several of these new initiatives.
- 3 Director of Education Susan LaRosa announced that an information meeting was recently held for students (and their parents) interested in participating in the fall 2007 YCDSB-Centro Scuola secondary school in Italy. Forty students in Grades 10 to 12 will participate in the program that offers students the opportunity to earn Ontario credits while experiencing the rich culture and traditions of Italy.
- 4 The respective architects for the Aurora and Richmond Hill Catholic high schools presented information about the status of the two projects. Together, the new secondary schools will hold a total of 2,550 pupils. Public meetings have been held that invited preliminary feedback from neighbours. The target completion date for both projects is August 2009.

It is anticipated that the programming for the Aurora secondary school will include a level 1 apprenticeship program in the area of transportation technology; a program of this type complements the Board's broad-based technology program and will be beneficial to the students in the Newmarket/Aurora area.

Message from the Chair ELIZABETH CROWE



Future of Ontario Catholic Schools:

Thank you to everyone who participated in the "Our Catholic Schools" consultations held throughout our system during the month of March. This is a province-wide initiative and an

important opportunity for all of us to make our views known about the future of our Catholic schools. Input will be gathered by the Institute for Catholic Education, who will prepare a provincial report so that our Catholic community can stand up and speak out for Catholic education.

Funding:

The Ontario government has just released 2007-08 funding grants, and having them this early in the year means that we will be able to set our own budget in a timely fashion. The Ministry is providing some funding for arts, music, gym and outdoor education. We continue to look for extra aid for buses, Special Education and English as a Second Language, and we will still need to analyze the numbers to determine precisely how students at our Board will benefit.

Public input opportunities into our budget setting process will be available at both the May 8 and 22nd Board meetings. Further information will be posted on our website at www.ycdsb.ca.

Enhanced Role for Student Trustees:

I congratulate our student trustees, Melissa Kostanecki and Kristine Soufian, who, as a result of new government legislation, will now take on an enhanced role at the Board table. The new regulation provides student trustees with new resources and opportunities, including: an honorarium; the opportunity to sit in on in-camera committee meetings; and access to Board resources as provided to other trustees.

Sincere best wishes to each of you for a peaceful and Holy Easter.

Elizabeth Crowe
Chair of the Board

Did you Know?

- that the property tax rate for both Catholic and public school supporters is exactly the same?
- that every time you move, your property taxes automatically default to the public board unless you declare yourself as a separate school supporter?

Please check your property tax bill to ensure your tax dollars are supporting York Region Catholic schools by calling the Municipal Property Assessment Office at 1-866-296-6722. You can also visit www.mpac.ca, or www.ycdsb.ca, and click on 'Admissions' and 'Separate School Support'.

