



THE

The newsletter for parents and staff of the York Catholic District School Board

# Catholic Monitor

October 2007 • [www.ycdsb.ca](http://www.ycdsb.ca)

## Director's Message



Susan LaRosa

I would like to thank all of our teachers, staff, students and parents for ensuring that this school year started so smoothly. The spirit of collaboration is strong here at York Catholic, and we all benefit from it.

We welcome two new school communities to our York Catholic family—**San Lorenzo Ruiz CES** in Markham and **Fr. Frederick McGinn CES** in Richmond Hill. As we continue to meet the needs of a growing York Region, we added 200 new staff members to our system this year.

With our Shared Vision guiding us, we are well along the path to developing a work environment where we all reflect on our roles and the impact we have on quality student achievement. If the recently released EQAO scores are any indication, we have a lot to be proud of at York Catholic. Our students are leading the province! I would like to thank all of our partners in education for all that you do to benefit our students.

Last November, many of our community partners took part in a province-wide dialogue to examine issues in Catholic education. The Institute for Catholic Education has now provided us with a summary report. Among their observations: we must promote and protect our Catholic faith traditions as core to our Catholic schools; parent and parish involvement are key to our Catholic school communities; and, the future of Catholic schools is the responsibility of the entire Catholic community. I hope you will join me in ensuring that our Catholic schools are stronger than ever.

We have much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving. I hope that you all enjoy time to reflect on life's blessings with family and friends.

Susan LaRosa  
Director of Education



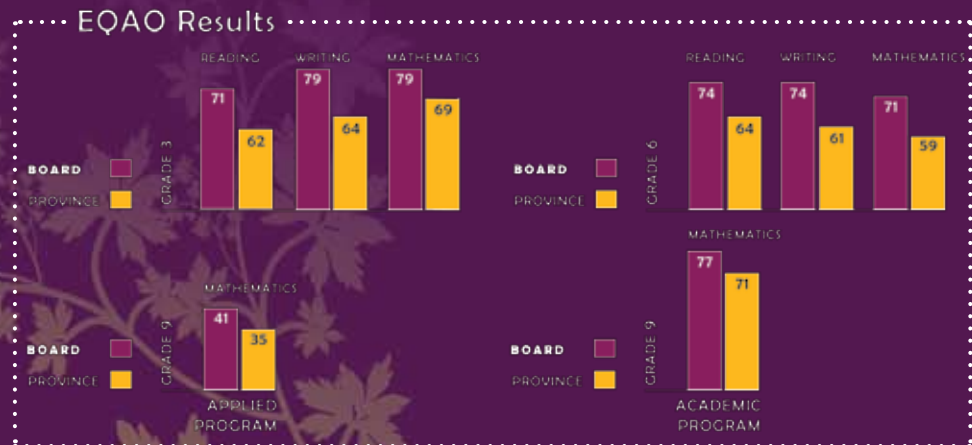
## Time to give thanks

School communities throughout our system have been busy preparing to make Thanksgiving special for those in need.

Pictured: St Joseph (Richmond Hill) CES Grade 2 student **Sarah Abbatangelo** digs up a potato with the help of her teacher, Ms. Baker. Last year's class planted the potatoes and Sarah's class dug them up and generously donated them to a local food bank.

## York Catholic students top provincial tests

Recently released Education Quality and Accountability Office standardized test results show Grade 3 and 6 York Catholic students are tops in the GTA and the province and are maintaining already high scores in each of the reading, writing and math categories. Additionally, the Grade 9 Mathematics assessments show York Catholic students are also outperforming their provincial peers.



YCDSB success can be attributed to several initiatives such as: the establishment of collaborative school teams; Model Classrooms; Target Success schools that receive extra support; literacy support teachers; new math programs; support from divisional program teachers and Program Resource teachers and Family of Schools meetings that provide training to promote student success.

Each school's individual profiles will be sent home to parents in October. Parents can also find school-by-school analysis on the Board's website at [www.ycdsb.ca](http://www.ycdsb.ca).

### Thanksgiving PRAYER

### You Who are in the Wind

Almighty God,  
You who are in the wind that breathes on the sea, and the waves of the ocean; the seal on the rocks; the lark in the heavens; the rays of the sun; and the glittering rock in the valley; You who are in the whole of creation and in your loved ones, we give You thanks and offer praise.

--The Society of Our Lady of the Isles, from harvest for the world

## Students offer the hand of friendship

Students at secondary schools throughout our system have helped make the transition to high school easier for incoming Grade 9 students. In addition to preparing the Grade Nines for the school start, the peer mentoring groups join together throughout the year to plan events, help with liturgies and to act as positive role models for younger students.

At St. Elizabeth CHS, a group of 40 "peer ministers" helps with Grade 9 orientation, plans liturgical celebrations and attends a leadership retreat that teaches them to enhance the spiritual life of the school. Organizer Ines Mancuso believes that students want to help others and this provides them with a great opportunity.

St. Theresa of Lisieux CHS's PAW (Partnership and Welcoming) Club gives students a chance to welcome newcomers to the school.

On the first day of school, a new student meets their assigned PAW member and together they

have breakfast, a tour of the school, and go to their classes, before meeting up again for lunch. The valuable PAW program helps new students feel welcome by offering the hand of friendship.

The SMASH (Student Mentors at Sacred Heart) club has 150 eager members who lead retreats, welcome Grade 9 students, help with liturgies and assist with photo day and parent interviews. Club organizer Deidre Vance compares SMASH members to big brothers and sisters who get to know the students and help the school run smoothly.

At St Robert CHS, Lisa Loffredi works with the newly formed PEERS (Peer Enabling Equality Recognition in Schools) program. So far, the 15 student members are being trained in bullying prevention and plan on distributing a card or magnet which gives students options on what to do if they experience bullying in their own lives. They also plan to paint an anti-bullying mural in one of the school hallways.



Five members of Sacred Heart CHS's SMASH club. (Left to right: Sarah Sterling, Katelynn Cannon, Nicole Seaforth, Lauren Ott, Simone Seaforth)

The 2007-08 school year brings a new look to the Divine Mercy CES community. Right, students and staff arrived for the first day of school wearing their new uniforms. This is the first year that the school of close to 1,000 students has adopted a uniform.



## Cardinal Carter teacher competes at Ms. Fitness World competition

Cardinal Carter's Priscilla Gagliano, a family studies teacher, was one of six women representing Canada at September's Ms. Fitness World in Las Vegas.

While she didn't win first place this time, Ms. Gagliano feels incredibly proud she put her best foot forward and was able to meet some incredible people. She believes her dedication to a healthy lifestyle—eating well, exercising and getting enough sleep—allows her to give her best everyday as a teacher, as well as influencing students to do the same.

*"Because I teach nutrition, my lifestyle helps me to show my students how to eat healthy and feel great," she says. Ms. Gagliano plans to continue training and participate in next year's competition.*



Grade 4 student wins Harry Potter contest and meets J.K. Rowling

St. Joseph (Richmond Hill) CES student Matthew Pincin entered an online contest to win a trip to England to meet the author of the Harry Potter books, J.K. Rowling — and won! The contest asked kids to explain why they love reading Harry Potter.

Matthew wrote that he loves the books' adventures and he wishes he had a pet owl just like Harry. His entry was chosen out of 15,000 and Matthew and his mom flew to England for the midnight reading of the book at the Natural History Museum. He also experienced his first limousine ride and had his copy of the newest book personally autographed by J.K. Rowling.





## Around Our Schools

### Healthy Schools Challenge

Elementary schools are continuing to implement 20 minutes of "daily physical activity" as part of the Ministry's "Healthy Schools" program. This shows students the importance of being active, as well as providing social, academic and health benefits.

### Terry Fox Run

Many of our schools showed their support for cancer research by participating in the 27th annual Terry Fox Run in September. Students from around the Board walked varying distances, raised donations and certainly had lots of fun.

### St. Edward milk program supports healthy lunch choices


St. Edward CES in Markham continues its support of healthier lunch choices, with the "Make the Move to Milk" program, now in its fifth year. Organized by Mme. Cholette, the program is very popular, with primary and junior students as its main customers. Each week, a student can purchase 10 tickets for \$6 which can then be used to purchase milk. After buying a sheet of tickets, the student's name is entered into a weekly draw to win great prizes, like t-shirts, mini footballs, erasers, baseball caps and pencil crayons. Congratulations to St. Edward, as well as all schools running a milk program, for encouraging our students to make healthy choices.

### Fr. Michael McGivney Interact Club Helps with Hunger

The Interact Club members will continue to provide complimentary breakfast once a week to fellow students. They believe providing a nutritious breakfast will help students start their day off right.

### Holy Cross CA Provides Tech Lab for Aspiring Newsmakers


Room 119 is no ordinary classroom – it's the official Communication Technology lab which offers student photographers and writers a place to try out their talents by joining the Hawk-1 student newspaper team.



Breast cancer survivor returns to teaching and raises awareness

In June of 2005, kindergarten teacher **Nora Wright** was diagnosed with breast cancer and took two years off to focus on her treatment and recovery. This September, she enthusiastically returned to teaching kindergarten part-time at one of the Board's new elementary schools, San Lorenzo Ruiz CES in Markham.

On the weekend of September 8, Nora participated in the Weekend to End Breast Cancer and was one of eight women chosen to be part of the opening ceremony. She ran an astonishing 60 kilometres and was able to raise \$20,000 in total with her group of 12 other runners. "I ran 48 kilometres for the 48 rounds of chemotherapy, six kilometres for the six rounds of radiation and six kilometres for the six neulasta shots. It was so empowering to run with all the other survivors. The feeling was indescribable."



Team supports journeys of faith

This year's Religious Education, Family Life Education and Equity Team has a new face: **Les Miller** has been a consultant with the team since 1999 and was appointed co-ordinator this summer. **Christine de Haas** returns to her post as equity consultant after serving for two years as

executive director of the Character Council of York Region. **Denise Dupuis** is in her second year as consultant after serving in both elementary and secondary schools. **Kathy Pellegrini** brings extensive primary and literacy experience to her second year as consultant. **Michael Way Skinner** brings extensive leadership experience in secondary Religious Education and chaplaincy teams. The group supports teachers in curriculum delivery and in spiritual and professional development. The team is also available to help Catholic School Councils pursue their spiritual goals. They look forward to supporting students, staffs and parents on their journeys of faith this year.



St. Joan of Arc CHS is welcoming a second classroom for its popular cosmetology classes this year. The classes are offered to Grades 10, 11 and 12 students. Recently, teacher Rina Cutruzzola and her Grade 10 students were interviewed by York Region reporter Teresa Latchford for local newspapers. The program has become so popular that the school is now offering 11 classes. It is the first YCDSB school to offer esthetics courses in addition to hairstyling. Over the course of the program, students learn to provide a range of services in a salon setting, including hairstyling, manicures, pedicures and facials.

◀ *Cosmetology teacher Rina Cutruzzola (right) helps a Grade 10 student detangle real human hair on a mannequin in preparation for styling.*

## 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.

The Catholic Monitor is published by the YCDSB Communications Dept., Catholic Education Centre 320 Bloomington Road W., Aurora, ON, L4G 3G8. www.ycdsb.ca

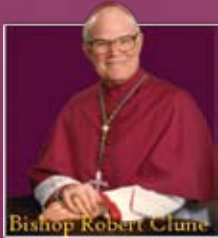
We are pleased to accept articles and photos about activities occurring throughout our system. We reserve the right to edit and determine which material is appropriate.

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His Excellency, the Most Reverend **Robert B. Clune**, passed away in Toronto on September 6, two weeks before his 87th birthday. Throughout his years of service,

Bishop Clune viewed Catholic education as a particular priority. He was an Honorary Trustee of the York Catholic District School Board and blessed many new schools in a time of significant growth for the Board. Superintendent of Schools Allan Mackey recalls that Bishop Clune was a prominent figure in the development of the York Catholic District School Board. "Throughout our years of rapid growth, Bishop Clune was always with us at our school celebrations, blessings and Confirmations. He was always affirming, expressing great pride in our Catholic schools." Bishop Clune will be fondly remembered for his affable, gentle way.

## Summer Camps boost literacy



Eighty JK and SK students enjoyed four weeks of a summer language program offered by YCDSB Speech-Language Services at four schools in July. The children were offered a "boost" in the oral language skills that are needed to begin learning to read: vocabulary, sentence structure, story telling and

sound awareness. Parents were also offered information sessions to support their child's progress. Above: Summer camp participants increased their language skills through outdoor activities.

## Director receives Administrator of the Year Award



Niagara University's College of Education has selected Director of Education Susan LaRosa to receive their "Administrator of the Year" award. The award honours individuals who have devoted their careers to enriching the lives of North American children. A graduate of Queen's University, Director LaRosa holds both an M.B.A. and an M.Ed. in

Administration. She serves on the York Region Character Region Character Council, is a key member of the York Regional Police Appreciation Committee and is a founding member of the York Region Human Services Planning Coalition. She and eight other distinguished educators from the U.S. and Canada will be honoured with various awards at a special recognition dinner in Lewiston, New York in October.

## Message from the new student trustee



It is a great honour to have been selected as the new student trustee for the YCDSB. I have always been very eager to express my ideas and concerns, and also relay the ideas of my fellow classmates. To take that to a greater level definitely sparked my attention. With this great honour comes great responsibility. Nonetheless I am confident that I will fulfill my duties, especially with the guidance of my mentor—fellow student trustee Kristine Soufian. As a result

of her excellent leadership, I have already learned a great deal about my role this year. My personal goal as a student trustee is to encourage involvement in co-curricular activities across the Board. My main focus is on the junior students and the Grade 7 and 8 students who are entering high school. If they get involved early, they will acquire the experience necessary to lead the future students in their school communities. —Clemence Emmanuel

*Student Trustee Clemence Emmanuel was sworn-in at the August 28th Board meeting. He begins a two-year term. He is a student of St. Robert CHS's International Baccalaureate Programme, the executive chairman of the school's Social Justice Club and a senior organizing member of both the Peer Mentorship and Volunteer Now programs. He is also a member of the Debate Society and teaches mathematics at a private tutor centre.*

## Chair's Message



The benefits of our Catholic school system are undeniable. We are fortunate to offer our students a curriculum that is infused with gospel values. Our schools provide a strong academic education with a focus on character development based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. I hope that you will join me in continuing to speak up about the benefits of our Catholic schools.

I will be participating in an upcoming TV production about Ontario Catholic Schools—to be taped later this month by the Salt & Light TV Network. This episode will focus on the distinctive nature of our Catholic schools. Once we know when the episode is set to air, we will post the information on our website, [www.ycdsb.ca](http://www.ycdsb.ca).

Recently, we were pleased to host Toronto Archbishop Thomas Collins, who commissioned our 18 newly appointed principals and vice-principals. Archbishop Collins delivered a wonderful homily and motivated us all to continue our work for peace and harmony in our school system and throughout our communities.

During the 2007-08 budget process, we identified a number of fiscal challenges. Recently, we were pleased to receive an additional \$4.5 million from the Ministry of Education to address some key areas of concern. We still face challenges, however, and we continue to lobby for improvements to the funding formula that will ensure students' needs are being met.

Our community was saddened to hear of the death of former trustee June Mallon, who was an active trustee with our Board for many years. Her contributions during her years as a Markham trustee were invaluable, and she worked tirelessly for our Catholic students. On behalf of the Board, I extend our thoughts and prayers to Mrs. Mallon's family.

Trustees recently approved a recommendation brought forward by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association to proclaim October 15 - 19, 2007 as Action Against Poverty Week. As we celebrate Thanksgiving, let's give thanks for all that we are blessed with, and remember in our actions and prayers those who are not as fortunate.

Elizabeth Crowe  
Chair of the Board



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