



The Catholic Monitor

October 2008 • www.ycdsb.ca

Director's Message



The 2008-2009 school year is now in full swing. Thanks to our outstanding students, teachers, staff and parents, our school communities have welcomed our newest JK students, held orientation and mentoring programs for our Grade 9 students, shared in curriculum nights and barbecues and raised thousands of dollars for the Terry Fox Foundation.

In addition, staff spent this year's first PA Day, September 26th, focusing on strategies to meet the needs of all learners and to engage students in the learning process. Other activities focused on what we can do to ensure safe schools.

Pope Benedict XVI has declared a year dedicated to St. Paul, celebrating the bi-millennial anniversary of his birth. The Pauline year extends from June 29, 2008 to June 28, 2009. St. Paul's love for Christ and his desire to preach the Gospel are well-recorded. Here at York Catholic, we will be guided by St. Paul this year as we work collaboratively to build on our strengths. To help give focus to the Holy Year within the Archdiocese of Toronto, an icon has been commissioned and blessed. It will be circulated among many area parishes. For more information, please visit www.archtoronto.org.

As we share in this season of Thanksgiving, and count our many blessings, I am grateful for the gifts we share as a Catholic community of learners. I pray that you are all blessed with peace and happiness this Thanksgiving.

Susan LaRosa
Director of Education

Gather Round the Table

The table is laid with a glory of gifts; here is wholesome bread and golden butter; here is a dish of varied salads, green and red; beyond it a basket of delicious fruit, multi-coloured, pears and apples, oranges and melons, grapes and cherries.

This is a table of sharing, an expression of caring, symbol of hospitality

and a reflection of God's abundant gifts for us.

Gather round the table and may it be a symbol of our unity and the open hand of compassion.

~ John Johansen-Berg



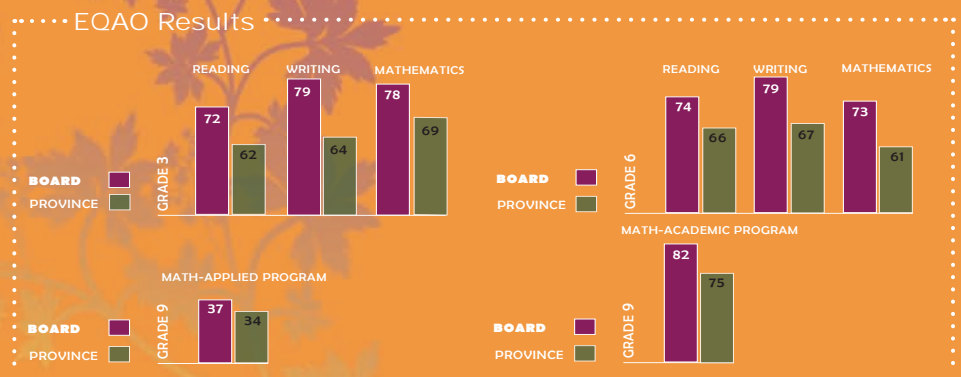
Terry Fox inspires season of giving

Many of our school communities organized Terry Fox Run/Walks during the last two weeks of September. For our York Catholic schools, this opportunity to honour Terry's journey and raise funds for cancer research is only the start of a yearlong series of charitable activities. Inspired by the teachings of Jesus, schools will now be embarking on fundraising initiatives and Thanksgiving food drives to help those in need.

Pictured left: All of the over 300 students at St. Matthew CES (Unionville) ran laps around Toogood Pond on September 24. Grade 4 students Natalie Agia and Rachel Giansopoulos are pictured preparing for the Terry Fox Run.

York Catholic students top provincial tests

Recently released Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Grades 3 and 6 standardized test results show that York Catholic students continue to be tops in the province and are improving on or maintaining already high scores in each of the reading, writing and math categories. Additionally, the Grade 9 Mathematics assessment shows improvement in both the academic and applied programming.



Each year, we use EQAO assessment results, in conjunction with many other indicators, to develop improvement plans that will benefit student success. Over the past several years, we have established a number of new and successful initiatives, including designating 18 Target Success schools to receive extra resources and supports; promoting literacy strategies through literacy support and reading recovery teachers; the establishment of collaborative school teams, model teachers and model classrooms; and after-school literacy and numeracy remedial programs taught by qualified teachers. Parents can find school-by-school analysis on the Board's website at www.ycdsb.ca.

St. Augustine CHS raises \$10,000 for partner school in Uganda



Last year, St. Augustine CHS' HEART: Helping Education in Africa, Reaching Together project raised an astonishing \$10,000 to support



St. Augustine's partner schools in Uganda.

With the help of Professor Lorna Bowman of the University of Western Ontario, St. Augustine CHS formed a partnership with Kalunga Girls Training School and Sacred Heart Primary School in Uganda. These residential schools administered by the Religious Sisters of the Sacred Heart (RSCJ) provide room, board and an education for girls, who otherwise would have to endure a lifetime of hunger and illiteracy.

Sr. Margie Conroy (RSCJ) visited the school and was presented with all the proceeds collected. Through the efforts of Ms. Aranha, Ms. Furfaro, Mr. Rooney, Ms. Yetman and Joyce Arabian, the HEART organizers will continue their awareness programs and generous fundraising this year.

Pictured (left): Stephanie Romanguolo cuts the cake with Sr. Margie Conroy (RSCJ) at a welcome luncheon hosted by the Special Education Department.
Pictured (right): African slums, homes of students attending our partner schools.

Student Transportation Services staff member Susan Gibson recently celebrated a milestone—35 years working with the YCDSB. Susan began her career as a school bus driver, and stayed in this role for 13 years. She later became a school secretary at Brother Andre CHS. In 1988, she joined the transportation department, where she continues to work today, as one of the key people responsible for keeping the wheels on the bus going round and round.

Pictured: Director of Education Susan LaRosa (right) presents Susan Gibson with an award.



St. Joan of Arc CHS alumnus competes in Beijing



St. Joan of Arc CHS alumnus Massimo Bertocchi proudly represented Canada at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. The 22-year-old Maple resident was the only Canadian in the gruelling two-day, 10-event competition that included the shotput, high jump, 400m, 100m, long jump, 110m hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin and 1,500m.

Before leaving for China, he said, "Only a few people in the world ever get to experience it. I'm just excited to be there and be an Olympian."

Massimo's goal was to finish in the top 15, and he came close, finishing 19th overall.

Photo courtesy Francis Crescia / Vaughan Today

Safety Awareness Week

The York Catholic District School Board has designated the week of September 29, 2008 to October 3, 2008 as Safety Awareness Week. During the week, staff and students rehearsed a variety of emergency school procedures to acquaint students and staff with the precautionary steps to take in the event of such occurrences as a warning of severe weather, an intruder or a bomb threat.

In addition, throughout the year, our schools will hold practice drills to acquaint students with various emergency protocols. Teachers will also review these procedures with students in class prior to practice drills.

St. Elizabeth CHS grad to star in new production of Cinderella



St. Elizabeth CHS alumna Paula Brancati has landed the lead role in Ross Petty's production of *Cinderella*, playing at the Elgin Theatre in Toronto. Brancati, who graduated from the Regional Arts Program, also stars on the television show *Degrassi: The Next Generation* and was nominated for a Gemini Award for her work on the Emmy-winning YTV series, *Dark Oracle*.

Paula still speaks fondly of her time at St. Elizabeth and says, "Thanks so much for all of the ongoing support. Having so many great people at St. Elizabeth still so interested and supportive of what I'm doing is extremely special to me."

Cinderella will run from November 28, 2008 to January 4, 2009.

Open call for York Catholic alumni!

Each year the Communications Department produces the Board's *Distinguished Alumni* poster, which features past York Catholic alumni who have gone on to have unique and successful careers. This year, we're issuing an "open call" for the upcoming 2009 poster, and encourage submissions of York Catholic grads with interesting careers. Please send all submissions to:

communications@ycdsb.ca
or call 905-713-1211, ext. 3008.



Sacred Heart student movement encourages positivity

Students at Sacred Heart CHS enjoyed a September 10 assembly featuring speakers from Absolute Leadership Development, a not-for-profit organization that hopes to empower emerging generations to live with purpose and to change their world. The speakers shared their personal stories of triumph over tragedy. Students were also treated to a performance from New Zealand musicians All Left Out. The assembly was organized by Sacred Heart's ICAN group, made up of 20 enthusiastic student members and staff advisors Rose Myler, Connie DeFelice, Christine deSouza, Teresa Cooney, Jason Scott and Jocelyn Roberts.

ICAN organizers later handed out bracelets to the entire school community, challenging students to try to be positive for at least one day (eventually working up to 21 days) without saying anything negative about themselves or others. The group encourages people to appreciate life and create a positive atmosphere, starting from within oneself. Pictured: Sacred Heart students gather to hand out ICAN bracelets.

Secondary students study in Italy

Twenty-five York Catholic students are off to Italy, this semester, to study at York Catholic Centro Scuola (YCCS) Canadian Academy. Five Grade 10 students and 20 Grade 11 students were accepted for the program, which is led by administrator Nunzio Romano. The school is located in the renowned seaside resort, Roseto, which has a richness of natural and artistic beauty. Students will study English, Religion, History and Italian, and participate in a daily reflection and prayer. On Sundays and other special days, students will attend liturgical celebrations at a local church.



Pictured: Grade 11 students Roman Belli, Lisa Spagnuolo and Andrew Dolinski dress in Ancient Roman costumes during presentations about Italy's history. The presentations took place before the students left as a way to prepare for the trip.

Schools to celebrate 50 years of Catholic education

Congratulations to the St. Patrick (Markham) CES and St. Margaret Mary (Woodbridge) school communities—these schools will be celebrating 50 years of Catholic education.

To celebrate, St. Patrick CES will have a Mass, open house and assembly with guest speakers, a student choir performance, and dances by intermediate students on October 25. The staff are currently collecting any photographs, anecdotes or memories from those who may have attended or taught at St. Patrick CES over its 50 years. To contribute, please contact the school.

The St. Margaret Mary CES community will celebrate next school year, in the spring of 2010. If anyone has photos they wish to have displayed during the celebrations, please contact the school.

{ Collaborative Learning Inspired by Jesus }

Catholic School Council Conference



Our 8th Annual Catholic School Conference will be held on Saturday, November 15, 2008 at St. Augustine CHS in Markham. This year's conference will be particularly exciting, as the keynote speaker is Barbara Coloroso, renowned author and lecturer.

The theme for the event is "Safe and Caring Schools" and Barbara will be providing attendees with practical advice on nurturing children to be respectful, positive, caring children – consistent with our Gospel values. The conference will provide Catholic School Council members with workshops on school fundraising, community partnership develop and building Catholic communities of character.

Committee breaks down barriers

The YCDSB's Accessibility Committee meets throughout the school year to discuss measures for identifying, removing and preventing barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use or attend school board facilities and services.

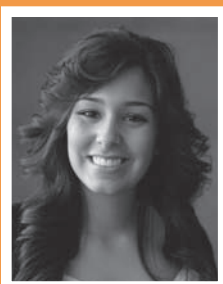
With Pope Benedict XVI having declared June 29, 2008 to June 28, 2009 a year dedicated to St. Paul, the Archdiocese of Toronto is also focusing on inclusivity.

This year, our Accessibility Committee is working to promote awareness of mental health issues, so that we may accept and embrace all people in our school communities. In addition, the committee is continuing to promote awareness of both physical and invisible barriers.

As one step in meeting this objective, the committee has called on elementary and secondary students to participate in video and/or poster contests focusing on ability awareness and sensitivity. Schools have been provided with information sheets outlining rules, criteria and prizes.



York Catholic welcomes new student trustee



The York Catholic District School Board's new student trustee, Cassandra Curcio, began her term this September. Cassandra, a Grade 11 student at Markham's Brother Andre CHS, is excited about her new position and is eager to start getting more involved.

"I wanted to be a student trustee because I believe that every student has a voice, and although some may not be as loud as others, their yearning to be heard is undeniable,"

explained Cassandra.

"With great faith, I truly hope that I will echo those thousands of voices and allow each one to receive the individual attention that they deserve." Cassandra Curcio joins Grade 12 student trustee Clemence Emmanuel, elected last year, at the Board table.

Chair's Message



As we begin another school year, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some recent news items from our Board table.

French Immersion

Our Board is one of only a few Ontario school boards currently offering Core French from Grades 1 to 3 in addition to the compulsory program from Grades 4 through 8. Recently, trustees also approved in principle the implementation of an elementary French Immersion program. Consideration will be given to starting in one or two locations in September 2009, with a possible expansion to five schools by 2010. An implementation committee is studying the issue and will report back to trustees. Public input will be sought to determine interested communities, once criteria is finalized. A final report will be presented to the Board no later than December 31, 2008, identifying recommended schools and phase-in strategies.

Character Community Week

Trustees approved a request from the Character Community Foundation of York Region to proclaim the week of October 27-31, 2008 as Character Community Week. We recognize that character in York Catholic schools is an integral part of our faith-based education and directly linked to Gospel values. Schools will receive resources and a poster for every classroom, to identify and support the relationship between character attributes, Catholic Graduate Expectations and Gospel messages.

CSC Conference

I am looking forward to meeting parents at this year's Catholic School Council Conference on November 15. The day promises to provide our school councils members with valuable opportunities to share best practices, along with many tools that will benefit our school communities.

I hope you enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Elizabeth Crowe
Chair of the Board

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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"E-news You Can Use"

"E-News You Can Use" is our new, electronic newsletter, sent out monthly, which provides information about activities happening at the Board and school levels.

It also provides links to the Communication Department's publications, tip sheets for parents and photos taken at recent events.

To begin receiving this electronic newsletter, please visit our website at www.ycdsb.ca for further instructions. Please note you can always unsubscribe at any time.



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