



Director's 2008 Annual Report

Collaborative Learning Inspired By Jesus



Director of Education Susan LaRosa is pictured in the Cardinal Carter CHS peace garden, with students from the school's Activists for a Cleaner Tomorrow (ACT) committee, Marcus Bangcaya and Allison Read.

Caring for our Earth

tions is that students *become responsible citizens who promote the sacredness of life, respect the environment and use resources wisely, and contribute to the common good.* At York Catholic, we are committed to providing students with curriculum-based environmental education, as well as opportunities for hands-on activities that support goals like waste reduction, “greening” of our schoolyards and energy efficiency.

In this report, you will find examples of a few of the many efforts that our students and staff are making each and every day on behalf of our planet. In addition, I am pleased to share with you some details about our budget, as well as curriculum highlights and successes from this school year. As always, please contact me with any questions, comments or suggestions, at communications@ycdsb.ca.

Susan LaRosa,
Director of Education

Director's Message

The United Nations has declared 2008 as the *International Year of Planet Earth*, and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) has stated that there is a need for a personal and collective conversion when it comes to our relationship with the environment.

At York Catholic, we have made the environment a primary focus for the 2007-08 school year and beyond. Our Board environmental policy states that “it is our immediate moral responsibility to live in harmony with God’s creation, the Earth, and to educate future generations to treat the Earth with respect. Reverence for our environment must be a foundation for all our decision-making”.

As Catholics, we are called to care for our Earth and all of God’s Creation. But, we have a long way to go. The United Nations’ *Human Development Report 2007/2008, Fighting Climate Change*, notes that Canada is far from meeting its Kyoto Protocol commitments—emissions

have increased by 159 million tonnes of CO₂e since 1990—a 27 percent overall increase and 33 percent above Kyoto target levels, largely due to an increase in emissions from expanded

The Earth is entrusted to humanity like a garden that is managed but not owned. Humans are responsible for being gardeners for the species of plants and good shepherds for the species of animals.—*Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Our Relationship with the Environment: The Need for Conversion”.*

oil and gas production. As the CCCC suggests, “We have mismanaged the Garden of Eden entrusted to us.”

Today’s children, who will inherit the Earth from us, are thankfully already conscious of the need for ecological awareness. Our students inspire us every day, as adults, to do the best we can for our Earth. In turn, we can empower our students to make good decisions in shaping the future of our planet. One of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expecta-



Student volunteers help to serve healthy snacks for the Eco-Stock attendees.

On April 3, St. Theresa of Lisieux CHS (Richmond Hill) hosted Eco-Stock 2008, a free environmental stewardship forum for high school students across York Region. Over 250 students attended and guest speakers included the Honourable Donna Cansfield, Minister Natural Resources and Geoff Cape,

co-founder of Evergreen, a national non-profit environmental organization that works to bring nature to cities through naturalization projects. Attendees were able to choose from a list of different workshops, such as: Impacts of Bottled Water, Cutting-Edge Architecture, Urban Sprawl, Climate Change, Protecting our Natural Areas and Communicating Your Environmental Passion Effectively.

Success **STORIES**

- St. Joseph (Richmond Hill) Grade 4 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. Matthew explained why he loves the Harry Potter books and was selected out of 15,000 entrants as the winner.

 St. Anthony CES student Vanessa Cataruzza received a certificate of achievement for her contribution to the Youth Round Table on Climate Change at the 2007 Shared Air Summit. This summit allows young Ontarians to voice their opinions on the right to clean air for a healthier tomorrow.

- To assist with the tragic natural disasters which occurred in Myanmar and China this spring, all York Catholic schools held a Loonie & Toonie Social Justice Day, with all proceeds collected going to ShareLife. The proceeds will help to provide food, shelter, clean water and medical assistance. The total raised was an astonishing \$51,000. The money was matched dollar for dollar by the Canadian government.

- On December 4, Archbishop Thomas Collins blessed Corpus et Spiritus, a contemporary faith-based sculpture at the Catholic Education Centre. The sculpture was sponsored entirely by private donations from Metrus Development Inc. through Fred DeGasperis. Principal artist Farhad Nargol-O'Neill is a YCDSB graduate and worked with six Grade 11 student apprentices to complete the sculpture.

- St. Elizabeth CHS's Mock Trial Team was declared the winners of a mock trial competition held in March at the Newmarket Court House. The runner-up was Markham's Brother Andre CHS, with Woodbridge's St. Joan of Arc CHS as the consolation champs, and Aurora's Cardinal Carter CHS as the consolation runner-up.

 Thirty-five schools participated in our new "Green Schools Program" offered in conjunction with Office Depot and Lexmark. As well as receiving rebates for used laser toner and inkjet cartridges, participating schools were eligible for prizes. Congratulations to Fr. Frederick McGinn CES, which won a school pizza day and St. Jean de Brebeuf CHS, which received a Lexmark laser printer.

- Many York Catholic schools were involved in Girls on the Run, a life-changing, non-profit program for girls in Grades 3 to 8. The program combines training for a 5 km run with healthy living education.
- Aurora's St. Jerome CES Grade 1 teacher Ruth Freeman was featured on Rogers Television in April. Rogers often profiles "exceptional teachers" and Ruth was selected for her expertise and caring manner with her students.

Curriculum **HIGHLIGHTS**

EQAO – Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) standardized test results, released in September, show that YCDSB Grade 3 and 6 students are leading the province. In addition, results from Grade 9 mathematics assessments show that our students are outperforming their provincial counterparts in math achievement.

APPLIED BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSIS - In 2007, the Ministry of Education issued a Program Policy Memorandum (PPM140), which provided direction to school boards regarding the use of Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) as an effective instructional approach. As a result of collaboration between Board staff, parents and the Special Education Advisory Committee, our Board developed a plan for ABA implementation to continue to include all students in the classroom, school and community.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION - During the September 2007 PA Day, teachers revisited "Education for All", using the document as a starting point to reflect on their teaching strategies, the composition of their classes and the best ways to match strategies with their students.

ADULT FAITH AMBASSADORS - In addition to holding school and area events, our 180 adult faith ambassadors gathered for three central events and a retreat this school year.

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS COURSES IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – Our AQ courses in Religious Education continue to be popular among teachers. About 330 people attend the courses annually.

FAITH DAY – On the May PA Day, teachers participated in a Faith Day, gathering at the nearest high school to watch an inspirational video featuring talks from Director of Religious Formation for the Archdiocese of Plymouth in England, David Wells, and Archbishop Thomas Collins, on the day's theme "We are called to be a people of joy".

ELEMENTARY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION - Schools received new resources for Grades 1 and 2 classes to update the Fully Alive program materials. Supplementary resources were also introduced for the Grade 7 and 8 Family Life curriculum.

SECONDARY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – Religious Education curriculum was one focus of the November 30 PA Day, as the Religious Education subject council met at St. Joan of Arc CHS to engage in a variety of activities aimed at improving student learning.

EQUITY/CHARACTER – Bullying prevention was emphasized this year, with additional supports and resources provided to schools. Equity staff also worked in support of the Community Alliance for York Region Education (CAYRE) and Character Foundation programs.

QUICK FACTS

• Elementary students: 37,848	• Elementary schools: 83
• Secondary students: 17,208	• Secondary schools: 13
• Total: 55,056	• Total schools: 96
• Instructional staff: 3,157	• Parishes in York Region: 28
• Non-instructional staff: 1,868	• Faith ambassadors: 180

In September, we welcomed students to Richmond Hill's latest Catholic school, **Father Frederick McGinn CES**. The school serves the growing community of Catholic learners in Richmond Hill. It is equipped with the latest technology, and now has 380 students registered. The school celebrated its Solemn Blessing and Official Opening in April to the excitement of staff, parents and students. Principal Harry Arena and staff are looking forward to building a new history within the community.



September saw the opening of Markham's latest Catholic school, **San Lorenzo Ruiz CES**. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology, the school boasts a mechanical cooling system, an electronic screen over the stage and computers in the classroom, including wireless laptops. The school held its Solemn Blessing and Official Opening on April 28 (pictured right).



Fraser Reports recognize SCHOOL SUCCESSES

The Fraser Institute's 2008 Report Card on Ontario Secondary Schools was released in March 2008, and York Catholic schools continue to be among the leaders in the province. Our secondary schools scored 7.37 out of 10, compared to an overall provincial rating of 6.2. The Report Card ranks 725 Ontario high schools using Grade 9 math test scores as well as the results of the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test. St. Elizabeth CHS was recognized in the report as "one of the most improved schools in the province", and the *Toronto Sun* featured the school in a March edition.

The Fraser Institute's 2008 Report Card on Ontario Elementary Schools, released on February 17, shows that three of our schools ranked in the top 25 in the province: St. Justin, Martyr CES (Unionville), Mother Teresa CES (Markham), and St. Padre Pio CES (Woodbridge). All three York Catholic schools received a perfect 10 rating in the Report Card.

While rankings of schools and school boards don't provide a full picture, the assessments that teachers are doing on a daily basis in our classrooms also show that our students are achieving at high levels. Our successes are a testament to the quality of teaching and col-

laboration in our schools. Over the past three years, all of our schools have been emphasizing numeracy and literacy. Program resource teachers work side-by-side with classroom teachers to enhance the teaching-learning process.

Schools honoured with Garfield Weston Awards

With the release of the Garfield Weston Awards for Excellence in Education on March 19, St. Justin, Martyr CES in Unionville was named the second runner-up in the category of Overall Academic Achievement. This award recognizes the school whose students have achieved remarkable, ongoing academic success over the last five years. Three other York Catholic elementary schools received Awards of Distinction in this category, including: St. Agnes of Assisi CES and St. Angela Merici CES in Woodbridge, and St. Patrick CES in Markham. St. Peter CES in Woodbridge was identified as a School of Distinction in the category of Improvement in Academics.

Congratulations to the students, parents, staff and teachers of all of these schools for your commitment to student success.

Taking the curriculum OUTSIDE



A partnership between the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the YCDSB has provided Grade 6 students at Our Lady Help of Christians CES with some exciting outdoor education. Implemented by teacher-librarian Linda McLellan, a board director of the Bruce Trail Conservancy, and Grade 6 teachers Karen Colaco and Alan Schnurr, the program included lessons about the Bruce Trail and the Niagara Escarpment, as well as a guided hike in Mono Cliffs Provincial Park.

2007-2008 Budget

Our balanced 2007-08 budget of \$439,447,878 is focused on meeting the diverse needs of each member of our community of learners. This figure represents an increase of six per cent over the previous year's budget expenditures.

In the 2007-08 school year, we welcomed 55,056 students, and opened two new elementary schools, added a new grade level in one high school, experienced a growth in enrolment of over 375 Average Daily Enrolment (ADE), developed and implemented a new music program and continued to develop and implement energy efficiencies and recycling programs.

The data represents revised operating expenditures by function for the fiscal year ended August 31, 2008. For final results at yearend, including audited financial statements, please visit our website at www.ycdsb.ca, or call 905-713-1211 or 416-221-5051, ext. 2400. Data excludes new pupil places, facilities renewal and debt charges.

New and revised POLICIES

Trustees approved new Bullying Prevention and Personal Electronic Devices policies and a revised Code of Conduct. For the full text of these policies, visit our website at www.ycdsb.ca.

Bullying Prevention, Policy 223

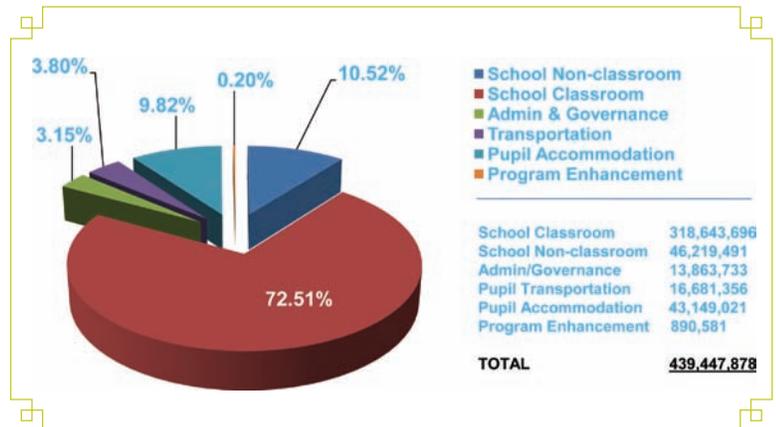
The Bullying Prevention policy states that bullying in any form is unacceptable and that staff will implement bullying prevention and intervention strategies which foster a positive learning and teaching environment for all students and staff.

Personal Electronic Devices, Policy 222

All personal electronic devices shall be kept out of sight, turned off and not used during the school day. Students must have prior authorization from the school principal for use during school-related activities.

Code of Conduct, Policy 218

The Code of Conduct policy is based on our belief that all members of our learning community have the right to a safe learning and teaching environment and that each person is responsible for creating and sustaining that environment.



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.

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- Within the Ontario curriculum at every grade level, there are many opportunities to integrate and address environmental education throughout the curriculum. For example, a Grade 5 Science and Technology unit looks at Conservation of Energy and Resources. The Religious Education program ties the environment to spirituality, with study topics like “God’s World is My Home”. Examples at the secondary level include Science studies of sustainable ecosystems and Canadian and World Studies units on human and environmental interactions.
- Three of our elementary schools submitted applications to become certified EcoSchools as part of the Ontario EcoSchools program. Sir Richard W. Scott CES, St. Jerome CES and St. Margaret Mary CES hope to achieve bronze, silver or gold status based on their environmental efforts of the past year.
- The Board-wide Environmental Committee continued its focus with a broad and varied representation of stakeholders during the 2007-08 school year. The group meets three times per year to share ideas and resources, report on their activities and learn from guest speakers. The committee promotes environmental awareness through hands-on activities like cleaning up the schoolyard, waste-free lunch initiatives and planting gardens.
- Our shared courier service with the York Region District School Board reduces the number of vehicles required and the associated environmental impact.
- In May, our Board and the Durham District School Board each received \$23,500 to support a school ground greening initiative through CODE (Council of Directors of Education). In partnership with Evergreen Canada, Durham Sustainability and the two boards, a school ground greening architect will assist the boards with selected projects for one year.
- Over 200 tonnes of paper fibre was collected and recycled as part of our green bin paper recycling program in operation at all of our facilities.
- Blue box recycling programs have been set up at the majority of our schools. Classroom blue boxes have been distributed and staff and students educated during environmental assemblies.
- An Eco-Champion program at three of our schools includes the installation of “Save Energy” LED signs in all classrooms, libraries and main offices at Our Lady Help of Christians CES, St. Gregory the Great CES and St. Justin, Martyr CES. These signs flash whenever the school is using electricity above certain thresholds. Schools have lists of things they can do to reduce electricity use when the lights are flashing.
- We have installed 70,000 new light bulbs that use considerably less power. The energy efficient lighting was sponsored with a \$100,000 grant from PowerStream’s powerWISE Business Incentive Program. The new bulbs have trimmed our annual lighting bill by \$375,000 and reduced greenhouse gases by 1,100 metric tons a year. We also have 20 schools now turning off lighting at night.
- We have implemented standard school temperature settings that range from 20 to 25 degrees depending upon the season, resulting in a comfortable temperature range and energy savings. We now centrally control heating and ventilation in over 2,150 classrooms.
- Our eco-friendly initiatives were recognized by the Office of Energy Efficiency. We received first place in Ontario for the highest percentage of gigajoule (GJ) reductions and second place in Ontario for the highest GJ savings. The Board’s savings amounted to 85,549 GJ, and approximately \$1.7-million.
- The two Catholic high schools we are building in Richmond Hill and Aurora are incorporating several greening initiatives, such as: heat recovery ventilation systems, occupancy sensors, low-flow water faucets and showerheads, energy efficient windows and light pollution reduction.



▲ St. Joseph (Richmond Hill) CES Grade 2 student Sarah Abbatangelo works in the school’s vegetable garden, designed to teach students about caring for plants and the value of our Earth.