



A Parent's Role in Student Success

RESearch clearly indicates that positive parental involvement improves student learning.

When parents have frequent discussions with their children about school it provides them an opportunity to offer advice and support, encourages accountability for achievement and reassures students that their parents care about their success. The discussions also help parents to become more familiar with their child's learning.

Homework is another way that parents can see how their son or daughter is doing in school. The



student will have homework almost every night but the amount of homework will depend upon the grade.

Ways parents can help with homework:

- Set up a study area, with a good light, away from TV or other distractions. Provide pens, pencils, erasers, paper and a dictionary.
- Set a regular homework time and help your son or daughter plan his or her work.
- Consider whether doing homework with another student would help. Some

students do better when studying with a friend. On some school assignments, students are expected to work together.

- Ask your son or daughter what their homework is about, and discuss it when it is done.
- Be encouraging when the work is hard, and always praise his or her efforts to succeed. Praise from a parent is a powerful incentive.
- Contact the teacher if the homework is too hard, takes too long, or is too easy.

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There is no finer investment than the gift of a Catholic education

IT has been an excellent start to the 2005/06 school year. Our student enrolment is slightly down in our elementary schools and our secondary enrolment is higher than we had anticipated. We welcomed twenty new teaching staff to our schools to offset retirements and to reduce primary class size.

Our school year kicked off by hosting a very successful conference this past August on Professional Learning Communities in Stratford. We had over one hundred of our teaching staff in attendance and the system received many accolades for organizing such a world class major conference.

Our commitment to student numeracy and literacy continues to be on the top of our agenda. We are committed to continually improving our schools, creating learning environments where people work together as a team and where innovation and improvement are built into our daily practices. As a Catholic learning community we need to reflect on our best practices, assess our effectiveness and make decisions about what we need to do to improve student learning.

As a system we continue to make substantial improvements in our results on provincial assessments. This is a tribute to a hard working and dedicated teaching staff who believe in the potential of all students.

As the fall term progressed our school councils further enhanced the important partnership between home and school. We hosted our School Council Forum on November 12th. Our Catholic Education Team hosted our second annual dinner



with the priests of the Deanery. This year the Board's leadership team, trustees, priests in the Deanery, principals, the Catholic Education Team and Religion Advisor Teachers dined with His Excellency Bishop Ronald P. Fabbro on November 3rd.

This fall the system honoured trustee Ron Marcy for 30 years of service. Ron has worked tirelessly for our school system over the years and has always represented our students and staff in a professional manner. Huron-Perth Catholic Schools have a dedicated group

of trustees who care deeply about the mission of Catholic education.

I am very pleased with the progress we have made on our capital projects. Our schools are in excellent condition. We have just completed major projects at St. Joseph's, Stratford, and St. Mary's, Goderich. Our last few years as a school system have been exceptional and we are very confident that this trend will continue. This belief is predicated on our unwavering journey towards excellence.

There is no finer investment for a society than giving its children the gift of an excellent Catholic education, and for this we are truly blessed.

As always, I would like to hear what you think. You can write me at P.O. Box 70, Dublin, ON N0K 1E0, or email at larry_langan@hpcdsb.edu.on.ca.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Langan".

Larry Langan
Director of Education

Construction Update

THE Board has completed the final stages of an ambitious construction program totaling over \$12 million of new and renovated facilities in the system.

- Two of the projects, St. Joseph's School, Clinton and St. Mary's School, Listowel were completed in the spring of 2005 at a total cost of \$7.4 million. These two new facilities replace old schools and will be funded through the Prohibited to Repair Grants provided by the Ministry. Students moved in January and March, and are now enjoying state of the art facilities.
- In September 2005, 165 students re-entered St. Joseph's School, Stratford to a completely renovated facility after having spent six months in a temporary school facility leased from the Avon Maitland District School Board.

St. Joseph's School was completely renovated to current standards. This included new flooring, lighting, shelving as well as a new heating and ventilation system. The addition included a library, resource room, gym and classrooms. The existing kindergarten classroom was completely retrofitted. A chapel was created in the former principal's office to allow for a space for reflection within the school. The total cost of this project was \$2.5 million and



Official re-opening of St. Joseph's School, Stratford.

Pictured above is Chair of the Board, Bernard Murray, giving opening remarks at the ceremony.

was funded through the Board's New Pupil Places Grants.

- In March 2005, the Board started a long awaited addition and renovation to St. Mary's, Goderich. Major features of this project were the addition of six classrooms that replaced existing portables, modification of the central corridor that created a grand hall and the relocation of the central and principal's office to the centre of the building off the grand hall.

The modifications to the school include relocating the entrance-way to the building, relocating the parking lot, and creating a new bus drop off area. The modifications have created a central space that allows for student gatherings. The focal point of the grand hall is the statue of Mary.

During the addition, modification to the existing school was undertaken - new door hardware was installed, lighting upgraded and re-roofing completed on various other parts of the building.

Outdoor landscaping was completed that provided for additional paving as well as incorporating green space to allow for a fully functioning school playground. The cost of this project is approximately \$2.2 million.

- In the fall 2005 and spring 2006, the Board will be preparing a long-term capital plan that will be submitted to the Ministry of Education to address the remaining pupil place and capital needs of the system.

New positions on Leadership Team

Several new appointments have been made to the Huron-Perth Catholic Leadership Team.

School Communities

Mike Bruneel, *new Principal at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel*
Dawne Boersen, *new acting Principal at St. Columban and St. Patrick's*
Pam Robson, *new Vice-principal at St. Columban and St. Patrick's*

Board Office

Vince Trocchi, *Coordinator of Numeracy/Curriculum*
Loretta Ayotte, *Coordinator of Information Communication Technology/Curriculum*
Annemarie Petrasek, *Literacy/Curriculum Consultant*
Dan Parr, *Superintendent of Education*
Donna Gregus, *Coordinator of Special Education/Curriculum.*

Committed to Physical Fitness



St. Boniface School in Zurich kicked off an active school campaign at the end of September with a parade through town to draw attention to their commit-

ment to healthy living. Many parents, grandparents and friends of the St. Boniface community, along with students and staff participated. The parade took 30

minutes, the same minimum amount of time that each classroom at the school has continued to dedicate to physical fitness each and every day.



Students from St. Patrick's School in Kinkora are recognized for exemplifying the virtue of respect.

Virtues Program - Gifts of Character

There are 52 universal virtues that are the essence of the human spirit and the content of character.

The Virtues Program is based on this premise and teaches respect, fosters kindness and is a model for integrity.

At St. Patrick's School in Kinkora, one powerful virtue is selected each month. In September it was "Respect."

For the month, staff and students did their best to speak and act with courtesy, to treat others with dignity, and to honour the rules at home and at school.

A representative in each class, who exemplified the virtue of respect, had their picture displayed in a special place in the school.



P.D. Day for Staff

The Professional Development Day in September was held at St. Anne's Secondary School. The day began with a liturgy celebration led by Father Peter Keller, parish priest of St. Patrick's, Kinkora and St. Brigid's, near the town of Mitchell. Various workshops were held for all staff groups. Approximately 550 staff attended.



New Student Trustees

Two new student trustees, one from each secondary school, have been appointed to the Board and will attend monthly Board meetings.

From left: Jennifer Kloefer is from St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School and Katey Chisholm is from St. Michael Catholic Secondary School.

Recognition of retirement and 25 years of service

In June, retiring teachers and individuals that have been employees of the Board for 25 years were recognized.

Retirees included: Carol McIlroy, Kathy Regier, Kaye Watkins, Ginette Ouellet, Paul Gainer, Ferg Kelly, Laurie Kraftcheck, Ron Galdding, Stella Farwell and Jim McDade.

Employees with 25 years of service: Glenn Thomas, Julia Gracey and Phil Antonio.

Terry Fox National School Run Day



In September, Huron-Perth Catholic Schools participated in a variety of activities to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of The Terry Fox Run. The drizzling rain could not dampen the spirits of a determined group of students from across the Board.

At St. Boniface School students were encouraged to exceed a goal of \$2,000. They almost doubled this goal and collected \$3,822. Elsewhere, at Precious Blood School in Exeter, Principal Rodney Marsh was forced to shave his head after his students were able to exceed their goal of \$1,000 by \$407. This effort was matched by the \$1,400 that was collected from Mt. Carmel. At Holy Name of Mary in St. Marys, students were greeted by MPP John Wilkinson, and their enthusiastic campaign generated \$4,000. In Stratford, students from St. Michael Secondary School collected \$2,488, and the top fundraiser for the day, St. Ambrose School, raised an impressive total of \$4,150.

There were many other examples of generosity across the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board. In fact, the total amount raised from all schools was approximately \$20,000!

An auspicious future for St. Mary's School

ST. Mary's School began its first full academic year at its new location in Listowel and the future looks very auspicious!

The site has modern classrooms, computer lab/library, gym, servery, washrooms, administrative space, and a wonderful chapel. In addition, the facilities outside the building are also complete. Students have full use of soccer and baseball fields, basketball courts, asphalt games, and an incredible new play structure complete with a climbing wall!

Programs have been enhanced with exciting changes in several curriculum areas. One subject with significant revision is the music program. The school has purchased, with help from the parent council, hand bells, recorders, and acoustic guitars. The goal is to create interest and inspire a love for instrumental music.

Teachers at St. Mary's are very enthusiastic about the new focus on the improvement in student writing. This focus will support staff to refine the use of the writing curriculum, exemplars, student portfolios, and the latest guidelines in writing assessment.

"As we tell our students," says Principal John McCarroll, "the pen (keyboard) is mightier than the sword (joystick)".



Teacher, George Haid provides guitar instruction to two senior students.



Debra Ross leads the grade 4/5 class in a 20 minute workout,

This fall, students and staff participated in "Peace Camp" at Galbraith Conservation Area. Students, parents, and staff enjoyed a day of prayer, peaceful games, and the Terry Fox Walk for Charity.

St. Mary's proudly promotes the lessons of Christ through the curriculum, masses and paraliturgies, sacramental preparation, and the conflict resolution program with Peaceful Schools International. The school's membership in this worldwide organization allows access to great learning materials, newsletters and special projects. As part of St. Mary's focus, the grade 4/5 class will take part in a peer mediation workshop and attend a play about peace.

This year the school will run a pilot program for Healthy Living. The project, supported by the Perth County Health Unit, requires the school to sell healthy lunches, provide a healthy snack program, incorporate 20 minutes of daily fitness activity as well as model healthy living in all lessons and fundraisers. The program's physical education and health teacher for the district, Deb Ross, will guide this pilot program. Mrs. Ross along with a Healthy Living Committee composed of: teachers, parents and students, will assist in facilitating the changes that will lead to a healthier school.

Exciting, new challenges at Our Lady of Mount Carmel

OUR Lady of Mount Carmel School is located in the south of Huron County, about 15 minutes south east of Grand Bend. There are 182 students from JK to grade 8.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel has dedicated staff members who inspire excellence and offer students a program that balances academic goals with faith development. Under the leadership of new Principal, Mike Bruneel, and many new staff members, the school community has begun a year full of exciting new opportunities and challenges, while upholding the strong traditions that make this school unique.

The school has close ties to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish across the road. Parish priest, Father Ray Lawhead takes an active role in the school community. This, coupled with the commitment of staff, ensures faith is an important part of student life.

A "School Pride" campaign is also underway this year. The Lions' mascot has been adopted at the



Fr. Ray Lawhead takes an active role in the school community.

school and this be incorporated into a theme of things to take "pride" in at the school. An integral part of this campaign will be the "Virtues Project." This is a project that focuses on shaping character by creating a positive, empowering culture in which students can learn and grow.

Each week a "virtue" will be highlighted during morning announcements and within individual classrooms.

During "Lion Pride" assemblies at the end of each month, when achievements in sports and academics are recognized; so too will students who best demonstrated the virtues of the month.

By placing a focus on these virtues, students will see that the way they act and treat others is not only important but it is also a part of the school culture.

Academically, Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a community that has consistently shown growth and accomplishment. This year, there will be a focus on improving specific areas in reading, writing and mathematics. Student achievement is a priority.





John McCarroll, Principal at St. Mary's School in Listowel stands with His Excellency Bishop Ronald P. Fabbro at the Deanery Dinner in November.

Deanery Dinner

Recently, the Board's leadership team, trustees, priests in the Deanery, principals, the Catholic Education Team and Religion Advisor Teachers attended the Deanery Dinner at the Mitchell Golf and Country Club. This special event was sponsored through the Catholic Education Team.

His Excellency Bishop, Ronald P. Fabbro was the honoured guest. He celebrated the partnership between Catholic schools and the parishes and addressed the focus of the Pastoral Plan.

Staff Day for Spiritual Development

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board has designated one of the four professional development days to be used as a school-based day of faith development.

The secondary schools will hold their Spiritual Development Day on December 9, 2005. The

elementary schools will host their day on February 2, 2006.

The focus of the planning teams for the Spiritual Development Day is:

- to create a celebration around a teacher's sacred calling to Catholic education,
- to offer a supportive gathering for colleagues on their faith

journey, and most importantly, to explore effective ways to encourage students to develop a deeper relationship with God through Catholic educational programs and through attention to creating Christ-centred communities in each school. Methods to make full use of the home-school-parish support triangle will also be celebrated.



Students at Christuraj Nursery and Primary School.

Update on the Catholic nursery and primary school project in India

Last spring, the Huron-Perth Catholic Schools Community Newsletter reported on the Board's involvement in fundraising for a Catholic nursery and primary school on the southern coast of India.

The village of Christurajapuram, located five kilometres inland was devastated by the Tsunami last year.

The students who attended Christuraj Nursery and Primary School lost everything including the school facility.

Staff and students have raised \$9,690.32 for this worthwhile project.

Currently, classes are being held on a temporary basis at the local church in Thuckalay.



From left: Mike Bruneel, Principal, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel; Tracey VanKerkoerle; Judy Merkel, Former Principal at Mt. Carmel; and Donna Gregus, Special Education Coordinator.

Coaching to Inclusion Award

Tracey VanKerkoerle is a grade one/two teacher at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and this year's recipient of the Coaching to Inclusion Award.

With the assistance of the Thames Valley Autism Support Team, Tracey developed a program that supported an autistic student new to the school. This young student enhanced communication and personal skills and thrived in his learning environment where he felt safe, valued and respected.

Intergenerational Program - Young and Old Alike

A Catholic education gives students the tools to develop emotionally, physically, socially, academically, and of course, spiritually as well.

Catholic schools often extend Christian values into the broader

community and demonstrate what it means to be a practicing Catholic each day of the year. The Intergenerational Program at Sacred Heart School in Wingham is a good example of this.

Students in Diane Lalonde's grade 2/3 class are participating in a special program that connects them to seniors in their community.

For students this is an excellent opportunity to learn from others who have experienced a great deal in their lives. Activities are both fun and academic – they involve cooperation, social studies, music, recreation, family-life and language topics.

There is also another important side to this initiative. Many seniors experience loneliness when family members live far away or visit infrequently. Students meet seniors at the Wingham and Area Day Centre

and for two to three months they visit and communicate through letters.

The program seems to have a positive effect on the senior participants' self esteem. The attention from the students and the opportunity for the seniors to share memories and talents makes a difference. The students also appreciate their senior partners and recognize how important they are to the community.

Perhaps the truest value of the program, however, is that it is all about people reaching out to people and forming new bonds and friendships.



Spiritual Guidance for the Board

Father Alan Dufraimont, pastor at St. Patrick's Church in Dublin and St. Vincent de Paul Church in Mitchell, will be an active participant at monthly Board meetings and provide spiritual guidance for the Huron-Perth Catholic community.

Our home page is always open
hpcdsb.edu.on.ca

Four year-old raises over \$12,000 for March of Dimes



ELLA Baker Lehnen has inspired others to care. The four year-old, affected by cerebral palsy, undertook a 20 km ride on her trike in early September to raise awareness and money for a program available through the March of Dimes.

The journey, between her home and school, took four consecutive mornings to complete. Ella was welcomed by a very supportive group of fellow students and staff when she arrived at St. Mary's School in Goderich.

The program, offered through the Ontario March of Dimes, has made an enormous difference in Ella's life. It has helped Ella leave her walker behind. She now walks independently, can ride her Trike and is even learning to jump.

If you would like to make a donation to help other kids like Ella, contact the March of Dimes directly at www.dimes.on.ca

The money raised through *Ella's Great Trike Trek* will go toward funding the cost of the program for other children with cerebral palsy.

"On October 24th Ella presented the money raised to the March of Dimes for \$9,000. City TV picked up the story and it was aired that same day on the six and eleven o'clock news. The television coverage generated more donations that went straight to the March of Dimes in Ella's name," says her father Todd Baker.

Sacred Heart's Handchime Choir has Kid A-Peal!

IN the fall of 2004, Sacred Heart in Wingham began its first handchime choir. Handchimes are simple instruments like large tuning forks. The aluminum is made into long tubes which are cut to various lengths; the size of the tubing, length and diameter, determines the pitch of the chime.

Each pitch is played by only one chime. To produce a melody each member of the choir has an equal responsibility for the group's final musical product.

Students in the choir develop musical skills, learn to work co-operatively with others and have the opportunity to perform.

Last year the Sacred Heart Chime Choir played at the Huron Festival of the Arts sponsored by the Board, as well as several school concerts and the graduation mass. This year the choir will perform at the Adult Day Centre in Wingham, various school functions and the Stratford Kiwanis Festival of the Performing Arts.

Building Learning Communities... one step at a time

THIS past August, Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board was proud to partner with National Education Services to host a national conference on Professional Learning Communities.

This was an opportunity for teaching staff to work with experts in the field and network with approximately 700 other educators from across Canada and the United States.

The conference was host to such renowned facilitators as Richard and Becky Dufour, and Canadian speakers such as Michael Fullan and Wayne Hullely. The goal of the conference was to enhance leadership and to provide strategies to improve student achievement.

Participants consistently heard how *effective* learning communities provide opportunities for adults to learn and think together about how to improve practices in ways that lead to improving student achievement. Delegates at the conference discussed how teamwork, collaboration and taking collective responsibility for the group's outcomes is often a welcome change from working in isolation with a focus on individual efforts.



Teachers and administrators shared their excitement about learning and began planning for future opportunities to implement ideas and beliefs about student achievement.

Developing deep changes in the culture of learning and establishing schools as professional learning communities requires planning and whole school commitment.

Professional dialogue between colleagues must be encouraged at all levels, and teachers must be supported to collectively build their knowledge.

As a system-wide initiative Huron-Perth Catholic has focused on change that impacts the learning for every student. It is the planning, the dynamic interaction and the collective energy of teachers and administrators leading together that will make a difference.

Questions? Call us at
519-345-2440

Parent Resources

A Parent's Role

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No homework?

- Ask your son or daughter to show you what he or she did at school.
- Talk to the teacher if there is often no homework.

Seven ways parents can help their child be successful in school

1. Attend parent-teacher conferences.
2. Discuss the choice of courses and develop an education plan.
3. Talk regularly with your son or daughter about school.
4. Attend school events, volunteer when possible.
5. Provide a good place for the student to do homework.
6. Help the student organize his or her time to do homework.
7. Contact the school if you have any questions or concerns.



Ensure your child reads daily. Sharing a book and demonstrating your regular reading habits sends a positive message about literacy.



Huron-Perth Catholic Schools
Community Newsletter

This newsletter is distributed free of charge to the families of all students in Huron-Perth Catholic Schools, and all Catholic ratepayers in the area. Occasionally we distribute additional copies of this newsletter to select Catholic households in Huron-Perth. We hope you have enjoyed this complimentary edition.

Check to be sure – if your taxes are not directed to the Catholic school system, you can't vote for Catholic trustees in the next election.

Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board

Mail P.O. Box 70, Dublin, Ontario N0K 1E0

Phone 519-345-2440 *Fax* 519-345-2449

Website www.hpcdsb.edu.on.ca

Editor & Production Co-ordinator: Denstedt Diggle Inc.

Return Canadian

undeliverable addresses to:

Huron-Perth Catholic DSB
87 Mill St (PO Box 70)
Dublin ON N0K 1E0

