

Rejoice

It's different here!

The Director's Newsletter

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Savouring Student Success

It started with a tray of muffins made available to students at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School as they arrived on Tuesday mornings. Administrators knew that kids couldn't learn on an empty stomach, and hoped that those who needed breakfast would be fed.

With the help of community donations, that Breakfast Club grew into a "Share Shop" that continues to welcome anyone who is without a lunch, no questions asked. It's just one of many programs launched under the banner of the *Student Success Initiative*. Designed to meet the varied needs of those deemed "at risk", the efforts are at once creative, compassionate, and a cause for celebration.

Student Success began as a Ministry of Education project to address the discrepancy between the education system and its outcomes: while the secondary school system was preparing students for university, only

25 percent of students were going there. For others, including some of those bound for apprenticeships and the workforce, the system was not meeting their needs. Consequently, they were losing ground.

To turn the situation around, educators Mary Flanagan and Karen Tigani made it their mission to uncover what these students needed, and how to get them back on track.

The resulting Student Success Initiative has grown into a successful multi-faceted program that is directly affecting whether some students graduate.

"Our job is to take away the barriers that come between students and success," explains Mary. "We give students the tools they need to help them through these life situations. We give them hope that things will get better, that it won't always be this way, but at the same time help them take ownership of the situation because challenges are a part of life."

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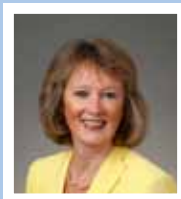
Board Retirement



PATHWAYS
to **SUCCESS**
choose your mission

Faith and Learning... Celebrating the Journey

From The Director



Dear Staff:

As the school year ends, I am again overwhelmed by the wonderful people and the deep relationships that are integral to Catholic education in our system. I am extremely proud of our Catholic schools and our students who are living out the Catholic Graduate Expectations in our classrooms.

We will continue to focus on engaging you, your school communities and parishes in thoughtful discussions about our Catholic schools and our commitment to our students, families and parishes. We know the challenges today are complex, yet offer many opportunities for growth and collaboration to ensure Catholic education remains an enduring and precious gift.

I wish to thank:

...our Board of Trustees, senior staff, managers, board and curriculum staff for their commitment to reaching our goals;

... our secretarial staff who offer the first welcome to families in our Catholic schools;

... our support staff for their team work;

... our custodial staff who ensure a clean and safe environment; and,

... our teaching staff, our principals and vice principals who practice stewardship in our schools, communities and classrooms.

May God Bless you and keep you safe and well this summer. Enjoy your well-deserved summer vacation!

Martha Dutrizac,
Director of Education

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While it is constantly growing, the Student Success Initiative currently includes:

- **Peer Mentoring** to smooth the transition from Grade 8 into high school, with senior students pairing up with younger ones to help them feel that they belong and are part of the school community
- **Homework Club** for peer tutoring
- **Credit Rescue** to jump in on behalf of students when problems become apparent, attempting to resolve issues before long-term damage is done
- **Credit Recovery** to help students meet expectations that were missed the first time through a course, to prevent them from having to repeat the course entirely. This keeps students from falling further behind
- **Alternate Attendance** which allows students to work one-on-one with a Student Success teacher to accommodate significant challenges outside of school
- **Program for Suspended Pupils** provides an action plan to keep suspended students on track with their course work,

offering counseling referrals where appropriate

- **Coop Programs** with flexibility that allows students to earn credits on the job, while still completing the academic essentials they need to graduate

“Before Student Success, I didn’t see myself getting my OSSD,” says Sam, a Grade 12 student who has benefitted from the Alternate Attendance, Coop and Credit Recovery aspects of the program. “I’m getting my credits, where before I didn’t see myself finishing high school. Now I’m thinking about being an electrician or an electrical engineer.”

Teacher Karen Tigani sees the program as a natural fit in Huron-Perth. “As Catholic educators, we move beyond despair to hope, from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. We can move beyond circumstances to positive outcomes. At the end of the day, it gives me hope that our students will overcome challenges and be successful, now and in the future.”



Education for All

Huron Perth’s Elementary Professional Development Day dedicated to *Education for All* was held at St. Michael Catholic High School on April 22nd, welcoming

elementary teachers, educational assistants and library technicians. The theme of “Digging Deeper” emphasized the philosophy of differentiated instruction in classroom teaching. Guest speaker was Gayle Gregory, a well-known author and speaker on differentiated learning strategies for use in teaching children. The afternoon included a performance by Kaleidoscope Ride – mother/daughter duo Kim Souch and Sara Sobey -- who perform as KiSara. They write, arrange and perform a wide variety of music. As a young child, Sara was diagnosed as autistic. Their performance raised awareness for the audience by focusing on the possibilities for students with special needs.



Career Symposium

The much-anticipated *2009 Career Symposium* took place April 28th and 29th at the Seaforth Community Centre. Fourteen community partners from Huron and Perth hosted the event, which was attended by students in Grades 7 to 12, parents and job seekers. Visitors had the opportunity to try plumbing, soldering and plastic injection molding, while over 600 bird houses were built at the two day event, with help from the technology students and teachers of St. Michael and St. Anne's Catholic Secondary Schools. Huron-Perth Catholic Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program was voted best-in-all exhibit. Special thanks to technology teachers Martin Overholt and Keith Donnelly, and OYAP Leader Tim Martens.

The Write Stuff

Mrs. Ducharme's Grade 5/6 class at St. James School in Seaforth has found an engaging way to test their collective writing skills in the real world: they've created a blog. Since its debut in February 2009, the collection of online musings has proven the students to be contemplative, insightful and wise beyond their years.

Launched with parental permission, the blog project is closely tied to the curriculum and accentuates a number of school pathways – namely, sharing opinions and making connections. Mrs. Ducharme explains that the blog is closely tied to topics covered in class, but at the same time has opened up conversations about internet safety and the consequences of making online information accessible to others.

As Mrs. Ducharme posts each new topic, class members respond to it at least once over the course of a week, either from school or home. Students have chosen pen names, so they know whose responses they are reading, but the messages are anonymous to anyone outside the classroom. Posts have included students' input on subjects such as teamwork and overcoming challenges. The following is an excerpt from a discussion about

historical figures of interest:

"If I were to change history I would put more about Joseph in the Bible because the only part you hear about Joseph is when Jesus was born."

(response from a fellow student)

"I thought the same as you a while ago.

Then I asked our Priest why you only hear about Joseph in the Christmas story. He told me you actually hear about Joseph in the Christmas story as well as when Jesus was about 7 and got lost in the temple...then, the next time you hear about Jesus all together, is when He is a grown man. Father Chris inferred that though it is not recorded, Joseph probably died between the time of the temple story and the next time they spoke of Jesus in the Bible."

Students have shown themselves to be thoughtful and eloquent, as in these posts on the value of patience:

"There has been many times in my life when I have waited for something and had really wanted it. I did not get what I wanted because I was either not mature enough to handle what I wanted or they did not trust me with the thing I had wanted..."



"I can make a connection to when I had to wait when my family drove to Calgary for summer vacation. The drive took 2 days and everyone was complaining about sitting down for so long. Then I realized that if I began to complain the trip would seem longer than what it was before. Everyone was bored but we had to find a way to have fun and be mature when the times were crazy."

Mrs. Ducharme describes the response from her students as "awesome."

"Achievement levels in my class are varied, but the blog is totally accessible to all students because it's on the computer," she explains. "The blog project is about making language work for every child, and it has turned out to be the highlight of my year!"

The blog can be found online at stjamesthewritestuff.blogspot.

The Big Sweep

In celebration of Earth Week, students and staff at Sacred Heart School took part in the “Big Sweep” on April 23rd, picking up garbage and recycling items around the town of Wingham. The school community picked up 200 pounds of garbage in an hour and a half, filling 18 garbage bags.



Happy Birthday, Bill!

The Stratford Festival recently marked Shakespeare’s 445th birthday by inviting two students from each elementary school to a celebration day at the Festival. Students had a chance to meet with actors, play theatre games, perform Shakespeare scene work, and see where the real actors rehearse. Pictured are students from St. Patrick’s,



Kinkora and St. James, Seaforth.

Service with a Smile

If you’ve been dining out in Exeter, you may have seen some familiar faces recently. These Precious Blood School teachers were working double-duty at McDonald’s McHappy Day to help raise money for children’s charities.



Huron-Perth Arts Festival

Students from all schools took part in the Fifth Annual *Huron-Perth Performing Arts Festival* at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Stratford and St. Anne’s Catholic Secondary School in Clinton. The two-day celebration of music, dance and drama was an opportunity for students to showcase their achievements in the performing arts programs in our Catholic schools, and what talented students we have!

Blessings for Kenya Trip

The St. Anne’s students travelling to Kenya this summer visited St. Peter’s Seminary on May 4th to present the details of their trip to Bishop Fabbro. The Bishop celebrated mass with the students, then joined everyone for dinner. Bishop Fabbro praised the students for their commitment to the worthy task of building a school in Kenya. In his homily, he told the students that each one of them has been called by name to live out the Gospel message through their mission trip. He blessed them and their trip, and commissioned them in their journey of faith.



Huron-Perth Sweeps Techno Challenge

The highlight of Education Week came when teams of Huron-Perth students gathered to participate in the Junior/Senior Techno-Challenge, a competition that tests their engineering prowess and ability to invent on the fly.

This year students were asked to construct from scratch, such varied devices as a popsicle-stick bridge, a cable car, a pneumatic arm and a windmill.

“The Techno-Challenge is a day for students to engage in challenging activities that test their problem-solving skills and science skills,” explains Coordinator Vince Trocchi, with the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board. Trocchi adds that while prototypes are available to provide inspiration, entries tend to be as varied and creative as the teams themselves.

“The first goal (for teams) is to make their inventions work, that’s victory number one,” he explains. “But now they look around at the competition and aim for even higher performance.



They’re aiming to win a medal.” And win they did! With 16 schools and 249 students from Huron-Perth and Avon-Maitland participating in the Intermediate/Senior division, Huron-

Perth swept the medal standings in the Vehicle Challenge for their cable car designs. First place went to St. Ambrose, second to St. Patrick’s Kinkora, and third to St. Joseph’s Clinton.

St Joseph’s also tied for second place in the Triathlon competition.

Michael is an 8th Grade student from St Joseph’s School who participated on the crane-building team. In his second year of competition, he speaks like a seasoned veteran.

“It’s hard sometimes. In the beginning we didn’t know what to do, but if you focus and write stuff down, you can make a lot of progress. Our crane popped two balloons out of five, so that was pretty good. But best part is having fun the whole day and hanging out with your friends.”

Also in Huron Perth, St. James Seaforth took home a first place medal in the 6th Grade Junior division, winning



the Construction Challenge with their pneumatic arm.

First place finishes were awarded \$75.00 for their school to purchase science supplies, second place teams \$50.00, and third place teams \$25.00.

Stuff That Bus!

On May 12th, Huron-Perth school communities participated in their second annual “Stuff That Bus” food drive. It was a fitting response to this year’s Catholic Education Week theme, “Good News for All”, in which we are called to be “the hands and feet of Christ”. Four busses, donated by Murphy, First Student and Kipfer’s Garage, travelled throughout our two counties to collect and deliver the food donations. Student leaders from each school, along with the “Stuff That Bus” committee, traveled on the busses to collect and deliver thousands of food items to our local St. Vincent de Paul chapters. Congratulations on another successful drive!



Cleaning Up in Dublin

The Huron-Perth Board Office is looking top-notch thanks to the environmental efforts of Mrs. Scott’s Grade 2 class at St. Patrick’s School in Dublin. Students cleaned debris from the office lawn as an Earth Week chore and got their Daily Physical Activity in the process. Thank you Grade 2’s!



Mother Teresa Faith in Action Awards

The *Mother Teresa Faith in Action Awards* were presented at the System Mass held during Catholic Education Week. Established by the Catholic Education Team of the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board, this award recognizes individuals who witness their faith; create nurturing, Christ-centered learning environments; promote social justice, awareness and action; and celebrate the gifts, self-worth and potential of each student.

The ten individuals who received this year's award were (left to right):

- Mary Verberne - Educational Assistant, Holy Name of Mary, St. Marys
- Karen Tigani - Teacher, St. Michael CSS, Stratford
- Mary Bannon - Retired Teacher, Huron-Perth Catholic DSB
- Heidi Clark - Teacher, St. Michael CSS, Stratford
- Anna Marie Cook - Retired Teacher, Precious Blood, Exeter
- Mary Ryan - Volunteer, St. James (Seaforth) & St. Patrick's (Dublin) Parishes
- Jan Mullock - Noon Hour Monitor, St. Aloysius, Stratford
- Pat Flanagan - Custodian, St. Mary's School, Goderich
- Fran Craig - Retired Principal/Coordinator, Huron-Perth Catholic DSB
- Father John Pluta - Retired Priest, St. Peter's Parish, Goderich



Skills Canada Winners

Huron Perth Catholic District School Board is proud to have had a winning team at the 20th *Skills Canada - Ontario Provincial Technological Skills Competition*. The St. Michael Catholic Secondary School Home Building Team of Steven Kolkman, Andrew Fulton, Chris Lingard and Nathan Kolkman were provincial bronze medal winners. In less than 16 hours (over the 2-day competition) the students built a detailed shed to completion from working plans, including electrical wiring and plumbing. Ten other competitors also represented our two secondary high schools in various divisions. Congratulations to our students and their teachers on an excellent showing of character, skills and knowledge.

Mock Crash

As part of OSAID (Ontario Students Against Drunk Driving) awareness week, Grade 12 drama students at St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School staged a mock car crash on May 12th. The students under the leadership of Crystal Brennan-Yeo, and the OSAID group under the direction of Mike Romijn, did an excellent job - as did Police Services Joanna VanMierlo, the Clinton Fire Department (lead by our own Dave Renner), and EMS.



Dyno Day at St. Anne's

St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School in Clinton celebrated Dyno Day on June 16. Students in the SHSM Agriculture Technology class along with several other students drove to school in their tractors to test Horsepower and Torque output using a Dynamometer. Nineteen tractors ranging from a 2005 JohnDeere 8520 testing at 326 HP to a 1953 Case that put out 27 HP were part of the experience. A big thank you to all tractor owners who allowed us to use their equipment to deepen our learning.



Travelling Musicians

Music students from St. Michael and St. Anne's Catholic Secondary Schools embarked on a musical excursion to Toronto from April 30th to May 2nd. The trip included a chance to see both the award winning musical "The Sound of Music", and a rare performance by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. The adventure culminated in a live performance by the St. Michael/St. Anne's combined Concert Band outside of the Rogers Centre – a well-earned reward for students who have been meeting for rehearsals throughout the year under the direction of Mr. Jeff McIntyre and Mr. Josh Geddis. It was a fantastic musical experience for all!

OUTGOING MESSAGES FROM OUR STUDENT TRUSTEES

...from Ali Kramers, St. Anne's CSS, Clinton

The experience that I have had as the student trustee at St. Anne's has been an excellent and memorable one. I appreciated the chance that not many are able to have to see 'behind the scenes' of how the schools in our board operate. The trustees were very welcoming and I enjoyed attending the meetings and various functions as well as the opportunity to meet many people within our board and from other boards. I consider myself fortunate to have represented the students of St. Anne's and was glad to share the happenings of our school with the board, who demonstrated that they truly care about their students. It was a great year!



...from Michelle McDonnell, St. Michael CSS, Stratford

After having the amazing experience of serving as a student trustee, I have realized how important Catholic education truly is. I was granted the wonderful opportunity to attend board meetings, represent my school and attend many board events throughout the year. I have learned so much about how a school functions behind the scenes and what it means to be a supporter of Catholic education. The fellow trustees I had the pleasure of working with were extremely welcoming from the beginning and I would now call them my friends. Huron-Perth has an admirable group of people taking care of our area and are so dedicated to building a community of caring. I have deep respect for the people in our system and admire them greatly. After every monthly meeting, I would always leave the town of Dublin with a huge smile on my face because I was on fire for my faith. The staff that attended the meetings were always focused on improving the board and doing what ever it takes to bring satisfaction to each and every student. The school board staff have so much passion for Catholic education, and have become great role models in my life. The student trustee position has also given me the opportunity to get to know many principals, teachers and students in our board and I have realized how strong our community really is! The position has given me hope for the future in Catholic education. It has given me motivation to continue to live my faith in my everyday life. The experience was absolutely incredible.

2009 Student Trustee Awards

Recipients of the Huron-Perth Catholic Trustees' Leadership Award attended an event-packed workshop on Thursday, May 14th at St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School in Clinton. Many thanks to Lori Lynn Stapleton, Religion Consultant, and Chaplains Lisa Phillips and Natanael Mateus-Ruiz who led the students in various activities along with several student leaders from St. Anne's and St. Michael. Parents of the students, principals, and teachers, attended a special Awards Mass for the recipients later in the afternoon followed by a reception.



Board Honours Retiring Staff and 25 Years of Service Employees

On Tuesday, June 9th, four retiring staff and four 25 year service employees were honoured at a retirement social held at the Mitchell Golf and Country Club. The Board of Trustees, Administration, OECTA and CUPE thanked these people for their

dedicated service to the many students, parents, and to the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board. We wish our retirees good health and happiness in their retirement.



Retirees - From left: Chair Jim McDade, Judy Koebel, Dorothy Van Steelandt, Charlotte McKercher, Trustee Bernard Murray, Marie Eickmeier

25 Year Employees - From left: Chair Jim McDade, Camilla Ippolito, Annette Marks, Maureen Sabin, Veronica Flood, Trustee Bernard Murray.

Track and Field: A Great Day for All!

Our annual Elementary Track and Field Meet on June 9 brought together a large number of students with diverse physical skills and talents in a venue that encourages us all to celebrate the successes of everyone's performances. This embodies the great qualities that make us a Catholic Community of Caring. From the opening ceremonies to the variety of track and field sporting events, it was a great day for all of our students. Congratulations to the students, coaches, volunteers and members of the organizing committee for their tremendous work in making this day a success for all of us to enjoy. There was a tie for our overall school champion - St. Aloysius, Stratford and Precious Blood, Exeter.



Bishop's Dinner

On Wednesday, June 3rd, staff from the Huron-Perth Catholic DSB attended the "First Annual Bishop's Dinner". The Most Rev. Ronald Fabbro, Bishop of London, brought messages of hope to an audience that filled the London Convention Centre. This evening was a wonderful celebration of the Catholic faith community in the London Diocese in support of St. Peter's Seminary and the St. Peter's Institute for Catholic Formation. This year's theme, "The Word of God", stressed the dynamic presence of Jesus in the life of the Church. We were fortunate to listen to a benefit musical performance by Donnell Leahy and Natalie MacMaster. Proceeds from this year's event will support St. Peter's Institute for Catholic Formation. It was an amazing opportunity to celebrate as a collaborative Catholic community.



Director's Report

This report is prepared by Elaine DeCorte at the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board. To keep the system informed of the latest news within your school and community, forward details about any activities and achievements by both staff and students to Elaine for inclusion in upcoming issues of the Director's Report. Contributions for this publication may be sent or emailed to Elaine at the Board Office. The Director's Report is distributed monthly to staff and is posted on the Board's website.

Congratulations!

...to Paul D'Hondt, teacher at St. Michael CSS, Stratford, on the birth of his daughter Corryn.

...to Denise DeJong, secretary at the Board Office, Dublin, on the birth of her son Cody.

...to Marianne Lupton, educational assistant at St. Ambrose, Stratford, on the birth of her daughter Rachel.

Rejoice

2009 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jim McDade - Chairperson

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Howick, Central Huron, Morris-Turnberry, Goderich

Ron Marcy - Vice-Chairperson
Stratford

Vincent McInnes
Huron East, Perth East, North Perth

Mike Miller
South Huron, Bluewater

Bernard Murray
Perth South, St. Marys, West Perth

Martha Dutrizac
Director of Education

Promoting Healthy Relationships

The staff and students at Precious Blood, Exeter, have demonstrated that they are a Catholic Community of Caring by actively participating in a variety of clubs to promote belonging and acceptance for all students. Some of the clubs that students can belong to include: sketching, arts and crafts, homework, church choir, road hockey, positive power yoga, building, story time, colouring, hiking and games club. Clubs take place at lunchtime and recesses and are lead by both staff and parents to provide students with an opportunity to share their diversified talents and gifts.

