

Rejoice

It's different here!

The Director's Newsletter

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Recognition program at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is a tangible reminder of what makes students special

Ask principal Todd Chisholm about what a successful day at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School entails, and he will sum it up simply:

“When our kids leave school at the end of the day, they should feel better than when they arrived.”

Mr. Chisholm admits there is something wonderful and unique about his Dashwood area school -- a “hidden curriculum” that brings positivity, a non-judgmental approach and humour to the learning process. Along with his staff, he shares the belief that kids need opportunities to connect, to be supported, and to embrace each day as a new beginning. It’s a Catholic school anchored by the God of Second Chances.

“Earlier this year, our Faith Day discussions focused on the fact that we cannot get to our learning goals until our kids are feeling good about themselves,” says Mr. Chisholm. In an effort to foster a positive school environment, he and his staff designed a year-long program that would recognize the gifts and skills of each and every student in the Mt. Carmel community.

In keeping with the school-year theme of “Celebrating the Spirit”, the staff devised a number of smaller themes including

Gratitude, Justice (Bullying Prevention), Understanding, Hospitality and Wisdom. Each theme builds on the one that came before, so that students are encouraged to reflect on what they have already learned as they move forward in their studies. Every six weeks or so, a new theme is explored through grade-appropriate discussion, role-play, assignments, artwork and music.

Classroom and school-wide activities have ranged from writing thank-you notes to bus drivers (Gratitude), to hearing podcasts of Martin Luther King Jr. (Justice). The



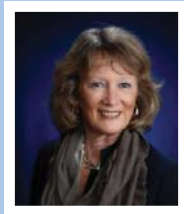
Understanding theme was recognized with a cross-grade activity in which students created poster sized pages for an “It’s Okay Book”, based on the one by author Todd Parr. Displayed in the main hall,

the pages are a visual reminder of the many unique gifts that Mt. Carmel students possess.

As each theme rolls into the next, it’s celebrated with a school-wide assembly – a chance to share what it has meant to each class. As part of the celebration, twenty students (three from each class) are chosen to receive special keepsake bracelets, in recognition of the ways in which their gifts

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From The Director



Dear Members of the Huron-Perth community:

The Lenten season is a time to reflect on how we can grow in our relationship with God and deepen our commitment to a way of life that flows from the gift of our baptism.

In the midst of a busy time of year, our Catholic schools have stopped to look at what they can do during this special time. They are focused on others, committed to deeper prayer, and anxious to be more generous to those who find themselves in need.

In this newsletter, we will highlight the work of our staff, students and parish communities as they prepare to celebrate the three holy days following Lent - Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil.

As a faith community, what we do needs to be accompanied by full knowledge of why we are doing it. Our schools are preparing their hearts to realize God's blessings and to move the emphasis onto others.

Through giving oneself over to more prayer, to reading of Scripture and to devoting time to good works, our Catholic schools invite and embrace God's presence.

May your Lenten journey also bring you to a wonderful Easter celebration.

God Bless,

*Martha Dutrizac
Director of Education*

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and efforts align with the theme.

"We had special wristbands made for each theme, similar to the yellow, rubberized ones that Lance Armstrong made famous," Mr. Chisholm explains. Each wristband is inscribed with the name of the theme and awarded to students who personify it. Winners' names are also published in the school's monthly newsletter.

"At some point in the year, every kid will be recognized in one of these areas," says Mr. Chisholm. "The recognition helps kids feel good about themselves, which in turn leads to improved academic results. Because they come to school with a positive attitude, they're willing to take risks by trying new things, by getting involved in clubs, music, talent shows or sports teams. It encourages them to look for ways to celebrate the gifts of others too -- so that they can lighten another's

spirit instead of dampening it."

Throughout Lent, Mt. Carmel students are launching weekly projects, including a DVD and teddy bear collection, bake sale and raffle in support of the Children's Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre. In keeping with the current school theme (Hospitality), they're striving to help others feel a sense of home and comfort during their hospital stay.

As part of the Eco School program (and school-wide efforts to maintain a hospitable planet), students are also planning a "bottled water-free day" to cut down on lunchtime waste. As a Gold Eco School, Mt. Carmel is one of only 200 schools in Canada invited to take part in nature-themed festivities for Canadian scientist and environmental activist David Suzuki's upcoming birthday celebration on March 30th.



Let Love Rule

A sense of belonging keeps things positive at Precious Blood School

At Precious Blood School in Exeter, principal Paula Nowak-Droog takes recess seriously. Through the chilly depths of winter, she twice-daily trades her in-school duties for a parka and cross-country skis. Come break time, you'll find her gliding across the schoolyard -- watching, chatting and bonding with students. She's keeping a finger on the pulse of the school community and an eye on anyone who she feels may be in need of a listening ear.

When she comes across a student she feels may be having a tough time emotionally, she takes a page from our Saviour's playbook and issues a welcome invitation: Walk with me.

"Circling the yard, I can connect with the kids who are really struggling," says Ms. Nowak-Droog. "I can get to the heart of their stresses and find out what's really going on with them."

Sharing Catholic values and reaching out in friendship, fifteen minutes at a time. It's a brilliant notion, based on the premise that recognizing children in positive ways will keep them from seeking out negative attention.

This drive to maintain the emotional health and well being of students is part of Precious Blood's ongoing quest to support the social and emotional growth of each and every child, from the inside out. It's also at the heart of "Mission Positive", a Lenten focus that asks staff and students to reflect daily on a straightforward question: How can I be a positive blessing on others today?

"What we're focusing on, what we really want to create, is a positive community that celebrates diversity



and gospel values by nurturing all parts of the child," explains Ms. Nowak-Droog. "One of the important ways we're doing that is by building relationships through the creation of recess clubs. These are non-competitive environments where a wide variety of age groups and abilities can play and laugh together."

The change in a student who suddenly feels valued is wonderful to see. "They come alive," says Ms. Nowak-Droog. "It's a place that meets their social and emotional needs in a positive and inclusive way."

The Precious Blood club circuit has taken off like wildfire, backed by staff and parents eager to contribute their time, talent and creativity. From social justice and story reading, to baking, art and lego-building, there truly is something that every student can enjoy. The response to these groups has been phenomenal: at yoga club, 70 students showed up when only 40 mats were available. It became an opportunity for young students to share with older ones as

they all joined in together.

At Precious Blood, club participation is even recommended as a replacement for detention.

"We want to create a love-based, not a fear-based community," Nowak-Droog explains. "Detention is fear-based, and the negative behaviour we're trying to address surfaces because kids are under stress."

Rather than focus on negative behavior, students are placed in a club that fuels their

passions – a place for them to seek the positive recognition and attention they crave.

In the weeks ahead, the Precious Blood community will embrace Mission Positive in their quest to find ways to be a positive blessing beyond the confines of the school community. With last year's earthquake in Haiti still fresh in their minds, students have adopted a Haitian foster child through a Catholic Sponsorship organization called Chalice Children, and plan to raise donations through an upcoming Mission Garage Sale.



Huron-Perth Hosts DanceFest *Movin' With the Spirit*

All Huron-Perth Catholic elementary schools were invited to attend the first annual DanceFest: *Movin' with the Spirit* event. This occasion provided students and staff with an opportunity to highlight Arts Education, focusing on the dance curriculum. DanceFest served as a vehicle in which dance ideas were shared in an atmosphere of joy and celebration. Students were provided with a captivating opportunity to share their God-given talents and showcase their interest and understanding of creative movement

and various dance routines.

The Huron County showcase took place at St. Anne's CSS in Clinton on March 29 with Perth County dancers taking to the stage at St. Michael CSS in Stratford on March 30. Secondary students at both Catholic High Schools hosted the day, taking on a variety of jobs, such as: welcoming schools, taking care of AV/tech/sound, announcing performances, photography and videography, setting up the stage performances and ensuring that transitions between dance

performances were seamless.

The Dance Team at St. Michael kick-started the day with a dance performance and group warm up. Over 300 Huron County and 180 Perth County elementary students attended this upbeat and enthusiastic day!

We were especially grateful to a large number of parents and friends who came to view their children in this special event. We are already planning for DanceFest 2012!



2011 Mother Teresa Faith in Action Award Recipients

The Mother Teresa Faith In Action Award, established by the Catholic Education Team of the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board, recognizes individuals who:

- Nurture and celebrate our own and each other's gifts, self-worth and potential in a Christ-centred environment
- Promote social justice and awareness
- Have an active parish involvement

Awards will be presented during the System Catholic Education Week Mass at St. Patrick's Church, Dublin on Monday, May 2nd, 2011. All staff and community members are invited to attend the celebration. The Catholic Education Team is pleased to announce this year's recipients of the award.

- Margriet Bolhuis, Special Education Teacher - Jeanne Sauvé School, Stratford
- Emmilla Doherty, Volunteer - St. Mary's, Goderich
- Jeannette Eybergen, Retired Teacher & Volunteer - St. Joseph's & Immaculate Conception Parishes, Stratford
- Jane Horenberg, Volunteer - Holy Name of Mary, St. Marys
- Julie Jeffrey, Volunteer - Holy Name of Mary, St. Marys
- Kathleen vonEuw, Volunteer - St. Patrick's, Kinkora

School Lenten Activities

St. Patrick's, Kinkora

St. Patrick's is collecting food items for the House of Blessing during Lent. Additionally, through student leadership, the Grade 7/8 class are preparing a tableau presentation of the Stations of the Cross to be shared with the school community on Holy Thursday. Their performance will capture the emotion and reverence necessary for a Holy Week event. The class will involve the entire school in the performance.



St. Joseph's, Clinton

The Grade 2/3 class at St. Joseph's, Clinton made crosses to remind us to say extra prayers during Lent.



St. Michael CSS, Stratford

St. Michael began the Lenten season with the visit of Dr. Andrew Simone, founder of Canadian Food for Children. His message of charity truly touched the community. With the deplorable situation of children around the world, Dr. Simone invited us to help by not being wasteful, and reminded us that many children in the world suffer because of our wasteful lifestyles. His program is a true act of sanctity and love. Dr. Simone's message will be kept as the theme in morning prayers throughout the Lenten season. The school will continue to support this great Canadian Charitable Organization.



St. Mary's, Goderich

This beautiful wall hanging, depicting the events of Holy Week, was created and hand sewn by the students of Gr. 5/6 under the direction of their teacher Mrs. Glazier. Every child in the class had a part in creating the tapestry. The end result hangs proudly in the foyer of St. Mary's school from Ash Wednesday until Easter.



Sacred Heart, Wingham

Ash Wednesday Mass marked the beginning of Lent at Sacred Heart School. Every week during the season of Lent, the school community meets to pray during a weekly prayer service. Students and staff have personal prayers and intentions prayed for by a 'prayer buddy'. Fr. Morrison has invited classes to attend the weekly parish Mass in Wingham.

Students are sacrificing their allowances and any spare change to support our two mission projects: *Save a Family Plan* and *Holy Childhood*. Parent Council supports the third year of Soup for Lent. This project is designed as an act of solidarity with people who are experiencing hunger in the third world. Students will be provided with a small portion of soup in return for a donation to the missions. In consuming the soup, students are reminded of what little some people have to eat, while their donation helps people in the developing nations be nourished. Lastly, the Rosary Apostolate parent group visits Sacred Heart once during Lent to say the Rosary with each class in the school.



St. Mary's, Listowel



Plans for Lenten projects at St. Mary's, Listowel are with a specific desire to help our local and global communities in which we live. The food drive is off to a very successful start with all donations being forwarded to the local food bank. Plans to raise funds for Haiti Relief Fund through an Easter Basket Raffle are also well underway. In recognition of how much of a sacrifice Jesus made during his 40 days in the desert, students are encouraged to "Pay it Forward" by doing extra acts of kindness for those around them versus "give something up" for Lent. Students are looking forward to learning much more about the Easter Story through the daily adventure of finding the hidden Resurrection Eggs in their classrooms. Each egg holds a symbol representing an important element of the Easter story. Their journey towards Easter is filled with learning the importance of the Easter Story and the responsibility to give to others as Jesus so willingly gave so much to us.

St. Aloysius, Stratford

The St. Aloysius School Community feasted on more than just pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, marking the last day before the beginning of Lent. Students gathered to hear some of the community's talented readers share their gifts. Fr. Bester and local hockey heroes, Simon Culliton and Myles Melchers read in one of several stations in the school. Throughout Lent the St. Aloysius School community participates in a number of daily fundraisers in support of the Hopital Bon Samaritan, through local volunteers Jim and Marg Brickman. Hopital Bon Samaritan is the principal health centre in Haiti situated in the river valley of Limbe.



St. Ambrose, Stratford

As Catholics, the St. Ambrose school community has been taking time to think about their blessings and the coming of the risen Lord that we celebrate at Easter. Lenten observations began on March 9 with an Ash Wednesday celebration; the Lord himself seemed to sound the alarm at this Mass (the fire alarm went off) to wake us from our spiritual slumber! During Lent, students have been called to a greater commitment to prayer, almsgiving and fasting. Each family has been given a Lenten calendar with daily tasks that help students realize the practical aspects of sacrifice. A typical almsgiving task might be something like “count the beds in your home and bring in 25 cents for each bead.” All proceeds that students collect will be given to the cluster Share Lent campaign. The act of fasting would be refraining from negative comments and giving someone a compliment. Students have been encouraged to “fast” from using bottled water. Each morning reflections are shared on the season of Lent (prayer) and celebrating with class lead para-liturgies. All are invited to the school’s Passion Play presented on Holy Thursday, April 21 at 1:30 in the St. Ambrose gym (prayer). This play will be presented by the intermediate students and is an excellent way to reflect on the final passion of Jesus Christ.



Jeanne Sauvé, Stratford

Jeanne Sauvé Catholic School is engaged in a Lenten project with a global faith connection. The student parliament at Jeanne Sauvé has connected with the Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane (a school board in Australia) and, more specifically, with St. Joseph’s School at Corinda in that area. Although the schools there have not been flooded or affected by the disaster just a few months ago, many hundreds of their families are seriously affected by the flooding and will be unable to return to their homes for some time. They suffer significant financial hardship. The best way we can assist them is by providing money which they will use to support families in this school community.

The student parliament at Jeanne Sauvé has put a plan in place to raise money. March was Spirit Month at Jeanne Sauvé. Students brought in donations to participate in Salad Dressing Week. Each day was a different dressing: Ranch Day, Blue Cheese Day (pictured below), Fruit Day, Caesar Day, and of course French Day. Another week was a series of PJ days. More spirit days, such as Wacky Hair Day, Sit With a Friend Day, and Late For Work Day are planned for the rest of the Lenten season.



St. James, Seaforth

As a school community, St. James, Seaforth is working together in Lent to prepare a variety of activities that include almsgiving, fasting, and prayer. One particular activity is in the kindergarten class where Mrs. Kramers will be using “The Story of the Resurrection Eggs: Benjamin’s Box” to present the true story of Easter to the students in a way that will help them understand and remember. They are also busy making religious “stained glass” pictures to display throughout our school.



Staff has also spent time creating a reverent entrance to St. James during this Lenten season.

St. Joseph's, Stratford

Ms. O'Grady's Grade 5/6 class recently attended an assembly for *Canadian Food For Children* (CFFC) at St. Michael CSS in Stratford. The assembly focused on all the good work being done by CFFC (100% of donations go toward the purchase and shipping of food). Ms. O'Grady's students hosted an assembly in March to share what they learned about CFFC and their good works and to kick off the school's Lenten project. The school is inviting students to bring in any spare change they may have collected and place it into the jar on the prayer centre in their classrooms. Once the jar is full, the students will take this money and pour it into a communal jar adjacent to our school prayer table in the front foyer. On Holy Thursday, the money will be counted and sent to the CFFC. The school community is very excited about supporting such a worthy cause.



Above, a student puts the school's first donation into the school's communal jar.

Holy Name of Mary, St. Marys

Some of Holy Name's Lenten activities include the Stations of the Cross, a presentation from St. Michael CSS students about their Mission trip to the Dominican Republic, and a Shrove Tuesday pancake luncheon. The Grade 8 student leaders have planned some fundraising to go to Caritas International (through the Diocese of London) to support the rebuilding of Japan after the tragic earthquake and tsunami.



St. Anne's CSS, Clinton

The St. Anne's God Squad Team facilitated the Ash Wednesday prayer celebration which included music, prayers, Scripture readings, and the distribution of ashes. The student team produced all aspects of the celebration which included a special challenge for the community: "During Lent this year, we are inviting you to JUST DO IT! Do things that reflect that YOU are an ambassador of Christ! That you are LIVING the Gospel message." The campaign will extend just beyond Lent, culminating in our first ever Eagles Fun Run on Saturday, May 7th. Pledges collected during the campaign and run will be distributed to our three area food banks as well as the *St. André Bessette Trust Fund* and the *St. Anne's Students in Need* fund.



St. Boniface, Zurich



As their charitable campaign this Lent, St. Boniface is committed to raising money and awareness for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada by taking on the "Pennies for Patients" program. The staff, students and community are rallying around this great cause to support one of their

own students who is fighting Leukemia. In the spirit of doing for others and answering the question, "What would Jesus do?" we issued a school-wide challenge for students to demonstrate positive behaviours and model gospel values. Each week, staff will look to catch a student who demonstrates the attitudes and themes that have been identified for Catholic Education Week. The theme this year is "Celebrating the Spirit" with 5 subthemes, which are: The Spirit of Hospitality, Understanding, Wisdom, Justice, and Gratitude. At the end of each week, students in each class who have modelled these themes in their interactions with others will be recognized and presented with special bracelets that identify each theme. We hope that by taking on these projects we can answer the call of Lent as we prepare for the joy of Easter.

St. Columban/St. Patrick's, Dublin



The students at St. Columban and St. Patrick's, Dublin have a good understanding of the three major Lenten practices: prayer, fasting (or giving something up), and alms-giving. At the same time, this year, they have been devastated by the recent disaster in Japan.

In particular, Mrs. Beuerman's Gr. 7/8 class wanted to combine their Lenten sacrifices with doing something to help Japan. For that reason, they are preparing an Easter egg hunt to be held on Holy Thursday. The Intermediate students are preparing presentations about the Japanese disaster to present to other classes in both schools. They plan on having students donate their Lenten alms to participate in their hunt for plastic eggs that will be exchangeable for those of the chocolate variety.

At the same time, Mrs. Brickman's Grade 4/5 class is asking each class in both schools to donate items to create an Easter basket. There will be a raffle for each basket, with the proceeds going to the Japanese relief effort. This is especially appropriate for this group of students since their teacher spent three years teaching in Japan!

The money raised by these two projects will be donated to the diocesan fund for relief efforts through St. Patrick's Parish. We are proud of the students' desire to help out those in need while also practicing their faith!

Meanwhile, at St. Patrick's, our primary students are busy preparing re-enactments of both the Last Supper and the Stations of the Cross. These dramatizations will form the basis of our Lenten liturgies during Holy Week.



Our Catholic schools are the heart of our community and provide a place where all people can gather to learn, grow and achieve even after the school day is done. Imagine our schools filled with basketball, volleyball, cubs, guides and playgroups in the evenings. On weekends, it's a place where community groups host theatre, sporting events and workshops. Our schools are becoming the hubs of our community, and it's happening across the province.

Community Use of Schools is an initiative by the Ministry of Education which strives to create affordable access to school space outside school hours for not-for-profit community groups. The Huron-Perth Catholic DSB has always embraced the opportunity to provide a welcoming meeting place for our community and with this Ministry initiative have been able to make renting space even easier.

You're invited to check out our new webpage to find out more about what we have to offer: www.huronperthcatholic.ca/Community/CommunityUseofSchools. Here you will find a wealth of information including access to our user-friendly online application process, rate information, insurance requirements and many other frequently asked questions.

Our gymnasiums, cafeterias, seminar rooms and school grounds are waiting for you!



New Principal Tara Boreham with Director of Education Martha Dutrizac.

Administration Changes

A big welcome is extended to Tara Boreham, new principal at St. James School in Seaforth. Tara has been working with Huron-Perth Catholic since 2001. She is coming from St. Ambrose School in Stratford where she served as vice-principal this past school year. The Board wishes former St. James principal Joanne Lombardi all the best as she retires at the end of March.



Martha Dutrizac bids farewell to retiring Principal Joanne Lombardi.

2011 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Martha Dutrizac
Director of Education

OFSAA Award Winners

St. Michael recently hosted its 8th OFSAA (Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association) championship. Sandie Ennett and Ted Hopkinson were honored for their contribution to school sport by being selected as the OFSAA Leadership in Sport Award. This award is presented annually at each OFSAA Championship to a teacher-coach who has made a significant contribution to the educational athletic program. The recipient of this award exemplifies the values of fair play and good sportsmanship, while promoting enjoyment, personal growth and educational achievement through school sport. Congratulations Sandie and Ted!



Shown above are: OFSAA representative and Past President Martin Ritsma along with Sandie Ennett and Ted Hopkinson.

Upcoming Events

Apr. 6	Diocesan Day of Confessions
Apr. 12-14	A / AA / AAA Elementary Basketball Tournament
Apr. 17-24	- Earth Week - National Organ & Tissue Donation Awareness Week
Apr. 22	Good Friday - no school
Apr. 24	Easter Sunday
Apr. 25	Easter Monday - no school
Apr. 26	Board Meeting - 8:00 p.m. (General Mtg.)
May 1-6	Catholic Education Week (CEW)
May 2	CEW System Mass & Mother Teresa Awards, St. Patrick's Church, Dublin 5:00 p.m. (All invited)
May 3	Huron Arts Festival - St. Anne's CSS
May 4	Perth Arts Festival - St. Michael CSS
May 11	World Catholic Education Day
May 12	H-P Catholic Student Trustees' Leadership Awards, St. Anne's CSS - 4:30 p.m. (Mass)
May 18	Stuff That Bus! (all schools)

DIRECTOR'S NEWSLETTER

This newsletter 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 Newsletter. The Director's Newsletter is distributed monthly to parents, staff and the wider community, and is posted on the Board's website at:

www.huronperthcatholic.ca