

Rejoice

It's different here!

The Director's Newsletter

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Tell Me A Story...

Innovative audio project captures the voice of a community

"It is not the magnitude of our actions but the amount of love that is put into them that matters." ~ Mother Teresa

When principal Dan Gracey talks about the ties between family, parish and community, he knows his students are listening – especially when those messages are being received on one of today's most popular gadgets.

St. Patrick's Kinkora is in the final stages of a year-long project driven by parents, grandparents, clergy and others who took the time to record themselves reading library books aloud. Through their combined efforts, the school has compiled an audio library of over 100 popular titles, all of which are iPod compatible and available for students to download and enjoy.

"We've caught the technology bug and are pretty excited about it," says Mr. Gracey of the library project. "The idea was hatched over coffee in response to a teacher suggestion, and it's grown to the point where it has really become our baby."

Mr. Gracey explains the success of the audio library was the result of a "perfect storm"; the school was given two iPod models to trial, and then received a pair of grants for the specific purpose of engaging parents. Abundant interest within the school also helped to move the process along.



The Catholic School Advisory Council oversaw the library project with the help of the St. Pat's tech support team. They used a downloadable program called Audacity to record the readings of staff, students, their parish priest, parents, grandparents and representatives from the Board Office onto individual MP3 files, which were then stored on the school's online server.

Students can access the recordings on the internet and listen with a St. Patrick's iPod, an MP3 player from home, or any home computer.

"We didn't pay for CDs of authors reading their own material," muses Mr. Gracey. "Instead, we have readings from Grandma that will always be on the

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From the Director



Dear Members of the Huron Perth community:

The new school year has been filled with energy, optimism and hope for the future. We have worked hard as a Catholic community to plan for the brightest future for the students entrusted to our care.

Our focus is on improving student learning and our service to the organization in a faith-filled environment.

Our teachers and staff embrace their calling to work diligently to meet the needs of our students, providing an excellent academic program enhanced always by strong Christian values.

As we move forward to *"Realizing our Capacity" 2010-2013 and Beyond...* I ask you to reflect on the founding principles.

Huron-Perth Catholic schools are:

- Places of respect and justice, where all are encouraged to speak and act with fairness and respect towards people of all faiths and dispositions;
- Places of hope where Catholic teachings and beliefs call our young people to move towards a hope-filled future;
- Places of celebration where we celebrate our rich history, the beauty and sacredness of those within our school community and the love of God;
- Places of quality learning and teaching where our students achieve the Catholic Graduate Expectations.

My warmest wishes for a successful year.

*God Bless,
Martha Dutrizac, Director of Education*

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website. These recordings are an enjoyable resource for students, and a great tool for emerging readers who can follow along with the written word as a way to enhance their skills."

Students are encouraged to sign out printed copies of the books they are listening to. Hard copies of every audio title are now being kept in a special corner of the library, marked with stickers and organized on a custom-built cart created by a parent volunteer.

Incorporating new media into the daily curriculum has been an ongoing mission at St. Patrick's. Here, senior students use online tools like blogs and Twitter to help develop critical thinking and writing skills. Mr. Gracey anticipates that the novelty of the iPod project will encourage students to read for enjoyment and personal interest.

He also sees it as an ideal way to bring students, families and communities together.

"When you see something this cool happening, you just find a way to support it," he says. "Together, we demonstrated a concerted effort to build those connections and hopefully, we will be able to reap the rewards later."

Acknowledging the flood of support that went into the audio project, Mr. Gracey is now looking at ways the school can make a difference in the community. As part of their outreach mission this year, St. Patrick's will collect gifts for the Knights of Columbus Toy Drive, bringing joy to children who are in hospital over the Christmas season.

The toy drive is bound to bring families together, as will the Knights' upcoming Santa Claus Parade (the first ever in Kinkora). Filled with the spirit of giving and bundled against the cold, both events will be an opportunity for everyone to celebrate the relationships -- and the resources -- they have built together this year.

Coats, Coats, and More Coats!

For the second year in a row, the elementary and secondary schools in Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board participated in a system-wide, one week blitz to collect coats for children and adults within our local communities. From October 4 - 8, hundreds of coats were collected as students and staff answered the call to service by helping those in need in our communities.



Parishes worked in partnership with the schools to promote the "Thanksgiving Coat Drive" through their weekly bulletins

and inviting members of the community to drop off coat donations to their local schools. The coats were delivered to the Salvation Army for distribution. Thank you to everyone who contributed in "Keeping Us Warm"!!

Love Grows

Grassroots efforts to “Love Your Neighbour” go global at St. Mary’s

“You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” ~ Matthew 19

As principal of St. Mary’s School in Goderich, Mrs. Jackie Simpson takes great pride in watching her students shine with His love as they grow in their Catholic faith.

This year, she is delighted to see a similar development throughout the school as ideas that were planted last year are now being nurtured -- changing the way her students see their community, and the world around them.

“Last year we got serious about developing a number of clubs, and they are really maturing this year,” Mrs. Simpson explains. “Under our guiding school theme of *Love Your Neighbour* and the Board-wide theme of *Celebrating the Spirit*, we have developed some important social groups that have caught the attention of our students and engaged them both locally and globally.”

St. Mary’s Social Justice Club and Environmental Club are seeing substantial growth this year, as students seek out the opportunity to make a positive impact in their world.



The Social Justice Club, an extension of St. Anne’s CSS recently developed **Me to We Club**, began last year and has continued to develop

and expand in recent months. Inspired by the work of *Free the Children*, **Me to We** encourages students to make a positive impact by drawing awareness to the less fortunate of the world and trying to do our part in helping those in need.

St. Mary’s students attended a **Me to We Day** conference alongside their St. Anne’s counterparts at the end of September. Duly inspired, they have created a number of school activities designed to draw attention and build support for those in need.

Their first undertaking was promoting the **Wheels of Change** project which encourages students to submit UPC codes from candy they have purchased. For every 100 codes submitted, a bike is purchased for a person in a Third World country. To date, St. Mary’s has purchased 1½ bikes.

This November, members of the Social Justice Club will encourage their peers to take part in a vow of silence to recognize that they want to be part of efforts that change the world for the better. Their “Hearts for Haiti” Valentine’s Day fundraiser will be repeated following its

successful launch last year, and student-led lunchtime assemblies will make others aware of **Me to We** initiatives around the world.

The group will also mark this year with a large social justice project – though it has yet to be chosen.

Also in its second year, the St. Mary’s Environmental Club has worked tirelessly through the fall to turn a desolate corner of the school playground into a welcoming Peace Garden.



“The school foyer was filled with plants until mid-October,” grins Mrs. Simpson, reflecting on the development of the project. “We had kids lined up during recess to take turns with the shovels and wheelbarrows. Students did the digging themselves, creating raised beds and pathways. The community donated soil, mulch, stones and plants, and joined the students on Thanksgiving weekend to complete the transformation.”

Surveying the growth of social movements across the St. Mary’s community, Mrs. Simpson also notes the success of the P.E.E.R. Pals campaign that began last year. By engaging every student in active, daily play, the inclusive program aims to improve the school experience for those struggling with social interaction.

So far, the results have been positive; while boosting the achievement and confidence of a growing number of students, P.E.E.R. Pals has also been marked by a noticeable reduction in bullying and behaviour problems among students from Kindergarten to Grade 8.

Canada's First Native Born Male Saint has Roots to the Region



On October 17, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI canonized Blessed André Bessette, the founder of St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal. Brother André became the first Canadian-born male saint canonized at the Vatican ceremony in Rome. He opened the door at the Oratory for the sick, lonely and poor to find a

home in the healing power of Christ Jesus.

André was a humble presence to strangers and had a firm devotion to Saint Joseph which compelled him to believe in God's healing power. His life was devoted to prayer and compassion for others, especially those who suffered.

A Saint Walked Among Us...

The hamlet of St. Joseph (near Zurich, Ontario) owes its association with Saint André to Narcisse Cantin. Both men shared a similar personal devotion to St. Joseph, the patron saint of Canada. When a chance meeting occurred between Cantin and Brother André at the St. Joseph Oratory of Mont-Royal in Montréal in 1908, a life-long, friendship developed. While visiting St. Joseph, Brother André expressed his desire to see a statue erected in honour of St. Joseph and even selected a site for the monument.

The site of the statue is at the St. Joseph Memorial Park.

May the legacy of St. André Bessette of Montreal remind us of what each person can achieve through faith, love and small acts of kindness. In the humble porter's own words, "It is with the smallest brushes that the artist paints the most beautiful pictures."

A Prayer to obtain a favour from Saint André of Montreal.



God our Father, You gave Brother André of Montreal, your humble servant, a great devotion to St. Joseph and a special commitment to the sick and the needy. May the example of his life and ministry inspire us to ever-greater works of charity, in generous service to our brothers and sisters in need.

Give us the strength to surrender ourselves to Your will, and to be instruments of your loving mercy.

Help us to follow Brother André's example of prayer and love, so that we too may come into your glory. Through the intercession of Brother André, grant the favour I now present (make your request). Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

St. André Bessette, pray for us.



The above two pictures were taken in 1917 on Brother André's first visit to St. Joseph, Ontario. Both pictures were taken on the steps of the current home of Trustee Mike Miller and his wife Dianne. Mike is the current Chair of the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board.

St. Anne's School Receives \$10,000 Band Aid Grant

St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School in Clinton Ontario is a proud recipient of a Band Aid Grant in the amount of \$10,000 from Musiccounts and the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

This grant is given to schools across Canada through a grant application process to supplement and support instrumental music programs.

The funds will be used to purchase new instruments for the rapidly growing music program at the school.

St. Anne's Catholic Secondary school has experienced unprecedented growth in the music program over the past few years. Music teacher Josh Geddis and the talented young musicians are very excited about expanding their

instrumental inventory and are greatly appreciative of the support they have received.



Annual Deanery/School Board Dinner



The annual Deanery/School Board Dinner took place on Tuesday, October 19, at the Mitchell Golf & Country Club.

Approximately 85 guests attended from various committees such as the Religion Advisory Teachers,

members of the Catholic Education Team, the Journey to Leadership Program, School Advisory Councils, Chaplaincy Leaders, Student Trustees, Trustees, Principals & Vice-Principals, OEFTA Presidents, Priests, the Learning Coordination Team and the Senior Administration of the Board. This was a wonderful event to celebrate the various partnerships in Catholic education. The keynote speaker was trustee Jim McDade who spoke on *Catholic Education: The Enduring Gift*.



Elementary Cross Country Meet



Over 570 students from across the two counties competed in the Huron-Perth Catholic Elementary Cross Country Meet held at the Wildwood Conservation Area near St. Marys on October 13. The high level of participation makes this a very popular event for our young athletes. Congratulations to our conveners and coaches for promoting Cross Country and to our student athletes for competing at such a high level of skill and determination.

Divisional Team Winners:

Junior Girls: St. Aloysius, Stratford

Junior Boys: St. Aloysius, Stratford

Intermediate Girls: Precious Blood, Exeter

Intermediate Boys: St. Aloysius, Stratford

Senior Girls: Jeanne Sauvé, Stratford

Senior Boys: Holy Name of Mary, St. Marys



Congratulations!

...to Cary Gilbert, teacher at St. Boniface, Zurich, on the birth of her son Alister.



Support Our CATHOLIC Schools



Please check your property tax bill to ensure your support is directed to the English Catholic School Board. It's a great way to deliver a powerful message to the government about the strong level of support for Catholic education in Ontario.

- The property tax rate for both Catholic and public school supporters is the same.
- Regardless of whether you rent or own, you can declare yourself as a Catholic school supporter.
- Grandparents, and those without children, can also declare themselves as Catholic school supporters.
- Every time you move, your tax support automatically defaults to public school support. Catholics need to re-declare themselves as Catholic school supporters.
- If your taxes are not directed to the Catholic school system, you cannot vote for Catholic trustees in the next election.

Verify your support by calling the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation at 1-866-296-6722. Thank you for your support.

Upcoming Events

Nov. 1	All Saints' Day
Nov. 2	All Souls' Day
Nov. 5	P.D. Day - All Schools
Nov. 7	Fall Back! Daylight Savings Time Ends
Nov. 11	Remembrance Day
Nov. 22	Board Meeting
Nov. 28	First Sunday of Advent
Nov. 30	Volleyball Elementary "A"
Dec. 6	Inaugural Meeting of the Board
Dec. 20-31	Christmas Break

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

2010 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Martha Dutrizac

Director of Education