

Rejoice

It's different here!

The Director's Newsletter

Volume 7 • Issue 1
Back to School 2010



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Caring...and Growing Communities

*And if you have faith, everything you
ask for in prayer, you will receive*

~ Matthew 21:22

When Judy Merkel took over the principal's desk of St. Mary's School in Listowel earlier this fall, she wanted to get a feel for the needs and desires of her school community.

What she quickly discovered was that the school seemed very much contained by its front doors. Surrounded by students and families with much to give, she set to work finding ways to expand the links that join St. Mary's to its surrounding city – and redefining the role of the school among students, parishioners, and the secular population of Listowel itself.

"It struck me that we would benefit from building a scenario where we could extend an invitation to our local community, and involve them in order to expand our faith community," Mrs. Merkel explains.

The process began with a request: friends and neighbours were invited to share their talents with students through the formation of extra-curricular clubs. As a result, there is a Baking Club, Rug Hooking Club and Book Club already in the works. One St. Mary's family also volunteered to support the school's teacher-run music program with the purchase of new instruments.

"It was very much a case of *ask and you shall receive*", says Mrs. Merkel, paraphrasing the much-loved Bible verse.

St. Mary's heightened involvement in the surrounding community is also providing students with opportunities to grow in their

Catholic faith. Mrs. Merkel tells the story of Nancy and Sheila, members of Community Living who come to work in the Kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms at the school.



"Both Sheila and Nancy truly are part of our staff and valued members of our community," Mrs. Merkel explains. In working together, we are given the chance to learn acceptance, empathy and the dignity of all."

Across many fronts, the school is discovering they have much in common with a surrounding community that often reflects values similar to those of Huron Perth. One example is the "Community of Character" program officially adopted by the Municipality of North Perth.

With the help of community groups, local businesses and leaders, the municipality is actively fostering a regional philosophy that sets the groundwork for overcoming obstacles and achieving success. Despite its markedly secular approach, Mrs. Merkel sees this as an opportunity to expand St. Mary's presence and involvement across the

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From the Director



Dear Members of the Huron Perth community:

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you back to a new and exciting year of growth and anticipated accomplishments in Catholic education.

2010-2011 promises to be an exciting year, rich in promise and opportunity. We look forward to working with our Catholic school councils, parents and parishes to ensure that our students have an enriching, faith-filled and joyful school year.

Our Board theme this year is *Celebrating the Spirit*. This theme provides an amazing opportunity to highlight our many celebrations. We celebrate the gift of Catholic education through:

- the staff in Huron-Perth...who, as a team, support every student and welcome them into our schools every day
- our focus on the Catholic graduate expectations, our student success and well-being, and our growth in literacy outcomes
- our pathways, our Specialist High Skills Majors, our achievement scores
- our inclusive practices in serving all students
- the leadership development for all employee groups
- one seamless, transparent and accountable system that requires the collective good to meet our goals and fulfill our responsibilities

On behalf of the senior administration and the Board of Trustees, I wish everyone a safe, healthy and productive return to school, and thank you for your continued support of Catholic education - the enduring gift

God Bless,
Martha Dutrizac, Director of Education

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community at large.

This month's featured characteristic? Respect.

"The Community of Character is an easy link because it aligns so well with Huron Perth's Catholic Community of Caring" she points out. "It incorporates a sense of us belonging to the town."

By positioning St. Mary's as an active community leader, Mrs. Merkel aims to provide opportunities for students who may not have a chance to fully express their gifts within the school environment.

This is about getting connected to others by a common goal or interest –

one that they may not see unless we offer that opportunity. By promoting inclusion and seeing ourselves as a single community, we come together in caring, in pursuit of a common goal."



New Teachers Anticipate Great Beginnings

Teachers who were recently hired to permanent teaching positions in our schools are pictured above at the Catholic Education Centre. They spent a full day together on August 31st getting to know board personnel, learning coordinators and senior administration. All of the teachers expressed excitement about the first day of school. As a group they acknowledged the privilege of teaching in a Catholic school where faith and pedagogy go hand in hand.



Attention Parents/Students in Grades 6, 7 & 8 (Huron County Schools)

What: Discover St. Anne's **Where:** Evening begins in Cafeteria
When: Monday, November 1, 2010 from 6:45 - 8:30 p.m.
Why: Learn more about the programs/services available for your son/daughter at our annual open house

Attend: Your choice of three workshops on:

- ~ Co-operative Education & OYAP
- ~ Student Success
- ~ Special Education
- ~ St. Anne's CSS - A Student's Perspective
- ~ Guidance & Student Services
- ~ Co-curricular Activities
- ~ Technological Education

A Fresh Outlook on Faith

“What does it say, then? The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith, the faith which we preach.”

~ Romans 10:8



This year, the Huron-Perth tradition of Faith Day is making an early appearance. What has habitually been a mid-winter day of renewal and reflection was bumped up this year to October 1st.

Principal Greg McLean of Sacred Heart School in Wingham is embracing the earlier date as an opportunity to reflect on how they are doing as a Catholic school and how best they can support the mission statement of the Huron-Perth Catholic School Board. Never satisfied with status quo, he is looking forward to deconstructing the school’s direction with the staff and optimistic that this timely reflection and creation of a school vision statement will bring about positive changes that play out through the rest of the year.

“Faith Day should be a springboard for everything we

want to do this year,” explains Mr. McLean with his hallmark unbridled enthusiasm. “It is an opportunity for us to re-examine our role as Catholic educators in a Catholic school community.”

“This day will help us refine our focus and look at our purpose for being here as a Catholic School: what do we want our kids to walk away with after leaving Sacred Heart?”

It’s a big picture thinking for sure – a blueprint that will set the stage for a brand new year of Catholic education. At the heart of the process will be the creation of a new school vision statement that is focused and community-driven, offering caring direction for the lives of our young Catholics. It will be based on the input of students and staff.

“In all that we do, we’re asking ourselves, *what is our Catholic response?*” explains McLean. “We’re inviting all staff and students to contribute to the planning the year once the vision and belief statements are complete. That might mean adding new activities or deleting ones that don’t seem to fit the vision. There are many great things we do already that

I anticipate fit the vision already. We just need to confirm that they indeed belong.” These include work in Professional Learning Communities; Catholic community building activities; and work outside the school with Save a Family Plan,

Community Living and *Free the Children*.”

“From an academic perspective, we’re redoubling our efforts to reach kids who are not yet reaching the Level 3 provincial standards. As Catholic teachers, it is important that we focus on student learning to increase the life chances of all our students and give them every opportunity to succeed.

With Faith Day approaching quickly, the Sacred Heart staff are dusting off their proverbial tool belts and breaking out the hard hats. They plan to spend the morning reflecting and brainstorming on the many opportunities for growth within the school community. By afternoon, McLean hopes to begin the process of evolving these ideas into a workable plan.

“Brainstorming together will give us the tools to focus in on what’s important, so we can better articulate what we’re all about,” he says. “It needs to be *ready, aim, fire*, not *fire, ready, aim*. Defining what we believe and where we’re going is not just a one-shot deal. It’s an ongoing process in our Catholic schools.”



Students and staff look to build on relationships developed last year with people from Wingham Community Living that will be inspired by their vision.

Full-Day Learning Off to a Great Start!

Huron Bruce MPP Carol Mitchell visited St. Joseph's School in Clinton on September 8th to announce the Full-Day Kindergarten program. On September 10th, Perth Wellington MPP John Wilkinson visited the Early Learning class at St. Ambrose School in Stratford. Both MPPs enjoyed reading a book to the kindergarten students before meeting with school and board staff.

Director of Education Martha Dutrizac stated: "The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board is delighted to launch the Full-Day Kindergarten Program and is particularly pleased to welcome our newest learners into our K-12 system with the highest expectations of knowing they will graduate from Grade 12 with the same excitement as they feel today."

The full-day kindergarten program within the Huron-Perth CDSB is being offered at St. Ambrose School, Stratford and St. Joseph's School, Clinton.



St. Ambrose Principal John McCarroll, John Wilkinson, Vice-Chair of the Board Bernard Murray, and Director of Education Martha Dutrizac pose with kindergarten students.



Carol Mitchell, Board Chair Mike Miller and Trustee Jim McDade share stories with St. Joseph (Clinton) kindergarten students, teachers and ECE's.



John Wilkinson reading to St. Ambrose (Stratford) kindergarten students.

Motion Leadership "Guru" Visits District

Michael Fullan, pictured above with Martha Dutrizac, Director of Education, visited our district last week to work with principals, vice principals and other system leaders. The focus of learning was centered on Fullan's research which helps leaders in education understand how to encourage and support educational change in schools.

Motion leadership refers to Fullan's notion that change happens as educators take action and lead the work of changing outcomes for students. Fullan's ideas are solidly based on the information he gathered from people who have experienced success in their efforts to improve

student learning and achievement. His research is from Huron-Perth Catholic, around the province of Ontario and from similar districts in the U.S. Participants appreciated this learning opportunity as it aligned directly with the work they are

doing on school improvement planning, and closing achievement gaps for students of our system.



Summer Learning for Students

Literacy Program held at REACH

Over the summer, the Huron-Perth Catholic DSB provided a two-week Summer Learning Program at the REACH facility in Clinton. This was a pilot project collaborating with a research team from McMaster University and the University of Waterloo. With a strong community partnership from REACH, fifteen boys from St. James Seaforth, St. Mary's, Goderich, and St. Joseph's, Clinton, experienced archery, horseback riding, composting, responsible pet care, creative arts, swimming and culinary arts. All of these engaging activities, along with the use of technology, supported the differentiation of learning literacy and math skills by teachers Cary Gilbert and Tyler Devereaux.



Along with Chef Devin Tabor, students learned about fresh herbs enabling them to be “hands-on” cooks to prepare homemade salsa and other tasty snacks. They also composed a cookbook. Bon appetit!

projects as all part of their day's work. Building carbon dioxide-powered cars, pine memory boxes, bridges, and robot heads. The projects introduced students to a wide array of hands-on skills, such as woodworking, welding, electrical wiring, mechanical repairs and the basics of design.

OYAP Leader Tim Martens says “The camp builds student awareness of the trade opportunities that are out there. Students work with their hands and minds and are rewarded with projects they completed to take home. The Tech camp ties in the value of literacy, to show that reading and math matter, no matter what you do. We also talk about apprenticeships and job opportunities, so that students can consider trades as they start to think about high school. It sounds like serious business, but this camp builds self-confidence alongside technical skills.”



At the start, most of the students are unsure – especially when it comes to things like welding. They like the sparks, but they're wondering, ‘can we even do this?’ As the week

progresses and projects are completed they feel more confident knowing they've had the opportunity to build something they likely wouldn't be able to do at home.

Teachers Keith Donnelly, Jason Steinmann, Bart Drennan, and Mark Flanagan know that the kids are keen. When they get in the shop, they're eager to get busy. It's great to get them started along a path that they might someday consider as a career. In the meantime, campers are learning useful skills while enjoying the thrill of completing a new project each day.

The week-long camp is a joint venture between the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board, The Technical Training Group, The Four County Planning Board, Huron and Perth Community Futures and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP). Through these sponsors the camp cost to the youth is subsidized keeping the price of the camp at an affordable level.

Summer Camp Introduces Kids to Careers in the Skilled Trades



Some summer camps fill their days with face painting and swim lessons. Others take on what might be described as *higher* education – such as launching homemade rockets a mile into the air and seeing them drift back to earth on parachutes.

From July 5th to July 9th at St. Anne's Catholic S.S. and St. Michael Catholic S.S., students from grade 6 to grade 8 were building and designing

Board Celebrates System-Wide P.D. Day

The 2010-2011 school year got off to an energetic start for over 550 Huron-Perth Catholic staff, who came together at St. Anne's CSS in Clinton on September 2 for a system-wide celebration of Catholic education. The theme of the day, and also the Board theme for 2010-2011, was Catholic Education: Celebrating the Spirit

The celebration began with an opening prayer and an address from Director of Education Martha Dutrizac. Martha invited participants to, "reflect on the gift of Catholic education...not only does our school experience excel in academic achievement but most importantly, Christ's teachings and our gospel values inspire us to see each child as a precious gift and a sacred responsibility." The Director also highlighted the *Strategy in Action - 2010-2013 & Beyond*: "Realizing our Capacity".

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Douglas Reeves who is the chairman and founder of the Center for Performance Assessment, an international organization dedicated to improving student achievement and educational equity. The second keynote address of the day was offered by Rev. Raymond Carey, a priest of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon. Rev. Carey spoke on the covenantal ethic for those who work in

Catholic education.

Rev. Carey concluded the day with Mass. A collection of over \$1,700 was raised to help alleviate child poverty in Huron and Perth counties. The collection truly showed the generosity of our Huron-Perth Catholic staff towards those within our community who are in need.



From left: Board Chaplain Rev. Dick Bester, Vice-Chair Bernard Murray, Rev. Raymond Carey, Director of Education Martha Dutrizac, Trustee Jim McDade, and Dr. Douglas Reeves.

Another SHSM in Huron-Perth



St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School in Clinton has once again been approved by the Ministry of Education to deliver another specialized program: the Energy High Skills Major (SHSM). The SHSM is a program that develops partnerships with industry, community and post-secondary educational institutions to offer specialized programs to students.

Carol Mitchell, MPP for Huron-Bruce, made the announcement at St. Anne's Catholic Secondary School on Friday, September 17.

In addition to the Energy SHSM, St. Anne's also offers the Agriculture Technology and Arts and Culture SHSMs. St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Stratford offers two SHSMs in Construction and Arts and Culture.



resources.elearningontario.ca

- Collection of over 20, 000 resources for students, parents, and teachers
- Can be sorted a number of different ways
- Resources for all grades and subjects
- Resources are directly related to the Ontario curriculum
- Resources include lesson plans, videos, activities, maps, and interactive media
- See your classroom teacher for the username and password

Huron-Perth “Walks With our Community”



On Sunday, September 19, Huron-Perth Catholic staff, family and friends gathered in Seaforth to participate in the first annual “Walk With Our Community”, joining with communities across Ontario walking in The Terry Fox Walk for Cancer Research. As a Catholic

Community of Caring, the “Walk” supported employees, families, friends and neighbours who have battled cancer.

Board hats were purchased at a cost of \$5.00 with all proceeds going toward the Terry Fox Foundation.

Each year, the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board will support and join the Terry Fox Walk in one of our Huron-Perth Communities. The event has been

unanimously endorsed by all employee groups of the Board: Huron-Perth Elementary OECTA unit, Huron-Perth Secondary OECTA unit, Huron-Perth Occasional Teachers’ unit, Huron-Perth CUPE unit and all other employee groups.



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.



Back to school means the return of math homework. If you are a parent worried about how to support your child’s math homework questions, don’t worry! An exciting

free online initiative designed to help students succeed is now available.

This September, the Ministry of Education, through the Independent Learning Centre has launched Homework Help. This is a website for a selected number of school boards including Huron-Perth Catholic for math students in grades 7 through 10. Students simply log-on to Homework Help at www.homeworkhelp.ilc.org and using an interactive chat room, can obtain personalized tutoring from a certified Ontario math teacher from the participating boards. Online tutoring sessions take place Sunday to Thursday between the hours of 5:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Homework Help is free, live and anonymous!

Parents and students will find a helpful link to the Homework Help site on their school’s website and on our Board’s website, while student usernames and passwords are created in class with their classroom teacher. For more information, view the site at

<http://homeworkhelp.ilc.org>

Check out our board website at

<http://www.huronperthcatholic.ca>,

Contact your child’s math teacher, or e-mail Steve Lane at steven_lane@hpcdsb.edu.on.ca.

Congratulations!

...to **Laurie Otten**, teacher at **St. Patrick's, Kinkora**, on the birth of her son **Blake**.

...to **Sandra Gregus**, teacher at **Precious Blood, Exeter**, on the birth of her son **David**.

...to **Melissa McIntosh**, EA at **St. Aloysius, Stratford**, on the birth of her son **Luke**.

...to **Denise Nolan**, teacher at **St. James, Seaforth**, on the birth of her daughter **Kate**.

...to **Candace Becker-Soudant**, teacher at **St. Columban**, on the birth of her son **Grayson**.

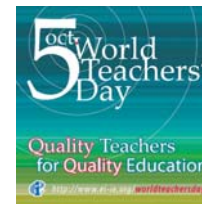
...to **Julie Nickel**, teacher at **Holy Name of Mary, St. Marys**, on the birth of her daughter **Leighton**.

...to **Mariana Diez deBonilla**, teacher at **Jeanne Sauve, Stratford**, on the birth of her daughter **Sofia**.

...to **Cindy Blue**, EA at **St. Ambrose, Stratford**, on the birth of her daughter **Addison**.

Upcoming Events

Oct. 1	Faith Development Day - P.D. Day for all schools
Oct. 5	World Teachers' Day
Oct. 4-8	Thanksgiving Coat Drive "Keeping Everybody Warm"
Oct. 11	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
Oct. 13	Elementary Cross Country - Wildwood
Oct. 17	Brother André to be canonized as a Saint
Oct. 19	Deanery/School Board/Catholic School Advisory Council Dinner
Oct. 25	Municipal Election
Oct. 26	Board Meeting
Nov. 1	All Saints Day
Nov. 5	P.D. Day - 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

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Rejoice