

# Rejoice

*It's different here!*

The Director's Newsletter

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Back to School 2011



## Huron-Perth's Catholic Community Responds to the Goderich Disaster

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

When an F3 tornado ripped through the heart of Goderich on August 21, our local Catholic community felt the call to action on behalf of "Canada's Prettiest Town". With the well-being of those affected weighing heavily on their hearts, volunteers sprung into action. Across Huron-Perth Catholic, the outpouring of support for those affected was nothing short of phenomenal.

"It was incredibly apparent within hours that people would step up to serve in a dramatic way," recalls Martha Dutrizac, Director of Education for the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board. "St. Anne's CSS students were at the forefront through the first week and into the second, and there were graduates who returned to the area because they cared so much about the community and its devastation."

### Essential Items for Those Affected

Ties established between the HPCDSB and the St. Vincent de Paul Society through the Board's annual springtime "Stuff That Bus" initiative paved the way for a quick response on behalf of the Food Bank.

"We realized that the Food Bank would be depleted almost immediately. All employee groups unanimously agreed that on our Professional Development Day at St. Michael CSS (September 1), we would host a Grocery Bag Drive to collect food and hygiene items



for those in need. A story in the Stratford Beacon spread the word about what we were doing and what items were specifically in need at St. Vincent de Paul, and by 10:00 a.m., we had filled a cube truck.

While Stratford is a long way from the tragedy, the care of the surrounding community is evident."

At the P.D. Day Mass, support for the people of Goderich was also offered through the Board's St. André Bessette Trust Fund; a second collection was taken in support of disaster relief.

"Across Huron-Perth, people have been unbelievably generous in the face of this disaster," she says.

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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.

The new school year promises to be exciting in Huron-Perth Catholic, rich in promise and opportunity. We look forward to working with staff, 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 *Walking in the Light of Christ* where our many celebrations and good news stories highlight the gift of Catholic education. Catholic schools across the province are a significant part of Ontario's public education system - with 600,000 students and 45,000 teachers in 1,500 schools, supported by 2.4 million ratepayers.

In our Catholic schools, we are blessed with exemplary staff, and high achieving students. As we are guided by our gospel values and learning outcomes focused on the Ontario Graduate Expectations, we are proud of our many accomplishments. Huron-Perth is one of the highest achieving boards in the province-a strong contributor to a great publicly funded education system.

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*.

*Martha Dutrizac*  
Director of Education

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*Bruce MacPherson, Director of Education for the Bruce-Grey Catholic DSB (and United Way Bruce Grey Board of Director), drove a cube truck loaded with 500 backpacks to assist in the Goderich Tornado Relief Efforts. Huron-Perth Catholic Director of Education Martha Dutrizac gratefully accepts the donations from her counterpart.*

## School Supplies for Students

The United Way of Bruce Grey, in partnership with the United Way of Perth Huron, stepped up to donate 500 fully-stocked backpacks leftover from their fall drive to students affected by the disaster.

"Our backpack drive was extremely well supported this year, and we knew this was something we could do to help," explains Francesca Dobbyn, Executive Director of the United Way of Bruce Grey. "We just could not put any surplus supplies in storage while the children of Goderich were in need."

"My colleague drove a cube truck full of backpacks and sent out a call

to the community for families to come," recalls Dutrizac of the day the bags were distributed from St. Mary's School in Goderich. "Another 100 packs were distributed at a family picnic that night."

## Wide-Reaching Effects

According to Dutrizac, the scope of the disaster and the strength of the storm-battered community cannot be captured by media images.

"Pictures are so insignificant in actually telling the story of what happened. Even as they pick up the pieces, the loss of what they had as a community is so raw and real. At St. Mary's

Elementary and St. Anne's Secondary schools there is great leadership, a positive perspective, and a faith-filled community. The two schools are working with area agencies to provide resources and counseling. There is much hope."

The Huron-Perth Centre is among those providing emotional support for children, youth and families in the wake of the Goderich disaster. Sessions have been provided by crisis management expert Eugene Dufour, a Bayfield resident who was on hand in New York City following the 9/11 attack. He brings significant expertise in the areas of mental health, hospice, palliative and pastoral care.

## Arianna is One Lucky Student!

Earlier this year, St. Patrick's (Dublin) student Arianna Catalan was fortunate enough to meet Justin Bieber up close and personal as he made a surprise visit to Stratford. Arianna's dad, Jody, who plays soccer for Stratford City FC, played soccer with "the Biebs" in Stratford, and Arianna was one of the lucky little girls who got to get her picture with Justin after the game. Arianna is the daughter of Kerri Catalan, secretary at St. Columban School.



# The Home/School Connection

At Sacred Heart in Wingham, the school year starts by reaching out to parents

*“If you have the gift of speaking, preach God’s message. If you have the gift of helping others, do it with the strength that God supplies.”*

~1 Peter

4:11

Along with fresh notebooks and pencils at Sacred Heart School in Wingham, the new school year brings an innovative drive for parental involvement within the school community.

“Parents play a critical role in the creation of a positive school environment,” says Sacred Heart principal Greg McLean. “Parental involvement helps students to feel safe and well, and in turn builds an encouraging school climate with improved student success.”

## Sharing Parenting Resources

Mr. McLean hopes that by connecting with parents, Sacred Heart can fill a void that’s common in smaller centres.

“Comparatively speaking, rural areas do not always have access to programs that are perhaps more readily available in the urban areas – that’s why we’re looking at ways in which we can reach out to support parents and families, and increase parent involvement.”

The campaign to engage parents began just a week into the new school year, at the Meet the Teacher Open House on September 15. Parents were invited to enjoy a presentation on “Parenting with Self Esteem”, hosted by Stan Shapiro -- child psychologist, author of *Practical Parenting* and *Classrooms That Work*, and creator of *Parent Talk* as featured on [www.practicalparenting.ca](http://www.practicalparenting.ca)

[PracticalParenting.ca](http://www.practicalparenting.ca)

“We know that we can no longer demand obedience from our kids and teenagers but must find a way to win their cooperation,” says Shapiro on his website. “We want to give kids a strong sense of positive self worth and compassion for others, as well as helping (parents) use routines and rules to set the boundaries kids need. These are the values and goals we know are important to parents today, and we know how difficult it can be to realize them in our fast-paced, constantly changing world.”

Shapiro’s appearance at the school was met with positive reviews.

“The presentation was full of practical ideas, rather than just concepts -- I found that very useful,”



said Sacred Heart parent Kevin Schmidt. “In dealing with different behaviors, such as a child who is always trying to get attention or one who is really shy, Stan offered specific pointers about what to look for, how to group a child into the right method, and where to go from there.”

The evening also included presentations on “21st Century Learning”, “Literacy at Home” and “Brain Gym”.

Providing timely parenting

resources such as these has been a long-term goal of the Sacred Heart Parent Council. Strengthening the lines of communication between home and school is also an initiative of the school’s Student Effectiveness Framework.

“We want to initiate free-flowing conversation about students and how they’re doing,” says Mr. McLean of his goals in the school community. “The Home-School relationship is a partnership. It’s important it be as open and trusting as possible in order to provide feedback, talk about shared goals and build our students’ next steps towards improvement.”

## Making the Connection

For new families especially, Mr. McLean understands that establishing open lines of communication can leave parents wondering where to start. For those feeling unsure about a school-related issue, he recommends calling the school and booking a time to come in and chat, as speaking directly with a child’s teacher is the most effective way for parents to share their feelings.

“It’s important to make an appointment,” he explains. “If you drop by the classroom as students arrive or as teachers are completing other tasks, it’s unlikely that person will get the necessary attention. Appointments open up the channels of conversation with no distractions and allow for the proper amount of time to have a conversation. Our staff does a great job in reaching out and making first contact with parents. It would be hoped that this goes a long way in developing the trusting relationship needed for children to thrive in school and in life.”

# Purposeful Inclusion

*“Human communities depend upon a diversity of talent, not a singular conception of ability.”*

*~Sir Ken Robinson*

St. Mary’s School in Listowel is focused this year on what one could describe as *purposeful inclusion*. Having moved beyond the passing recognition that we each have differing needs and abilities, they are actively seeking ways to bring those differences into the fold.

“We are engaging in a year focused on student engagement, student voice and a realization of our own individual gifts as part of our overall school improvement plan,” explains Judy Merkel, principal of St. Mary’s. “As a school, we are promoting inclusion in terms of fitness levels, open-mindedness and creativity, from JK to Grade 8.”

## Drum Roll, Please...

The school kicked off its new improvement plan in a celebratory fashion this month, with a visit from DrumFIT on September 13. This fun and fast-paced fitness program combined music, dance, rhythm and learning as engaging exercise for the body and brain. Each student worked with a large exercise ball (positioned on a ring to prevent it from rolling) and a set of drumsticks. The results were active, engaging, creative and achievable for all students, regardless of age, language or ability level.

“For the technically minded, our workouts incorporate patterning, Brain Gym activities, poly rhythms, hand-eye coordination, fine motor skill building, spatial awareness and team work games,” explain program creators Liz Fryer and Val Shah. “DrumFIT increases heart rate and builds motor skills, with the additional emotional benefit of decreasing stress and anxiety while increases self-esteem in

a non-competitive and non-threatening environment.”

In short, it makes kids feel good because there’s no wrong way to drum!

DrumFIT activities were featured at a recent Open House, where parents were invited to join in the fun. The school is also applying for a SpeakUp grant to purchase DrumFIT equipment of their own.

For a video demonstration, visit [www.DrumFit.ca](http://www.DrumFit.ca).



## Leading the Way

St. Mary’s mission to promote student voice is further taking shape through the development of what Mrs. Merkel describes as “a succession plan for student leadership”. Dubbed the PATH action plan, it begins with a thought-provoking question for students: what would our school look like if it had everything you wanted in terms of inclusivity and community?

Grade 6, 7 & 8 students are already in the process of formulating their PATH (Planning Alternative Futures with Hope) under the leadership of parent Stephanie Gratton.

Over the past 18 years, Stephanie Gratton has worked in many capacities in developmental services, and has received a wide variety of

training and professional development tools and resources. This year, she is working with students on their journey towards becoming leaders, mentors and creators of a welcoming school environment.

“Unlike a traditional Student Cabinet that involves kids who are recognized for their strengths academically or athletically, PATH is involving quiet people that might be overlooked in other avenues. It recognizes that leadership can look different in different circumstances,” Mrs. Merkel explains.

PATH will help students take ownership and responsibility for the direction of their school, while making a commitment to a school community that values and respects every person. The plan will be a resource for the students to use as a guide as they make progress throughout the school year, and will be presented to the teaching staff at a later date this year.

On the school’s first Professional Activity day on September 30, Stephanie will spend time with St. Mary’s staff, discussing the idea that every human being is born with a specific gift. Each staff member will have the opportunity to identify their gift through an interview process designed by Bruce Anderson.

The process of identifying and sharing gifts will be used to help connect staff members with deeper purpose in their work, with their families at home, in their communities and spiritual life.



# Board Celebrates System-Wide P.D. Day

The 2011-2012 school year got off to an energetic start for over 500 Huron-Perth Catholic staff, who came together at St. Michael CSS in Stratford on September 1 for a system-wide celebration of Catholic education. The theme of the day, and also the Board theme for 2011-2012, was *Catholic Education: Walking in the Light of Christ*.

The day began with the Huron-Perth Catholic staff responding to the call to help those affected by the tornado in the Goderich and area communities. Staff generously assisted the Goderich Society of St. Vincent de Paul by filling their truck and donating grocery bags full of items to help those in need.

The Offertory collection was gathered to support the St. André Bessette Trust Fund - a fund that can be accessed by schools to help students in need within our two counties.

Director of Education Martha Dutrizac gave opening remarks highlighting our expression of Catholic faith by working for justice and charity. She also shared some celebratory stories of "ordinary people doing extraordinary things" within the Huron-Perth Catholic DSB.

The morning continued with an amazing celebration of the Eucharist with Fr. Moe Charbonneau and Fr. Richard Bester. At the conclusion of Mass, each of the 18 schools received the Faith Framework, a beautiful visual depicting the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and the overall themes found within the K-12 Religion and Family Life programs. This visual will assist in communicating with staff, students, parents and the wider community about who we are as a Catholic educational system.

To conclude the morning our keynote speaker, Shannon Hogan, a member of the Professional Development Department at the OECTA Provincial Office, shared stories related to the theme, *Walking in the Light of Christ*.

Schools gathered in the afternoon to participate in training and to review various policies, procedures and practices. The day proved to be a wonderful opportunity to gather together as an educational community of believers and to reflect on the message that we are children of the light and all of us are called to let our light shine for all to see.



## New Educators Gather Together

New Catholic educators spent a morning together on August 30 getting to know Board personnel, learning coordinators and senior administration. These employees will participate in ongoing orientation and professional development programs to support them in their new roles as educators. As a group they acknowledged the privilege of teaching in a Catholic school where faith and pedagogy go hand in hand.



# Smiling, Happy People Everywhere

On September 6 the new school year started for all HPCDSB students. This year's theme is "Walking in the Light of Christ". Students at various Catholic schools across Huron and Perth were seen showing their smiling, happy faces.



## Outdoor Learning Pavilions

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board supports the construction of outdoor learning pavilions on school grounds. Outdoor Learning Pavilions provide outdoor learning spaces for our students, protection from the elements, and encourage staff and students to enjoy nature and all of God's creation. Huron-Perth Catholic schools participate in the Ontario EcoSchools program which also promotes school-ground greening projects and outdoor learning.

On Friday, September 16, St. Patrick's School in Kinkora hosted an Open House and Blessing Ceremony of their new Outdoor Learning Pavilion.



## Golfing for Goderich



*From left to right: St. Michael team of Bart Drennan, Dan Peters, John Page, Tim Doherty - St. Anne's team of Jason Steinmann, Brian Marcy, Curtis Meyers, and Glen Ditner.*

On Saturday, September 24, St. Michael CSS and St. Anne's CSS teachers entered a golf tournament at the Woodlands Golf Course in Clinton. Over \$10,000 was raised for the Goderich Tornado Relief Fund.

Rumour has it that there was a friendly wager with the St. Anne's team gaining the upper hand!! Good fun was had by all!

## Second Annual “Walk With Our Community”

On Sunday, September 18, 2011 the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board hosted its second annual “Walk With Our Community”, joining with communities across Ontario walking in The Terry Fox Walk for Cancer Research.

Each year, the Board supports and joins the Terry Fox Walk in one of the Huron-Perth Communities. This year’s walk was in the lovely town of St. Marys.



## Energizing our Secondary Schools and our Youth’s Minds

Students understand the importance of reducing green house emissions. The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board started the 2011-2012 school year with both of our secondary schools greener than ever! St. Anne’s and St. Michael Catholic Secondary Schools have lowered their environmental foot print by installing two kilowatt solar systems at each school. These solar systems were designed to enable students to learn more about solar energy, specifically solar PV (photovoltaic) electric systems through a variety of activities and special projects. Students and teachers will be able to engage in new green energy projects such as data collection through hands-on opportunities to view real time energy production data. They will also be able to analyze daily, monthly and annual energy production trends, and gain a deeper appreciation of the environmental benefits of generating electricity with PV systems.

The study of the renewable energy systems is especially valuable for students working toward their Energy Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) red seal diploma. The Energy SHSM program is presently being offered at both St. Anne’s and St. Michael.

The solar projects were made possible through financial and in-kind donations from Libro Financial, Ideal Supply, Technical Training Group, and Farm Energy Inc. We thank these businesses for their contributions. Like most things in life, a little sunshine brightens our days - “Let the sun shine in”!



## Upcoming Events

Sept. 30	Faith Development Day - P.D. Day for all schools
Oct. 3-7	Thanksgiving Coat Drive "Keeping Everybody Warm"
Oct. 5	World Teachers' Day
Oct. 6	Provincial Election
Oct. 10	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
Oct. 12	Elementary Cross Country Meet Benmiller
Oct. 20	Deanery/School Board/Catholic School Advisory Council Dinner
Oct. 24	Board Meeting
Oct. 31	Hallowe'en
Nov. 1	All Saints Day
Nov. 4	P.D. Day - All schools



### 2011 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Bernard Murray

**Perth South, St. Marys, West Perth**

Martha Dutrizac

Director of Education

## Congratulations!

...to **Laura Kaufman**, teacher at **St. Joseph's Clinton**, on the birth of her daughter **Kaila**.

...to **Casey Morrow-Harding**, teacher at **Our Lady of Mount Carmel**, on the birth of her daughter **Lily Jayne**.

...to **Rosa Ort**, teacher at **St. Patrick's, Dublin** and **Michael Ort**, teacher at **St. Michael CSS**, on the birth of their daughter **Julia**.

...to **Renita Roxburgh**, Vice-Principal at **St. Michael CSS**, and **Joe Voros**, teacher at **St. Michael CSS**, on the birth of their daughter **Danica**.

...to **Heather George**, teacher at **St. Boniface**, on the birth of her daughter **Emmalee**.

...to **Janis Antonio**, teacher at **St. Aloysius**, on the birth of her son **James**.

...to **Marianne Lupton**, EA at **St. Ambrose**, on the birth of her daughter **Robin**.

...to **Sarah Matheson**, teacher at **St. Michael CSS**, on the birth of her daughter **Cynthia**.

...to **Laura Bannon**, Human Resources Officer at the **Board Office**, on the birth of her son **Weston**.

...to **Andrea Durand**, teacher at **St. Michael CSS**, on the birth of her son **Fynn**.

...to **Chad Verberne**, teacher at **St. Anne's CSS**, on the birth of his son **Tyler**.

