

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

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Roger D. Lawler,
Director of Education

Merry Christmas!!

We know that as soon as the American Thanksgiving and the Grey Cup roll around the community begins to focus on Christmas. What gifts should we give others? How do we respond when someone asks what we 'want'? Everyone's calendars fill up with opportunities to get together with family and friends. This is our season of **preparation**.

Within our schools, parishes and families, **preparation** means preparing for the way of the Lord; **preparation** to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our saviour and promise of redemption in the life to come. Our spiritual journey – our **preparation** – has a great deal to do with examining how we can be positive signs for the community. We are born into a world that calls us to build a culture of justice, hope, compassion and charity. We see in our learners every day how they can and do work to transform their and our world into communities of hope.

While we may sometimes take for granted what everyone contributes every day, **Advent** -- our time of **preparation** -- provides us with a unique opportunity to once again reflect in anticipation and hope of what can and should be. As members of the Waterloo Catholic school community who desire their schools to be the heart of the community...places where there is success for each and a place for all...may we in this period of **preparation** be signs of justice, hope, compassion and charity in living out the saving message of Jesus Christ.

May you and your family have the time to be together, to reflect, to rest, to reach out to others and to enjoy this blessed time of the year.



Message from the Chair of the Board

In our Catholic school system we are all privileged to be able to experience, in faith, many celebrations throughout the school year. Our liturgical season is filled with many happy thoughts in waiting for the celebration of our Saviour's birth.

As a Board of Trustees we wish and pray that as you and your families enter the Christmas season you are able to celebrate in happiness and joy.

We also remember those in our communities less fortunate and who may be experiencing hardship and suffering. May we all be able to offer support to those in need.

On behalf of myself and all of the Trustees, **Joyce Anderson, Wayne Buchholtz (Vice Chair), Rev. Robert Héту, Janek Jagiellowicz, Anthony Piscitelli, Wendy Price, Peter Reitmeier, Greg Reitzel** and our Student Trustees **Anne Marie Hayman** and **Claire Matlock**, we wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas.



Manuel da Silva
Board Chair



December, 2010



Available in colour @ www.wcdsb.ca
See inside for more!

"Our Catholic Schools: heart of the community -- success for each, a place for all."



Louise Ervin

Reflections on 25 years in Catholic Education

By Louise Ervin

Louise Ervin was first elected to the Board of Trustees in 1985 and has been a prominent voice in Catholic Education locally, provincially and nationally for 25 years. She retired as a Trustee on November 30, 2010. The following is adapted from her final speech to the Board:

Who would have thought that the announcement of full funding for Catholic schools would have brought us to today...25 years later!

The long awaited dream of our parents and grandparents was finally coming true! Premier Bill Davis's announcement of full funding for Catholic schools brought a flurry of activities. There was so much to do, so many decisions to make.

Even though the legislation had not passed yet and the money hadn't started flowing, the Catholic boards across the province, including ours, started implementing full secondary schools.

Elementary schools in Cambridge and Waterloo were K to 6 schools. They had to become K to 8 schools. Our three Junior High Schools in Cambridge and Waterloo (St. Benedict, Msgr. Doyle and St. David) would now offer Grades 9 to 13 rather than 7 to 10. Kitchener's two private high schools (St. Jerome's and St. Mary's) had to be turned over to this board, one year at a time, to the displeasure of many.

We needed classrooms, desks, textbooks and teachers. Our enrolment was climbing fast. (1985: 15,183. 1989: 18,687). We needed proper gyms, science labs, sports fields, libraries, technology classes and equipment, department heads and consultants for secondary subjects. We needed to negotiate new contracts because now we had recognized secondary teachers. We could now educate all our special needs students and offer adult education programs and co-operative education. All this, without a dime from Queen's Park yet. And we were already poorer than Church mice! It was a whirlwind of activities.

And now, look at where we are! Within a few years, although it seemed like an eternity, we were granted **equal** funding! We have beautiful schools, many of them new! Our technology classes provide the latest computerized equipment, our programs are recognized across the province for their innovation and forward thinking, we have a proper board office....the list goes on. The Waterloo Catholic school system of 2010 is very different from the one that existed in 1985.

The highlight of my trustee career was certainly serving as President of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association and the Canadian Catholic School Trustees Association. I leave our Board of Trustees with so many memories and so much to be thankful for!

I also leave with one strong message for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board community: Each and every one of us is charged with **promoting** and **protecting** Catholic education locally, provincially and nationally.

May God bless you and your continued great work in Catholic Education. Merry Christmas!

AN ADVENT PRAYER

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a wonder at the wisdom and power of Your Father and ours. Receive my prayer as part of my service of the Lord who enlists me in God's own work for justice.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a hunger for peace: peace in the world, peace in my home, peace in myself.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me a joy responsive to the Father's joy. I seek His will so I can serve with gladness, singing and love.

Come, long-expected Jesus. Excite in me the joy and love and peace it is right to bring to the manger of my Lord. Raise in me, too, sober reverence for the God who acted there, hearty gratitude for the life begun there, and spirited resolution to serve the Father and Son.

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, whose advent I hail. Amen.

The Symbols of Christmas

"Christmas, the celebration that is perhaps dearest to popular tradition, is rich in symbols linked to different cultures. The most important is certainly the nativity scene.

Next to the nativity scene, we find the traditional Christmas tree. This is also an ancient custom that exalts the value of life because during the winter, the evergreen fir tree becomes a sign of life that does not die. Christmas gifts are usually placed under the Christmas tree. The symbol thus becomes eloquent even in a typically Christian sense; it reminds us of the 'tree of life,' a figure of Christ, God's supreme gift to all humanity.

The message of the Christmas tree is thus that life is 'ever green' if one makes a gift, not of material things, but of oneself: in friendship and sincere affection, in brotherly/sisterly help and in forgiveness, in time shared and in reciprocal listening.

May Mary help us to live Christmas as an occasion to savour the joy of giving ourselves to our brothers and sisters, especially the neediest." -- Pope John Paul II, 2004



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