Welcome all to an exciting and rewarding year in your Waterloo Catholic District school. If you are a returning international student, we hope that you had a positive experience with your family over the summer and that you are ready and motivated to continue your education and life journey with us. If you are a new student to our schools, know that we are looking forward to getting to know you and to helping you achieve your education and life goals.

Our community is very much a global village, offering many opportunities to experience Canadian life, to meet new people from different cultures, and to prepare you for a successful life in the 21st Century. Your school community also offers you many opportunities to grow and develop as a whole person through a variety of course offerings and after-school activities. We encourage you to embrace these new adventures and to become engaged with all the opportunities that are available to you.

Vic Degutis
COO • Research & Development Office/International Education Services
Waterloo Catholic District School Board

Important Information

Student Information System

A student, parent or guardian can access their student’s attendance and stay up to date through the Student Information System. Examples of information available include student mark history, current course schedule, and attendance in each course for that schedule. To access the system, parents and guardians will be required to have their child’s student number which can be found on the front of the latest report card or the current course schedule. https://sis.wcdsb.ca

Smartphone Arrival App for New Incoming Students

Arriving by yourself at the airport in Canada can be a little intimidating. WCDSB’s International Education App will walk you through the whole process: from when you get off the plane, through immigration to the arrival area. We also give you contact info for our office, and show you where your arrival orientation will take place. The App is available in English, Spanish, and Chinese Mandarin.

The App is completely free to download at the Apple Store for iPhone: https://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewSoftware?id=1266182780&mt=8

It is also free to download in the Google Play Store for Android devices: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.carstonhoy.waterloo&hl=en

We hope the App will help to guide you and allow your arrival to be worry-free! We look forward to meeting you!

Check out our social network:

facebook.com/wcdsb.intl
WCDSB_Intl
weibo.com/wcdsb
Greetings! My name is Jessica Song, and I am an international student from Dongying City, Shandong province, China. This is my third year studying in Canada, and I am in my grade-twelve at Monsignor Doyle Catholic Secondary School. The three years that I have spent here in Canada have become one of my most treasured memories. I've met a lot of friendly people and made plenty of Canadian friends. The assistance that I received from them has helped me in many ways, and I’m truly grateful. Together, we have created countless unforgettable memories, and I would really like to share some of them with you today.

I am currently taking several university level courses and preparing for my post-secondary education. For any high school students, the school work is always difficult and challenging; in the case of an international student, life only becomes tougher. Studying in a foreign country with a totally unfamiliar language can be a challenge to anybody, especially without the companion of families or familiar friends. During my first several months here, this loneliness almost made me lose my confidence and I started to question myself. I managed to overcome it, with the help of my teachers, friendly homestay, and new Canadian friends. The barrier of language did not stop us from establishing true friendships with each other. When I am struggling, they always patiently answer all my questions and help me to fit in with the lifestyle here. They lend me a hand when I need assistance, and I truly appreciate what they’ve done for me. The time that we have shared together is gold and I shall remember it forever.

I’m also deeply fascinated by the academic environment of Canadian schools. This is the last semester of my high school life, and I’m planning on continuing my post-secondary education in Canada after I receive my high school diploma. The classrooms here allow the students to think outside the box and develop their own thoughts beyond the textbooks. Students can participate in discussions and let their voices be heard. For some of the international students who first came to Canada, they may find it’s a little bit hard for them to fit in. My suggestion for them is to challenge themselves and try new things. If they never try or never do something out of their own comfort shell, then they will never be able to make friends or discover the true beauty of studying abroad.

Are you speaking English?

Don’t forget to use English when you are out of school! Here are some free apps you may find helpful: Duolingo, Memrise, AccelaStudy.
Waterloo Catholic Students and Staff Travel to Japan

Konichiwa! This past summer 36 students and 5 supervisors from the Waterloo Catholic District School Board traveled to Yokohama, Japan as part of their involvement in the Japanese Exchange Program. After hosting Japanese students from the Yamate International School in their homes this past April, the students made a return visit to live with Japanese host families for two weeks.

While in Japan, the students experienced the beauty and history of Japan by visiting Buddhist Temples and Shinto Shrines, eating traditional Japanese food, and watching various student performances during Culture Day at Yamate. The students also traveled to popular tourist destinations such as Sea Paradise and Tokyo Disney.

Overall, this experience was life changing for many of the students, as they formed strong friendships with teenagers who live halfway across the world. Our students, along with our supervisors, truly learned to appreciate what it means to be a global citizen.

The School Board plans to offer this opportunity again in 2019. Look for details in your school’s newsletters if you are interested in this amazing initiative.

WCDSB Educators’ Teaching and Cultural Experience in China

This past July, our eight WCDSB educators had the opportunity to travel to China and teach at Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School (SFLS) in the province of Hebei. The trip included two weeks of teaching and collaboration at the school’s summer camp (both primary and middle school programs) and cultural experiences throughout. We connected with educators from around the world, shared best practice, and developed partnerships. The cultural experiences included visiting the Longmen Grottoes, the Shaolin Temple, some Beijing markets, and of course, the Great Wall of China. Educators also went on excursions with local families including visits to museums, tea ceremonies, and making traditional dumplings were also included.

Through our teaching and travels, our worldview was forever altered. We came to recognize that the world is a small place filled with the most wonderful people. Sometimes it takes travelling great distances to realize the things that unite us all. Undoubtedly, there are differences between cultures; however when we begin to appreciate these differences we can see the interconnectedness between them. We leave this experience with a new global perspective of education, a heightened knowledge about the world, and friendships that will last a lifetime!

WCDSB Summer 2017 team: Jessica Weber, Michael Perkins, Amy Barsalou, Jessica Stock, Julie Tonin, Janene Sarabura, Julie Amador, and Catherine Boutzis.

Link to video:  https://youtu.be/y8f-l30MjgY

Article and photos courtesy of Jessica Weber

Jessica’s Blog:  mindfuled.blogspot.ca
Chinese Students Participating in International Summer Program

80 Chinese students and teachers from Hebei Zhengding High School and Shijiazhuang Foreign Language School participated in WCDSB’s International Summer Program in July. Not only did they experience Canadian class culture and improve their English skills, but they also learned about Canadian culture, food, and local communities. They also experienced extra-curricular activities and excursions in Ontario.

Colombian Group Coming in September

The School Board will be welcoming students from Colombia to participate in the International Immersion Program at our local Catholic elementary and secondary schools from September 15 to October 28, 2017.

Colombian Student and Homestay Getting Together

Daniela D’Amato is a Colombian student who attended a four-week International Immersion Program at WCDSB in September 2016. In those four weeks, she studied at a local Catholic school and stayed with Dianne and Roger Oei who were her host family. This summer, while Daniela’s family was planning a trip to New York and Niagara Falls, they contacted Mrs. and Mr. Oei to see if they could meet. Finally, they were all together again in Niagara Falls!

The students only spent four weeks in our short-term program, but the connections, friendships, and memories they gained from the program will last forever!

Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest

Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is an annual nine-day festival in the Waterloo Region. Since 1969, it has developed its own traditions, becoming the largest Bavarian festival in North America with the greatest Thanksgiving Day Parade in Canada. It is also filled with over 40 family and cultural events. Each year, Oktoberfest attracts thousands of visitors to celebrate our local community’s tradition, culture, and the joy of life!

The 2017-2018 President of the Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is Mrs. Margo Jones, who is also the Program Manager of International Education at our Waterloo Catholic District School Board.

Come join Margo and all of us on October 6-14 for this year’s festival! Check oktoberfest.ca to see 10 things you should do at Oktoberfest!