

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

Quality • Inclusive • Faith-based • Education



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**Roger D. Lawler**  
Director of Education

“The Waterloo Catholic District School Board believes in the redeeming message of Jesus Christ. We see it reflected in our curriculum. Moreover, we see it reflected in the many acts of social justice, compassion and justice that our learners and staff engage in each and every day in our schools and board office sites”.



December, 2011

## The Holy Season of Advent

As we embark upon *Advent* let us keep in mind *Advent* is about the coming birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Let us also keep in mind that *Advent* is eternal; that is, we are – and should be – continually renewing our relationship with Jesus through what we do in our daily lives, in our relationships within our families, and in our work with our co-workers and students. That is what we are about as a Catholic school system. The message of *Advent* is “Come Lord Jesus” and that invitation is one that should shape our relationships as mentioned above.

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board believes in the redeeming message of Jesus Christ. We see it reflected in our curriculum. Moreover, we see it reflected in the many acts of social justice, compassion and justice that our learners and staff engage in each and every day in our schools and board office sites.

In December I will deliver the **Director's Annual Report** to the Board of Trustees. That report will indicate that this past school year our learners and staff raised nearly **\$460,000** for charitable work and the missions. This does not include the amount of clothing and food that our learners and staff contribute to many worthy causes each year. The funds raised this past year bring our running 13-year total to more than **\$4.5 million!!**

This is just one example of how our learners and staff are an *Advent* people; how they continually focus on building the Kingdom of God through their actions. We call it being a **Basileus** people – those who build the Kingdom of God through action. We have much to be thankful for as members of the Waterloo Catholic District School system.

May this *Advent* and Christmas season be for you an opportunity to reflect upon your own gifts and provide you with the opportunity to share what you have and be a gift to others. May you enjoy the peace and good will of this 2011 *Advent* as we welcome the coming of our Lord, Jesus.

## Merry Christmas!!

As we celebrate this Christmas season, our system is also celebrating 175 years of Catholic education in Waterloo Region. Across our system there are many things to be thankful for and to be proud of and not just for the past 175 years but for what is currently happening. We are all very proud of the staff, students and many volunteers who help us be who we are.

The WCDSB **Board of Trustees** hope and pray that as you and your families head into the Christmas season you are able to celebrate in happiness and joy. As we celebrate, we also remember those in our communities less fortunate and who may be experiencing hardship and suffering. May we all offer support to those in need.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, **Joyce Anderson, Wayne Buchholtz, Fr. Robert Héту, Janek Jagiellowicz, Anthony Piscitelli, Wendy Price, Peter Reitmeier, Greg Reitzel** and our Student Trustees **Marcus Cardoso** and **Colin Whaley** we wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas.

Available in colour @ [www.wcdsb.ca](http://www.wcdsb.ca)  
See inside for more!



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## Trustee Profile

For the next few years each **Community Update** newsletter will feature a profile of one member of the Board of Trustees. This month...meet Board Chair **Manuel da Silva!!**



### Fun Fact

Manuel says: "Like any good Portuguese boy, I took accordion lessons"!

Manuel da Silva was first elected as a trustee in 2003. He served as Vice Chair for two years and was elected as Chair of the Board last December.

Manuel was born in the Azores of Portugal on the Island of Terceira. In 1971 he moved to Canada with his parents and grew up in Sarnia, attending Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Upon completing his post-secondary education, his job took him and his family to London in 1985 and Cambridge in 1993. He and wife Marcie have two children who both attended **St. Francis CES** and **Monsignor Doyle CSS**.

Manuel's interest in becoming a trustee stemmed from his involvement in school councils in both elementary and secondary schools. He is a believer that one of the best ways to get to know your community is to get involved. He believes it's important for children to see their parents involved (as much as possible) in their lives and to be involved and contributing to their community.

Thanks, Manuel, for your many contributions to our community!!

### Our Prayer for Catholic Schools

By Fr. Charles Fedy, C.R. & the Board of Trustees

O Risen Lord, you have entrusted us with the responsibility to help form a new generation of disciples and apostles through the gift of our Catholic schools. As Disciples of Christ, may we educate and nurture hope in all learners to realize their full potential to transform God's world.

May our Catholic schools truly be at the heart of the community, fostering success for each by providing a place for all. May we and all whom we lead be discerning believers formed in the Catholic faith community; effective communicators; reflective and creative thinkers; self-directed, responsible, life-long learners; collaborative contributors; caring family members; and responsible citizens.

Grant us the wisdom of your Spirit so that we might always be faithful to our responsibilities. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*This prayer is recited at the end of every board meeting.*

## A Word of Thanks...

The Board of Trustees would like to thank the parents, staff and students who completed the on-line survey regarding our boundary review and school closure procedures. A special thank you to those who volunteered to participate in the focus group.

Information gleaned from both these processes has been incorporated into the committee's recommendations, which are intended to make the accommodation review process more responsive to the needs and concerns of our community.

These recommendations, as approved by the Board of Trustees, will be reflected in our practice in upcoming accommodation reviews.

The fall graduation ceremonies have recently been completed for our secondary schools,

as well as for our successful **St Louis Adult and Continuing Education** program.

Every celebration was beautifully done, well organized, and strongly supported by staff, as well as friends and family of the graduates.

Trustees would like to thank staff for making the graduation ceremonies such special events.

We also wish to congratulate our many graduates as they leave our schools and move ahead in this next important phase of life.

We are very proud of you, and wish you well.

As always, if you have any comments, questions or concerns about our schools, we would appreciate hearing from you. Contact information is on our website @ [www.wcdsb.ca](http://www.wcdsb.ca).

## An Advent Reflection

By Fr. Robert Héту

As a Catholic school system, we should never forget that the Church Year is divided into Ordinary Time and four special seasons: **Advent, Christmas, Lent** and **Easter**.



Unfortunately, most Catholics today spend the entire Advent Season celebrating Christmas rather than preparing for it. In Advent, we are called to prepare for Christ's final coming at the end of time, celebrate Christ's daily presence within us through the Spirit and thank God for Christ's first coming at Christmas.

Let us preserve the Advent Season by taking part in Advent activities and devotions, such as family/school/class Advent wreaths, Advent calendars and the daily reading of an Advent devotional like *Sacredspace* or *Word Among Us*.

It should not be Advent versus Christmas, but Advent and Christmas. Let us take time this Advent Season to spiritually prepare and be filled with hopeful memories of the first Christmas, the daily joyful rebirth of Jesus in our hearts and the ultimate peaceful and loving Second Coming of Christ.

In our 'Christmas rush' may Advent not become the Lost Season!



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# The Faces & Messages of WE Day, 2011



*"When we come together, when we find strength in each other, we can realize this: 'Hopeless' is an illusion; 'Never' is a fool; 'Unrealistic' is a coward; and 'Impossible' is a liar. Realizing these truths, that is the power of WE".*  
 – Craig & Marc Kielburger



"Get involved.  
 Get your boots dirty.  
 Get out there!"  
 Senator  
 Romeo  
 Dallaire



"Redefine possible."  
 Spencer West



"If each and every child reached out to a child, whole communities would be lifted up. You are the generation I have been waiting for".  
 Mia Farrow



"You young people coming together for a common good and a common goal, and that's to help people every single day and that's powerful right there."  
 Earvin "Magic" Johnson

## Student Trustee Report

On October 28 the **Student Activities Council of St. Mary's High School** hosted what will always be remembered as the perfect example of a school at the heart of the community, where there is success for each and a place for all – the first **"Coffee House"** of the year. It was a casual and relaxing evening where everyone gathered to support a good cause and appreciate the talents of students.

Coffee House is something most students look forward to; not only did we have a marvelous line up of acts that night, we had such a large turnout we weren't able to fit any more people into the cafeteria. Alongside the many SMH students were many elementary students who were warmly welcomed by everyone. These elementary students were invited to come through the contacts established at the **Youth Leadership Conference** held earlier that month.

The cause was to support **Harmony Brubacher**, a grade eight student at **Monsignor Haller CES** and future St. Mary's Eagle, who has a rare form of cancer and needs an extremely expensive surgery that is not covered by insurance. The entire grade eight class of Monsignor Haller, Harmony's peers, attended this event to show their support. By the end of the night we raised a total of **\$4000** for Harmony and her surgery.

Harmony's family couldn't have been happier – and through our actions, generosity and support, the WCDSB students and staff truly proved how our community really is "heart of the community". – **Marcus Cardoso, Student Trustee**



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# Celebrating St. Louis @ 25!!!

By Michele Breault



There are many milestone birthdays, anniversaries and achievements to celebrate in one's lifetime. Your parents celebrated your first step and first words. Recall the frustration, falls and thrill of learning to ride your bike. Summon up the awkwardness and excitement of your first dance and the importance a dance would have on your wedding day. And remember that first day driving through the campus entranceway of your new college or university. All may be early memories before turning 25. So, what's so special about being 25?

Being 25 mirrors that silver lining on cloud nine. This point in one's life is one for pause; a reflection on what has been achieved; knowing that this stage is the height of energy and that there is so much more to accomplish. This year, **St. Louis Adult Learning and Continuing Education** celebrates its **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** as a school community. Our school has achieved so much and we have so much more to do!

In these very busy times, making the time to celebrate milestones, (even minor ones), becomes so critical. In a Catholic school community, we recognize highlights such as one's first day at school, the sacraments and tests of faith, student graduation(s), teachers being honoured for their impact and years of service, schools and our school board celebrating their historical significance and gifts to their community. Although St. Louis offers programming and courses for learners of all ages, these highlights of early years are relived for many of our students and St. Louis honours their achievements daily.

**First Day of School** -- Our **ESL/LINC** students are so brave to come to school to learn a new language, in a new country, as an adult. In some cases, these students have never set foot inside a classroom and entrusted us to care for their toddlers in their own school-like setting. Our International Language students have two "first days of school"; one at their Day School through the week and the other, their **Language School** on Saturdays. Some start as early as Junior Kindergarten!

**Tests of Faith** -- Coming back to school as an adult takes courage. Believing in oneself, when you feel that you failed yourself and your family takes faith. Having renewed hope that one can overcome whatever barriers were in the way is a driven spirit that many of our students sustain, as they hurdle through their last few credits or dare to learn to read. Being grateful for the opportunity to pursue one's goals, because they were given another chance, takes humility. And many more tests of faith are celebrated.

**Graduation** -- St. Louis, as a school community, has seen more than **200,000 learners** in its 25 year history. The class of 2010-11 was granted just over **400 Ontario Secondary School Diplomas** and another 280 industry-recognized certificates in **Chef, Hair Styling, Microsoft Office Specialist** and **Personal Support Worker** training. Our trustees, administrators, staff, guests and our students value this rite of passage, as one that everyone deserves, regardless of when they graduate from high school. On November 17 & 18, 2011 we saw more than 1,500 attendees at our two graduation ceremonies.

**The Value of our Teachers** -- With more than 350 teaching staff and administrative supports, St. Louis has been blessed to celebrate four teachers who have given 25 years of service to the WCDSB who are currently at St. Louis -- **Bev Billo** (SSC teacher Cambridge Campus), **Brenda Steffler** (Kitchener Guidance), **Beth Hobson** (Cambridge Guidance), and **Barbara Burgoyne**, (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) instructor at the Kitchener main campus) who began at St. Louis the first year of its opening, 25 years ago!

**25 & 175** -- *St. Louis Adult Learning and Continuing Education* continues to be a proud part of the *Waterloo Catholic District School Board's* 175 year history and is proud to model the school board's mission to be at the heart of the community -- offering success for each, and a place for all! We invite you to celebrate and honour our school's silver lining and look forward to many more years together.

**Michele Breault is Program Manager, Partnerships & Proposals, St. Louis Adult Learning and Continuing Education Centres. You can view a video about St. Louis at <http://stlouis.wcdsb.ca/video/video.html>.**



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