

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

Quality • Inclusive • Faith-based • Education



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**Michael Schmitt**  
Director of Education

“As I continue to visit schools weekly, I am proud of the high levels of student engagement and rich examples of faith formation. It is a tribute to the focused efforts of the students, the staff and parents / guardians. Our Catholic schools are the place to be...”



**Manuel da Silva**  
Chair of the Board



Wishing all a blessed  
Advent & Merry Christmas!!

December, 2014

## Merry Christmas!!

Welcome the light of the holy season of **Advent**. This season launches us into the new liturgical year and a 'new beginning' in living the way of the Lord. Our Advent journey is about opening ourselves to God's light in our lives and humbly letting this light shine through us. May this holy season be a time to forgive hurts, to be generous in giving and intentional in doing good works for others in the pursuit of justice and peace.

We have much to celebrate! We are a Board on the move – both figuratively and literally. Our students continue to demonstrate improvement in literacy and numeracy and we particularly celebrate the tremendous gains that our secondary students have made in numeracy. Recently, we introduced a mental health anti-stigma campaign by partnering with the **Mood Disorders Association of Canada** in our schools. Schools are identifying creative ways to bring conversations about mental health to a level of comfort with our students. I am also proud to announce that we will begin to pilot **French Immersion** in three schools for September 2015 – **Sir Edgar Bauer CES** in Waterloo, **St. Anne CES** in Kitchener and **St. Peter CES** Cambridge. In the new year our board will renew its strategic vision and I look forward to engaging with all our partners in this important and creative process.

Our staff continues to engage students in their learning with the goal of improving the learning of all. As I continue to visit schools weekly, I am proud of the high levels of student engagement and rich examples of faith formation. It is a tribute to the focused efforts of the students, the staff and parents/guardians. Our Catholic schools are the place to be – heart of the community, success for each and a place for all.

May the Peace and Joy of the Newborn Christ be with you and your family!

## Message from the Board Chair

This is a wonderful time of year and students and staff across our system are celebrating the gift of Christmas in a variety of ways. Some celebrate with Christmas lunches, some with plays, some in song but always in faith and prayer. We are privileged to be able to experience, in faith, many celebrations throughout the school year.

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 who are less fortunate and may be experiencing hardship and suffering. May we all be able to offer support to those in need.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, **Joyce Anderson, Bill Conway, Manuel da Silva, Amy Fee, Frank Johnson, Wendy Price, Greg Reitzel, Brian Schmalz, Melanie Van Alphen** and our Student Trustees **Karen Hakim** and **Maria Paz Rodrigues**, I would like to extend to our students, staff and families all best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a restful and relaxing holiday break!

May one and all experience the joy of Christ among families and friends.

God bless all of you!

Don't forget to follow WCDSB on Twitter: @WCDSBNewsire #WCDSBAwesome



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**Grow Yo Mo Day!!**  
 Students at **St. Clement CES** got in on the "Movember" action this year. L to R: **Rachel Bensler, Jessie Herbison, Abbey Brick, Liam Dietrich, Nolan Hislop & Brett Springer.**

## Praying for Peace

In November – following their Remembrance Day Assembly – all students and staff at **St. Paul CES** signed a special Remembrance Day card bearing the inscription "Peace I leave you, my peace I give to you." (John 14:17). The card was later placed by a staff member at the base of the **National War Memorial** in Ottawa.



A group from **St. Francis CES** was honoured to meet Free the Children's **Spencer West** at a special pre-**WE Day** reception.

## University Cooperative Education

The **University Cooperative Education Program (UCEP)** offered through the Waterloo Catholic District School Board is a unique partnership with **St. Jerome's University**, the **University of Waterloo**, and **Wilfrid Laurier University**. Students can begin to transition to a university learning environment while still in Grade 12.



Current UCEP student **Julie Tran** prepares a white adipose tissue sample in liquid nitrogen as part of her research project in Dr. Ken Stark's Lipodomics lab studying levels of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids in different cultural diets.

Students in UCEP spend their entire first semester studying on a university campus and are registered in a first year university course.

This university credit gives them a head start before they begin full-time university studies. While in UCEP, students will also work at a Cooperative Education placement with a professor/grad student. This means students get an opportunity to actively participate in the daily regime of academic research.

Students work across many different disciplines (e.g., collecting tissue samples in a kinesiology lab, developing research skills through analysis of historical databases, or assisting in the production of 3D printing within the Faculty of Engineering).

Students continue their transition experience by taking one or two Grade 12 university preparation courses directly on campus. WCDSB teachers travel to campus daily to deliver these courses. With 20+ years of history, the goal of UCEP continues to be supporting student success in a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment.

We are excited about the future as UCEP continues to evolve and grow as the only program of its kind in Ontario. For more information visit <http://coop.wcdsb.ca/ucep.html>



Newly elected trustees **Melanie Van Alphen, Amy Fee, Bill Conway and Brian Schmalz** joined the WCDSB contingent at **WE Day** on November 20.



# 30 Days of THINK ...

Last November -- to kick off **Bullying Awareness Week** – the **THINK** campaign was launched in all WCDSB and WRDSB schools (170 schools in all!). The **THINK** initiative (spearheaded by the **Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council**) encourages people of all ages and backgrounds to ask the following questions before they text, tweet, email or post to Facebook and other social media:

Is it **T** R U E / Is it **H** E L P F U L / Is it **I** N S P I R I N G /  
Is it **N** E C E S S A R Y / Is it **K** I N D

This year the campaign was expanded to become “30 Days of THINK” and students across the Region were eligible to win prizes for submitting examples of how they were using social media to prevent cyberbullying.

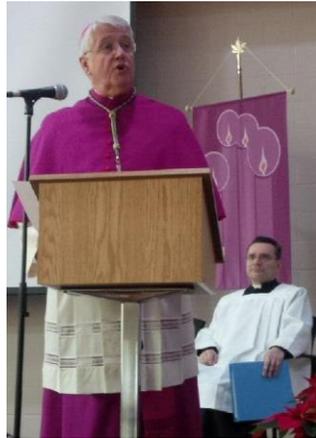
[www.preventingcrime.ca/think](http://www.preventingcrime.ca/think)  
[@30daysofTHINK](https://twitter.com/30daysofTHINK)



Students at **St. Daniel CES** had a special visitor on December 1, 2014 – new Kitchener Mayor **Berry Urbanovic**. The Mayor (who attended the school as a child) made St. Daniel a special stop on his inauguration day!



**Mrs. Huehn's** Grade 1 & 2 class at **St. Matthew CES** developed this “word cloud” as their **30 Days of THINK** project – proving it's never too early to learn how to play nice, be kind & treat people with respect!



On December 7 **Bishop Crosby & Fr. Freitas** presided over the blessing & dedication of the new **St. Gabriel CES** in Cambridge.



## Let's talk about the ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

### Mental Health & Wellness in the Classroom

**What can YOU do?**

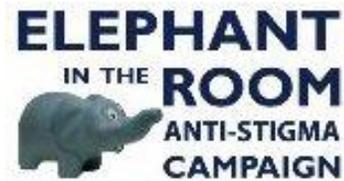
**As a student**

- Educate yourself
- Treat people with respect
- Confront Stigma/Be Understanding
- Talk to a trusted adult (i.e. Teacher, Guidance Counselor or Parent)

**As a person who needs support**

- Get Help
- Don't allow self-doubt and shame
- Inform others
- Be a Champion

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board is dedicated to the well-being of students, families and staff by addressing the need for further enhancement and expansion of programs pertaining to the development of resiliency, social and emotional learning, and behavioural competence within the context of Catholic education and our Catholic community. The concentration on **Mental Health and Wellness** is an extension of the board's strategic direction and is guided by a comprehensive three year (2014-2017) **Mental Health Strategy**.



The Waterloo Catholic District School Board began the year by launching the “**Elephant in the Room**” campaign, partnering with the **Mood Disorders Society of Canada**. The campaign is in place to reduce stigma regarding mental health concerns by creating safe, supportive school environments and thus ensuring that students, families, and staff know that they can come forward and not be judged. We are committed to the campaign and will continue to work on embedding anti-stigma into our board culture.



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# The Lost Gifts of Advent & Christmas

By Fr. Fred Scinto, C.R.

Here we are again in December and the Season of Advent and fast approaching the beautiful celebration of Christmas! Like most of our past years, will these basically be whirlwind times of activity that cause us to say exhaustedly when they are finally over, "Thank God that is finished for another year!"? Does it always have to be that way? The simple answer is that it is up to us!

We today live in a very interesting world of ups and downs, pluses and minuses, good things and bad things! The good things are obvious, ranging from excellent communications means like Skype where we can get in contact orally and visually with relatives half way around the world to medical advances and procedures that are more effective and less invasive such as laser surgery all the way to cars being produced more cheaply and with greater mileage in respect to gasoline and produced by robots/robotics.

One thing is something, however, on which we can all agree. Around 1980, the great cultural analyst and futurist, Alvin Toffler, introduced us to the concept of Future Shock. What is this? Toffler was astute enough to see what was happening to our world and to us; he observed that change was everywhere. But that is not all! He went on to state that the pace of change was accelerating so much that we in our human bodies and human person could no longer keep pace and stay healthy with all that change coming at us constantly. Since his day the pace has even further accelerated. We can no longer absorb all that change and it makes us sick and this Toffler identified as Future Shock. His words were truly prophetic. So we continuously live in a very frenetic world in which there is no letup. In this world we are also discovering another great loss: the loss of our social worlds. More and more we are becoming more isolated in spite of the development of our modern media and information technology. In the past, it was quite easy to find down-time, easy time, reflective time, etc. But this is no longer the case.

In Advent Season and Christmas Season, because of all we try to do, the pace of Future Shock even speeds up further and our lives become ridiculously hectic.

What can we do about such an unhealthy time for us? **We need to make time for what is important to us! To break all the frenetic cycles and circles in which we are caught is to do something very healthy.** Let us do this this Advent Season and Christmas Season so that we can enjoy both seasons much more (with the help of God's grace) and enjoy all our beloved much more (again with the help of God's grace) and without any sense of burden.

So make a firm will (with God's help) to create a few spaces of quiet time for both seasons. In Advent, spend some brief moments cultivating a hunger for God; ask God for this grace which is easily given to us. For the Christmas Season, create some quiet spaces to create a deep desire (with God's help) to prepare yourself for the Coming of Jesus Christ our Saviour. In these moments, meditate on what this means for yourself and for your family, especially for your little ones.

If you have children (especially small children), you will be blessed by them because they will teach you what Christmas is; watch them carefully and learn from them but this will not happen if you do not deliberately make time for this.

May God bless you and your beloved (and the students you may be privileged to serve) and grace your life by manifesting to you the meaning of these two beautiful seasons. Have a good, relaxed, blessed, and understood Christmas. And make sure to make time over the holidays to "waste" time with those that are special to you.

*Father Fred Scinto, C.R., of the Resurrection Centre for Lifelong Learning, is Spiritual Animator of the WCDSB.*

**St Anne CES**  
6:00-7:00pm  
Tuesday January 6, 2015  
250 East Ave., Kitchener

**Sir Edgar Bauer CES**  
6:00-7:00pm  
Monday January 12, 2015  
660 Glen Forest Blvd., Waterloo

**St Peter CES**  
6:00-7:00pm  
Thursday January 15, 2015  
92 Avenue Rd., Cambridge

**\*\*NEW for 2015-16\*\***

**FRENCH IMMERSION**

Parent Information Meetings



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