It's the Holiday Season!

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

**Director of International Education**

I have the opportunity to visit various countries and meet interesting, motivated people around the world in Asia, Europe, South America, the Middle East. Each country has unique cultures and characteristics. Many people who I encounter in my travels are interested in studying in a Canadian school, experiencing, and being immersed in a safe and prosperous country with its own unique, multicultural, environments. I am always proud when I hear that Canadians are considered friendly, welcoming, people and when our international guests share with me their appreciation of the beautiful and dynamic landscapes they see across the country.

This year, I am able to use my community enjoys four seasons... the leaves on the trees have recently changed colour, the days are shorter, and soon winter and the Christmas season will be here. Winter is time for warm coats and boots but it is also a time to enjoy traditions and unique winter activities. We hope our international guests will take the opportunity to experience all that is offered through our Waterloo Catholic School communities.

-Vic Degutis, Chief Operating Officer
International Education, Waterloo Catholic District School Board

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**Student Highlight - Bing Bing Li**

My name is Bing Bing, I am from Shanghai, China. I came to Canada on August 17th! I am in Grade 9 now at St. Benedict. For studies, I find that Canada’s way to study is more fun. I am good at music and I love music very much, so I always attend the music shows and play the instruments with my friends. I also joined the Music Club after school. It’s a Rock Music Club, our teacher teaches us how to work on our instruments better. If we have problems with making our own music or skills, we can always ask him and fix the problem. I’m so happy to do my favorite thing every day. I also like doing Math. I love the feeling of dealing with difficult problems! In my Math class, we have two teachers. Their teaching skills are both fantastic. They told us to change our seat every day to meet new students and learn to work with different people in groups. They said this is related to our future work, because in the future, we will meet more people in our jobs, and we must know how to work with those people. Sometimes we can’t fix a difficult problem by ourselves, but if we have more people to deal with the problem, it means we have more thoughts, then we can fix it in a better way.

The most interesting thing in Canada is to stay with my sweet host family! They are all nice to me. I also have three host brothers and one host sister. They are in Grade 11 and Grade 12, one little brother is in Grade 7. They are cute and friendly. My host sister said she can always help me with my studies! I always feel very happy to study with her and play with her, we are just like real sisters. We go shopping together, eat together, study together, and play games together! My host mother is a nurse, she always cooks delicious food for this big family and deals with everything good. She can bake food very well too. She is always making deserts with us on the weekends. She is really a perfect host mother for me. Last week, I also went to Toronto with my host family. They showed me the subway and we went to China town! We also went to the biggest mall in Canada. It was so nice that day. I still remember that she said she knew her little daughter in China more. I feel so happy about that!

I have two dream jobs, one is to be a vet, to take care of the animals. Another one is to be a musician, make my own music, play the piano. I chose science as my second master course. It is also some preparation for my dream of the vet. I really hope one of my dreams will come true. I love everything about Canada, especially the weather, I am a girl that loves winter very much, because I love snow, it’s so pretty, white and pure. Winter is coming now, snow is coming too. I hope I can make lots of fun with it.

-Bing Bing Li, St. Benedict - Grade 9
The ancient Chinese myths and legends tell of an evil beast, Nian, also known as the year beast. According to legend, every year at midnight, the beast will attack the villages. All the villages occupied by the beasts have suffered cruel massacres, the horns on his head is a massacre of weapons. Later, people found the beast was afraid of the colour red, of loud noises, and of light. These were the three major weaknesses of Nian, so the people decided to set firecrackers, post gatepost couple on their doors, driving away the beast’s attack. From then on, the first day of the New Year, people will have New Year's greeting, New Year’s couplets, New Year pictures, window sticklers, firecrackers, red envelopes, new clothes, hanging lanterns, kowtowing including a variety of other activities and customs. This is the origin of Chinese New Year.

Each year is represented by a zodiac animal of the 12 zodiac animals being the rat, the ox, the tiger, the rabbit, the dragon, the snake, the horse, the sheep, the monkey, the rooster, the dog and the pig. The 2019 Chinese New Year will be celebrated widely in 14 countries: China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Mauritius, Australia, and the Philippines. For several thousand years Chinese New Year has been a traditional celebration that brings people happiness, hope, and peace. It is a time for family members to gather, to relax and enjoy the festival. The Chinese New Year is a beautiful cultural celebration that has been maintained from generations to generations.

Written by Qian Du & Iris Huang

Student Highlight - Kimia Salmanzadeh

Hi, I’m Kimia Salmanzadeh. I came here from Kerman, a city of Iran. I came here on the 3rd of October but I went to school on week after I arrived. I'm studying grade 10 in St. David Catholic Secondary School.

The different things between here and my own country are that here we can take phone with our self in school. In Canada the lessons are not hard as my country here we can choose our courses but in Iran they choose our course for us. Here the teachers are good but in Iran some teachers didn’t teach really good. Here we have freedom meaning that we can wear t-shirt and pants or shorts but in Iran we have to wear Manto, scarf and pants. My dream job is to work in Apple company as a software or computer engineer and if I want to reach my goal I have to study very much and get good marks in all of my courses. I have to be patience if there was any problem in my path.

The really good thing of Canada culture is the people driving that is really good that I have excited very much they are rarely Patience In driving. The thing that really excited me to live and study in Canada is that everyone can feel comfortable everyone can be everything they want, they can do everything they want and they can also have everything they want. I have come here for study and live in quiet and comfortable place. The thing that really I love about Canada is the nature of Canada of course in the fall season, it’s really beautiful.

-Kimia Salmanzadeh, St. David - Grade 10

Canadians: It snowed a little today.

Parents & Guardians: Register for an account on our School Board’s Encompass Parent Portal, using the child’s student number, birthdate and home address in Canada. You will see your child’s timetable and report cards, and you can also click on the attendance for each class. There is a ‘Quick Tips’ link you can click on for help. For help with registering or for any other inquiries, please email info@wcdsb.ca.
I have been a student in Canada for two months now and I love it here. The environment here is really great; the air is fresh and there are many trees and fresh lawns here. The people here are very friendly and I have not met anyone who is unwilling to help others. I have even seen many wild animals such as squirrels and rabbits, whom are passing by when I was walking in the street and that is hardly seen in China. That’s a quite unforgettable experience for me.

I have attended school for about two months now and the teachers and students there are so kind and energetic. I have been introduced to many different cultures and customs which expanded my awareness. My school often holds many activities for the students. For example, I am a member of the Ping-Pong Club now and I went on a trip to Toronto last month. I visited the University of Toronto’s St. George Campus in the morning and visited Ontario Universities’ Fair in the afternoon. It was a really wonderful trip for me. I also attended two presentations there; one for the University of Toronto and the other was for the University of Waterloo. I realized that there are many things I need to know about the university, like the requirements and the steps for getting accepted to the university I want to go to. I have learned what my goal is and the direction that I need to go towards to reach it. I feel it was really helpful and useful.

My homestay family is very kind and great too. They have taught me a lot of things I should know in Canada, like table manners. They also drive me around to get familiar with the surroundings and they also take me to the mall to buy the things I want. For instance, a SIM card and food. They help me practice my English speaking skills as well. I am really thankful for them. That’s my life in Canada! I love the food here (almost everything, but burgers and sandwiches are my favorite). I also love the environment and weather here, because I love rainy, snowy, cloudy and windy days. I have made seven new friends here and four of them are foreign people. One is from the United States, one is from South Korea, and two are Canadians living here in Canada. I am really happy to become a member of Canada!

-Bowen Zhang, Resurrection - Grade 11
Hi! I’m Junyi, an international student from China. Now, I’m a Grade 10 student at St. Mary’s High School. Nice to meet you! I came here during the Summer of 2017. When the plane landed at Toronto Pearson Airport, the first time I opened the door of my homestay, the first time to school, when I made the first good friend from different countries... "Canada is fantastic," I said to myself.

This is my second year in Canada. Studying in Canada is a wonderful experience for me, I think I can still remember it after many years. Coming to a new country, speaking a new language, and adapting to a new environment is challenging for everyone. But I think coming to Canada is the right decision and a brave decision.

The learning model of Canadian high schools is different from that in China. Here, your mark depends on your long-term learning status; including every assignment, quiz, unit test and final exam. You need to have good self-control skills and learn to arrange your own time. You can choose courses according to your learning ability and hobbies. You can also adjust the order of the courses according to the learning status at different times. I really like this kind of learning model. My goal has gradually become clearer and I have learned to develop my own study plan. Teachers will not always urge you to hand in the homework, and will not ask you if you want to re-do any quizzes or assignments. However, this learning model gives more opportunities to people who like studying. Communication with the teachers is necessary, especially for international students. Teachers may not know you very well, but if you take the initiative to find them and ask some questions, they will be happy to help you.

Compared to other international students, I do not adapt very quickly and everyone has their own process of adaptation. Sometimes you may feel unhappy during that time, or you may feel homesick and cry.

In the past year, I have achieved satisfactory marks in my studies. I participated the CEMC Math Contest in February and became the top 10% of all the Grade 9 students. I got level 4 on the EQAO test. I was on the honor roll for both semesters and got awards for Mathematics and Geography. Excellent results made me become more confident. Now I feel more comfortable with the lifestyle here. You need to be a little more careful when you are finished school and establish tasks for yourself. Every day on the school bus, I review the content of today's classes, and there is a timetable in my mind that helps me manage my time better. Of course, I don't study all day long. Sometimes, I play the piano when I feel tired, and the piano will make me feel happy. I also like watching movies. For international students, it is a good way to improve your English.

I joined the band at school because music opens a whole new world for me. In this world, I never want to leave! When we played “O’ Canada” on Awards Night at St. Benedict High School, the experience touched me and I cried. We are like a big family and it is very easy and happy to live with them. I feel that I am a lucky person. During this year, I made a lot of friends from different countries. They are from Ukraine, India, South Korea, Vietnam, and Philippines. I learned a lot of truth, and I have become more confident and more independent. I am very grateful for this opportunity to come to Canada because it let me be closer to my ideal self.

Junyi Chen, St. Mary's - Grade 10

The Waterloo Region is home to many Christmas and Holiday celebrations. Some of which include skating, parades, Christmas Markets, train rides, shows and performances, Christmas light festivals and much more! Bingeman’s hosts a ‘Gift of Lights’ show, as well as many other Christmas related events. You can visit their website by clicking here. Waterloo Park in Kitchener, has a huge light show set up with horse-drawn carriages! Click here to learn more about this fun family event.

Visit Kitchener’s City Hall from December 6-9 to experience a real German Christmas! Dating back to 1434, Christkindl is a unique and fun experience for all. This is the biggest German Christmas celebration in all of Canada! Watch the Bingeman’s ‘Gift of Lights’ video here! https://youtu.be/psG7Ls6svoA

Merry Christmas

Krismas kį būtų
krisamas kee badhace
Feliz Natal
meli keuliseumase
Vrolijk Kerstfeest

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