

# École John McCrae School

## NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2015

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Principal: Leslie Newman

Vice Principal: Olivier Cutz

Office Co-ordinator: Kathy Lambkin

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### PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

I started to write this newsletter last week and I was referring to the warm, sunny weather that we have been getting. On the weekend, however, it turned cold and we got snow. I went for a walk on Saturday night. I had forgotten how magical it is outside when the snow is falling softly and the world is quiet. I know I tend to complain about driving in the snow and the cold, but it is beautiful and our students are so happy to have the chance to play in it.

Last week was Anti-Bullying Week. As a school, we really emphasized kindness and how being kind to each other could make a big difference in the world. M Cutz and I read the book *In My Heart* to all of our kindergarten as well as our grade one and two students. We also had a guest writer and illustrator; Janet Wilson spoke to every class about how everyone, including children, can make a positive difference in the world. She talked about kindness and compassion and shared stories with the students. It is important that we keep our interest in being kind going and that flows right into the holiday season.

Speaking of the holiday season, please stay tuned for more information regarding our holiday concerts. They will be held on the mornings of December 16, 17 and 18. Some, but not all classes will be performing during these times. Some of our students will perform on May 19, during our Night Amongst the Stars. Your child's teacher will send something home soon to let you know if their class will be participating during the December Concerts. Like the previous two years, we will put a holiday tree up in the front hall. All donations of new scarves, hats and mittens would be welcome. We will decorate the tree with them and then donate everything to charity. Please help us with this.

I want to end by saying thank you to all of our parents and families. It has been a busy and unusual fall. You have continued to be supportive of the school and of your children. Your efforts during our Dance-A-Thon raised \$8043.40. Mme McEwen is planning on attending the next School Council Meeting to thank everyone, but also to let them know of her plans for the MakerSpace. Our Remembrance Day Ceremony was truly beautiful and helped our students understand the sacrifices made on our behalf. We were able to support the Terry Fox Foundation and participate in the Terry Fox Run. On behalf of the entire staff we wish you happy holidays. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukah, the Winter Solstice or Mawlid-al-Nabi, we hope that you are able to spend some time with your family and friends. We hope that the New Year brings happiness and good health to all of our John McCrae Families.

*Leslie Newman*

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### ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING A READING VOLUNTEER OR LUNCH SUPERVISOR?

We are looking for some parents who would be willing to volunteer and read with some of our students one or two times per week. We would ask for a commitment of one or two hours per week for at least six weeks. If you are willing to help us out, please email M Cutz at [olivier.cutz@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:olivier.cutz@ugdsb.on.ca).

We are also looking for lunch room/outdoor supervisors! This is a paid position and a great way to get involved in your child's school. If you are interested please email Mme Griffiths at [sarah.griffiths@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:sarah.griffiths@ugdsb.on.ca) or call her at the school (519-824-0028)

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### SCHOOL COUNCIL CORNER

Please join us for the next School Council Meeting on Tuesday, December 9th from 6:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (in the school library). If you require childcare, please contact Mme Newman at [leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca) by Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.

Remember to use **VolunteerSpot** (<http://vols.pt/4ufctZ>) to volunteer in support of school activities and events!

**Dance-a-thon:** Thank you students and parents for a fun and successful Dance-a-thon fund raiser. We raised over \$8043.40!

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### INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

In case of severe winter weather, with poor driving conditions and bus cancellations and delays, please listen for announcements on radio stations 1460 AM CJOY, 106.1 Magic FM, 900 AM CHML, 107.9 FM CJXY (Y108), Oldies 1090 AM, 105.3 Kool FM, News Talk 570 AM, 96.7 FM CHYM, 1150 AM CKOC, 102.9 FM CKLH, 820 AM CHAM and CKCO-TV. Announcements for John McCrae PS are included in "South Wellington and the City of Guelph."

**Please note:** *If buses do not operate in the morning, they will not operate in the afternoon. If you elect to drive your student to school, you must make arrangements for them to be picked up at the end of the day (please communicate the arrangement with your student, or leave a note in their agenda, prior to drop-off). Likewise, if you choose to keep your "walking" student at home on an inclement weather day, you must notify the office (Attendance line #100) of the student's absence, otherwise the office will contact you to confirm your student's absence.*

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## **Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol (VTRA)**

The Upper Grand District School Board is committed to providing safe learning environments for all students, staff, school visitors, and community members. When a student behaves inappropriately, Principals use progressive discipline to help a student take responsibility for their actions, change their behaviour, and learn from their mistakes.

When safety is threatened by the potentially violent or dangerous behaviour of a student, which places either the student or others at risk, school staff will follow specific protocols for the protection of all. It is important that you and your children are aware of these protocols. For more information, please visit the board's website: <http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/parents/article.aspx?id=51057>

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## **LOST AND FOUND**

Please take a moment to visit the lost and found box at our school. The box is full of clothing items that definitely should be missed by families! During the first week of December, all lost and found clothing will be put out on tables in the front hall. Students will be asked (many times) to check for items that may belong to them. We have noticed that students do not always recognize that something may belong to them. There are many expensive items including coats and boots. If you happen to have a minute during the first two weeks of December, please drop by and see if you recognize something. All clothes not claimed by December 14<sup>th</sup> will be cleaned by our Social Justice Club and donated to a charity.

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## **CHAPTERS FUNDRAISER!**

We would like to pass on A **HUGE** thank you from our librarian Mme McEwen to all of our John McCrae families and friends. Thank you for coming out to support our library at Chapters on November 9th. Thanks to your generous support the school library has \$843.16 to spend on brand new books!!!! WOW!!!

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## **CHROMEBOOKS AT THE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The Upper Grand District School Board now has Chromebooks for student use in all 25 public libraries across the district. The program first launched in April at three pilot sites within the Wellington County library system and has grown to include all 25 public library branches that serve our region. Each branch has been outfitted with five Chromebooks that are available exclusively for Upper Grand students to access and complete their homework and assignments. For more information, visit the board website at [www.ugdsb.on.ca](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca)

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## **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION**

Just a reminder to that registration will take place sometime in February. If you think your child may be old enough to come to school in September 2016, stay tuned for more information.

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## **TIMELY REMINDERS**

We would like to remind all of our parents that our school day begins at 8:50 a.m. We would ask that you have your children on the playground by 8:45 a.m. Our classroom activities begin before the announcements at 8:55 a.m. and teachers need to have everyone in class promptly. Thank you for your help in having your children to arrive at school on time. This one small detail makes a great deal of difference to starting the day off right!

Please help us keep your children safe. We have a number of parents, who, at the end of the day cross with their children between the busses or cross the street somewhere other than at the crosswalk. We are working really hard to instill safety with our students and would appreciate your help demonstrating to them that adults need to follow the same safety rules.

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## **GRADE 8 PARENT NIGHTS**

Grade 8 students and their parents are invited to learn more about the great opportunities Upper Grand high schools have to offer – from academics and trades to sports, music and art. Most parent information nights include a special presentation about the high school, its programs and the registration process. Both parents and their Gr. 8 students can also tour the school and ask the principal and teachers more about programs and other opportunities.

**J. F. Ross** – January 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. (E.L. Fox Auditorium)

**Guelph CVI** – January 12<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 p.m. (Auditorium)

**Centennial CVI** – February 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. (Cafeteria)

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## **SCHOOL CASH ONLINE**

Thank you, John McCrae families, for signing up – **81%** of our school population is using this convenient and secure online payment method! And there is still time to sign-up to use School Cash Online! This system will allow you to pay for most school related items online. You will receive email notifications when items are available to purchase, and reminder emails before an item expires. Please visit [www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc) and follow the prompts to sign up.



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## HELPING YOUR CHILD LEARN FRENCH

As a parent, the best thing you can do to help support your child's learning is talk with him or her **in the spoken language used at home**. Talking helps build communication skills. These skills are transferable from one language to another. (Cummins, 1998)

### When engaging with your child, consider the following:

- listen to a television program together and ask your child to share his/her thinking
- listen to music and ask your child why he/she thinks the artist wrote the song
- listen to the radio and ask your child to share his/her opinion about what is happening in the city and/or the world
- use a variety of words (i.e., friendly, kind, considerate)
- allow your child to hear you questioning what you see and hear around you
- talk out loud as you attempt to solve a problem
- tell your child a story about when you were little or tell him/her a story about something that happened at work that day and leave off the ending for him/her to provide
- ask your child to provide 3 things and make up a story that includes all three (example: a princess, a race car, and an ice cream cone)
- read aloud daily to your child, talk about the pictures, make predictions and see if they come true
- read to your child on vacation or during a long wait at the doctor's office
- read a book to your child and ask him/her what he/she would do if he/she was the main character
- leave notes for your child in his/her lunch box or school bag
- ask your child to leave notes for you around the house
- have your child create a to-do list
- play word games such as Scrabble Junior and Boggle
- encourage your child to bring his/her writer's notebook whenever he/she goes on family outings where there will be plenty to notice, wonder and write about

### Parents who don't know French can help their child learn French.

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## DECEMBER'S ENVIRONMENTAL THEME: WATER POLLUTION

Water might seem like an endless resource. It covers more than 75% of our planet, but only 1% of the water on planet Earth is fresh, usable, and drinkable. The rest is either saltwater or frozen. And now the 1% that is drinkable is being threatened by pollution because of humans.

We need to conserve the water that exists on planet Earth. Did you know that almost 1 billion people do not have access to clean water? That is really hard for us to understand because Canada's most valuable natural resource by far is fresh water. While we have only 0.5% of the world's population we have approximately 20% of the world's fresh water resources. But unfortunately Canada is also one of the highest fresh water users in the world. Of 29 nations studied, only the United States uses more water than Canada on a per capita basis. Canada's consumption is an alarming 65 per cent above the average!

What are some of the ways we can reduce water pollution? At home, purchase environmentally friendly, non-toxic cleaning products. Or clean with baking soda, lemon or vinegar. Conserve fresh water by collecting rainwater in barrels. Use it to water your lawn and garden or even indoor plants. Don't pour chemicals or paint or oil down the drain and especially not into the storm drains on the street, as it goes directly back to our rivers and lakes. Using natural products that are biodegradable, for example, is a great way to go. Most importantly, don't waste the clean water that we have. Turn off the taps when you brush your teeth, take shorter showers, and know that lawn watering is now no longer cool!

*Slogan of the month: Conserve our water - it's all we have!*

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## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ACCOMMODATION AND A MODIFICATION?

When students are struggling in an area, teachers can use any number of accommodations and/or modifications in the learning environment to help those students be successful and overcome any barriers.

In a nutshell, an accommodation is a tool or strategy that enables a student to successfully approach a task that would be expected for his or her age. As a simple example, some students cannot properly hold or write with a pencil perhaps due to a physical barrier. If that student is given a computer then they are able to write at the same level of proficiency as their peers. Access to a computer is the accommodation. Accommodations can vary greatly and can be used in combination. Some examples are special teaching and assessment strategies, human supports, and/or individualized equipment. These accommodations enable a student to learn and to demonstrate learning. It is important to note that the provincial curriculum expectations for the grade are not altered for a student receiving accommodations.

A modification is a change or an alteration made to the age-appropriate grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. For example, a student may not have the capacity to memorize the conjugation of 10 required verbs for their grade-level. A modification could be to reduce the number of required verbs to the 5 most important ones for that grade-level. It is important to note that for students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), these changes could include: expectations from a different grade level; significant changes (increase or decrease) in the number and/or complexity of the learning expectations; and measurable and observable performance tasks.

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## TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH-DECEMBER 2015

31 Days of Taking Care of Ourselves

In December, as the days get shorter and colder, we all need to take some time to do something good for ourselves. Taking a little time each day to take care of ourselves makes so much difference to keeping in good mental health. You may choose to do some activities on your own or with your family or with a friend. Try one or a few or try them all. Enjoy!

<b>December 1</b> :One Minute	Take deep breaths, in and out, for one minute.	<b>December 2</b> : Two Minutes	Smile at yourself in the mirror
<b>December 3</b> : Three Minutes	Listen to a favourite song.	<b>December 4</b> : Four Minutes	Eat some fresh fruit
<b>December 5</b> : Five Minutes	Light a candle and quietly watch the flame	<b>December 6</b> : Six Minutes	Sit quietly for six minutes
<b>December 7</b> : Seven Minutes	Enjoy the taste of a holiday snack.	<b>December 8</b> : Eight Minutes	Spend fun time with someone
<b>December 9</b> : Nine Minutes	Think of the best things that happened this week	<b>December 10</b> : Ten Minutes	Take some time out with a cup of tea. Sip slowly and enjoy
<b>December 11</b> : Eleven Minutes	Sing along with your favourite songs	<b>December 12</b> : Twelve Minutes	Send an email to a friend setting up a time to meet up during the holidays
<b>December 13</b> : Thirteen Minutes	Draw, paint or doodle	<b>December 14</b> : Fourteen Minutes	Go outside and breathe in the cool, crisp air
<b>December 15</b> : Fifteen Minutes	Read a favourite story	<b>December 16</b> : Sixteen Minutes	Call or Skype with someone
<b>December 17</b> : Seventeen Minutes	Do something active	<b>December 18</b> : Eighteen Minutes	Make a cup of hot chocolate and pay attention to the flavor and warmth as you sip
<b>December 19</b> : Nineteen Minutes	Help someone else out who needs some extra help in the holidays	<b>December 20</b> : Twenty Minutes	Watch the sunset on the shortest day of the year
<b>December 21</b> : Twenty One Minutes	Enjoy the holiday decorations in your neighbourhood	<b>December 22</b> : Twenty Two Minutes	Reflect on traditions you have enjoyed or currently enjoy
<b>December 23</b> : Twenty Three Minutes	Make your favourite meal and enjoy every bite	<b>December 24</b> : Twenty Four Minutes	Enjoy a bubble bath or extra long shower.
<b>December 25</b> : Twenty Five Minutes	Take a walk to appreciate nature and being outside	<b>December 26</b> : Twenty Six Minutes	Take a nap, lie down and take a rest.
<b>December 27</b> : Twenty Seven Minutes	Watch your favourite TV show that makes you laugh	<b>December 28</b> : Twenty Eight Minutes	Spend time with friends or family
<b>December 29</b> : Twenty Nine Minutes	Go to the library and take out a new book, CD or DVD	<b>December 30</b> : Thirty Minutes	Take some time to do a hobby or something you enjoy that you have not done for a while
<b>December 31</b> : Thirty One Minutes	Make a list of all the things you were grateful for this year		

*Dr. Lynn Woodford, Psychologist, is the Mental Health and Addiction Lead for Upper Grand District School Board Follow me on twitter: @drlynnwoodford*

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## SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO ARE GIFTED

In order to be successful at school, all students need support from teachers, classmates, family, and friends. Some students require supports that go above and beyond what are ordinarily received at school. In Ontario, children who have behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities, may receive special education supports when their needs are not met through regular classroom instruction and assessment. Students who are gifted are one of the groups who receive additional supports in Ontario schools due to their special intellectual learning needs.

The Ontario Ministry of Education sets out the definitions school boards must use to identify an exceptional student. Giftedness is defined by “an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.” At the Upper Grand District School Board, a group ability test is done in grade 3 under the supervision of a school psychologist. Students who score at, or above, the 98th percentile are considered to be gifted. An individually administered intellectual test done by a registered psychologist can also be used to determine if a student has a full scale I.Q. at, or above, the 98th percentile.

The Upper Grand District School Board supports students who are gifted in a variety of ways. Many students are successful in their regular classes when an individual education plan is put in place to support learning in terms of depth and breadth of the curriculum.

Through this type of programming, students are challenged to reach the high level of thinking and reasoning that is associated with their intellectual potential. However, some students struggle to thrive in a regular classroom. They may be recommended by their school to attend a special education class for students who are gifted. In these special classes, students work on grade level curriculum, but are provided extensions in breadth and depth of the curriculum. The criteria for these classes include an assessment that indicates a cognitive ability at, or above, the 98th percentile. The student must also demonstrate academic achievement at or beyond grade level in writing and math, and a reading ability at or above two grade levels beyond the current grade. If parents agree that this is a good option for supporting their child, the student may attend this program for one or more years in Grades 4 through 8.

More information about giftedness can be found through The Association of Bright Children of Ontario ([www.abcontario.ca](http://www.abcontario.ca)). For more information about the supports offered to students who are gifted at the UGDSB, talk to your child’s classroom teacher, the special education resource teacher at the school, or the principal or vice-principal. The Board’s Special Education Plan and Reports are also available online on the UGDSB website ([www.ugdsb.on.ca](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca)) and provide details and in-depth explanations of special education at the UGDSB. The Ontario Ministry of Education also provides information for parents about special education supports on its website ([www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced)).