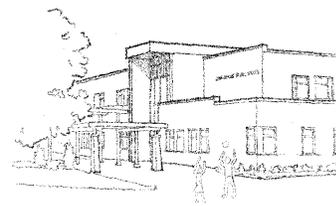


École John McCrae School

NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2017

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Principal: Leslie Newman

Vice Principal: Olivier Cutz

Office Co-ordinator: Kathy Lambkin

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

I am grateful to have been asked by Mme Newman to compose this month's Principal's Message. There are many things to be grateful for here at École John McCrae. Firstly, it cannot be denied that our school property is absolutely stunning with our majestic maple bush and lush surrounding woods and river. Our teachers and students take full advantage of the nature in our backyard to support all areas of the curriculum. Furthermore, there will be lots of connections and learning this month about best environmental practices as classes and our environmental club prepare for Earth Day on April 22nd. This month, we can all learn additional behaviours and habits to do our part to conserve energy and reduce our impact on the environment. Stay tuned for more details on our environmental focused upcoming monthly Character Education/Spirit Day.

As always, there is much going on. Just to name a few activities for students we will have our Jump Rope/Hoops for Heart Kickoff Assemblies, Skills Canada Competition at Centennial CVI, Rainbow Day Assemblies (grades 6-8), sports tournaments, Shark Swim Programs, Emergency Preparedness Day and much more. We'd also like to invite parents to our 2nd Healthy Habits Parents Reaching Out Speakers Series focusing on Mental Health on April 11th from 5pm to 7pm. Our School Council meeting will follow at 7pm and all parents are welcome to attend. **Please save April 27th as that is our Night Among the Stars and Open House** where parents can view classrooms and students art displays as well as music and drama presentations. The PA Day will take place on the following day on April 28th. Teachers will be working hard to build capacity towards student achievement. To keep up to date, please refer to the calendar for details on the School website as there is always so much more happening.

On a final note, I'd like to share an example of what we can be proud of here at JMC. Last year, we had representatives from a school board in France visit our school. They loved what they saw and initiated a partnership with our school. From April 24th to May 4th, two teachers and an administrator from *Collège Jules Ferry* in Vichy, France will spend time observing and collaborating with our staff to build their capacity in second language learning and cultivating a culture of inclusion, equity and respect. We will have much to learn from them as well. To that end you may hear your child talk about seeing or having conversations with native French speakers. This is a first step in forming an international partnership with a French school board. We will be happy to welcome teachers Mme Brugerolles, M David and Vice Principal M Boussahba to our school community!

As always, drop by or call if you have any concerns about your child.

Olivier Cutz
Vice-Principal

SCHOOL COUNCIL CORNER

*Parents Reaching Out: Speaker Series – Join us on Tuesday, April 11 to hear from the following guest speakers: Dr. Paula Cerveny, “Mental Health – Understanding Anxiety”; and Dr. Dan Vitale, “Building Little Superheroes Naturally – Tips on eating and playing like a super-kid!” Join us in the library for a welcome at 5:00 p.m. followed by Dr. Cerveny at 5:15 and then Dr. Vitale at 6:15. Light refreshments will be provided. Note: Children are welcome to attend and participate with a parent or guardian at their own discretion. Child care will not be available at this event.

*Our regular School Council Meeting will be held on April 11 at 7:00 p.m. following the “Speaker Series” (see above). If you require childcare, please contact Mme Newman at leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca by Friday, April 7th.

*Family Fun Night – After the resounding success of last year's Family Fun Night, many of us are looking forward to June 8th for this year's event. Lots of help is needed! Please contact Brenda MacDonald, brendacmacd@gmail.com if you can help in any way!

CITY OF GUELPH – TRAFFIC FIELD INVESTIGATION

Due to ongoing issues around morning and afternoon drop-offs and street parking, as well as neighbor complaints, the City of Guelph conducted a site investigation in January. The following issues were relayed to the Board and our school:

- parents are parking in “no stopping” and “no parking anytime” zones on both Water and Maple Streets
- parents are blocking the transit bus stop when parking on Water Street; this makes it difficult for the transit bus to use the transit stop and blocks the roadway in the meantime
- very few parents are using the sidewalk and cross walk, instead they are waiting for gaps in traffic to cross Water street as well as walking in front of school buses that are unloading/loading
- some students who are dropped off on the street are not using the crosswalk and instead wait for gaps in traffic
- vehicles are parking within 1m of residential driveways on Water Street; some are blocking part of residential driveways

Needless to say, these scenarios are dangerous for our students and inconsiderate of our neighbours. Please be mindful of all traffic and parking signage, and be sure to use our crosswalk. Set aside plenty of time in the morning to arrive and find appropriate/legal parking as necessary, use the crosswalk, and arrive in time for your student to enter the building with their fellow classmates at the morning bell – 8:35 a.m.

Please watch for reminders on our front signage. Thank you in advance for your cooperation to ensure the safety and consideration of the entire John McCrae neighbourhood!

MOVING IN? MOVING OUT?

If you are planning a move to another school this summer, or know of someone moving into our school area for the 2016-2017 school year, please notify the office as soon as possible.

GLASSES FOUND

There is still a pair of children’s prescription glasses (black and lime green) in a grey case in the office. The prescribing optometrists are Neff & Tessel. Also, a pair of women’s Karen Kane sunglasses were found at the YMCA after school program. Please see the office if either pair belongs to you or your student.

KINDERGARTEN LEARNING FAIR

As we head into spring at John McCrae, we are already awaiting the arrival of our new junior kindergarten students. To help them and their families get to know us better, and learn about what it is like to go to kindergarten, we will be hosting a Kindergarten Learning Fair. At this evening event, you and your children will have an opportunity to meet our staff, talk to community members who support our students, and have a tour of the school and classrooms. This year our Junior Kindergarten Learning Fair will be held on Thursday, May 25th from 5:30-6:30 pm. Be sure and mark the date!

MAD SCIENCE

The “Mad Science” after school program is returning to our school. This six week program, “Crazy Chemworks,” takes place on Thursdays from 3:10-4:10 pm starting May 4th. Watch for registration forms going home with each Grade 1-6 students next week. Forms must be returned to the school with payment of \$78 to “Mad Science” no later than Wednesday, April 12th. All inquiries should be directed to Mad Science, 519-621-0600, ext. 23 and 28. (Participating in this program requires parents to pick-up their student(s) from school at 4:10 pm.)

SKILLS CANADA

John McCrae sent two intermediate teams to the Skills Canada Cardboard Boat Race Challenge at the Centennial Pool this year. Our kids did better than they ever have. Team members were Hannah W, Abbey F-D, Anna V-R, Meagan P, IndigoK, Kellie E, Eliza M, and Emma L-S.

This month, our junior and intermediate students are trying out for the Skills Canada Tech Challenge. It’s a chance for kids to use their technological skills to design a device to solve a problem. There are events in wood working, Lego robotics and mechanics, green energy, and construction. We will be taking 28 students this year to College Heights and Centennial CVI on Friday, April 7th. Good luck to everyone!

CHESS CLUB

12 of our best Junior and Intermediate chess players will participate in the Board wide Chess Tournament in Aberfoyle on Thursday, April 6th. This year, we’ll have representatives from all three division! Best of luck to the participants.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

From April 10-13, we are celebrating diversity at John McCrae. In particular, we will be celebrating the diversity of families and gender expressions found within our school community. There will be a number of special events organized by our school's Grade 6-8 Rainbow Club (funded through a Speak Up Student grant they received).

Monday, April 10th - Rainbow Day – Dress in many colours or rainbow clothing!

Period 3 & 4: Assembly for Grade 6-8 students with singer-song writer & educator Kate Reid, presenting the workshop: "LGBTQ What's with the acronym?"

Period 5: Workshop for Grade 4's presented by Rainbow Club

Period 6: Workshop for Grade 5's made by Rainbow Club

Wednesday, April 12th - International Day of Pink – Dress in pink!

Periods 3 & 4: Picture books read to K-3 classes by members of the Rainbow Club

All presentations will be age-appropriate and will focus on respecting and celebrating diversity. Thank you to the Rainbow Club for your efforts in organizing these events.

CLASS PLACEMENT REQUESTS

In the past, we have received a number of class placement requests for the coming school year. This can make class building very difficult and sometimes hinder the process significantly. Due to our ever changing school population and the fact that our grade 7 and 8 students are on rotary, **we will not be taking any class placement requests for September 2017.** If your child has some exceptional circumstances that require consideration when doing class placements, please email Mme Newman directly, leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca. Please know that when placing your child in a class, we consider their ability, personality, friendships, learning style, and behaviour. Class building is a lengthy process that is given a great deal of thought by the staff. Thank you for recognizing that we do our very best for each and every student.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

Please remember that if you are taking an extended vacation that will mean an absence of 15 or more consecutive days, you must contact the school office to ensure the proper paperwork is completed. Thank you for your cooperation.

DO YOU KNOW AN EVERYDAY HERO?

Please nominate someone in your school community – an individual or a group - whose actions and efforts foster the development of a positive learning and working environment. Deadline for nominations is Thursday April 13, 2017. For more information, visit the board website: <http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/article.aspx?id=3546>

NO CHILD WITHOUT – MEDIC ALERT

Did you know that one in five children lives with a medical condition, allergy, or special need that must be communicated during a medical emergency? In many cases, children are the most vulnerable because they are often too young, too afraid, or too hurt to express themselves. "No Child Without" is a charitable program that protects children and supports school officials to address concerns about students living with chronic medical conditions, allergies or special needs. For information on FREE medical identification services, please see the office for a brochure.

FRENCH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE - READING

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader" - Margaret Fuller

In education, we strive to teach our students how to be critical readers so that they can flourish in their future endeavours whether in English or in French. Reading skills in French are not unlike reading skills in your first language, however, reading in French does require attention to a different sound system, different vocabulary, and at times an understanding of contexts or cultures that may be different than those in another language.

How can parents support student reading at home when they don't speak French?

One way to do this is to read with your child in their first language. Research shows that reading behaviours and skills are transferable across languages. For example, understanding how to retell a story in English using the beginning, middle, and end structure is a skill that is transferable to French.

Opportunities for shared reading will support motivation and skills in reading no matter the language. Asking your child to predict what the text will be about or what will happen next, to visualize what is happening as you read and to use picture clues to better understand the text are all activities that will positively impact reading.

Another way to support and motivate your child is to encourage them to read to you in French and then ask them to summarize or retell what they have read. This shows them that you are interested in and value their reading experience in French and may even teach you some new French vocabulary along the way. Simply having a conversation with your child about what they are reading in French and asking questions is an additional way to show your interest and support.

What happens when students are not moving forward in their reading or parents have concerns about student progress?

Research shows that interventions can be effectively delivered in the student's first language as well as in French at a time when the gap between strong and weak readers is still relatively small. Early intervention is key. Discussing your concerns as soon as they arise by speaking with your child's teacher and then examining appropriate courses of action and supports as a team are important first steps.

It is important to remember that a student struggling in reading does not mean that the student is not a good fit for learning French. French as a second language programs are for all students. Promoting this belief helps to create a supportive environment where students feel more confident and can be successful.

Further Reading:

1. What Works? Research into Practice. "Supporting Early Language and Literacy. Dr. Janette Pelletier OISE, University of Toronto. The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.
2. What Works? Research into Practice. " Early Identification and Intervention for At-Risk Readers in French Immersion. Nancy Wise and Dr. Xi Chen. OISE, University of Toronto. The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

May 1-5 is Child and Youth Mental Health and Well-Being Week!

Child and Youth Mental Health and Well-being Week is in the first week of May. It is about promoting mental wellness, increasing awareness of the child and youth mental health, decreasing stigma and understanding that support is available. Let's improve everyone's mental health and well-being!

The theme for Child and Youth Mental Health and Well-being at UGDSB is: Have a **SUPER** Week!

Social Connections

Understanding Emotions

Personal Health

Empowerment

Resilience

Each day of the week will focus on a different aspect of Mental Health and Well Being. The schools will be provided with resources and activities related to each day's theme. As a parent, you can increase the Mental Health and Well-being of your children, youth, and family too! Here are some suggestions:

Monday May 1 -Social Connection - "Be the Reason Someone Smiles Today".

Say Hi to 3 people that you do not know. Perform a random act of kindness.

Tuesday May 2 – Understanding Emotions – "Understanding Emotions Creates Positive Actions"

Right now, stop and reflect on how you are feeling. Take a couple of moments as a family to do some deep breathing.

<http://youth.anxietybc.com/how-do-it> Now, how are you feeling?

Wednesday May 3 – Personal Health - "Move, Sleep, Eat, Repeat. Keep yourself healthy every day".

Did you know that how our bodies feel affects how good we are feeling? Three of the best things you can do to improve your mood is to exercise, sleep well and eat well. Go for a walk or play a game, get outside, turn off the devices an hour before bed and eat fresh food! The more you do to help your body feel good, the better you will feel!

*On Wednesday, wear GREEN to support Mental Health Awareness.

Thursday May 4 – Empowerment - "Change Your Thoughts, Change Your World".

You are encouraged to look for ways to make a difference in your school and community. Start small, you never know where it will lead too.

Friday May 5 – Resilience - “Every Challenge is a Learning Experience”.

Mental Health and Well-being means coping with the ups and downs of day to day life. Building more resilient thoughts and skills can really help. Children and youth can also find support by seeking help from caring adults. Take time now to talk with child or youth about who those caring adults are in their lives.

For more information about Mental Health and Well-being and interactive activities with your children and youth:

Mind your Mind (online) www.mindyourmind.ca/Interactives

Fun, interactive options for de-stressing for youth.

Smiling Mind (Free App) smilingmind.com.au/

An app that guides you through simple, calming meditations.

GoNoodle (Free App) <https://www.gonoodle.com/>

Fun interactive body and mind breaks for kids.

At the end of the week, talk with your child/youth about the things that made them feel more connected, emotionally aware, healthy, empowered and resilient and continue to do those things every day!

Most of all... have a SUPER week!

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

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS – CELEBRATE EARTH DAY ON APRIL 22ND!

“Founded in 1990, Earth Day Canada inspires people of all ages across the country to connect with nature and build resilient communities as well as foster an intrinsically motivated, enduring commitment to stewardship and conservation.”

<https://earthday.ca/about/>

Why is it so important to connect kids with nature?

Kids who don't get outside, who aren't stimulated by their environment, won't grow up with the motivation to protect to protect our planet. Kids who don't connect to their inner nature through creative play won't be as resilient as generations before them.” <https://earthday.ca/ed2017/everyone/>

IDEAS FOR YOUR FAMILY TO CELEBRATE EARTH DAY:

***Get involved with Earth Day's EarthPlay** <https://earthday.ca/ed2017/schools/>

You can download an activity tool kit and enjoy the many suggestions to promote outdoor activities and learning for kids.

***Spend a day outside**

In the garden with your family, plant vegetables, trees, or native flowers and attract native animals and pollinators. Or join a local community event to help clean your neighbourhood or restore local plant life.

***Make commitments to cut down on your energy usage as well as waste.**

Turn lights off, power down electrical devices, turn down your thermostat and only do full loads of laundry and dishes. Always bring cloth bags when shopping, refuse to buy over packaged products, and lug a mug instead of using non-recyclable coffee cups. <http://www.ways2gogreenblog.com/>

***Learn more about the environment and the effects of global warming.**

Encourage awareness and promote the Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle way of life.

Remember that every day is Earth Day! Don't restrict yourself to just one day a year. Make environmental actions and caring

about the planet a habit – on Earth Day and every day.

MAPLE SYRUP RAFFLE

We have had a wonderful maple sap harvest this spring and now have 12 bottles of delicious John McCrae Maple Syrup that could be yours! Raffle tickets will be sold in your child's homeroom next week. The draw will take place on Monday, April 17th. \$2 for 1 ticket and \$5 for 3 tickets! Buy a raffle ticket to support our school. There is nothing better than delicious 100% natural maple syrup!

