

# École John McCrae School

## NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2019

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Principal: Leslie Newman

Vice Principal: Chad Reay

Office Co-ordinator: Kathy Lambkin

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### PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

We hope you are taking the time to enjoy the nice weather outdoors with your children and that you had an enjoyable March Break! Despite the month of March passing by quickly it was filled with many enriching experiences. Some of our kindergarten classes enjoyed learning at the Art Factory, while our primary students had a visit from Scientists in the School, our juniors had a basketball tournament and our intermediates took part in the Values, Influences, and Peers (VIP) program in partnership with the Guelph Police. We also had a number of students who participated at the UGEMTA Music festival. Earth Hour was observed on March 29<sup>th</sup> and we had some wonderful learning opportunities for our students around energy conservation and the importance of taking care of our environment.

Of particular significance was our very popular Syrup in the City collaborative event despite the heavy rainfall. Through the incredible organization and collaboration between John McCrae's librarian, Beth McEwen, CCVI's CELP Headwaters' program, and Transition Guelph, our school and magnificent maple bush was transformed into a sap-filled celebration of the gift of "sweet water" with lots of fun, food, arts, and learning for all. It was heartwarming to see families eating pancakes, watching the demonstrations, learning about the birds of prey and taking in all the learning about maple syrup. Thank you to all organizers, sponsors, students, staff, parent volunteers, and to our community for coming out.

We look forward to April here at John McCrae and all the exciting things that will happen. **Please note that our Parents Reaching Out Event scheduled for Tuesday, April 9th at 6:30 pm had been cancelled.** Due to this cancellation we will be having our next Parent Council meeting on April 9th at 6:30pm.

There will also be lots happening for our students during April such as, Skills Canada Competition, River Run performances, police safety presentations and our Character Education Assembly. April 24th and 25th are our Administrative Assistants and Custodial Appreciation Days and April 4 is a Professional Activity Day where our teachers will be building capacity and school effectiveness through professional learning.

Once again, we thank you for supporting the learning happening at John McCrae in all the ways that you do and please know that our doors are always open should you have any questions or concerns.

*Leslie Newman and Chad Reay*

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### SCHOOL COUNCIL CORNER

Parents Reaching Out:

**Please note that our Parents Reaching Out Event scheduled for Tuesday, April 9th at 6:30 pm had been cancelled.** Due to this cancellation we will be having our next Parent Council meeting on April 9th at 6:30pm.

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### MOVING IN? MOVING OUT?

If you are planning a move this summer, or know of someone moving into our school area for the 2019-2020 school year, please notify the office as soon as possible.

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### 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 23<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-6:30 pm. Be sure and mark the date!

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### EVERYDAY HERO AWARDS

Nominations for the 2018-19 Everyday Hero Awards will open on March 4, 2019. The deadline to nominate an Everyday Hero

in your school community is April 12, 2019.

The purpose of the Everyday Hero Award is to publicly recognize significant and outstanding achievements of employees and representatives of system partners of the Upper Grand District School Board. Everyday Heroes are people who go above and beyond what's expected to make Upper Grand schools great places to learn and work.

Candidates for the award may be an employee, volunteer, representative of system partners (i.e. bus drivers, crossing guards, community members, etc.). Groups will also be considered. Candidates who contribute by actions and efforts to the development of a positive learning or working environment may be nominated.

For more details, please visit <https://www.ugdsb.ca/community/everyday-heroes/>

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### GRAD PHOTO RETAKES

If a grade 8 student missed having their grad photo taken on March 22, retakes have been rescheduled for Tuesday, April 9 at the Kitchener Lifetouch office. Please call Lifetouch directly to schedule and appointment for that day, (519) 744-1146, ext. 2.

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### 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 2019**. If your child has some exceptional circumstances that require consideration when doing class placements, please email Mme Newman directly, [leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto: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.

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### 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.

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### ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS – EARTH DAY – APRIL 22

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/>

Earth Day 2019 Theme: Protect our Species – All living things have an intrinsic value, and each plays a unique role in the complex web of life. We must work together to protect endangered and threatened species. Go to <https://earthday.org> for some quick facts on the current wave of extinction and additional information about this problem.

Ideas for your family to celebrate Earth Day:

- **Review last year's Earth Day Theme on ending plastic pollution**, as this important work continues. Make a pledge to always carry a reusable shopping bag, use alternates to Ziploc bags, buy in bulk, refuse to buy over packaged products and make litter-less lunches. Download your Plastic Pollution Primer to learn more about this problem help **End Plastic Pollution!** <https://www.earthday.org/yourjourney2018/>
- **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.
- **Learn more about the environment and the effects of global warming**. Encourage awareness and promote the **Reduce** (buy less), **Reuse** (repurpose it) **and Recycle** (sort it right!) 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.

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### TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH – JUMPSTART YOUR BRAIN THIS SPRING

Did you know that you can actually boost your brain power and increase your focus, ability to concentrate and your overall sense of wellbeing? So how do you do this?

**Feed Your Brain:** Did you know your brain uses up to 20% of the calories that you take into your body? A well-balanced diet can provide your brain with much needed energy and increase your ability to focus and concentrate. Some high-quality brain foods are blueberries, salmon, nuts, avocados and whole grains. As a family you can journal what you are eating and then engage in a conversation and reflect on what you are feeding your brain.

**Get Quality Sleep:** It is estimated that approximately a third of school aged children in Canada are not getting the required amount of sleep. Sleep actually restores the brain and supports memory, thinking and creativity! Try stopping screen time at least an hour before bed. Don't drink sugary or caffeinated drinks. Is your brain getting enough recharge time?

**Get Outside and Move:** Even just 20 minutes of walking can increase your brain power. Try and charge your brain with fun, family friendly exercise. Walk around the neighbourhood and try and find all the spring buds and other signs of spring. Try and count your steps for one minute – it's not that easy!! Fresh air, exercise and movement are all fuel for your brain!

**Take a Mental Vacation:**

Take 3 minutes and close your eyes imagining a place that you love or wish you could see. Focus on the smells, the sounds and sensations. When we visualize something, our brains respond the same way as if we were actually there. Just 3 minutes of a mental vacation can put your brain into “relax” mode.

**Be Creative!** Creativity can increase focus and sense of calm. Pick a craft or project to do as a family. Make a springtime collage of all things spring: images from magazines, words, drawings, items you find outside, etc. Taking the time to engage your brain creatively will give your brain a boost!

**Exercise Your Brain:** Exercising your brain is as important as exercising your body! So how do you do this? Do a crossword puzzle or a word search. Anything that gets your brain thinking and being strategic will do! Play a game of chess, make some origami art or even playing hide and seek! These activities may not feel like work, but they are doing great things for your brain!!

And, as always, remember that there are many people who are struggling. Stay kind, be a good listener and talk to someone if you are needing support!

Jenny Marino, Mental Health Lead  
Follow me on Instagram @ugdsb\_mental\_health