



HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

ST. THOMAS SCHOOL

170 Skinner Road

WATERDOWN, ONTARIO L0R 2H7

PHONE: (905) 523-2328

FAX: (905) 689-4847



"A proud feeder school of St. Mary Catholic Secondary School"

Principal: Mr. D.Younger
Superintendent: Mr. M. Hucal
Principal Intern: Mrs. A. Caiella

Trustee: Mrs. C. Cornale,
Pastor: Very Rev. W.L. Lobsinger, EV, PP
Secretary: Mrs. M. Rath

ST. THOMAS "WILDCATS" DECEMBER – 2015 NEWSLETTER

Loving God, during this holy season of Advent
We ask for Your blessing on all families.
Let Mary's openness to Your wondrous ways
Be an inspiration to place all trust in You.
Let Joseph's courage provide hope
During times of anxiety and uncertainty.
Let Jesus life ignite all families
With a spirit of light and love.
May the grace that encircled the Holy Family
Widen to embrace all families.
For this we pray, Amen

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

As the frenzy and commercialism of Christmas approach, Catholic communities around the world prepare during this season of Advent, a time to do something different from the usual preparations: pause, reflect, and get spiritually creative. Take time to reflect on Mary's hope and faith as she responds with a simple and loving "Yes" to God's plan for her as the mother of Jesus. The Holy Family models faith, hope, trust, patience and humility for all families. During Advent look and listen for times when God speaks to you in many ways: the voice of a friend or loved one, the laughter of children, a quiet moment, a choir, the soft ringing of bells, or a wonderful scene from nature. Just as Mary and Joseph listened and trusted, we look to God during this Advent season to help us do the same. We ask God to quiet our minds and hearts at this time. We have so much to do-- Help us, Lord, to seek quiet spaces and hear Your voice each day as we continue Your work as 'Merchants of Hope and Mercy' for all those in our midst.

God bless you and your families during this season and onward. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Mr. D. Younger
Principal

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The annual STTA Christmas Concert will take place on Thursday, December 10, 2015 at 6:30pm in the school gym. Parents/guardians are asked to have students arrive no earlier than 6:00pm. Children will congregate in their classrooms while waiting for their performance and will return to the class until the end of the entire show. Staff will be supervising while families enjoy from their seats in the audience. A sincere thanks to the staff members of STTA for sacrificing their personal time so that our school community can enjoy the talents of the students.

NURSING STUDENTS: FINAL DAY

A sincere appreciation is extended to the McMaster University Third Year Nursing students who shared their time and talents via the project: 'Nurturing Positive Climates and Wellness at St. Thomas the Apostle CES'. Their work at the school culminated with the 'WELLNESS TREE'. <http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/151575--Positive-Wellness-Tree-at-STTA>

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

A team of priests will visit the school on December 3, 2015 to bestow the sacrament of Penance on students. Students will be given the opportunity to sit with one of the visiting Priests for Confession, Penance and Reconciliation.

BUS SAFETY PRESENTATIONS

Officials from Transportation will be visiting the school on December 3, 2015 to provide bus safety presentations to all students, FDK-Grade 8. Safety remains a priority at St. Thomas the Apostle CES.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

On December, 3, 2015, staff members will be meeting together in small networks to consider the School Improvement Plan for Student Achievement. The teachers will explore the current goals that were created based on various data sets and consider instructional practices that will improve and enhance student achievement.

ROBOTICS COMPETITION

On December 5, 2015, the STTA Robotics Team will be participating in the regional Robotics Competition. We wish the team well and know that each member will represent the school as ambassadors of character.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

The next Catholic School Council Meeting will take place on Monday, December 7, 2015 at 7:00 in the school Learning Commons. Mr. Morris Hucal, Superintendent, will be visiting to bring greetings and introductions. Thanks to Mrs. Cornale, Trustee, who attended the October meeting. All parents and guardians are welcome.

ADVENT MASS

The staff and students will be celebrating the Advent Mass on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at the church. Together with the Guardian Angels CES population, we will share in the Holy Eucharist. Students will be transported by pre-arranged buses.

SPECIAL ORDINATION

Please mark Saturday, December 19, 2015 at 10:00am to attend the ordination of Deacon Whitfield. Bishop Crosby will preside at St. Thomas the Apostle Church for this very sacred and solemn ceremony as Deacon Whitfield receives the sacrament of Holy Orders.

TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL LEARNING CONSULTANT VISIT

On December 11, 2015, the school board's Technology and Digital Learning Consultant will be visiting. Staff members have scheduled times to meet with Ms. Zupancic to explore new and exciting ways to integrate technology and learning in the classroom.

CROCK-A-DOODLE

An organization called Crock-a-Doodle will be visiting the school to work with various classes from FDK-Grade 5 in the area of visual arts. The children will be creating ornaments with the help of these professional visual artists.

SCHOOL CASH ONLINE

Thanks to all families who weathered the growing pains and frustrations linked to the School Cash Online system. Special thanks to Mrs. Rath, school administrative assistant, for her tireless efforts in fielding all calls, questions and concerns. The system is designed for a seamless payment process without cash transactions. To date, the school has a very large percentage of families currently registered. To register:
<https://hwcdsb.schoolcashionline.com/>

NEW EMAIL SUBSCRIPTION SYSTEM

Our school is pleased to offer the new email subscription feature available by visiting:

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/subscribe/>

Once you are signed up and you confirm your email, you will receive daily updates from the school (after 5 p.m.). Due to Canada's Anti-Spam law, if you were previously subscribed to the school and would like to continue receiving school updates via email, you MUST subscribe to the new system. Once you confirm your email address, you will receive a subsequent email asking you to manage your subscription.

Once you subscribe, and as we post items to the school website, you will automatically receive information when it is emailed out just after 5pm daily.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school.

AUTHOR VISIT

David Filax, a published author and a parent of one of the school's students, will be visiting on December 14, 2015 to present to classrooms. He will be showcasing his book, "A Christmas Chase".

FREE VOLLEYBALL CLINICS

Adam Podstawka, a former national team athlete (sport: beach volleyball) will be visiting the school on December 14 and 15, 2015 to model and teach the students the fundamentals of volleyball (bumping, setting, spiking and serving) as well as basic strategy through modified games that will match the level of the students.

Each volleyball session will last approximately one hour and take place during one of the nutritional breaks. Students will receive information about a Beach Volleyball Club that offers a developmental league and camps for students in grades 5-8.

Please see www.legacybeach.com for more information about this organization.

The permission form for parents and guardians can be found on the school's buzzboard and needs to be returned with a signature if a student in Grades 5-8 is interested in participating:

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/151683--Free-Volleyball-Clinic-at-STTA>

STTA MEDIA TEAM AND CHCH NEWS

The STTA Media Team and the Student Council Executive produce a televised news program twice a week in place of morning announcements.

Through the technology of Adobe Connect, the entire program is broadcast to each classroom in the school and viewed on SMARTboards. It is amazing to observe the team behind the scenes. Each member has a role to play such as director, anchor, co-anchor, weatherman, sports reporter, script writer, headlines, etc.

Each broadcast also includes guest reporters from classrooms who report on updates and exciting events around the school. One broadcast actually had our 'roving weatherman Jacob' report from outdoors via a laptop linked to a mobile hotspot for internet connection.

The frenetic energy prior to, during and after each show is reminiscent of an actual professional news broadcast. With this in mind, CHCH News was contacted and a tour/visit to the studio has been arranged. We will be granted some question/answer time with the professionals while the morning show is being broadcast live.

The CHCH News visit occurs on December 15, 2015 at 8:00 am so tune into the station for a possible glimpse of some of our budding media professionals.

CHRISTMAS PLAY AT ST. MARY CSS

Students from FDK to Grade 6 will be attending a Christmas performance at St. Mary Catholic Secondary School during the morning of Thursday, December 17, 2015.

The play is called, "**Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus**". It is a heartwarming story that challenges audiences that sometimes we do not need to see to believe. Students are encouraged to bring a school safe snack with them on the day of the show to eat at intermission.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SITE (LMS)

Parents/ Guardians are reminded to check their child(rens) site regularly to gather pertinent information regarding the events that are taking place in and outside of the classroom. If you have not yet signed up for the notification alert when a new post has been added please do as it makes things very convenient on keeping up to date.

E.Q.A.O. NEWS

Grade 3 and 6 students will be completing their Education Quality and Accountability Office (E.Q.A.O) assessment the last week of May/first week of June. You will be notified as soon as the final dates are decided. The assessment evaluates the reading, writing and math skills the students are expected to have learned by the end of their grade. Please visit <http://www.eqao.com> for more information or contact your child's teacher directly.

PFLC POTLUCK

Visit our school's Parenting and Family Literacy Centre this week to learn more about the centre's upcoming 'Christmas Potluck Celebration' on December 17, 2015. This centre, operated by Miss Patty, continues to burst at the seams with visits by parents, guardians, caregivers and their little ones. It is a centre grounded in early learning and rooted in joy and community.

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR 2015

The last day of school for 2015 will be Friday, December 18. This date marks the start of the two week Christmas Holiday Break. Classes will resume on **January 4, 2016**.

A FOND FAREWELL

It is with sadness that we announce that Mr. Catarino, one of the school's Educational Assistants will be leaving on December 1, 2015. We express our genuine appreciation for his time and effort in supporting the learning needs of countless students. We wish him every success along his new journey.

A WARM HELLO

We warmly welcome Mrs. Fuller, the school's new Library Technician to the Learning Commons and Ms. Bond, our school's new Evening Assistant Custodian, who will be joining Ms. Schilaske and Mr. Doyle on the Custodial Team.

ROOTS OF EMPATHY

Roots of Empathy is a research-based program that nurtures the personal, social and emotional development of students.

A newborn baby and his/her parent are partnered with a classroom. Through multiple visits, the facilitator assists the children in learning about the emotional responses of the infant. In doing so, children develop their own emotional maturation while also developing a greater sense of empathy for others in the world around them.

Currently, Roots of Empathy is underway in Mrs. Fallis' Grade 5/6 class and Mr. Porco/Mrs. Maslowski's FDK class. Roots of Empathy programs will be starting very shortly in Mrs. Anderson's Grade 5 class and Mrs. Haynes/Mrs. Kenyon's FDK class.

View the 5/6 students singing the signature song to the little baby and some of the images from the FDK room.
<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/150457--Roots-of-Empathy-at-STTA>

'Empathy is seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another.'



Roots of Empathy
Racines de l'empathie

<http://www.rootsofempathy.org/en>

3 ON 3 HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

Congratulations to the students who represented the school at the annual '3 on 3 Hockey Tournament' on November 18, 2015. [http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/150030--STTA -He-Shoots,-She-Scores!](http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/150030--STTA-He-Shoots,-She-Scores!)

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Thanks to all parents who were able to conference, either in person or over the phone, with teachers. These conversations are critical to ensure a collaborative and seamless approach to ensuring all students reach their full potentials and realize the fullness of humanity of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the model.

FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN OBSERVATION VISITS

FDK classrooms have been welcoming parents and guardians for observation visits. Each visit is intended to observe little ones in the act of play-based learning and personal/social/emotional development. Parents and guardians are experiencing a 'day in the life' along with the opportunity to discuss current growth and next steps for their children with the FDK Educator Team.

EQAO DATA

EQAO results from Spring, 2015, have been released. Please visit the following link to our school buzzboard for information relating to data for our school:

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/150352--STTA-and-EQAO>

NOVEMBER AWARD RECIPIENTS

St. Thomas the Apostle CES held the November Award Ceremony on November 30, 2015.

Staff recognized the accomplishments of three students in each class for their dedication to the Virtue Focus- Peace, School Motto- Lead, Learn, Love, Leave a Legacy, and the 7 Habit Focus- Begin with the End in Mind for the month of November.

Congratulations to the award winners for the month of November.

	Virtue: PEACE	School Mission: Lead, Learn, Love, Leave a Legacy	7 Habits: Begin with the End in Mind
Ms. Romeo	Hayden	Ella	Ava
Mrs. Haynes/Mrs. Kenyon	Hayden	Cate	Kian
Mr. Porco/Mrs. Maslowski	Landon	Ariel	Ashley
Mrs. Brash	Riley	Capri	Lyla
Mrs. Legace-Gagnier	Isabella	Alexander	Ryan
Mrs. Fleet	Viviana	Jared	Ava
Mrs. Horzelenberg	David	Abby	Ava
Mrs. Caiella	Camila	Lilian	John
Mrs. Richardson	Liam	Lily	Rebecca
Mrs. Anderson	Mikayla	Cole	Hayden
Mrs. Fallis	Dominic	Therese	Jaina
Mrs. Reeves	Ilyjah	Christopher	Alex
Mrs. Shannon	Leandra	Abby	Shayne

December's foci for students:

Virtue - Hospitality ; School Mission - Lead, Learn, Love, Leave a Legacy; 7 Habits - Put First Things First



THE LAST WORD



We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace.

-Pope Francis

<https://twitter.com/Pontifex>

POPE FRANCIS' NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS (from 2015)

1. Take care of your spiritual life, your relationship with God, because this is the backbone of everything we do and everything we are.”
2. “Take care of your family life, giving your children and loved ones not just money, but most of all your time, attention and love.”
3. “Take care of your relationships with others, transforming your faith into life and your words into good works, especially on behalf of the needy.”
4. “Be careful how you speak, purify your tongue of offensive words, vulgarity and worldly decadence.”
5. “Heal wounds of the heart with the oil of forgiveness, forgiving those who have hurt us and medicating the wounds we have caused others.”
6. “Look after your work, doing it with enthusiasm, humility, competence, passion and with a spirit that knows how to thank the Lord.”
7. “Be careful of envy, lust, hatred and negative feelings that devour our interior peace and transform us into destroyed and destructive people.”
8. “Watch out for anger that can lead to vengeance; for laziness that leads to existential euthanasia; for pointing the finger at others, which leads to pride; and for complaining continually, which leads to desperation.”
9. “Take care of brothers and sisters who are weaker ... the elderly, the sick, the hungry, the homeless and strangers, because we will be judged on this.”
10. Make sure your Christmas is about Jesus and not about shopping”