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

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PRINCIPAL: D. YOUNGER
PRINCIPAL INTERN: A. CAIELLA

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SECRETARY: M. RATH

MARCH - 2016 NEWSLETTER "WILDCATS"

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**Prayer to be a Better Person**

Lord, help me today to think of the feelings of others as much as I think of my own. If I know there are things which annoy people with whom I live and work, help me not to do them. If I know there are things which would please them, help me to go out of my way to do them. Help me to think before I speak, so that I may not thoughtlessly or tactlessly hurt or embarrass anyone.

If I have to disagree with anyone, help me to do so with courtesy.

If I have to argue with anyone, help me to do so without losing my temper.

If I have to criticize anyone, help me to do so with kindness.

If anyone has to criticize me, help me to accept it with grace.

Help me all through the day to treat others as I would wish to be treated.

Amen

### PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

I begin by again thanking staff, students, parents, guardians and families for contributing to the wondrousness that is St. Thomas the Apostle CES. Each month, I am continually reminded of how special this school remains. I consider myself blessed to be part of this tremendous community.

Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of the very important season of Lent. Lent is a time for "Spring Cleaning", a cleaning of our hearts, our minds, as we continue our spiritual journey and grow closer to God. Lent is a time of going beyond ourselves and doing things that will make a difference for others.

Students were challenged to make Lenten Promises and these promises were offered as a gift during our Ash Wednesday Liturgy at the Church. This is a time for us to ask God for His forgiveness for our human

weaknesses. During these days of Lent, we strive to be even better Merchants of Hope for those around us.

Finally and in alignment with the board's strategic plan, one of our continued foci will remain mental health and well-being. The school is committed to ensure the wellness of all, physically, emotionally and mentally.

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/157705--STTA-and-the-Professional-Development-Day>

May God continue to bless each of you with His wisdom, knowledge and grace throughout the month of March.

### MARCH VIRTUE - COURAGE

As members of one global family, we are committed to the common good and we are responsible to one another. At times it takes courage to speak out on behalf of others,

especially others whom we may not know because they are far away. We must ask ourselves, "How can we be our brothers' and sisters' keepers wherever they live?" "Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge justly, defend the rights of the poor and the needy." (Proverbs 31: 8-9)

On a more local level, do we always stand up for the marginalized or those being unjustly treated? Do we show courage in speaking out and standing up for those around us who are being mistreated. It takes 'courage' but each one of us can make a difference. As Tolkien said, "Even the smallest person can change the course of the future."

### **SENIOR/JUNIOR BOYS VOLLEYBALL**

The boys' volleyball season has begun. Thanks to Mrs. Fallis, Mrs. Romeo and Mrs. Reeves for coaching. Go Wildcats go!

### **CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWS**

The Catholic School Council would like to thank our school community for their help with Shrove Tuesday and the Pancake Extravaganza. A special thanks to Angels Diner in Waterdown for donating the pancake batter. If you get a chance, stop by Angels to give their restaurant a try and to say thanks for their generous donation.

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/156186--The-Syrup-was-Flowing-at-STTA>

Thank you, Catholic School Parent Council!  
Next meeting: March 7, 2016, 7:00pm in the Learning Commons. All parents welcome.

### **QUIDDITCH**

The STTA Quidditch League is well underway. Students who are participating have been placed in one of four 'houses': Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Slytherin and Ravenclaw. For games, Grade 1 and 2 students play against each other, Grade 3 and 4 students play against each other and Grade 5, 6, 7 and 8 students play against each other. All games and points won will go toward the final 'Quidditch Cup'. Well done to all players for

their sportsmanship as each 'house' flies about in pursuit of the elusive 'Golden Snitch.'

### **MARCH BREAK**

Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup> to Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup>.  
Students return to school on Monday, March 21st, 2016.

### **UPDATING OUR FILES**

We are in the midst of preparing our school organization for September 2016 over the next couple of months. If you have moved or are planning a move to a new address, please notify the school office (905)523-2328. Also, if any of your contact information has changed, please let Mrs. Rath know so that she can update our files.

### **SIGN IN PROCEDURES**

For the safety of our students, all visitors and parents must report to the office. Access to classrooms is only granted through the office. Please do not go to the classrooms without checking in at the office. Mrs. Rath will be happy to call your child/children down to see you for any of your concerns. Classrooms should not be interrupted at any time by a parent visitor at the classroom door. Meeting opportunities should be scheduled with the classroom teacher in advance; a phone call or note in the agenda will initiate the necessary contact. Thank you as always for your cooperation.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

You are kindly asked to label every clothing item, including boots and snowpants. The Lost and Found bin continues to resemble a department store 'clothing sale event' and this can be prevented if these items could be identified with owner names. Thank you for your support. There are currently many items in search of their rightful owners.

### **STTA and HWCD SB SCIENCE FAIR**

Congratulations to all students who participated in this year's STTA Science Fair. Special thanks to Mrs. Shannon for coordinating this very special event.

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/156825--Science-is-Alive-and-Well-at-STTA>

Based on the judges scores that day, a team of eight students was selected to participate in the system-wide Science Fair on February 27, 2016 at Bishop Ryan CSS: Olivia, Lily, Jaina, Matthew M, Anthony C., Duke, Krish and Audrey.

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/157709--STTA-at-the-HWCDSB-System-Science-Fair>

### **LIBRARY NEWS**

In the last month exciting things have been going on in the Library Learning Commons at St. Thomas the Apostle. Mrs. Fallis' grade 5/6 class just finished presenting a PSA about cyber-bullying using a Web 2.0 tool called Powtoon. Students learned how to effectively use this new presentation tool and learned about some great Canadian websites to visit if they are ever experiencing cyber-bullying themselves.

Mrs. Romeo's FDK class along with the help of Mrs. Fallis' class has been inquiring into winter animals. With the help of our older students, the FDK class is seeing that information can be found in both print and virtual sources. Presentations will be taking place next week.

Mrs. Anderson's grade 5 class has been participating in grand conversations in the Learning Commons. They are learning how to contribute and respond to others in an insightful and respectful manner.

Mrs. Brash's grade one class have been exploring the use of respectful behaviour at home, at school and in the community. In the coming weeks they will be creating a Pic Collage to demonstrate what they have learned.

As you know, Sigmund Brouwer visited our school in February. The students went wild for Rock and Roll Literacy. Mr. Brouwer has generously donated an hour of his time to Mrs. Reeves class, who were so excited to

hear about his message about writing that they have been writing non-stop ever since. In real time, students will be given an opportunity to ask Mr. Brouwer any questions they have about the writing process using a Zoom or Google Hangout.

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/156574--A-Rousing-Rock-and-Roll-Good-Time-at-STTA>

Stay tuned for many exciting things to come.

### **STUDENT COUNCIL NEWS**

Thanks to Student Council for planning the STTA Cake Raffle on February 12, 2016. It was a huge success. Thanks to all families for contributing delicious baked goods for the event.

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/156870--Cake-Raffles-at-STTA>

The Student Council has also planned a 'Students vs Staff Volleyball Game' on March 10, 2016.

### **FIRST RECONCILIATION**

Congratulations to our Grade 2 students who received the sacrament of First Reconciliation at the church in February. The students were examples of peace and prayerfulness as they opened their hearts once again to God. Let us continue to pray for our Grade 2 students as they continue to prepare for the Sacrament of Eucharist on Sunday, April 24, 2016 at the church. Thanks to Mrs. Fleet and Mrs. Horzelenberg for preparing the children so well.

### **CHAPEL AT STTA**

Under the supervision of Mrs. Sergi, each classroom will be responsible for artistically representing one of the Stations of the Cross. Each will be plaqued and then mounted in the school chapel to enhance this space as a place of holiness and sacred prayer and reflective contemplation.

## **FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN**

### **REGISTRATION**

Registration for Full Day Kindergarten, Year One for September 2016 is now in full swing. Please call Mrs. Rath at 905-523-2328 to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. Most current enrolment numbers are used for classroom organizations and staffing allotments. It is best to register sooner than later. Please also let your friends and neighbours know that the registration process for September has started.

The following documents are required for registration:

- Baptismal Certificate
- Birth Certificate
- Proof of Residency
- Proof of up-to-date immunization
- Immigration papers, if applicable

### **CONFIRMATION**

Please wish the Grade 7 class well as they are preparing for the Holy Sacrament of Confirmation which takes place on April 3, 2016. May the Holy Spirit guide them on this journey of self-reflection.

Preparation for this sacrament was enhanced when the Grade 7 students participated in the recent Diversity Conference. Thanks to Mrs. Reeves for coordinating and executing.

<http://stth.hwcdsb.ca/156867--Diversity-Conference-at-STTA>

### **CAREER DAY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!**

On Wednesday, May 4th at 9:30am, the school will be hosting a Career Day for our Junior/Intermediate students. We are looking for volunteers who are willing to share their careers with our students. If you are interested, please call the school and leave your name and number and Mrs. Richardson will get back to you with more details.

### **HEALTH ACTION TEAM (HAT)**

The STTA Health Action Team continues to meet regularly under the guidance of Public

Health Nurse Julie. The goal is to nurture positive climate and wellness at St. Thomas the Apostle CES. Our McMaster Nursing Students are working in tandem. March is Nutrition Month and the Health Action Team will be making announcements over the P.A.

Key messages will be:

1. Choose 3 of the 4 food groups when packing a school lunch.
2. Fresh fruit and vegetables make great snacks.
3. Limit store bought lunch kits and processed foods.
4. Choose healthy drinks, For example milk, water, fortified soy beverage, 100% fruit juice (limit to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup per day)
- 5.

The Health Action Team will be promoting Water Only Wednesdays (WOW). Drinking water is important for every system in our body. Water energizes our muscles, keeps our skin healthy, digests our food and helps control our body temperature.

To help wrap up our healthy nutrition month there will be a Pita Pit Lunch Day on Thursday March 31st. We will be accepting on line payments ONLY. Order templates are available through School Cash Online.

We thank you in advance for all of your support.

### **CHOCOLATE FUNDRAISER**

Once again, thanks to all families who are participating in the chocolate fundraiser. Many prizes have been distributed as per the regular draws. More draws to follow, including the five pound chocolate bars to top selling classroom in each division. It will be exciting to begin the purchase order process with the funds and witness the fruits of everyone's labours as new items and resources arrive at the school for students.

### **SWIM TO SURVIVE**

As part of a system wide initiative, Grade 3

students will continue to visit the Flamborough YMCA for swimming lessons. They will be swimming on March 1 and 8, 2016.

### **GRADE 8 GRAD PORTRAITS**

The wonderful Grade 8 students of STTA will have their grad portraits taken on March 9. Smile !

### **GOOD FRIDAY, EASTER AND EASTER MONDAY**

A friendly reminder that the season of Lent will culminate with Good Friday on March 25, 2016 and Easter on March 27, 2016. This most sacred long weekend will also include Easter Monday on March 28, 2016.

### **BASEF**

The Bay Area Science and Engineering Fair is open to all students in Grade 7-12. Please visit the following link for more details. We strongly encourage everyone to consider:

<http://www.basef.ca/students>

### **CAMP MARYDALE**

Students in Grade 3 and 5 will be visiting Camp Marydale on March 4, 2016 for a fun-filled day of environmental science and physical literacy.

<http://cyo.on.ca/campmarydale/>

### **SACRAMENT OF PENANCE**

Students from Grade 2-8 will have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Penance on March 3 as Father Lobsinger and a team of priests visit the school. The gym will be transformed into a holy place for this sacred experience.

### **PARISH-SCHOOL CONNECTION**

Father Lobsinger will be visiting classrooms on March 1 to speak with students about our calling as Catholics. Thanks to Father Lobsinger, Father Whitfield and Seminarian Ross for their active collaboration.

### **HOCKEY 3 ON 3**

We wish the students who are playing in the invitational 'Gary Mahler 3 on 3 Hockey

Tournament' well. The tournament is on March 9, 2016. Thanks to Coach Shannon and Coach Kenyon for their leadership.

### **TEACHING MASS**

The Grade 2 classes will participate in a Teaching Mass at the church on March 8, 2016 at 10:00am. Father Lobsinger will interject the liturgy with anecdotes about each ritual's importance and significance. All are welcome.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

In the spirit of the school's commitment to the mental health and wellness for all, the following is taken from the chapter on Anxiety from the Ministry's Supporting Minds document:

Although different signs of anxiety occur at different ages, in general, common signs include the following. The student:

- has frequent absences from school;
- asks to be excused from making presentations in class;
- shows a decline in grades;
- is unable to work to expectations;
- refuses to join or participate in social activities;
- avoids school events or parties;
- exhibits panicky crying or freezing tantrums and/or clingy behaviour before or after an activity or social situation (e.g., recess, a class activity);
- worries constantly before an event or activity, asking questions such as "What if ...?" without feeling reassured by the answers;
- often spends time alone, or has few friends;
- has great difficulty making friends;
- has physical complaints (e.g., stomach-aches) that are not clearly attributable to a physical health condition;
- worries excessively about things like homework or grades or everyday routines;
- has frequent bouts of tears;
- is easily frustrated;
- is extremely quiet or shy;
- fears new situations;
- avoids social situations for fear of negative evaluations by others (e.g., fear of being laughed at);
- has dysfunctional social behaviours;
- is rejected by peers.

(Based on information from: CYMHIN-MAD, 2011; Hincks-Dellcrest-ABCs, n.d.)

**Note: This list provides some examples but is not**

exhaustive and should not be used for diagnostic purposes.  
Strategies to Reduce Stress and Anxiety

- Create an environment where mistakes are viewed as a natural part of life.
- Provide predictable schedules and routines
- Provide advance warning of changes in routine.
- Provide simple relaxation exercises.
- Get plenty of sleep
- Get plenty of vigorous exercise
- Encourage children to take small steps towards accomplishing a feared task.
- Engage in relaxation exercises which include Christian Meditation, decompression walks, fidget toys and deep 'belly' breathing.

(Based on information from: CYMHIN-MAD, 2011; Hincks-Dellcrest-ABCs, n.d.)

Good for all, essential for some.

Let's all work together to ensure healthy, promising and happy futures for everyone.



### SAVE THE DATE

Save the evening of April 28, 2016 for a fun-filled 'Trivia Night' for STTA families and friends. Mrs. Shannon's Grade 8 students are in the planning stages. This initiative is part of the Entrepreneurial Program through the Learning Partnership. Students are learning how to generate business projects from inception to fruition. This 'Trivia Night' is their business project. Prizes will be awarded throughout the evening. We hope to see everyone there for an enjoyable night of questions, laughter and fellowship. Thanks again to Mrs. Shannon and the students.