

St. William makes learning fun!



**Story and photo by
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Staff Reporter

At St. William School in Emeryville it's all about making learning fun!

And recently, with the help of the school's parents' council and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board three brand new 3-D printers have been added to the computer laboratory.

St. William is the only elementary school in Ontario to be equipped with such sophisticated technology.

Principal Carl Bull says the push for the laboratory comes at hefty price tag of \$20,000, but is worth every penny when it comes to his student's future career choices.

"I'm thrilled to say it has exceeded our expectations," Bull said. "I'm not having to chase kids into the lab. They're engaged."

As a former math teacher, Bull thought the 3-D printers would be a great way to help teach the challenging concepts of measurement, algebra and geometry. And do it in a fun way.

"After only five weeks, the students were running the lab themselves." He added. "We have 87 Gr. 8 students and all of them have been trained to use the Tinkercad program."

Students are also taught robotics and coding right from Junior Kindergarten through Gr. 8.

Camden Finlay, 13, says the experience has been a great learning experience.

One of his student projects included the making of a replica of his bedroom.

Learning how to troubleshoot problems when the technology doesn't work is also part of the education.

"It's pretty cool," said Finlay. "The process is interesting, you get to design and proof everyone's project before printing. You are also trouble shooting as you go along."

And while Camden confesses that he's really not a 'math guy,' he's finding that he wants to learn more of the numbers side of the process. It's peaked his interest and for Principal Bull 'that's what it's all about.'

Bull added that he engaged in a partnership with Papp Plastics and International Machinery owner Marty Pathak.

"We've had a couple of very generous business owners come forward to help," Bull said.

The two firms each supplied one of the \$5,000 printers. The school raised the other \$10,000 needed to set up the lab project.

Bull said 3-D printing could also be used to improve student engagement in other classes such as history by printing out replicas of artifacts.

"The challenge to expanding this is creating the financial and structural infrastructure to make it go forward," Bull said. And the vision here is that the technology must be available to all students who wish to learn."

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Irish eyes are smiling!



Photo courtesy of Joe Bachetti

St. Pius X Catholic School student Sara W. is all smiles after putting the final touches on her 'Leprechaun Trap' she built in Mrs. Parent's Grade 1/2 class. Students worked feverishly to complete their design in time for St. Patrick's Day in hope that upon their return to school they will find their leprechaun!