

Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board Gives Director's Annual Report

by Shelby Wye

The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board gave their annual director's report on Jan 26, reporting of a "successful 2015".

"It was with a tremendous sense of determination by some of the most resolute and judicious people I've ever had the pleasure of working with that we have managed to extricate ourselves from the lowest depths to arrive at heights perhaps never before experienced by this organization," said Paul Picard, the director of education during his address to the WECDSB Chair Barbara Holland.

The 'lowest depths' Picard refers to is when the WEDSCB went under provincial supervision in 2013, following a few years of gathering deficit.

They successfully ended the 2014-2015 fiscal year with an in-year surplus of \$5M, which was \$4M better than planned.

"It's the quick and dramatic recovery of this organization that at times astounds me the most, but upon further contemplation, I realize that I should not be so surprised at the turnaround," said Picard.

At the meeting, the trustees reviewed their successes with the audience. This included students meeting or exceeding most EQAO categories, received a positive Ministry of Education audit on the Safe Schools, Equity, and Inclusivity and Student Mental Health programming. They worked to increase the use of mobile technology for all learning, expanded cloud computing

and e-learning throughout the system. A new masonry program was launched at one of their schools.

The WECDSB operates 36 elementary schools, 1 middle school and 8 secondary schools, as well as an adult education program that provide Catholic education to 20,565 students.

Holland said while surpluses and student achievement is their most reliable indicator of their success, she said the most satisfying was the praise they received from the parents of their students.

"These educational experiences are what our ratepayers expect and deserve, and I'm proud that the feedback we receive illustrates that those expectations are being met" said Holland.

ST. WILLIAM

From left, St. William principal Joe Bachetti, Windsor Spitfires forward Cristiano DiGiacinto, and Houry Ashekian, of Phoenix Jewellers.

Photo courtesy of Kelly Greff



Go Spits, go!

Windsor Spitfires' forward Cristiano DiGiacinto visited St. William Catholic School last week!

Cristiano told us that he grew up and started playing hockey in the Hamilton area when he was three years old and from that day on, nothing stopped him.

He was never drafted by an OHL team, but was given a tryout and worked really hard to make the team.

He was selected by the Tampa Bay Lightning in the 2014 NHL Entry Draft.

He also delivered an important message to students, that if you want to achieve something, work at it and you'll never be disappointed.

What a great motto for all of us to hear!

He was impressed with our slide show highlighting the Spitfires hockey club and also stayed afterwards to

sign autographs and enjoyed a pizza lunch with our bus patrols.

A big thank you to the Ashekian family (Phoenix Jewellers) for once again sponsoring season tickets to Spitfire games this year to give opportunity for our classmates to attend some exciting hockey games.

Lucky students from St. William will be drawn weekly to attend the game(s).

A special Wildcat Spitfire game is being held on Sunday, Feb, 21 at 2 p.m. versus the Hamilton Bulldogs, where the students and families can skate with the players after the game. What better reward after a busy term one of school work?

Fingers crossed, I hope I win some Spits tickets!

Written by Lola O.

Welcome future Pacers!



Photo courtesy of Nancy Sarkis

St. Pius X Catholic School held their JK Registration Night. The soon-to-be-Pacers and their parents toured the school. In the computer lab, they played on the iPads and computers, then watched some of our videos made by the Tech-Team. In the gym, they played an assortment of games with the Grade 8 leaders. Then, they got to explore the kindergarten classrooms, and also met the teachers. They are very excited for September now!

Cardinal Carter program assists Bank Theatre

By Bryan Jessop

The High Skills Major Construction program at Cardinal Carter Catholic Secondary School has literally taken centre stage in an ongoing community project.

Fourteen students from the local high school — about half enrolled in the High Skills Major course and the other half considering registering for upcoming semesters — arrived at The Bank Theatre and Meeting Place Wednesday, Feb. 17 to take on a one-day, four-part construction project focusing on the facility's stage. Led by curriculum teacher Chris Church, the team of students added an insulating layer of sheathing foam as soundproofing for dance routines. The group also extended the front of the stage by two feet and added a proscenium/archway to the sides and above the stage's front to allow a curtain system to conceal off-stage actors. Finally, the students allowed better use of the stage's far left corner by adding to its surface.

The multi-component project was completed in about five hours.

"It's been going really well," said Church about an hour into the project. "They're all doing something and keeping busy."

Lunch for the project was provided courtesy of Domino's while the participating students were bused to and from the theatre courtesy of Switzer Carty Transportation. Materials and supplies were provided by The Bank Theatre via Home Building Centre while tools used were the property of the High Skills Major program.

The school was contacted by Leamington municipal councillor John Hammond, who made arrangements to put Church in touch with The Bank Theatre's building committee chairperson and director Rick Taves.

"It's fantastic," Taves said of Cardinal Carter's involvement in the restoration project. "They're a great group of helping hands. These kids are getting real-life experience and they're taking ownership of the community. This is also bringing youths here who didn't really know about this place."

The stage's new dimensions are 30' x 28', with about three feet lying in front of the new proscenium. The arch-



Cardinal Carter student Alyssa Orlando uses a cordless drill to secure a two-by-four to the stage surface at The Bank Theatre to accommodate a new layer of soundproof foam sheathing.



Cardinal Carter student Luc Ribble cuts a length of two-by-four while fellow student Mack Butler looks on as part of a project to modify and extend the stage at The Bank Theatre Wednesday, Feb. 17. A group of 14 from the school, made up of High Skills Major Construction program students and others interested in signing up for the course, conducted the project.



Cardinal Carter students Connor Rivest and Zack Barette work on extending The Bank Theatre stage by two feet.

way will block the view of framework above and behind the stage and will allow for the addition of plain, black curtains to run along the stages sides.

"It's like a frame for a picture," Taves explained. "Right now, we're pushing to get the stage to where we want it. Then the rest of it can catch up later on."

New stairs are also being added to the corners of the stage.

We're with you all the way!



Photo courtesy of Joe Bachetti

From Left; Mrs. Long, ECE, Adriana M., Nina L., Xavier Y., Anthony K., Reese L., and Mrs. Lawrenson, Teacher.

Going to school is a big first step! You may be nervous and thinking what school should I attend? You will find upon entering St. William Catholic School that it will be a wonderful experience and you'll feel right at home.

Finding friends at St. William's is easy, as we have so many professional staff and friendly students, who are waiting to meet you, like myself. Becoming a Wildcat, and starting your first year of school is exciting! As a Wildcat, you will have many positive experiences and live life to the fullest! Our Kindergarten rooms are busy with students learning through interactive play and using technology. If you are looking for a sea of smiles, look no further than there.

It's all about starting school in a positive environment, so come to St. William and experience what the buzz is all about. We will have staff and volunteers giving you a tour of the school such as

the new kindergarten classroom addition built last year, the tech library where you can complete all your forms and of course the gymnasium every child's favourite place to run. Snacks and refreshments will be provided along with a photo booth.

When a JK or SK parent registers, their child will receive a free: Wildcat mug, Wildcat T-shirt, narrative story book, colouring book, and a pack of crayons, our small token of thank-you and warm welcome so your child will be ready to start off the school year in the coolest Wildcat gear.

So if you have a sibling or know someone that will be going into JK or SK next year, tell them that St. William is the place to be! Kindergarten Open House is next Wednesday, February 17 from 5 to 7 p.m.. Hope to see you there.

By Lola .O

Wildcats sock it to wi

Pope Francis has set this as the jubilee Year of Mercy. We are all called to show mercy to mankind by Jesus.

At our Ash Wednesday mass last week, we learned from the Liturgical Team about the Year of Mercy, the meaning of Lent and what action we can take this Lent.

Fr. Chris gave us an inspiring homily and encouraged us to donate to our school's Sock Drive.

Every year the Mission Team of St. William holds its annual *Sock It to Winter* sock drive for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Divine Mercy chapter.

Did you know that socks are the most needed item for the homeless and the least donated?

Students were encouraged more than pencils and erasers to help themselves.

This fits not only with the Lenten season, but also with the Lenten season we are called to do during Lent. God has given to us.

Socks are especially needed here.

The Mission Team knows the importance of our socks. We at St. William know we should give and live like Christ, leading acts of mercy.

19/16

Winter!

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g by example and by doing



Photo courtesy of Joe Bachetti

From left, Caleb G., Regan S., Ronan S., and Kip S.

schools

'The Canadian experience'**Tecumseh family shares the positive experiences they have had with the Homestay Network student exchange program**

By David Dyck
Special to Shoreline Week

With an increasing number of international students travelling to our area to study, the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board is looking for more local families to step up and welcome these students into their homes.

Working in conjunction with the Canada Homestay Network, students ages 12-17 can come for single month to four-year terms to study.

Many of these students come from China, Columbia, Korea, Spain and other countries.

The WECDSB is continuing to list its international students program as one of its main priorities.

Nadia Desjardins was recently installed as supervisor of the Homestay Network.

She says the program has enriched its curriculum exponentially.

"What it does to our domestic students, how it impacts them... it broadens their horizons and makes them ready for the global economy," said Desjardins.

"And the teachers love it. One told me he thinks just having the international students in his class has enriched his music program so much."

It is also an enriching experience for the host family.

'They all become part of the family'

David and Julia Cadeau, of Tecumseh, have taken in seven students and are looking forward to accepting an eighth student this September.

"One way or another, they all become part of the family," Julia explained.



David, Julia and daughter Rashel Cadeau stand surrounded with memorabilia from previous exchange students in their home in Tecumseh.
Shoreline Week photo: Matt Weingarden

"Some of them closer, some of them are more like friends, but they are all welcome."

This bond can become unbreakable.

Rashel - David and Julia's daughter - said a sisterly attachment has developed between her and a Spanish exchange student, who recently sent them a Christmas card.

Students come for other reasons as well, with bettering their English being one of

them. Many may come for 'the Canadian experience.'

One Japanese student with the Cadeaus expressed amazement at the amount of the stars in the sky, a sight obscured by the amount of artificial bright lighting back home.

When international students sign up, they can select preferences on what type of home they prefer.

Whether they don't want to be in a house with pets or would

like to have young children in the home, the Homestay Network tries to accommodate both parties.

Relationship manager Karrison Quinlan said narrowing down the list of families to the required criteria can reveal only a few remaining.

She must also limit these few to those actually in the student's chosen school's region.

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Homestay

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Homesickness is a factor.

While the host family is critical in making the student feel welcome, students can become anxious or depressed after a few months away from their home country.

To curb this, the Homestay Network has created a 1-800 number with over 30 languages available for the student to call should the need for it arise.

The purpose of the program, however, is to let both cultures learn from each other.

It can even lead to amusing circumstances, as when the Cadeaus once had a Japanese

student and a Spanish student in their home both going to the same high school.

"It was almost a battle of the minds," recalled David.

"The one from Spain challenged (him), and it would be back and forth.

"You could see at the table while they were doing homework that there was a little bat-

tle going on, especially in the sciences and in math."

Canada remains the primary learning experience for students coming from abroad.

With subjects like dance, engineering and masonry possibly not being available back home, students can receive a learning experience unlike anything they have back home.

"Every culture comes in and says 'we don't have these types of things in our schools,'" said Desjardins.

"We're really, honestly advanced and it is exciting for them."

For more information about the Homestay Network, please visit WhyIHost.ca/windsor