

Some thoughts on cleanliness

What would our junior kindergarten classroom at St. John Bosco Catholic School look like if we didn't have a custodian?

Messy!

Dirty!

The windows wouldn't be shiny.

It would be stinky.

There would be dust bunnies everywhere. You would sneeze.

If there was garbage everywhere, we wouldn't have any place for us to sit. We might have to stand on our chairs.

The floor would be sticky from juice spills.

When the grade one students spent some time thinking about Mr. Yantha, they realized:

- Most times, we don't really notice because we think that he will always be available to do all the nice things he does for us.
- If the pipes were broken there would be water everywhere if Mr. Yantha wasn't here to fix them.
- If the play structures were broken no one would be around to fix them.
- It would be cold in our classroom because he always warms up our classroom before we get there.
- We wouldn't have any paper towel in the bathrooms to wipe our hands on.
- If you made a mess on your desk it would stay there because I wouldn't be able to get it off myself.
- The paint would peel off the walls and no one would know to paint them.
- We know the right time because he fixes the clocks for us.
- He goes around and turns off the water that kids forget to turn off.
- We wouldn't have any desks in the classroom or we may not have the right amount of desks.
- If someone threw a ball up on the roof we would not be able to get it down. Then we would not have any balls to play with at recess.
- He washes off our blackboards, otherwise there would be too much chalk on them for us to use.
- If someone was sick there would be no one to help clean up the mess and we would all get very sick too.

Dear Mrs. Walsh,

Thank you for cleaning our classroom. If you did not clean our room, it would be a disaster! There would be smelly garbage all over and toys would be scattered on the floor. Food would be on the table and it would rot and bugs would come. Ants would crawl around the wrappers and juice boxes that were on the table. Dust would go on our carpet, paper would be on the floor, the toilets wouldn't get cleaned, the windows would be dusty and we wouldn't have any toilet paper or paper towel. Spiders would come and there would be spider webs. It would be a filthy school! We love when you clean our classroom.

Love,
Miss Peplinskie's SK class,
St. John Bosco Catholic School



We asked the primary students of St. Mary's Catholic School in Wilno what life would be like without their custodian, Bozena Dabrowska, pictured, left. Here's what they had to say:

If we didn't have her in our life... we would have:

- sticky floors
- messy bathrooms
- two feet of garbage
- grass up to our knees in the summer
- black floors
- our bathroom would be green and gooey
- stinky sock smell
- we'd lose our neighbours.

Photo by Timothy J. Baklinski

A message from the Director of Education

What creates a good learning environment?

We know that children need to feel safe. They need to engage in active learning and they need opportunities to explore new concepts. They also need quiet time for concentration, reflection and individual thought.

These are all elements that support our approaches to teaching. The most basic elements, however, often go unnoticed.

Our students, and our teachers, need warm, clean, dry and comfortable environments. They need access to appropriate technologies and learning materials. They require order and organization.

This issue of *Notebook* pays tribute to the staff who toil behind-the-scenes to provide our good learning and work environments. We want the maintenance staff—the carpenters, painters, electricians and plumbers—to know how

much we value their expertise. We want to publicly acknowledge our caretakers for the daily care they take.

We'll also take this opportunity to share our excitement about new building and renovation developments in our Catholic schools.

Ephesians 2:20 refers to God's people being "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone". This scriptural reference explains that the whole building is joined together in the Lord, just as we are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

The care that goes into maintaining and enhancing our physical environment is a key component in making Renfrew County's Catholic schools truly "*Schools To Believe In*".

Michele Arbour
Director of Education

Sacraments: Reflecting what we believe

by Father Ryan Holly

We have reflected on some of the sacraments and their meaning, along with our responsibility to celebrate them faithfully. One of the questions that often arises is that of sacramental sharing. Why is it that Catholics do not share sacraments with the members of other Christian communities? Why is it that Catholics do not receive sacraments in churches other than our own? This is often a point of confusion for Catholics and non-Catholics alike. While we do recognize and share baptism as a common sacrament among Christians who baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do not share the other sacraments. Being Catholic is not ascribed by virtue of attendance at a Catholic school. It requires being baptized in the Catholic Church or making a Profession of Faith in the case of a person who was baptized in another Christian community. The reason that other baptized Christians—children or adults—cannot receive sacraments in the Catholic Church is that our communities are not yet in "full communion" (in unity). This same principle applies to Catholics who attend a religious service in another Christian community. People will often say, "but the liturgies are so

much alike, so why not share in the sacraments?" The fact that we refrain from administering sacraments to non-Catholics and that we do not receive sacraments in other churches is out of respect for what our respective communities believe. The reception of a sacrament is an outward sign of our full belief in the mystery that is being celebrated. It is also a sign that we are in full unity with the teachings and practices of our Catholic community. As Catholics we have come a long way in ecumenical relations in recent decades. Many of our families are powerful witnesses to the fact that members of different Christian communities can live together in peace and we can even have opportunities to pray together and work on shared projects and objectives. At the same time we must acknowledge that by refraining from sharing in sacraments we are actually respecting our traditions and beliefs. If we attend a service in another Christian community, our abstaining from receiving a sacrament is not to be thought of as being disrespectful—rather it is the exact opposite—we are acknowledging that there is much that unites us, but the hard work of Christian unity has not yet been realized and we must continue to pray that "all may be one".

John XXIII has a caretaker who really cares

by Teachers Shauna Rampton and Jacqueline Ryan,
with input from staff

Caretaker Brian Hill has "taken care" of John XXIII Catholic School in Arnprior for over 27 years. His wife, Susan and two sons, Gavin and Kyle, have often pitched in on weekends, evenings, and holidays to make it a family affair.

Mr. Hill takes pride in providing the highest standards of cleanliness for his extended family—the John XXIII students and staff. He can now recognize students as the children and even grandchildren of former students.

Mr. Hill performs duties well beyond those outlined in his contract. At the hotdog station every Thursday, for example, he knows exactly how students like their toppings... three stripes, dots, or swirls of ketchup or mustard... and he never disappoints. Down in the kindergarten rooms, Mr. Hill is the "milk poker". He designed a handy tool for punching a quick

straw hole in the milk containers, which really speeds up the process. While he's there, he willingly opens thermoses, fixes broken toys, makes rocking chairs rock again, unsnags coat zippers, and even fixes broken necklaces.

Outside on the yard, Mr. Hill answers regular requests to retrieve "roofed" balls. He is always happy to find a new desk and install coat hooks the morning a new student arrives. He sets up and dismantles chairs and tables for every special event, and often stays late into the night to make sure things are put away properly and in order for the next school morning after major events such as Mayfest.

He comes quickly when we accidentally set off the alarm, rescues us when we run a little short on gas on the way to or from school, pulls stuck vehicles out of the mud or snow, and clears snow off of cars on heavy snow days.

Brian Hill... thanks for "taking great care" of John XXIII!

Secondary school addition creates new learning opportunities in Renfrew

The new addition at St. Joseph's Catholic High School in Renfrew has opened the doors to a world of educational opportunities for local students.

Construction was completed last spring to make more room for popular courses like automotive technology, construction, woodworking and a foods class. Additional computer lab space for communication classes also made it possible to offer a class dedicated to designing the school yearbook.

Karla Belton, a Grade 12 student, is taking full advantage of the facility, spending half of each school day in the new space for automotive technology and foods classes.

"I have my own car," she explains. "I wanted to know what to do about it instead of asking my brother, which is what I always do now."

Laura Sweet, who is taking the same class, took a semester when it was run out of the basement of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School next door.

"This is a lot better," she comments, adding that the newer machinery is much safer and easier to use.

Both girls have noticed that the new learning space has invited more of their female schoolmates to take an interest and sign up for construction and automotive classes.



Ashley Lemay, Laura Sweet and Karla Belton in the new automotive lab.

Photo by Gemma Robillard

Teacher Stephen Charkavi says that was the intent when the rooms were designed with big windows facing into the school so that potential students could see what was going on.

"The fact that everything is modern" is also a definite selling feature, he figures.

Grade 11 Student Skylar Reid agrees, noting that it is very exciting to be one of the first students to break in the new equipment.

The fact that they can stay on St. Joe's grounds is also a benefit.

"We get to spend more time working in the shop doing hands-on stuff," he notes.

Students in the foods class couldn't agree more.

"We used to always have to carry our food over next door," recalls Belton, who is taking the foods class because she wants to be an event planner. Now she has more time to chop, mix and share recipes with her friends.

"I just love these hands-on classes," she concludes.

New science labs are on the drawing board

Principal Peter Adam has no doubt that the students at Bishop Smith Catholic High School in Pembroke will appreciate new science labs.

"My father might have studied in the labs students are using today," he quips.

In fact, very few changes have been made to the science department since the building was constructed 40 years ago.

All of that will change this summer, when three of the school's six science labs will be completely refurbished.

Preliminary drawings were presented to the school board earlier this spring, and Director of Education Michele Arbour reports that they were enthusiastically received.

She points out that the school draws 1,200 students from a large feeder area.

"They deserve the best learning environment," Arbour declares.

The new state-of-the-art science labs will be phase one of a project that will completely revamp the entire department within a year. If funding is available, the project may also include a greenhouse to support the school's hands-on learning programs.

Adam notes that the renovations are the result of a long renovation journey that has included a new roof and gym floor and the ongoing installation of new windows throughout the building.

"It's exciting and it's very gratifying," he comments. "We appreciate the ongoing investments made by our board, and their commitment to accessing provincial funds to continually improve our facilities."

Our Mission Statement

Inspired by our rich heritage and challenged by the struggles of our past, we are an inclusive Catholic educational community called to express our mission as Church to pass on the Good News of Jesus Christ, to make it relevant in the world today, and to be the hope for the future.

Staff, students and parents can't wait to use new space at Lourdes



The new addition at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in Pembroke will be officially blessed before the end of this school year, and put to its regular uses next September.

In the meantime, however, the school community can't wait to get into the new rooms. Evening school council meetings are now held in the new library, where the school's impressive drum set often establishes a loud rhythm during daytime music classes. Special education teachers work with students in the quiet space of the future meeting room.

"The whole community is uplifted by these kinds of things," says Principal Kathryn Dupuis-Sharpe. "It's exciting for everyone to put these new rooms to good use."

"We'll be well set," she adds. "This is a giant step forward for our school community."

Students create a joyful noise in the new addition at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in Pembroke.

Students join the clean team when they go to Cathedral

At Cathedral Catholic School in Pembroke, cleanliness is a group effort. Custodian Mike Jones has enlisted the help of the entire school to keep things neat and tidy.

"They know what I do," he states with pride, adding that one young student recently confided that he, too, would like to be a custodian when he grows up.

There are two components to Cathedral's student caretaking program. The first, called "I Like My School", started in 2003 as a way to get students involved in school-wide recycling.

Teachers identify students who want to volunteer and parents' consent is sought.

Participants help Jones sort and manage the cardboard, paper, glass, tin and cartons. They are rewarded at the end of their month's work with a certificate and their photo in the local newspaper.

Other students are identified for the second arm of Jones' work with pupils—the Junior Custodian program.

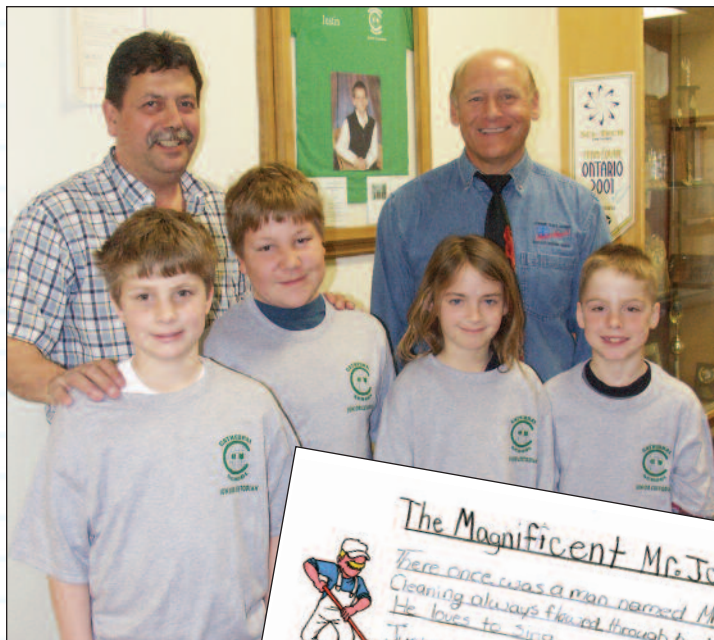
"I take them under my wing," the custodian explains.

These students work with him for 10 or 15 minutes each day, picking up shoes and chairs while he sweeps and helping with other daily tasks.

"They have to earn it, and they work hard for it," Principal Alfie Sicoli notes, explaining that the students participate on the understanding that they will keep their marks up, do their homework and cooperate in class.

The program was originally developed for Justin Schultz, a young student with lots of energy who wanted to help. Sadly, he was killed in a tragic motor accident before he could receive Cathedral's first Junior Custodian trophy.

T-shirts and trophies have been awarded ever since, in addition to the candies Jones keeps readily available for good workers.



Junior Custodians Noah Schroeder, Brandon Schalo, Destiny Desrochers and Jesse Kerr with Cathedral Custodian Mike Jones and Principal Alfie Sicoli.

