



## Good News Release

### **Arnprior-area schools launch 2015 with fundraising, healthy living and outdoor fun**

Winter fun days were in the works for RCCDSB schools in the Arnprior area in January, as students also focused on healthy living, fundraising and, of course, lots of classroom learning.

At St. John XXIII in Arnprior, students were still basking in the success of their pre-Christmas presentation of the *Hotel Bethlehem* musical, reports Principal Scott Nichol. “The Grade 6 students had the lead roles, but all students were involved in songs throughout the performance. It was standing-room only in our gym for two evening performances. What a time!”

Nichol says that some Grade 3, 4, and 5 students started preparing for a team competition in January that challenges students to be innovative and collaborative. “We will send two teams to the regional Destination Imagination tournament in March,” Nichol says.

St. John XXII also invited guest speakers to discuss various issues with students this winter. Harold Ross, an Algonquin elder, was invited to talk to Grade 3 to 6 students about the history of the Algonquin Nation. In early February, a guest speaker will talk to junior students about what it means to be global citizens.

Also in February, Grade 3 and 6 students will participate in the Canadian Assessment of Physical Literacy, a study that uses various samples of students to determine the skills and abilities that contribute to daily behaviour, motivation, confidence, knowledge and understanding in physical competence.

Plans also are under way for Winter Fun Day for primary students and a Ski Day at Calabogie for the junior students in late February, Nichol reports.

Meanwhile, at St. Joseph’s Catholic School in Arnprior, students were planning their Winter Carnival activities, including a ski trip for Grade 5 to 8 students, and swimming and bowling excursions for Grades 1 to 4.

St. Joseph is also focusing on the importance of student well-being in all areas, says Principal Mary-Lise Rowat. “We plan activities that include not only our physical health, but our overall health.” Last fall, Grade 7 students participated in a full day of boys’ and girls’ retreats focusing on positive self-image and friendship, led by Safe Schools Coordinator Sandy Brannan. In February, Brannan will work with Grade 8 students on Internet safety and positive choices in the digital world. Rebecca Paulsen, the RCCDSB’s Mental Health Lead, also is working with two Grade 8 classes and one junior class to pilot the new Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Corporation (EOCCC) Mental Health Curriculum, spreading out lessons throughout the school year, Rowat says.

As well, an OPP officer will deliver the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program to Grade 6 students, one session a week over a period of 10 weeks, Rowat says.

Members of the Catholic Women’s League from both Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. John Chrysostom parishes also are visiting St. Joseph’s classes monthly to teach about the lives of the saints, Rowat says. “As well, our Grade 7 and 8 students join Father John Burchat and the parish community of St. John Chrysostom every Friday morning at Mass. They also will participate in the NET faith-based retreats in May of this year,” she reports.

At St. Joseph's Elementary School in Calabogie, students have been getting ready for skiing lessons. "We have been fundraising since November in order to participate in a four-week ski clinic offered by the Calabogie Peaks Resort," reports Principal Rory Donohue. "The students, staff, school council and parents raised more than \$1,300 to pay for three lessons (on February 5, 11 and 19) and the full ski day on February 26. We believe that, in addition to teaching the kids the skills required to ski, the program will instill in them the confidence to face challenges and overcome obstacles."

Donohue adds that iPad and Chromebook technology continue to be integrated into everyday studies to enhance student learning in all classrooms at St. Joseph's.

The mathematics focus in St. Joseph's primary class is on data management and how it relates to everyday lives, reports Donohue. The study of narrative writing in language is brought to life by creating props and acting out stories by favourite authors.

The Grade 2/3 class is really enjoying their author study of Robert Munsch, Donohue adds. "They are going to send him a letter at the end of our unit with new ideas for his next book."

As well, St. Joseph's teaching staff has been attending workshops with mathematics education expert Dr. Marian Small "and the amazing RCCDSB Program Team," Donohue reports. "There are lots of great discussions around growth mindset in math and a great deal of 'Math Talk' going on in all of the classrooms. It is great to see the students engaged in math inquiry they feel is 'fun' and 'interesting'."

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