

# Catholic Community Newsletter



COMPLIMENTS OF THE BRUCE-GREY CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SPRING 2010



Durham students paint yellow fish at storm drain.

## Bruce-Grey Catholic schools enjoy close partnership with Conservation Authority

FOR over a quarter of a century the Saugeen Conservation Authority has been providing safety and environmental education programs to students in Bruce and Grey Counties, including the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board.

"Over the years, the Conservation Authority has worked closely with our teachers in developing relevant and interesting programs for our students," said Bruce MacPherson, Director of Education. "Most are 'hands-on' and are delivered in our own classrooms, or outdoors at one of the Authority's conservation areas."

Nancy Griffin is the Authority's

Conservation Education Coordinator. She has been with the Authority for 21 years and has "had the opportunity to build some 50 education programs for students of all ages."

One of the Authority's first public education programs was its Maple Syrup demonstration which started some 35 years ago. Today, it's offered to Kindergarten to Grade 3 students at its Saugeen Bluffs Conservation Area.

"Floodwaters and You", a program on flood and ice safety and the danger of fast-flowing rivers, began in 1987 and is offered to over 2000 Kindergarten to Grade 8 students each spring.

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## Literacy Camps to be held again this year

THE Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board will host Literacy Adventure Camps at several locations again this summer for children entering Grades 1, 2, 3, or 4.

The camps will be held at St. Joseph's School in Port Elgin,

Mother Teresa School in Walkerton, and St. Basil's School in Owen Sound. Two sessions are planned, August 9 to 13 and August 16 to 20.

St. Anthony's School in Kincardine will host the camps August 16 to 20 and August 23 to 27.

## Walkerton to Haiti Sacred Heart High School supports Haiti water project

PRESENTATION at Walkerton's Sacred Heart High School to mark the 10th anniversary of the Walkerton "water crisis" provided the spark that launched an international fundraising project at the school.

Local clean water activist Bruce Davidson talked to the students about the Walkerton water crisis of ten years ago and what has happened since.

He told the students that he had been at a Water Source Protection Committee meeting and "got talking about the earthquake in Haiti and one of the most critical needs of Haitians – clean water.

"We asked ourselves, what do Walkerton and Haiti have in common? No clean water.

"We in Walkerton had a small taste of the consequences of not having potable water."

Clean water in Haiti is a priority, said Mr. Davidson. "We

have to ensure Haitians are well enough to succeed in their lives."

The Walkerton group, he said, looked at working with Life Water Canada, which has been drilling in Haiti for some time. Coincidentally, said Mr. Davidson, the President of Life Water Canada, Jim Gehrels is from Walkerton.

"There is so much to be done in Haiti," he said, "including drilling new wells and repairing old ones, making sand filters, siting washrooms to keep them away from water sources. The organization also hires local Haitians wherever possible."

The discussion has since moved into action with the establishment of a series of projects in Haiti and a target of \$40,000 in donations from the citizens and businesses of Walkerton.

"A fitting way to honour the loss of life," said Mr. Davidson, is to save lives."

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Return Canadian undeliverable addresses to:  
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Hanover ON N4N 3A1

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# Director's Message: Home, School and Parish

AS the 2009-2010 academic school year comes to an end, I am filled with awe and gratitude for all the wonderful learning opportunities that have been provided for our students this school year. Upon reflection, it is clear that the partnership between home, school, and parish is the main ingredient of this recipe for success.

We continue to remain focused on our Board Strategic Plan's four key areas of effort: Catholicity, Communication, Effective Learning Environment, and Organizational Culture. Each of the committees representing the four key areas has representation from all employee groups.

The Catholicity Committee was very active throughout the school year. We were pleased to work with some very energetic individuals/groups while celebrating our faith through: hosting our Diocesan Mass, participating in numerous social justice opportunities, designing our Virtues Calendar, and preparing for Catholic Education Week. Our Board Leadership Committee has enjoyed sharing the history of Catholic education with staff and community members.

Thanks to the members of our School Councils and the District Parent Involvement Committee who have supported our students and staff throughout the school year. Your interest and participation in our schools contribute positively to our caring learning environment.

The efforts of our Parish Priests working with students and staff ensure our students receive a rich, faith filled learning experience. Our participation with our Parish Priests at the Deanery Meetings throughout the school year also supported our partnership in Catholic education.

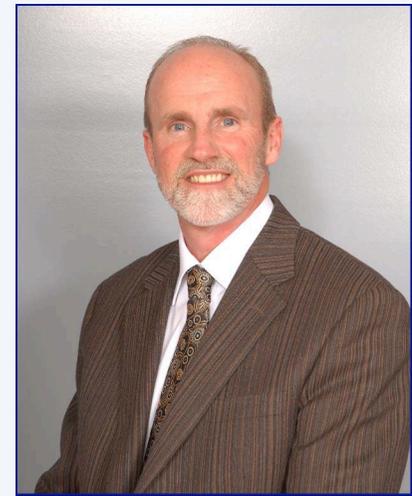
Our Communication Action Team has made significant progress this year in the area of communications, with lots of great ideas on the table for future development. The

implementation of our new Content Management System (website), development of our Communication Plan, and continued improvements to our First Class system as a tool for internal communication are just a few of the areas they have focused on. The team looks forward to next year, with several projects already identified as priorities, including a communication survey, updates and development of policies and procedures for communications, website guidelines, and webpages, and communication training for staff.

The Effective Learning Environment Committee has remained focused on raising the bar and closing the gap through continued work on oral language with critical friend Carmel Crevola and robust thinking tasks in math 3-6 through Ministry funding for our Math consultant. As part of the School Effectiveness Framework, we continue to help staff identify strengths and next steps in instruction while they continue to analyze and program for student success in writing. We have also increased our efforts in the area of assistive technology to help with closing the gap for students with special education needs.

We are pleased to have received approval for summer learning opportunities and we will be offering literacy camps and assistive technology camps this summer throughout Bruce Grey.

The Student Success Teams at each high school have remained focused on identifying students at risk of not graduating in response to the Ministry's directive. The student success teams have been tracking grade 11 and 12 students who are behind on their credit count, have not completed their community service hours and have not successfully completed the Grade 10 Literacy requirement. The team works with the students to put strategies in place to help the students succeed.



**Bruce MacPherson**  
*Director of Education*

The schools are moving forward using credit accumulation data, pass rates, and attendance data to inform their school improvement plans. We strive to remain above the provincial average in credit accumulation and compulsory course pass rates. The work that schools have done in the past year to improve student attendance has reduced the absenteeism rate.

The Organizational Culture Committee provided a variety of opportunities to celebrate our students and staff during this past year. The Applause Breakfast Program, Hello Baby Luncheon, Staff Appreciation Week and the Annual Long-Service and Retirement Dinner were events held throughout the year. The Wellness Team continues to provide programs that promote and support individual, spiritual and organizational well-being of all staff.

We continue our work in raising the bar, closing the gap, and maintaining confidence in publically funded Catholic education.

In the words of Emily Dickinson, "The possible's slow fuse is lit by the imagination." Thank you for Letting Your Light Shine for our students in the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board.

Have a wonderful summer.

## Students recognized at Applause Breakfast

THE Bruce-Grey Catholic DSB annual Applause Breakfast was held in Chesley in early May to recognize students – and their parents – for the ongoing contributions to their school communities. These 'unsung heroes' come to school every day, give it their best, add to the positive climate in our schools, and display our Catholic virtues of deep caring. Twenty-six students were recognized – with a certificate and an award.

"We believe that it is important to formally recognize the efforts and achievements of students whose presence and actions are foundational to our success," said Director of Education Bruce MacPherson.

### *The winners are:*

**Mary Immaculate School, Chepstow**  
Courtney Alexander  
Ashley Ernst  
**St. Peter & St. Paul's School, Durham**  
Gabrielle Glass / Christian Glass  
**Immaculate Conception School, Formosa**  
Joshua Konecny / Abigael Slosser  
**Holy Family School, Hanover**  
Emily Tichon / Kayla Spielmacher  
**St. Anthony's School, Kincardine**  
Sean Conlin / Caleb Palmer  
**Sacred Heart School, Mildmay**  
Taylor Goetz / Curtis Reuber  
**St. Basil's School, Owen Sound**

Taye Dickenson / Rylie Chapple  
**Notre Dame Catholic School, Owen Sound**  
Mariah Chapple / Alicia Cook  
**St. Joseph's School, Port Elgin**  
Tyler Blundell / Renée Myette  
**Sacred Heart School, Teeswater**  
Trent King / Raquel Sousa  
**Mother Teresa School, Walkerton**  
Olivia Markauskas  
Nicholas Kunkel  
**St. Mary's High School, Owen Sound**  
Angus Hilts / Hillary Weppler  
**Sacred Heart High School, Walkerton**  
Michael Cardillo / Sarah Johnson

### *The BGCD SB wishes to thank the following sponsors of Applause Breakfast:*

Advantage Sport Inc. / Allen-Hastings Ltd. / D.J. Peat Roofing Sheet Metal / Davidson Construction Inc. / Durrer's General Contracting / Emke Schaab / Excel Business Systems / Genivar / H. Bye Construction / Hicks Morley / Holst Office Supplies / Keele Cottrelle LLP / Kunkel Bus Lines / Martin's School Bus Transit / Montgomery Bus Lines / SRM Architects / Wayne's Electric / Wightman Telecom.

# Students from Bruce-Grey Catholic high schools participate in mission trips to El Salvador and Dominican Republic

## St. Mary's High School students travel to El Salvador

NINE students from Owen Sound's St. Mary's High School spent two weeks at the Hogar del Nino orphanage in El Salvador working with children and adults with special needs.

The students prepared for the trip by attending meetings, discussing Jesus' mission amongst humanity, exploring the culture of El Salvador, and packing their luggage with Canadian souvenirs and supplies required by the orphanage.

During their stay, the students assisted the people at the orphanage and developed relationships with many of the orphans. Many of these individuals have been rescued from the streets and the



orphanage has become their home for life.

Since they returned, the students have shared their experiences at the school's Holy Thursday prayer service, at local churches, schools and in individual classes.

"It is evident that the students had a profound experience while

working at the orphanage," said St. Mary's Chaplain, Lydia Foch. "It ignited a faith within some that they didn't know was there, and fostered an appreciation for what is really important in life.

If one was to ask them of their understanding of God after this exposure, they no doubt would say that God exists at the orphanage,

**St. Mary's High School students who participated in the El Salvador experience:** Nathan Krulicki, Nathan Ayrheart, Charlotte Curley, Katie Ryan, Kendra Hargest, Katelyn Render Bianca Posthumus, Dylan Ritchie and Konrad Schnurr.

that God is love. It is a mission one has to experience individually to understand the paradox of meeting God in the lives of the humbled."

## Dominican Republic destination for Sacred Heart High School students

A team of 20 students from Walkerton's Sacred Heart High School spent two weeks this spring at the Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos orphanage in the Dominican Republic. The orphanage is located north of the city of San Pedro de Macoris on the Dominican's south coast.

During their stay the students helped build library and classroom shelves, sidewalks, an outdoor basketball court, planted several hundred fruit trees, roofed the kitchen storage container and slaughter house and painted murals. They also painted a prototype house that will be built in large numbers for the homeless in Haiti.

The students interacted with the orphans through sports and music and distributed donated

clothes, shoes, bedding and other items.

Through this experience "we learned that more important than all the material wealth are the relationships we share with other people in the world," said one student after returning from the trip. "We know from experience that true joy comes not from what we have but rather who we are with and who we become as we get to know others."

The students were accompanied by staff members Peter and Joy King.



## Hope – theme of Catholic Education Week

CATHOLIC Education: Rejoicing in Hope was the theme of this year's Catholic Education Week.

From May 2 to 7, the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board celebrated what Catholic education means to its students, the community and the province.

Being a faith-based education system, we embrace a hope that transcends our human hope and asks us to place our hope in the living God. Each day of the week was given a unique sub-theme: Hope in our Hearts, Hope in our Homes, Hope in our Schools, Hope in our Community and Hope in our World.

More than 200 people, representing staff, parents,

community members, parishioners, and clergy, attended the Board's fifth annual Catholic Education Week dinner in Walkerton. This year's speaker was Michael Way Skinner, a consultant in faith leadership and student engagement from the York Catholic DSB. Michael shared his thoughts and reflections on the theme of Rejoicing in Hope.

## Participate in the future of Catholic Education



Unless you are identified as an English Separate (Catholic) School Supporter you cannot vote for Catholic school trustees in the upcoming municipal elections and you are not counted as a supporter of Catholic Education in Ontario.

Your tax support does not automatically follow you when you move. Every time you relocate you must declare yourself as a Catholic school supporter. Check your property tax bill or property assessment notice.

To register, check or change your Direction of School Support call Paula Fahrer at the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board at 519-364-5820, ext. 239.

## Conservation Authority

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Other programs include:

► **DEER: Discover Energized Environmental Resources**

This program features 63 days of visits (one visit per school – Catholic and Public – per year) to such facilities as Bruce Power, Inglis Falls, and Headquarters Conservation Area. Bruce Power, through a major partnership with the SVCA, sponsors busing, program materials, facilities and Ms. Griffin's time and mileage to present the programs.

► **WREN: Watershed Resources Education Network**

This hands-on, curriculum-based program is presented in-class and at the conservation areas. The focus is on natural resources, outdoor skills and recreation, and includes such activities as orienteering, snowshoeing, and water and forest studies.

► **Earth Day**

Schools are encouraged to participate in Earth Day events through school visits and hands-on activities.

► **Grey Bruce Children's Water Festival**

Held at the end of September for Grade 4 students, the Festival features 35 different activities

covering water technology and water conservation. Many of the activities are "hosted" by secondary students.

► **Bruce Grey Forest Festival**

Only the second program of its kind in Ontario, the Forest Festival will be held this October at Allan Park between Hanover and Durham. Targeted to Grade 7 students, the curriculum-based program features information and activities on forest management, careers, forest conservation and stewardship, and invasive and endangered species.

► **Children's Safety Village**

Currently under construction at Headquarters Conservation Area near Hanover, the "village" will feature buildings and streets where children can learn and practice bicycle and fire safety, as well as where to go for help. Local police and fire services are involved in the project, which is sponsored by Bruce Power.

► **Yellow Fish Storm Drain Marking Program**

With Trout Unlimited Canada, the SVCA is working with Grade 4 students, beginning in the Durham area, to mark road storm drains as a reminder that whatever is put down a storm drain is not treated and goes right into our rivers and streams.

## Grad returns to system as a teacher

**A**MY Kieffer is one Bruce-Grey Catholic alumna who decided to return to her alma mater after completing her university career. Not as a student, but as a teacher.

"Amy represents a number of our graduates who have returned to our Board to begin or continue their teaching careers," said Director of Education, Bruce MacPherson. "I find that quite satisfying and a testament to the quality of education our Board provides."

Ms. Kieffer attended Mother Teresa School and Sacred Heart High School, both in Walkerton, before going on to the University of Waterloo where she received an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and English Literature. She received her Bachelor of Education degree from York University in Toronto.

Ms. Kieffer has spent her entire career as a Grade 7/8 teacher at Immaculate Conception School in Formosa where she has demonstrated that teaching is clearly a vocation, a calling to which she devotes her life.

As a Catholic teacher, she is dedicated to practicing and growing in her personal faith and in sharing that faith with her students. She always shows genuine care and concern for her students, knowing and honouring each one and serving their individual learning styles.

Understanding the connection between faith and life, Ms. Kieffer weaves gospel values and the teachings of the church into daily lessons, and constantly searches for new ways of inspiring students to embrace a life of faith and service.

Ms. Kieffer lives out Catholic social teaching through her commitment to social justice. She has participated in mission excursions to Mexico and South Africa, and has inspired her students and the community to



become involved in social justice.

With the assistance of the school's Student Council, parents and staff, Ms. Kieffer has launched numerous fund-raising activities which have built schools in Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Kenya through Free the Children.

She is a life-long member of Sacred Heart Parish in Walkerton and has served her parish through her involvement as a member of the RCIA team, the Parish renovation fundraising committee, and as commentator and lector at Sunday Eucharist.

Ms. Kieffer contributed to the Catholic Curriculum Cooperative's writing of the "Called to Change the World" resource for intermediate students. This series of lessons make the link from the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and those of the Religious Education and Family Life Curriculum, to the work of Free the Children.

A life-long learner, Ms. Kieffer puts new knowledge into practice in her classroom, and regularly mentors new teachers. She is also a member of the Board's Elementary Social Justice Committee.

Over the past seven years, she has been actively involved with the Ontario Catholic Teachers' Association as a school representative and unit treasurer.

With her Catholic faith, her commitment to her community, and her dedication to the cause of justice, Ms. Kieffer is truly an "awesome alumna" of the Bruce-Grey CDSB.

## Haiti Water Project

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Following the presentation at Sacred Heart High School, Student Trustee Bridget King, a Grade 12 student, and her friend Courtney Bushell decided to work with the student council to raise \$3,000 to go toward the Town's Haitian project.

"What makes this project particularly important to Courtney, is that she got sick during the water crisis and had to be airlifted to London where she was on dialysis

for a month," said Ms. King.

To press time the school has held a number of fundraising activities, including a barbeque at a rugby tournament, donated the proceeds of the school's production of "Fame", held a coin race, and collected donations at the Town's anniversary ceremony.

"Sacred Heart will literally own a well in Haiti," she said.

## Grade one students plant trees

**R**OSEMARIE Binkley's Grade 1 class at St. Peter and St. Paul's School in Durham raised more than \$200.00 to replace trees damaged by last year's tornado. The money went to the Durham Conservation Area to purchase a total of 220 trees.

Not only did the students raise the money, but they helped to



plant 167 of the cedar seedlings. "I'm very proud of my little Grade Ones," said Ms. Binkley. "They were eager to plant more!"

### Bruce-Grey Catholic Community Newsletter

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Community Newsletter attempts to provide an overview of the accomplishments, the challenges and the issues for the Bruce-Grey Catholic system as a whole.

Comments may be directed to: 519-364-5820  
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The Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board can issue tax receipts, in the full amount, for any financial donations made to its schools. Cheques should be made to the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board Charitable Trust and the name of the school should be noted on the memo line. Check to be sure – if your taxes are not directed to the Catholic school system, you can't vote for Catholic trustees on the next election.