

VOLUME 62 ISSUE 1

SPRING 2024

QFHSA NEWS

THE NEWSMAGAZINE FOR HOME AND SCHOOL MEMBERS

It's Puzzle
Time on our
Kids' Page!

*There's So Much to Do
When Spring Comes!*



Attend our 80th Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, May 29 on Zoom, p. 3

Celebrate the Year's Exceptional Volunteers
The QFHSA's Awards Luncheon on May 25, p. 5

Discover Home and Schools Near and Far
*Meet some local Home and School Associations,
p. 7-9; 19-23*



*The Quebec
Federation of
Home and School
Associations*

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is an independent, incorporated, not for profit volunteer organization dedicated to enhancing the education and general well-being of children and youth.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. promotes the involvement of parents, students, educators, and the community at large in the advancement of learning and acts as a voice for parents.

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A huge thank you to the local Home and School Associations that shared their photos for this issue.

We welcome your letters!

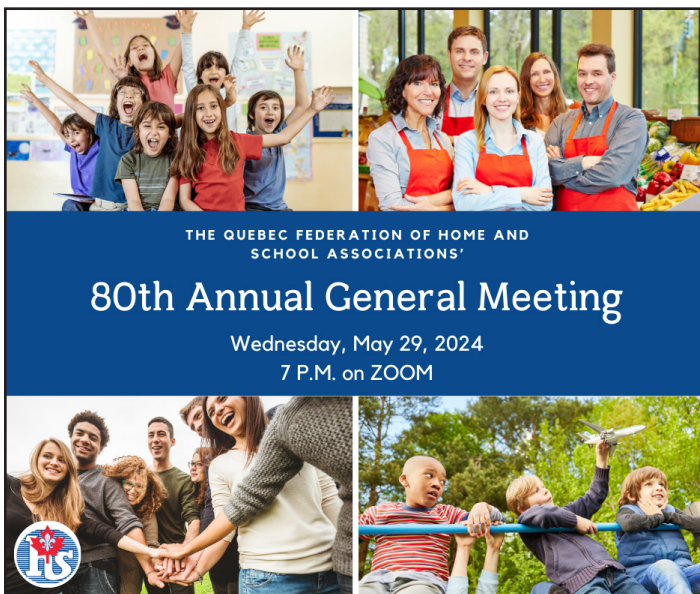
You are invited to send us your comments/suggestions on this edition of the QFHSA News by email to news@qfhsa.org.

The QFHSA's 2024 Annual General Meeting

80 Years Strong: Building Unity, Strengthening Community

ON THE EVENING OF WEDNESDAY, MAY 29TH, the QFHSA will be holding the 80th edition of its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Zoom. The meeting unites QFHSA board and committee members, staff, representatives from our local Home and School Associations, and guests from the community. On that night, registration will begin at 6:45 p.m. The meeting will get underway at 7 p.m.

This will be the fifth year our Annual General Meeting will take place online. Introduced during the early years of the COVID pandemic, the online format has proven to be convenient and effective for organizers and attendees alike.



At this year's meeting, the following will be discussed and voted on:

- The Auditor's Financial Review
- The Proposed Budget for 2025
- The Proposed Resolutions for 2024
- The Proposed Slate of Directors for the 2024-25 QFHSA Board of Directors
- The QFHSA's Book of Reports 2023-24 containing information on the activities of the federation's committees and staff

Continued on the next page



Local Home & School Associations: *The QFHSA Needs You!*

As a member of the federation, each local Home and School Association is mandated to participate in the federation's Annual General Meeting. This is one of the commitments our local associations make when they renew their QFHSA memberships each year.

Please appoint one delegate for the meeting as soon as possible along with an alternate delegate. It is essential that the federation has quorum. Remember that the delegate and alternate your Home and School appoints do not have to be members of your executive.

Once you have chosen your delegates, follow these two steps:

1. Register Your Delegate and Alternate Delegate for the Event

The registration form is available on our website. From the Home page, select "Events" in the left menu, and then "Annual General Meeting." You can also use this link: <https://forms.gle/GArv57zc1oRjnJbu5>

2. Complete the Voting Delegate and Discretionary Voting Powers Forms

These two forms are also available on our website in the "Annual General Meeting" section. You can also use these links:

Voting Delegate Form: <https://bit.ly/48PAfcc>
Discretionary Voting Powers Form: <https://bit.ly/3valtKu>

Download the forms, fill them in, scan them, and email them to Membership Services Coordinator Marlyn Brownrigg at marlynbrownrigg@qfhsa.org.
Thank you.

QFHSA's Annual General Meeting

Continued from the previous page

QFHSA Resolutions: *An Important Opportunity for the QFHSA to Advocate for Students, Parents, and our Community*

Each year, the QFHSA's committees closely follow developments in Quebec education and politics that will affect parents and students. This leads to the creation of resolutions that reflect the federation's stance on the issues of the day.

This year, the QFHSA's Resolutions Subcommittee is preparing the following proposed resolutions for our federation in 2024:



French Instruction Availability:

Delay the implementation of the French-language requirements to graduate for secondary and post-secondary students until there is a sufficient supply of qualified teachers, instructors, and professors.



The Far-Reaching Effects of Tuition Fee Increases on Quebec's English Universities:

For a host of reasons, the Quebec government must reverse its decision to increase the university tuition fees for out-of-province students.



Permanent English Voters' List for School Board Elections:

When they turn 18 years of age, individuals who attended

public schools in the English sector should be registered automatically on the permanent English Voters' List.



Provincial In-School Food Program:

Advocate for a fully funded provincial in-school program designed to reduce food insecurity for children and youth across Québec. Support legislation and provincial policies geared to that purpose.



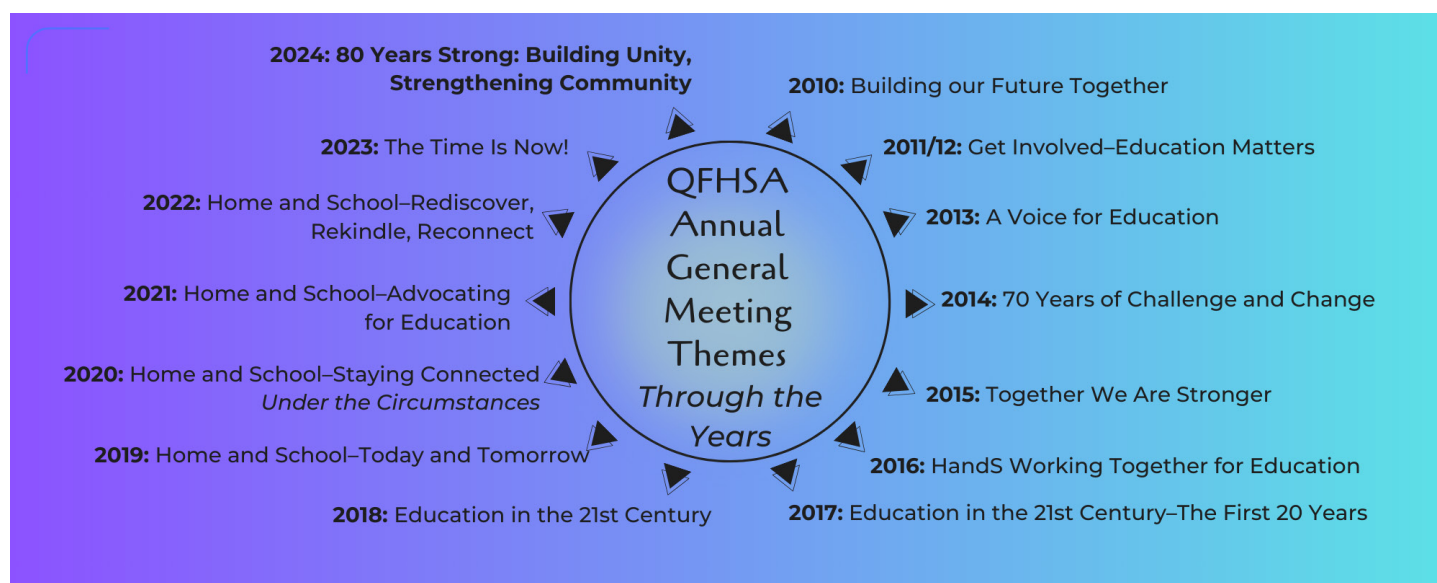
Cellphone Ban:

Support the Quebec government's ban restricting cell-phone use in the classroom. However, recommend that the focus be placed on promoting students' responsible use of cellphones instead of penalties.

In late March, local Home and School Associations received the draft resolutions for consultation in advance of the Annual General Meeting. **It is very important for local Home and School Associations to discuss the draft resolutions at a Home and School meeting.** This gives delegates to the QFHSA Annual General Meeting the information they need to accurately represent their local Home and School's position on each resolution.

We look forward to seeing your Home and School on May 29th!

Karen Henchey,
Communications Officer





In Praise of Generosity

A Message from the QFHSA's President

RUTH GOTTESMAN, A FORMER PROFESSOR and the 93-year-old widow of a Wall Street financier, donated \$1 billion dollars to cover the tuition fees of all future students of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, located in the Bronx Borough of New York City. It was an astounding gesture that will benefit students for many years to come.

Now, you and I surely don't have that kind of money to give to our local Home and School Associations, schools, or our children, but we do have other stuff.

We have wisdom to give to our children so they can follow safe paths through life.

We have love to embrace them when they stumble and fall.

We have knowledge to share with our children, our colleagues, our friends, and our communities to help us all live together in peace.

We have the experience to teach and mentor new Home and School members.

We make the time to volunteer for school activities and events.

We do a lot.

Here is another thing that caring parent volunteers can do: **They can join the QFHSA's board of directors.** We meet one Saturday a month (usually online) to discuss educational issues as well as the provincial and federal laws that affect the education of our children. We work on presentations, webinars, conferences, regional councils, community round tables, and more. We receive reports from the chairs of our internal and external committees. We produce resolutions and press releases to present to governments and communities. Most importantly, we advocate and speak for parents and our children.

The board of directors is always looking for new voices and new ideas, and that is where you, our wise and

dedicated parent volunteers come in. Won't you consider joining our team? Please do not hesitate to contact me or the QFHSA office if you would like more information or if you have any questions.

Stay safe.

Rosemary Murphy

It's a Date!



*Buy your tickets today
for the QFHSA's
2024 Awards Luncheon*

Invite your local Home and School Association's award winners and volunteers to lunch!

Tickets for the event are \$35 per person. You can sign up for the luncheon on our website (qfhsa.org). From the Home Page, select "Events," then "Awards Banquet." You can also use this link: <https://forms.gle/BkWGmURGZNvPNKur6>

Your response is requested by Friday, May 10th.

P.S.: Don't forget to submit your nominations for this year's Golden Torch, Unsung Hero, and Newsletter awards. *The deadline for submissions is April 15.*

Staying Strong

A Message from the Executive Director



THIS YEAR’S THEME for the QFHSA Annual General Meeting and the Fall Conference will be:

**80 Years Strong: Building Unity,
Strengthening Community**

In 2019, we celebrated our 75th year with a special banquet at Macdonald College, site of Quebec’s first Home and School meeting in 1919. Now, in 2024, we can celebrate 80 years of still going strong. To our immense relief, we are seeing Home and Schools grow again and “find their feet.”

The need for community is as strong as ever. Home and School has always been a great way for young mothers and fathers to be active with other parents and with kids in the same grades, working together on projects that benefit everyone. Many of those friendships will last a lifetime (and many have the matching scars to prove it).

It is easy to get caught up in your own little bubble and see the world through rose-coloured glasses, but turn around and you will see the dark clouds looming on the horizon.

It is so disheartening to see a provincial government that does not take the contributions of teachers, nurses, and other essential service providers seriously or value them as they should.

A government that will give themselves a 30% salary increase in one year, but offer only 17.4% over 5 years to teachers is a government with the wrong set of priorities.

A government that will point to the Appeal Court ruling to uphold Law 21 as an indication that the law has been proven essential to the protection of the values of Quebec culture is a government that is dangerous. It was a great disappointment to hear that the law was considered constitutional given that Law 21 infringes on the cultural values of the minority English-speaking community.

But Home and School remains a strong institution, even in the 21st century, with values that endure—values that promote unity, community, and working together. We look forward to hearing of your highs and lows, triumphs and disappointments, always confident in your ability to work together to keep your school community vibrant. We will celebrate together on May 25th in person for the Awards Ceremony Luncheon and on May 29th virtually for the Annual General Meeting.

The wind may be howling outside, but our house stands firm.

80 years strong!

Carol Meindl

Image from Adobe Stock

Dates to Remember	
Saturday, April 27 9 a.m.	Board of Directors Meeting (On Zoom)
Saturday, May 25 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	QFHSA Awards Luncheon at Novotel Montreal Airport
Wednesday, May 29 7 p.m.	QFHSA's 80th Annual General Meeting (On Zoom)
Wednesday, June 19	Deadline for Submissions for the "Focus on the Locals" section of the <i>QFHSA News</i> —Summer Edition

Getting to Know You

This article is part of an occasional series profiling local Home and School Associations. Of course, every Home and School is unique, reflecting its own specific set of circumstances. Some have the mandate to provide extensive in-school programming, others focus on boosting school spirit and raising needed funds. All make an important impact in their school communities. Here is Queen Elizabeth's story.

Small, But So Mighty!

The Queen Elizabeth School Community, Western Quebec School Board

IF YOU DRIVE ABOUT AN HOUR NORTH from Hull along Route 105, you will reach the town of Kazabazua. Located in the Algonquin First Nations territory, the town's name comes from the Algonquin language and means "underground river." Kazabazua (or Kaz for short) is home to a little over 1000 residents and Queen Elizabeth Elementary, one of the newest Home and Schools in the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations.

The rural community of Kazabazua has had a school since the early 1900s, and there has been a school in the current site since 1953. However, the building you see today was built in 1997 after the previous one was destroyed by fire.



Queen Elizabeth Elementary currently serves 60 families, and the school's 92 students are bused in from about a 50-kilometre radius. But do not let the school's small size deceive you. This is one mighty and vibrant school community, as Ashley Peck, Queen Elizabeth's Home and School president, explained in a recent interview with the QFHSA. It is a very

caring school community, too. One where parents know each other and their children and watch out for one another. One where School Principal Alana Albert makes it her mission to provide every child with a free wholesome breakfast each morning as well as free lunches once or twice a week. One where children in the school's daycare are able to go on trips thanks to monetary donations from parents. And one that has sent 50 children to Disney World through the "Dreams Take Flight" organization.

Queen Elizabeth's Home and School: How It All Began

Queen Elizabeth's Home and School was formed in early 2023 to answer a particular need: transportation. In the Fall of 2022, parents were driving students in their own vehicles to a soccer tournament, but for legal reasons, this type of arrangement had to come to an end. This meant that the school community would need to hire buses to bring students to away activities and special events, and this would cost money, of course.

During the December holidays, Ashley got thinking about how she could support the school, and she enlisted the help of some parents to explore their options. This is when Principal Albert suggested the group form a Home and School Association, which would allow parents to raise

funds specifically earmarked for their school community. With support and encouragement from Principal Albert and Maggie Holmes, longtime Home and School president at neighbouring St. Michael's High School, Ashley and the small group of parents jumped into the adventure of creating the school's first ever Home and School.

Jumping into Action

And what an adventure it has been! Within weeks, Ashley and her fellow volunteers organized a movie night for the children. She describes the impact of that first-ever Home and School event: "I think hosting this type of event is important for our tiny school, as there aren't many opportunities for outings in our town."



That first movie night was followed by dances (for some of the children, their first ever!) and plenty more fun. Fun, after all, was exactly what the Home and School team wanted to provide for the students at Queen Elizabeth.

Continued on the next page

Getting to Know You

Small, But So Mighty!

Continued from the previous page

Boosting Student Well-Being, One Event at a Time

Children are at the forefront of everything the Home and School does. Through their activities and events, the team strives to lift up, support, and enrich students' lives.



Ashley explains that when planning their fundraising activities, Queen Elizabeth strives to get the students involved as much as possible. This way, two goals are accomplished: funds are raised and a sense of community grows within the student population.

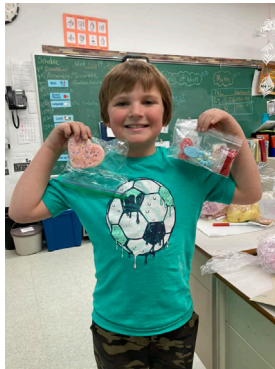
Student participation helped to make the Spring '23 plant and bake sale the success it was. They grew tomato plants, helped to set up for the event, and sold their plants at the municipal gazebo just across the street from the school.



For the recent Candygram fundraiser, students purchased candies, cookies, lollipops, cotton candy, etc., for their

classmates. All followed Principal Albert's important rule: "If you give to one, you have to give to everyone in your class."

Participating in Queen Elizabeth's Home and School activities is also giving students a sense of belonging, of being part of something bigger than themselves. To Ashley, it means "...understanding you are not alone in this world and there are other people, and you can help them." That sentiment motivated 11-year-old Pearl, for example, to help package 300 cotton candy gifts for the Candygram fundraiser.



Like all Home and School volunteers, the group at Queen Elizabeth are seeing firsthand how much the children appreciate what they do. Ashley tells the story of meeting a child in the school hallway who proudly informed her that he had just learned to read. Right then and there, he read her a storybook, his way of showing his appreciation for Ashley, his new friend.

Ashley and the team sometimes measure the success of an event not by the money it raised, but by the joy it made. During a recent outing to the sugar shack supported by Home and School, Ashley asked one



of the younger students why she was giving a thumbs up to the sky. Her answer: "I'm just giving a thumbs up for a good day." What wonderful words to hear and what a great new slogan for the Home and School movement: *We make good days!*

According to Ashley, the new Home and School could not have come at a better time for Queen Elizabeth. The long years of the COVID pandemic have been difficult for the students intellectually, emotionally, and socially. The Home and School's initiatives are reinforcing the message to students that they are getting back on track, that things are getting better. It is bringing positivity after a dark time.

Outside the School and Into the Community

Queen Elizabeth Home and School closed out the 2022-23 school year with a community bazaar, an ambitious and fantastically successful event. Despite worries that rain or smoke from the wildfires would jeopardize the event, it went off without a hitch.



At the bazaar, over 20 local vendors sold their wares, the students organized a garage sale, and best of all—the town came out in full force to support the event. Thinking back on that day, Ashley writes: "The response was massive for Kazabazua, we truly felt the benevolence of our citizens, who were dropping

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Getting to Know You

Small, But So Mighty!

Continued from the previous page

off donations left and right for the students to sell... Our small town loved it and we keep getting asked if we will do another.” Ashley explains that in addition to raising funds for the school, the event did a good job of publicizing Home and School to parents and the community alike.

For the 2023-24 school year, Queen Elizabeth’s goal has been to partner with the municipality and the Kazabazua Fire Department. In this collaboration, the town, fire department, and Home and School share knowledge, volunteers, and resources for the benefit of the entire community. Not only have these partnerships been made, but they are thriving.

In October, Home and School ran a first aid kit fundraiser, timing the event with Fire Awareness Month. The Kazabazua Fire Department, located across the street from the school, joined in the initiative by providing tours of the fire house and demonstrations of emergency scenarios. The students learned about fire safety (and apparently quite a few went home and reminded their parents to change the smoke detector batteries...).

When Home and School approached Kazabazua Mayor Robert Bergeron about a possible collaboration, the mayor was enthusiastic. The partnership has made it possible for Home and School to do even more for the school and the larger community. With the municipality’s blessing, Home and School held a Valentine’s Dance in the town’s hall that was open to all the children and families of the town, not just the Queen Elizabeth community.

The Benefits of Being a Home and School

Creating a Home and School was a new challenge for the parents at Queen Elizabeth, but a rewarding one. The team has learned a lot in a very short time—everything from running meetings to event planning, budgets, and more. The team has found that being part of a federation of Home and School Associations helps everyone stay organized, focused on their goals, and mindful of their roles and responsibilities as members of a province-wide federation.



Guiding Principles: Know Your Community, Appreciate Your Volunteers

From the early days, the Queen Elizabeth team has understood the value of knowing their own school community and its needs. This helps guide the team’s decision making. Ashley sees the value of going with your intuition; it will often set you on the right path.

Having participated in the creation of a Home and School and witnessed how volunteers made it happen, Ashley has gained a profound appreciation for her fellow volunteers. She marvels at how each person brings a unique set of skills to the table and makes an important contribution. Of her volunteers, she observes, “Even if you can give a lot or a little, you are still giving a lot.”

You can expect a warm welcome, great camaraderie with other adults (without kids), and sometimes even a nice meal when you attend a Queen Elizabeth Home and School meeting. After a recent meeting, a volunteer said to Ashley, “I needed that... to go out and talk to another parent.”

Although the Home and School currently has nine members, more parents are quick to lend a hand at events. Ashley believes that with time, more parents will get involved, especially when they see what Home and School is all about (and all it is able to accomplish).

What is next for Queen Elizabeth Home and School? Volunteers are looking forward to the installation of a gazebo purchased with Home and School funds. It will provide a nice shady area for the children to learn and play.

In a little over a year, Queen Elizabeth Home and School has accomplished much. The moral of this story: Have a Home and School and a gang of dedicated volunteers and you will travel far (literally and figuratively).



Congratulations to the entire Home and School team, the school administration, and the town of Kazabazua for their tremendous work. A special thank you to Home and School President Ashley Peck for sharing Queen Elizabeth’s lovely story.

Karen Henchey,
Communications Officer

News for You



What Role Has the Tyranny of the Majority Played in the Quebec National Assembly's Passing of Bills 21, 40, and 96?

A Commentary By Brian Rock

AS FAR BACK AS 1859, John Stuart Mill described the tyranny of the majority as an inherent weakness to majority rule in his book *On Liberty*. It occurs when the majority of an electorate pursues exclusively its own objectives at the expense of those in the minority factions. This results in oppression of minority groups.

When the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) government was first elected on October 1st, 2018, it won a majority of 74 seats in the 125-seat Québec National Assembly. At the time, there were four major political parties in the running. The CAQ won 59.2% of the seats with a total of 37.42% of the popular vote.

Given that the overall voter turnout was 66.45%, the CAQ was supported by only 24.87% of those eligible to vote who turned out to cast ballots.

At the last Québec general election of October 3rd, 2022, the CAQ returned to power with an increased majority. CAQ candidates were elected in 90 of the 125 seats up for election. With five major political parties in the running, the CAQ won 72% of the seats while attracting 40.98% of the popular vote. Taking into consideration that the overall voter turnout was 66.15% this time around, the CAQ was supported by only 27.11% of those who voted in the election.

Collective rights, also known as group rights, are rights held by a group as a whole rather than individually by its members. In contrast, individual rights are rights held by individual people even if they are group differentiated, as most rights are. They remain individual rights if the right holders are the individuals themselves. Historically, group rights have been used both to infringe upon and facilitate individual rights, and the concept remains controversial.

During the last 5½ years, the CAQ government has consistently resorted to the usage of closure and the imposition of the Notwithstanding Clause. CAQ cabinet ministers are never reluctant to “not withstand” sections of

the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and even the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms of Québec.

Stay tuned. As the CAQ pieces of legislation work their way sluggishly through the Québec court system, we will be hearing more of the judicial wranglings over Bill 21: ***An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State***, passed in June of 2019; Bill 40: ***An Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance***, passed in February of 2020; and Bill 96: ***An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec***, passed in June of 2022.

There is a way to shorten this process. The Honourable Arif Virani, M.P., Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, possesses the legal authority to refer Bills 21 or 40 or 96 or even all of them to the Supreme Court of Canada via a direct reference to verify whether they are constitutional under Canadian law.

Wouldn't that be a wonderful birthday present—say for Canada Day, July 1st, 2024!

Brian ROCK, B.A., M.Ed., is a retired school principal and a former secondary teacher of English Language Arts and the History of Québec who now resides in Aylmer, Québec.

*Brian chairs the **COalition For the Future of English Education in Québec (COFFEE-QC)** as well as the **Committee for the Enhancement of the Curriculum of the History of Québec (ComeECH-QC)**.*

A past president of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. (QFHSA), Brian recently returned as a member of its board of directors. He chairs the QFHSA Nominations Committee and the QFHSA Resolutions Subcommittee. He is also the vice-chair of the QFHSA Rights Subcommittee.

Note: The opinions expressed in this commentary are those of the author and not necessarily those of the QFHSA.

News from the Board

Spotlight on the QFHSA Board of Directors: *Debi Brown*



Debi's Home and School story begins back in 1986, the year her daughter attended Grade 1 at Aylmer Elementary. In 1988, then a mother of two, Debi attended the Home and School's annual general meeting, and shortly afterwards volunteered for the vacant treasurer position. This was the beginning of an extensive and incredibly rewarding volunteer journey that continues to this day.

At the local level, Debi is currently a member of Lord Aylmer Elementary Home and School. She returned to Lord Aylmer about 10 years ago when her granddaughter (now in Grade 10) attended the school. Now in the "grandmother membership category," Debi is happy to support the team, drawing upon her years of experience.

At the provincial level, Debi has been and continues to be an exceptional volunteer. She has held several executive positions with the QFHSA, including board president, treasurer, and most recently, secretary. This kind of dedication does not go unnoticed. In 1998, she received the QFHSA's Leslie N. Buzzell Award in recognition of her outstanding service to the QFHSA. Her most recent tenure on the board began in 2015.

In addition to her board duties, Debi sits on the Education Subcommittee as well as the Constitution/By-Laws Committee.

There have been many fruitful collaborations with fellow volunteers over the years. Debi fondly remembers her work on the PALS and Literacy programs, which were Canada-wide initiatives.

At the federal level, Debi lent her time and energy to the Canadian Home and School Federation (CHSF). She travelled the country, met Home and School representatives from the 10 provinces and learned a great deal about the dynamics of the different provincial government/Home and School

relationships. Her work with CHSF earned her a lifetime membership with the group.

The years have brought many memories... including that time when, as a parent commissioner, she chaired the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Western Quebec School Board until a chair could be elected.

With her long history with the Home and School movement, Debi has witnessed a lot of change in education and the impact of the Quebec government's educational reforms dating back to Bill 22 and Bill 101.

From her early days with her local Home and School to the present, Debi's unwavering commitment to Home and School comes from her firm belief in the importance of education.

As you may have guessed, Debi Brown is an excellent person to have on a board of directors, a fact the QFHSA has known for years.

Thank you, Debi!
(And see you at the next board meeting!)



Join Debi Brown and the Rest of the Team!

Recruitment Continues for the QFHSA Board of Directors

The QFHSA Board of Directors welcomes new voices!
Won't you consider joining the team of volunteers that supports the Home and School movement at the provincial level?

The board of directors meets about eight times a year, usually online. Being part of a board of directors can be a very rewarding experience.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining us, please call the QFHSA office or email info@qfhsa.org.



Montreal area board members at the QFHSA's March 16th hybrid board meeting. There was time for some St. Patrick's Day fun, too!

News for You



We Need to Have One Voice

The QCGN and Quebec's English-Speaking Community

THE QFHSA OFFICE WAS HUMMING WITH ACTIVITY on the morning of Saturday, March 16th. The board of directors held its first ever hybrid meeting and we welcomed a couple of guests *in person!* They were Eva Ludvig, president of the board of directors of the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN), and Sylvia Martin-Laforge, the organization's director general. Although the QFHSA has been a member of the QCGN since its inception, the presentation was an excellent refresher on the non-profit organization.

Since its creation in 1995, the QCGN has been dedicated to supporting Quebec's English-speaking minority. In recent years, the organization has engaged in a process of renewing and re-visioning its *raison d'être*. This led the QCGN to create the following definition of the community it serves:

English-speaking Quebec is a recognized, respected, and diverse linguistic minority that is an integral contributor to the development of all aspects of Quebec and Canadian society.

It is an important validation of our community: we belong, and we have a role to play in this province and in this country. The QCGN defines its own role as leading and representing English-speaking Quebecers and their institutions, organizations, and communities through "dialogue, public awareness and advocacy." The QCGN believes that a strong community is an engaged community. Engagement, in turn, leads to sharing and mutual support, and this leads

to advocacy, which strengthens community rights.



From left to right, Eva Ludvig, Rosemary Murphy, and Sylvia Martin-Laforge

What are the benefits of joining the QCGN? There are many, according to Ludvig and Martin-Laforge. To name a few, member organizations can have access to the latest news; boost their organization's visibility; get their concerns heard; join in consultations; connect with like-minded people; and learn about funding opportunities. Today, the QCGN has 42 community group members. Individual memberships are also available. Martin-Laforge regularly reaches out to groups and individuals, inviting them to join the network. She recognizes the importance of building a solid membership, one that reflects the diversity that is Quebec's English-speaking minority.

Ludvig explains that the QCGN has traditionally focused its attention on community development. However, the QCGN is now also dedicating a good deal of time to advocating for Quebec's English-speaking community. This is necessary given the province's current political environment.

Ludvig explains, "We want our rights to be protected, of course, and we want respect as full-fledged citizens." You will find the QCGN lending its voice to the opposition to Bill 96, Law 21, and more.

Ludvig and Martin-Laforge both note that while the English-speaking community has always been diverse, there are common causes that all can rally behind. We are stronger when we are united and speak in one voice, and the QCGN helps to make that happen. There are also common causes (the economy, for example) that everyone living in Quebec can get behind.

There are always more bridges to build, more common causes to find. Whether it is working within the English community, collaborating with fellow Quebecers on those common issues, or reaching out to the Franco-phone minority in the rest of Canada, the QCGN is keeping very busy.

Through their many initiatives, the QCGN works to build a society that is open and inclusive, a society that recognizes the rights of all citizens, whether they belong to the English-speaking minority or the French-speaking majority. For more information on the QCGN, visit the group's website (<https://qcgnc.ca/>).

Thank you to the QCGN for close to 30 years of advocacy in Quebec—and Eva Ludvig and Sylvia Martin-Laforge for spending part of their weekend with us!

Karen Henchey,
Communications Officer

A Summary Report on the February 26th Provincial Round Table on Promoting Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination in Quebec *Prepared by Brian Rock*

THE QUEBEC FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS Inc. (QFHSA), in collaboration with the COalition For the Future of English Education in Québec (COFFEE-QC) and the Committee for the Enhancement of the Curriculum of the History of Québec (ComeECH-QC), presented a virtual round table meeting to promote anti-racism and anti-discrimination in Québec. A total of 28 people participated in the event, which took place on the evening of Monday, February 26th.

The round table began shortly after 7 p.m. when QFHSA President **Rosemary Murphy** welcomed everyone and thanked them for being present to support this important topic. Rosemary then introduced Brian Rock, chair of COFFEE-QC and ComeECH-QC, the co-sponsors of the event.

Brian Rock read the land acknowledgment declaration, explained the rules for posing questions, and introduced the moderator for the evening, Linton Garner.

Moderator **Linton Garner** is the executive director of the CEGEP Heritage College Foundation in Gatineau, a commissioner with the Western Quebec School Board, a member of Public Safety Canada's Cross-Cultural Round Table on Security, and the immediate past president of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations.

The event featured six panelists:

- **Alix Adrien**, the president of the Quebec Board of Black Educators and a director at the Quebec Community Groups Network
- **Michael P. Farkas**, the longtime director of the Youth in Motion Program of Little Burgundy, Montreal



- **Réginald Fleury**, a consultant with the Office of the Commissioner for the Fight Against Racism and Systemic Discrimination, Ville de Montréal
- **Myrna Lashley**, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry at McGill University and an adjunct researcher with the Culture and Mental Health Research Unit of the Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research
- **Allison Saunders**, commissioner with the Lester B. Pearson School Board
- **Letitia Taylor**, chair of the CEGEP Heritage College Foundation, parent commissioner with the

Western Quebec School Board, and vice-chair of Parents for Diversity

During the round table discussion, panelists described historic and present-day injustices experienced by Québec's Black community. The group then considered ways forward: what our society can do to combat racism and discrimination. The discussion raised a number of points including the following: 1) The commitment to fight racism and discrimination must be shared by many—students, teachers, institutions, governments, and individual citizens. 2) Every individual—regardless of race or ethnic background—can be an ally in the quest for equality for all.

To watch a recording of the round table discussion, please visit the QFHSA website (qfhsa.org). On the Home page, select "Advocating for Our Parents and Community" from the menu, then "Reports and Presentations." You can also use this link: <https://youtu.be/foiSZAXqdj0>

During the discussion, several panelists and guests shared documents and videos on the topic.

- Guest **Tino Bordonaro**, chair of the Advisory Board on English Education (ABEE) and a course lecturer with the Department of Integrated Studies in Education

Continued on the next page

News for You

Anti-Racism Round Table

Continued from the previous page

at McGill University's Faculty of Education, shared **Prioritizing Student Diversity in Québec's Education System**, a report on discrimination and diversity in schools prepared by ABEE. To see the brief, visit the Quebec government's website (<https://www.quebec.ca/>). Type ABEE in the search bar to access ABEE's page. Once on the page, scroll down to the list of publications. You can also use this link: <https://bit.ly/3ViVVKJ>

- Guest **Richard Y. Bourhis, Ph.D.**, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychology at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), shared **La leçon de discrimination**, a video from Ici-Radio Canada that chronicles one elementary school teacher's experiment with discrimination in her classroom. To view the

video, visit <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/> and in the search bar, type "La leçon de discrimination." You can also use this link: <https://bit.ly/3wXhQnf>

- Panelist Allison Saunders shared **The Final Report of the Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion of the Lester B. Pearson School Board**, which you can find by visiting the school board's website, <https://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/>. On the Home page, select "About" and then "Equity, Diversity, Dignity, and Inclusion." On this page you will find information about the Task Force along with a link to the report. You can also use this link: <https://bit.ly/43psPv3>
- Also shared at the meeting was a link to the recording of **Minorities, Minoritization, and the Education of African, Black, and Caribbean Diasporic Youth**, the keynote presentation by Dr.

Tya Collins, assistant professor, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, from the Quebec English-speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREEN) at Concordia University's Forum 2023. To watch the video, visit YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/>) and search for the QUESCREEN Concordia channel and then the videos from Forum 2023. You can also use this link: <https://bit.ly/3ViT58v>

An interesting question and answer session concluded the informative evening of discussion.

A big thank you to the organizing team of David Cromwell, Linton Garner, Carol Meindl, Rosemary Murphy, and Brian Rock for jobs well done!

Please Note: The opinions expressed in this summary report are those of the speakers and are not necessarily those of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc.



Mark Your Calendars! The English School Board Elections Will Take Place on November 3, 2024

The Quebec government's Law 40 attempted to abolish Quebec's English school boards, replacing them with English-language service centres. Thanks to the legal challenge initiated by the Quebec English School Boards Association, our English school boards remain intact. However, they need your help. Show your support for our English school boards by voting at the school board elections.

Our English education system needs you!

Did you know...?

When a former student of a public school in Quebec's English sector turns 18, they are automatically placed on the Quebec Voters' List, but not all are identified as eligible for placement on the English Voters' List. That is why it is essential for all adult alumni of Quebec's English public school system to make sure their names are on the English Voters' List. Get

in touch with your local school board to verify that your name is on the list.

The integrity of the English Voters' List has been a QFHSA concern for a number of years and the QFHSA Resolutions Subcommittee continues to advocate for an accurate and complete English Voters' List.

The QFHSA Think Tank Facebook Group: A Great Place to Share Tips and Ideas



Do you know about the QFHSA Think Tank on Facebook? This private group was started by a local Home & School Association to give local Home and School executives a forum to ask questions, share fundraising and event information, and more.

Recently, members of the group have been talking about budgets for Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week and sharing ideas on the best cups for hot chocolate, DJs, yearbook printers, and more.

If you aren't already a member of the group, visit <https://bit.ly/3IPkAwI> and request to join today so you can get your questions answered, too!

Image from Adobe Stock

Remembering Anne MacWhirter and Donna Norris



The board and staff of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations were very saddened to learn of the recent passing of Anne MacWhirter and Donna Norris.

Anne MacWhirter was one of those teachers that every parent wishes for their children. Born in Perth, Ontario, Anne earned her teaching degree at McGill University. With diploma in hand, she set out to inspire the children in her care, and for 35 years she did just that. For many years, the Gaspésie region of Quebec has been home for Anne, and she taught in the schools of the Eastern Shores School Board.

In addition to her teaching duties, Anne found time to volunteer for her school community—and what an amazing volunteer she was. She has been described as "the model of dedication to volunteerism." Over the years, she volunteered locally at the New Carlisle and Shigawake Home and School Associations, provincially at the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, and nationally at the Canadian Home and School Federation. In 1990, Anne received the QFHSA's Leslie N. Buzzell Award in recognition of her outstanding service to our federation. In 2014, she received the Canadian Home and School Federation's Volunteer Recognition Award. A wonderful volunteer and a wonderful person, Anne will be sorely missed.

Donna Norris was another outstanding advocate for students, parents, and the Home and School movement. A former Montrealer, Donna was a graduate of Father MacDonald High School, but for many years she called the Gatineau region of Quebec home. Donna was well known at Lord Aylmer Elementary School, where she was the school's secretary until her recent retirement.

An extremely dedicated volunteer, Donna served as president of the QFHSA's board of directors from 2004 to 2007. She was also an administrator for the Canadian Home and School Federation. Unfailingly generous with her time, Donna was an inspiring mentor to others. The Home and School movement thrives thanks to the dedication of people like Donna, and for that we are extremely grateful.

The QFHSA salutes Anne MacWhirter and Donna Norris for their many years of service to Quebec education. Our thoughts are with their families at this difficult time.

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News for You



Youth Exploring Science:

Discovering vermi-composting, renewable energy resources, and more!

THIS YEAR, THE QFHSA IS PLEASED TO FUND five wonderful science projects in Quebec elementary and secondary schools.

At Beaconsfield High School and Birchwood Elementary: Worm Composting

At Beaconsfield High, Secondary 2 students are learning how to vermi-compost indoors with a Wormbox and red wiggler worms. The students provide foods scraps for the worms, the worms eat them, and the result is vermi-compost: a great fertilizer for plants and gardens.



Meanwhile, students at Birchwood Elementary have embarked on a very similar project. Working with the school's garden club, the students are using red wiggler worms to produce vermi-compost for the school's gardens.

At Maple Grove Elementary: Learning All About Mushrooms

Using Élise Gravel's storybook, *Fan club des champignons*, the Grade 1 and 2 students at Maple Grove Elementary have taken a deep dive into the world of mushrooms. They are learning about different types of mushrooms, how they grow, and how they are beneficial to our health and environment.



Students are growing their own mushrooms and make a recipe with them, too!

At Onslow Elementary: Exploring Renewable and Non-Renewable Energy Resources

Grade 6 students at Onslow Elementary are learning all about solar, wind, and other renewable sources of energy. They are also testing their knowledge and understanding of renewal sources by conducting experiments with electric, solar, balloon jet, and elastic cars.



Students at Souvenir Elementary having some serious science fun...

At Souvenir Elementary: Creating a Variety of Science Adventures

Grade 1 and 2 students at Souvenir Elementary are enjoying a variety of activities and experiments designed to help them better understand the world around them. Topics explored this year include hibernation and healthy foods. Students designed slap bracelets, figured out the best way to create a tall structure, and more!



The QFHSA's Youth Exploring Science (YES) Program continues to thrive, with schools coming on board proposing interesting activities and supplying photos of happy students.

Although YES applications are now closed for the 2023-24 school year, a new season of Youth Exploring Science will begin in September 2024. Keep your eyes open for the invitations to propose a science project and submit it to the QFHSA Selection Committee.

Carol Meindl,
Executive Director

The Kids' Page

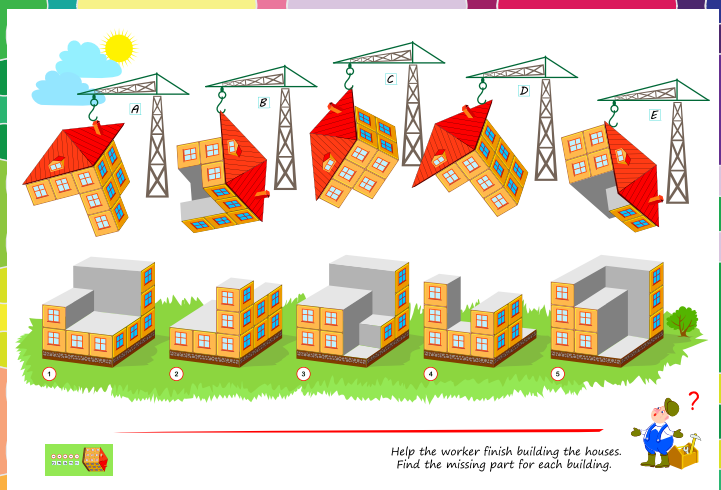
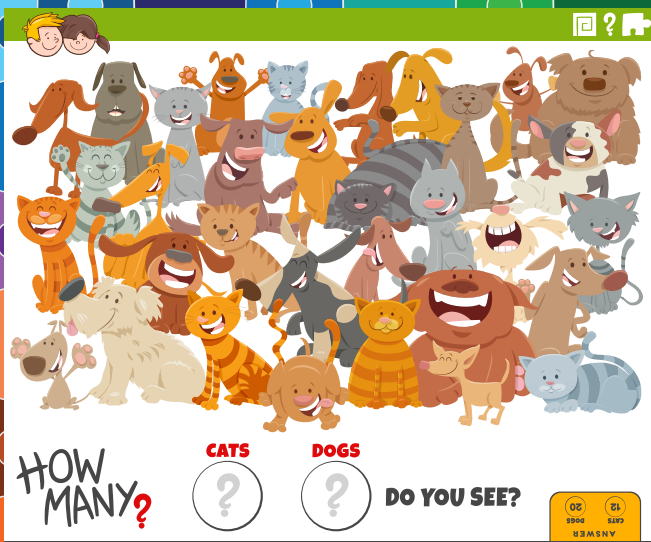
It's Puzzle Time!



Spring Word Search

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BLOSSOM APRIL NEST GREEN
 BUTTERFLY TULIP BREEZE UMBRELLA
 EASTER BUNNY RAIN GRASS
 THAW ROBIN RAINBOW BUD





A Message From Membership Services: The End-of-Year Checklist

Believe it or not, it is already time to look ahead to the last months of the 2023-24 school year. The following is a checklist of things to do before the year ends.

- Check your Home and School's constitution and by-laws for notice timelines for the annual general meeting and elections, constitution and by-law changes, etc. Please note that Section 17 of the QFHSA by-laws template has been updated.
- Is there a succession plan to replace executive members who are leaving? Think about setting up a nominations committee to recruit for executive positions.
- Membership: Has the final membership list been sent in to the QFHSA office? Does the list balance with the payments that were remitted?
- The 2023-2024 President's and Treasurer's Reports will be due at the end of June/beginning of July. *Please note that if documents from 2022-2023 are outstanding, your association will be contacted by mail.*
- Allocate a budget to send your award winners and other volunteers to the QFHSA's Awards Luncheon on May 25th.
- Appoint a delegate and alternate delegate for the QFHSA's Annual General Meeting. Your delegate/alternate can be any member who is in good standing (and does not have to be a member of your executive).
- Discuss the QFHSA's draft resolutions at your May Home and School meeting. **Your delegate represents your members and should vote accordingly.**

- Invite the new Kindergarten/Grade 7 parents to your June Home and School meeting.

Good luck with the year-end festivities!

Marlyn, QFHSA Membership Services Coordinator
marlynbrownrigg@qfhsa.org

Welcome, Sunshine Academy!

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations is very pleased to announce that Sunshine Academy, an elementary school in the Lester B. Pearson School Board, has recently joined our federation.

Welcome to the federation!



Background image from Adobe Stock

Update from the QFHSA Literacy Subcommittee

Born to Read

Souvenir Elementary Home and School in Laval gave six Born to Read book bags to the tots in their school community. Kudos for continuing this early literacy program.



Photo by William Fortunato from Pexels

Reluctant Readers Program

The QFHSA Literacy Subcommittee was pleased to allocate \$3070 to high school programs that support students reading below grade level.

The beneficiaries were:

- Westwood High School (Lester B. Pearson School Board): 56 students in four programs/departments
- La Tuque High School (Eastern Shores School Board): 50 students
- LaurenHill Academy (English Montreal School Board): 300 students from both campuses and students from Summit School

Thank you to the local Home and School presidents who passed the information along.



Image from Adobe Stock

Focus on the Locals

In the **Focus on the Locals** section, we share news and information from our local associations. **Thank you to all of the Home and Schools that contributed to this issue.** We would love to hear from our other Home and Schools too! Before sending photos, please make sure you have the permission of those appearing in the photos. We invite Home and School Associations to send their news to news@qfhsa.org.

Serving our Community through the Seasons at Baie Comeau High School

Baie Comeau High School's 2023-2024 year got off to an enthusiastic start with Home and School organizing a back-to-school barbeque lunch for students, staff, parents, and families. The menu featured fresh corn on the cob, hot dogs, fresh fruit and veggies, and fruit juices along with homemade chili. We used the occasion to sign up a few parents interested in serving on our Home and School.



At the event, we also worked in conjunction with the North Shore Community Association to help spread the word about parent and child resources for the Anglophone community.

For Halloween, Home and School tried something a little different. Instead of the traditional serving up of Halloween treats, Home and School provided each student and staff member with a treat bag.



In late November, our attention turned towards fundraising. For the second year, we teamed up with our local coffee roaster at Le Manoir du café. People had a choice of ordering a 400-gram bag of coffee beans or ground coffee. A profit of \$300 was realized and the coffee was distributed just in time for the Christmas break.

As part of the multitude of Christmas activities, Home and School put on a scrumptious hot breakfast for students and staff just before the break. A menu of sausages, French toast, sliced ham, and hash browns was cooked up by our volunteers. Attendees were also served milk, juice, and clementines.



We are scheduling our activities for the remainder of the year. Our Annual Bean Supper on May 10 is sure to be a highlight. We are also enthused to see the addition of a few new community members that will bring added value and collaboration with our Home and School.

*Submitted by Stephen Kohner, Baie Comeau High School
Home and School Association*

Focus on the Locals

Kicking Off the New Year at Terry Fox Elementary (Laval)

The hard work and dedication of the parents at Terry Fox Elementary in Laval have made so much possible this year!

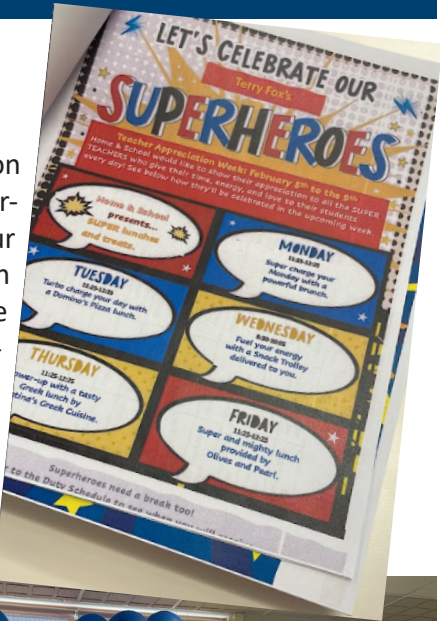
Meet Terry, the Fox!

We are very excited to share that we introduced a new mascot to the school! Terry embodies the spirit of fun, learning, and friendship that we hold dear here at Terry Fox Elementary School (Laval). With a beaming smile and a twinkle in his eye, Terry ignites our imaginations and lights up our days with excitement. Just like each and every one of our students, Terry is unique, full of energy, and always ready to lend a helping hand.

Whether it's cheering on our sports teams, leading us in school spirit rallies, or simply spreading joy in the hallways, Terry is here to remind us that we are all superstars in our own way! With his vibrant colours and enthusiastic spirit, Terry encourages us to embrace our individual talents, celebrate our successes, and lift each other up along the way. He reminds us that together, we can accomplish anything we set our minds to!

Our Teachers Are Superheroes!

Teacher Appreciation Week was the perfect time to show our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for the countless hours, tireless efforts, and unwavering dedication that our teachers pour into their work each and every day.



Teachers, staff, and students all enjoy having Terry around and the excitement he brings is so special!



Focus on the Locals

During the week of February 5th to 9th, our Home and School Association transformed the teacher's staff room into a SUPERHERO Headquarters where our superheroes got a chance to recharge their super powers!!!

The jam-packed week was filled with catered lunch meals, a goodies trolley for that perfect afternoon coffee or sweet fix, a surprise gift for each teacher, as well as daily replacements for recess duty. Thank you to our sponsors, St. Viateur Bagel, Dominos, Christina's, and Olives & Pearl, for their generous donations and to our parents, too, who baked the homemade goodies!!

The teachers are the heart and soul of our community, and we are forever grateful for their dedication.

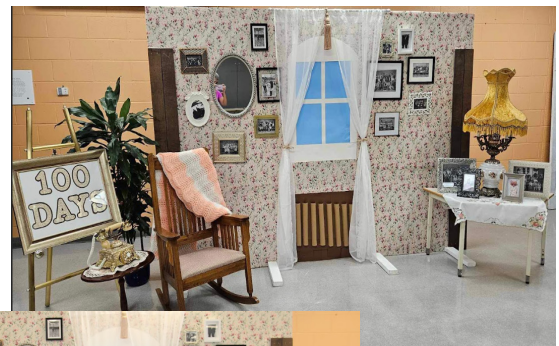
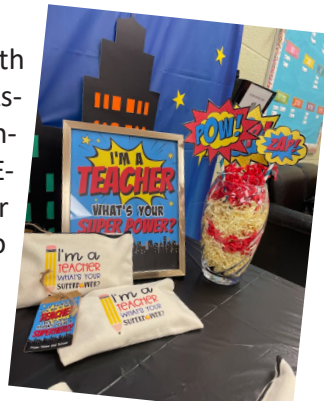
The food was plentiful!



Celebrating 100 Days of School!!!

We navigated through countless adventures in learning, overcame challenges big and small, and now we stand together, 100 days wiser, 100 days stronger, and 100 days closer to achieving our goals!

To celebrate this special milestone, Terry Fox Home and School Association built a special background with the inspiration of a vintage living room. The set up included old class pictures, vintage accessories, and, of course, floral wallpaper!



Students dressed up as seniors and took class pictures!

Others joined in the fun, too!



We are looking forward to making the rest of this school year even more incredible than the first 100 days!

The team is now hard at work planning the activities for the months to come. Stay tuned!

*Submitted by the team at Terry Fox Elementary (Laval)
Home and School Association*

Focus on the Locals

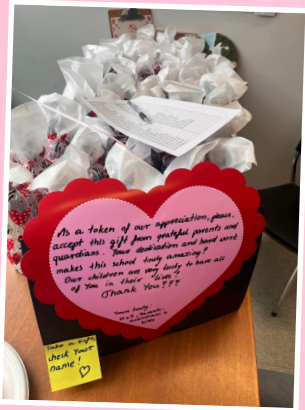
Celebrating the Amazing Staff at Forest Hill Elementary *All Though the Year*

The Forest Hill Junior and Senior Staff Appreciation Team always go the extra mile when it comes to supporting and celebrating the staff at both of our school's campuses.

For the past couple of years, we have made it a priority to host staff appreciation events regularly throughout the school year.

From surprise coffee carts to luncheons prepared by our incredible parent volunteers, Forest Hill staff members are showered with treats, gifts, midday pick me ups and amazing lunches to celebrate their ongoing invaluable contributions.

We feel it is important to acknowledge the dedication of our school staff and show our appreciation for all the hard work they do to support our children every day.



The staff are always so delighted with our fun themed events and yummy food options!

We make sure to spoil our bus drivers too with coffee and treats!

Our frequent staff appreciation events are a beautiful reminder that we are grateful for the role each staff member plays in the lives of our children and we plan to continue this tradition for many years to come!



*Submitted by Cris Baluch,
Forest Hill Elementary Home and School Association*

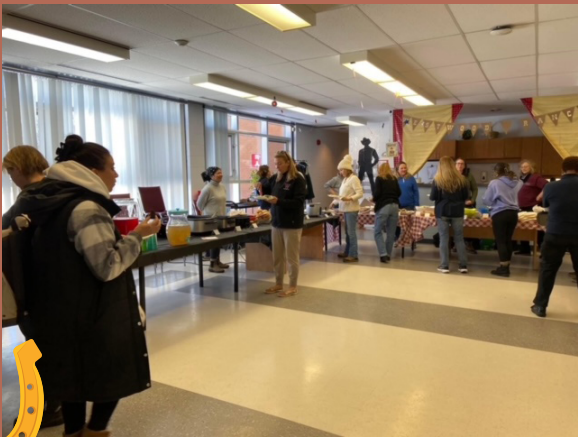
Focus on the Locals



This year's Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week at Westwood was **The Best in the West!** Our teachers and staff were celebrated all week long with fun surprises each day. We had Happy Trails Mix, a Breakfast Bonanza, a Chili Cook Off, and Dynamite Desserts.

The highlight of the week was the first ever combined campus luncheon, Stampede BBQ. It was so great to get the staff from both campuses together to share a meal.

*Submitted by Angel Johnson,
Westwood High School
Home and School Association*



Western images from Adobe Stock

SHARE YOUR NEWS!



Photo from Adobe Stock

What is happening in your Home and School community? Fun fundraisers? Special events? Please let us know and we will be happy to share your news in our *Focus on the Locals* section in an upcoming issue of the *QFHS A News*. Send your submissions to news@qfhsa.org

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