



THE VOICE OF
THE PARENT
IN EDUCATION

QFHSA NEWS

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DECEMBER 2013

Workshops SUCCESS Focus Literacy Healthy Health Policies Education Parenting Relationships



*Happy
New Year
From our
Families to
Yours*

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The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations held its annual Fall Conference this year on Saturday, November 12, 2013. The conference was graciously hosted by the Home and School Association of Beurling Academy, a high school in Verdun. QFHSA President, Larry DePoe, launched the Fall Conference by bringing greetings to all attendees and introducing guest speakers, each with their own special message for the audience.

Mona Segal, QFHSA Director and Chair of the Education Committee asked the question, "why bother", and invited all concerned parents to help out in the QFHSA Education and Rights Committee, prioritizing concerns and getting involved with what is important to today's parents in Quebec.

Next to address the crowd with messages of encouragement and updates from his associations was Frank Verrillo, English Montreal School Board (EMSB) Commissioner from District 17 in St. Leonard and Vice President of the Quebec English School Board Association (QESBA). His main concern was the current government's 'sideshow' of Bill 60, the Charter of Values. He feels that instead we should be focusing on more concrete problems such as infrastructure, education and health care.

David Abracen, Principal of Beurling Academy, thanked the Home and School for all they do at Beurling. He also marvelled at the huge amount of gathered Home and School "goodness" that had assembled

in his school that day!

The keynote speaker was Dr. Dale Stack, Professor, Department of Psychology and Centre for Research in Human Development, at Concordia University in Montreal. The title of her presentation was "**Fostering healthy parent-child relationships and emotional competence in children**".

Dr. Stack shared results from her study, the Concordia Longitudinal Risk Study launched in 1976. Dr. Stack and a group of researchers have followed 1774 elementary school children from disadvantaged inner-city neighbourhoods to arrive at their findings. Healthy relationships begin in the home with parent-child interactions. At times when negative interactions have become routine, it is of utmost importance to bring positive interactions back into a parent-child relationship. Dr. Stack stressed that it is important to balance love and limits and offered the crowd some key tips on how to achieve this.

Dr. Stack's main messages to parents were to reclaim the dinner table, spend quality positive time with children, help them integrate socially and emotionally into high school, and that it is very important to have one-on-one time with them to keep open communication channels.

We thank Dr. Stack for bringing us insight into how parent/child relationships affect not just the current generation, but generations to come. Today's efforts will have a great impact on the tomorrow's family relationships.

Lisa Fougère, QFHSA News Editor



Picture from left to right are Larry DePoe, QFHSA President, Rickhey Margolese, QFHSA Executive Vice President, Mona Segal, QFHSA Director, Carol Meindl, QFHSA Executive Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

I very much enjoyed our Fall Conference this year. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Dale Stack made some pretty complex research accessible and interesting. I also sat in on a regional council and heard some excellent discussion with representatives from several local home and schools, as well as two high level workshops. My congratulations to the QFHSA staff and organizing committee on a terrific conference.

**Which leads me to a special request - we need your help!**

The government will continue to push its agenda, which includes budget cuts to school boards and the so-called Charter of Values. Our rights committee will draft a brief in hopes of being heard in hearings in Quebec City, as well as a resolution for our General Assembly in the spring. We need to hear from you. Are these issues being discussed in your school? How will the Charter affect your association and community?

Please call the office and we will certainly be in touch with you.

Larry DePoe

QFHSA President



NOMINATIONS TO THE QFHSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Are you really concerned about education? Are you worried about the rights of our students in today's society? Would you like to join a team that shares your concerns and wants to make a difference? The QFHSA Board of Directors is always looking for qualified nominees. We currently have parents who work full time, some part time, some retired, some stay-at-home, some are on local Home and School associations, some have children in high school and CEGEP, some work with children, but ALL board members want to make education the primary concern of the Quebec government. We are continually looking for people with a passion for education who would like to serve at the provincial level. It is a position that could suit a graduating parent who would like to stay involved and would offer them some new challenges.

Each year at our Annual General Meeting, we elect new members to positions on the Board of Directors. The QFHSA AGM and the Annual Awards Ceremony will take place in May of 2014. We would like you to take this opportunity to start thinking about nominations for the QFHSA Board of Directors and nominations for the Annual Awards.

The nomination forms are on our website and, of course, we are available to discuss!

Rosalind Hoenig, QFHSA Nominations Chair

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FLURRY OF ACTIVITIES

After the fast pace leading up to the Fall Conference, the calm after the storm has left us in the office with a just few more jobs to take care of before the holiday season sets in. Every year in November we man an information table at the QPAT Convention (Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers) where we willingly spread the word about the advantages to having a Home and School Association in a school. It is also an opportunity for us to familiarize the teachers with some of the various literacy projects and activities that we sponsor, which they might find of interest to their students.

Marlyn Brownrigg (from QFHSA Membership Services) and I presented a workshop on “Mobilizing Volunteers and Maximizing Parental Involvement” to the Community Learning Center coordinators in October. It was based on the Membership workshop we offered in the fall and was quite well received. I also participated in a workshop on “Dealing with Difficult People” which I hope to make available to our members as a Lunch and Learn event sometime in 2014.

In January 2014, Marlyn and I will make a road trip to the Western Quebec School Board where we have been invited to hold an Executive Training and Regional Council meeting with some of the local associations in the area. We look forward to meeting the parents from these member schools, answering their questions and hearing their concerns.

Your own local association should have received in the mail, the first call for Nominations to the Board of Directors

as well as Nominations for the 4 Major Awards we give out each year. These awards honor those individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to make a difference in the lives of students, be they a teacher or a parent. I would like to encourage all of you to start thinking now about who you believe deserves the honors next year and prepare a letter nominating your choice and describing their contributions.

The New Year will bring a renewed flurry of office activity as we prepare to receive the submissions from the various essay contests, register students for the Youth Exploring Science workshops and start

preparing for the Annual General Meeting, which this year will be on May

3, 2014 at the Novotel Hotel in Dorval. So much to do and often, so little time, that we are sincerely grateful to all who have donated their time and energy to help make our Home and School activities a success, at the provincial level as well as at

the local level. Thank you!

Here’s wishing you all a relaxing holiday season and renewed energy to tackle the challenges that will come with the New Year.

Sincerely,

Carol Meindl

QFHSA Executive Director



“...we are sincerely grateful to all who have donated their time and energy...”



Our ***Mission Statement*** can be found on our website along with many other helpful and informative documents, including the QFHSA Strategic Plan, upcoming Events, Special Projects, Awards, back QFHSA NEWS issues and valuable partner links and resources.

Please visit www.qfhsa.org for all your association updates.

QFHSA FALL CONFERENCE 2013 DETAILS & REVIEWS

Each year the QFHSA brings together Home and School members from across the province offering workshops to develop leadership skills and networking opportunities through regional council meetings. On these pages, you will find more about the events and workshops at the Fall Conference 2013 hosted at Beurling Academy in Verdun, centering around our theme of Healthy Relationships. Thank you to all for participating and we hope to see you at our next event!



Fall Conference 2013 Workshops

- ◆ **Live, Love and Laugh, Raising Resilient Children**
Facilitated by Deb Kellman and Mona Segal, DM
Family & School Services
- ◆ **How to Help the Illness that You Cannot See** -
Facilitated by Lynn Harris
- ◆ **Optimizing Energy for the Entire Family** -
Facilitated by Sue-Anne Hickey
- ◆ **Healthy Kids, Homes and Lives** -
Facilitated by Joyce Shanks
- ◆ **Constitutions and By-Laws** -
Facilitated by Liette Chamberland
- ◆ **The Inner Game of Health and Healthy Relationships**
- Facilitated by Bhaskar Goswami and Haidee Thanda
- ◆ **Building Relationships, Not Bullies** -
Facilitated by Corey Szwarcok, Dynamix



Mental Illness: The illness that cannot be seen Facilitated by Lynn Harris, AMI-Quebec

Mental illness is a delicate subject. It is still hampered by stigma, which makes it difficult to talk about. Lynn Harris, touched personally by the experience of dealing with the mental illness of a family member, was grateful for the intimacy that was possible with the small group that chose this subject for their first workshop of the day. She herself found that there is much more support for the person with the mental illness than for the family members who end up being the caregivers. This is a situation that needs to change.

Mental illness can come out of left field, affect anyone and is often completely unexpected. One often finds oneself in a difficult situation, not knowing where to go for help. A simple show of hands demonstrated that everyone in the room was affected by mental illness, one way or another, be it in a friend, a family member or a co-worker. One in five people in Canada are challenged at one point in their lives by this issue.

Although it may appear as if mental illness has increased over the

years, it is more a factor of increased awareness and understanding. The initial onset of mental illness can manifest itself in teenagers so it is very important to be aware of changes in a child's behavior, health, relationships and socializing. It is not so much the behavior that is to be noted but the changes in their behavior: their feelings, actions and thinking. Mental illness is not caused by a single factor, but by a combination of factors: biological, genetics and environmental. She emphasized how important it is for caregivers to not "check out" and be isolated in their responsibility. It is important to remember to "check in" and remind loved ones to remain in communication and provide support when they are in crisis. It should never be considered a weakness to ask for help.

She also felt strongly that schools needed to have a more compassionate and tolerant attitude towards the student who exhibits signs of mental illness. Zero tolerance should never be considered a solution. Rather, schools need to get to the root of the problem and offer support, not expulsion. We all have a role to play. For more information on support services for those affected by mental illness, please go to amiquebec.org.

by Carol Meindl, QFHSA Executive Director

FALL CONFERENCE REVIEWS CONTINUED



Healthy Kids, Homes and Lives

Facilitated by Joyce Shanks

We are all concerned with the health of our families, and we want to make informed choices. However, with so much information out there, it is hard to know where to go and whom to trust. This workshop was an introduction to what some of the hazards in everyday life and home can be, and an offering of helpful tips for alternative products that are less harmful to our kids and the environment in general.



One of the important points made was that many of the thousands of chemicals that are in our consumer products are not adequately tested. There are too many instances of

the existing research being sponsored by the companies that produce the very products in question. When the bottom line is

profit and not safety, it puts the health of everyone at risk.

Joyce Shanks, who is a self-taught amateur “expert” in these issues, was very passionate about her desire to raise awareness to healthy alternatives. The workshop touched on Hydro Smart meters, the dangers of cooking with Teflon, using stain guard for furniture, and the prevalence of pesticides in grocery store produce. We considered the undesirability of plastic storage containers for hot food, and the usefulness of activated charcoal as an air freshener, among various other tips.

Joyce recommended a film called “The Story of Cosmetics” to get the big picture of how and why commercial cosmetics are dangerous. She also recommended a website called EWG (Environmental Working Group), which offers a database on commercial products ingredients and their safety. She recommended reading the book “Slow Death by Rubber Duck: How the Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Life Affects Our Health” by Dr. Rick Smith and Bruce Lourie.

Our childrens’ health is one of the most important concerns we have, and many equally concerned parents have already done the research. It is up to us to benefit from their foresight and dedication to the cause and to inform ourselves of the facts

by Carol Meindl, QFHSA Executive Director

Healthy * Relationships * Children * Parents * Love * Family Healthy * Relationships * Children * Parents * Love * Family

The Inner Game of Health and Healthy Relationships

Facilitated by Bhaskar Goswami, founder of BODHI Yoga Centers and corporate Yoga Instructor and and Haidee Thanda

Through stories and discussion, Bhaskar explained to the group how “the East is generally very good at giving people the moment, and the West is generally very good at knowing what to do with it!”. Bhaskar emphasized the need for all of us to maintain our balance, examine our inner needs, and to take care of ourselves.

Bhaskar helped the group focus on how to “tune in” to the moment, using such examples as “health is wealth, peace of mind is happiness, and yoga shows us the way”. He further explained that this is accomplished through calming the mind: once the mind is calm, it steadies the rest of the body, allowing for peace and fulfillment.

Finally, Bhaskar conducted exercises with the group. He emphasized direct experiential understanding, with the take home message of “Breath is the window to our body and mind”. Thank you Bhaskar for facilitating this workshop, and for supporting the QFHSA fall conference 2013!

By Mona Segal, QFHSA Director

Live, Love & Laugh: Raising Resilient Children

Facilitated by Mona Segal and Deb Kellman of DM Family and School Services

The topic of resilience resonated well with parent participants of both elementary and secondary levels in this session, as Deb and Mona explained that resilience is commonly described as a person's capacity to cope with changes and challenges,



and to 'bounce back' during difficult times. Young people who have learned to be more resilient still experience disappointments and setbacks, but they overcome obstacles with more ease and in less time, whether the stressor is school or more extreme traumatic situations.

Parents were pleased to learn about steps they could take to aid their children in developing a resilient mindset, including those that promote realistic optimism, coping skills, and self-discipline. The participants were very engaged and a lively discussion focused around strategies parents can implement to help their children become more resilient. Many thanks to Deb and Mona for facilitating this workshop on Raising Resilient Children!

By the QFHSA Fall Conference Committee

QFHSA FALL CONFERENCE ATTENDEES 2013

Allion Elementary School
 Arundel Elementary
 Beacon Hill Elementary
 Birchwood Elementary
 Dunrae Gardens
 East Hill Elementary
 Edward Murphy Pre-K (Les Petits
 Bouts-de-Choux de l'Est)
 Face School (*non-member*)
 Greendale Elementary
 Honoré Mercier Elementary
 John Rennie High School
 Lakeside Academy
 Lindsay Place High School
 Macdonald High School
 Merton Elementary
 Poltimore Elementary
 Royal Vale Elementary
 St. Lawrence Academy
 South Hull Elementary
 Souvenir Elementary
 St. Anthony Elementary
 St. Charles Elementary
 St. Patrick Elementary
 St. Paul Elementary
 Westpark Elementary
 William Latter Elementary

FALL CONFERENCE REVIEWS CONTINUED

Constitution and By-Laws

Facilitated by Liette Chamberland, QFHSA Past President

The constitution and by-laws workshop was presented by Liette Chamberland, Past President of the QFHSA. Liette presented a similar workshop at the 2013 QFHSA AGM. Liette cheerfully coped with a couple of technical glitches at the beginning, jumping right into the subject.

Liette reminded participants that the constitution is not a document that is to be amended on a regular basis. It is composed of the following: name and object of the society, powers, qualification of members, officers and their election, meetings of the society, how to amend the constitution, and a provision for dissolution. Keeping it as wide-open as possible will ensure that amendments are not needed.

Procedural changes are carried out by amending the by-laws and administrative items are changed by amending the standing rules. There were many questions on by-laws and what details were to be included in a by-law document versus a constitution versus standing rules. Each association will have a different composition of all these documents. Though it may seem like an insurmountable amount of work when you are just starting out, there are tons of ideas on the internet from other Home and Schools and school councils across Canada that can give you some ideas on what to include in your documents. We are also available at the QFHSA office to answer questions anytime, so contact us. We are there to help!



As a rule of thumb, the **constitution** is the document that is the most rigid in structure, contains the absolute basic definitions of your association and is very difficult to change (except by voting at the AGM or by a special meeting). The **by-laws** are more detailed than the constitution and contain specifics on positions, duties, and other standard procedures, and is also a fairly rigid and non-changing document (except by voting at the AGM or by a special meeting). The **standing rules** are the daily and monthly procedures followed by your Home and School, communication protocols, documentation procedures. This is the most detailed document and can be changed at any meeting by a motion.

There is an explanation and constitution template on the QFHSA website at www.qfhsa.org. Local Home and School Associations are asked to send their draft constitution into the office before it is presented to the membership and voted on at your next AGM.

By Marlyn Brownrigg

AWARDS AGM 2014 WHO WILL YOU BE NOMINATING?

This is the time of year to start thinking about all those wonderful people who volunteer their time and energy to make your school community a better place. Each year Awards and Prizes are given out at the QFHSA Awards Dinner and at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The award categories are:

- **Leslie N. Buzzell Award which** recognizes the achievements of a Home and School member at the provincial level.
- **Gordon Paterson Award which** recognizes an outstanding educator who believes in involving parents.
- **Lewis Peace Prize which** recognizes an individual or group making a significant contribution towards peace.
- **Pat Lewis Humanitarian Award which** recognizes an individual or group, at the elementary school level, making outstanding efforts toward a humanitarian cause.
- **Unsung Hero Award which** recognizes outstanding volunteers within the local school.
- **Golden Torch Award which** recognizes the volunteer leadership achievements of Home & School executive or committee members at the school level.

We also give prizes for Newsletters and Membership at both the high school and elementary school levels. Membership prizes are determined by membership numbers submitted to the QFHSA office. A sample of your Home and School newsletter can be submitted for committee consideration. If you would like to submit a nomination, consult the QFHSA website for more information and get in touch with your local Home and School executive. Submissions for one of the 4 major awards will be accepted until mid-March 2014 via email to info@qfhsa.org.

FALL CONFERENCE REVIEWS CONTINUED

Building Relationships, Not Bullies - Facilitated by Corey Szwarcok, Dynamix

Always a workshop with loads of action, this one was no exception. Corey led the parents through a series of exercises about bullying, by-standing and feeling what it was like to be bullied.

The main message was that bullying is a relationship problem, one that requires relationship solutions. Corey said that bullying can stop within 10 seconds of an incident when peers intervene or don't support the bullying behavior.

The group went through some fun team-building exercises using slinkies! He said that team-building maximizes engagement and learning while intentionally targeting specific interpersonal skills. We all learned how to build relationships and not bullies!

By the QFHSA Fall Conference Committee



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QFHSA MEMBERSHIP

by Marlyn Brownrigg, QFHSA Membership Services

Fall Conference: It was a pleasure to meet many of you at the QFHSA Fall Conference. It was the first time I participated from the “other side” of the registration desk. I hope that you enjoyed your workshops and gave us feedback on the evaluation forms.

New Home and School Association: The QFHSA would like to welcome **Poltimore Elementary Home and School Association** as its’ newest member. Even though there are only 32 families in the school, 3 members attended the QFHSA fall conference. Bravo!

Regional Councils - Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB): The Thorndale Home and School Association hosted a regional council on November 25, 2013. Elementary Home and Schools from Pierrefonds, D.D.O., Pointe-Claire, Kirkland, and Beaconsfield were invited to participate. Some of the topics discussed were after-school programs, fundraising, grants and membership incentives.

Regional Councils - Western Quebec School Board (WQSB): In the coming new year, a regional council/executive training workshop will be held for the Home and Schools in the Gatineau area. Carol Meindl and I will

meet with a group to gain insight into the challenges facing schools in the Western Quebec area.

I would like to thank the Thorndale, South Hull, and Poltimore Home and School Associations for their help. It is another night out for tireless volunteers but the discussions are always informative and lively, with everyone walking away with something for their networking efforts.

2014: If your Home and School would like to host a regional council in the new year, please contact Marlyn at the QFHSA office.

Bits and Pieces: Please note that all documentation including membership lists are due. As usual, I am available for questions or to meet with you.

Cheers!

Marlyn

marlynbrownrigg@qfhsa.org

[Click here for links to FORMS on the QFHSA website.](#)



QPAT CONVENTION

The Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT) holds an annual convention for approximately 8,000 teachers in the English school boards of Quebec as well as the teachers in the English schools of the Littoral School Board. This year, as in the past, the QFHSA attended and had a booth on November 21-22, 2013 at the Palais des Congrès in Montreal.

In the photo at QPAT Teacher’s Convention 2013 are Shadi Asadollahi, QFHSA Office Assistant (on the left) and Carol Meindl, QFHSA Executive Director (on the right). They fielded questions and inquiries from convention delegates at the QFHSA information table, spreading the word about the benefits of having a Home and School Association in a school.

THANK YOU, LEO

Leo LaFrance is an outstanding educator who has given a lifetime of service to Quebec education. His leadership always included a commitment to having a strong parental component. His achievement in inspiring and encouraging parental involvement in education was honoured last year when the QFHSA presented him with the Gordon Paterson Award for long service to the education of children and for the encouragement of the involvement of parents.

Team-building has been an integral part of Leo's philosophy over the years, as a teacher, principal, school board administrator, and in his position as Sous-ministre adjoint aux services à la communauté anglophone, aux affaires autochtones et au Plan Nord, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS).



Leo LaFrance has always been a strong supporter of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations and rarely missed an opportunity to bring a message from the Ministry to our parent members, either at Fall Conference or the Annual General Meeting.

Thank you, Leo, for all you have given to our community and we sincerely wish you a happy retirement.

by Carol Meindl, QFHSA Executive Director

Leo LaFrance at the QFHSA Fall Conference 2010



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Strong Teams Stick Together: A Lesson in Cooperation

"Cooperation", author Virginia Burden summarized, "is the thorough conviction that nobody can get there unless everybody gets there." At Dynamix, we have multiple activities centered on this principle; games designed to encourage our students to move as one unit and arrive at their goal together. These are my favourite types of games because you can see group-consciousness forming in young minds right before your eyes. A child who loves being the fastest runner in her class, for example, decides to slow down so that her team can move at a more careful pace - an especially important choice as her team is trying to carry a pyramid of cups balanced on a board while only holding its strings! (It is as cool as it sounds - request 'Pyramid Insanity' for your next Dynamix Event!).

However, it took an extraordinary group of eight and nine year olds to show me the essence of Burden's point. We were playing an old Dynamix standby in which each team must travel to different "islands" (hula hoops) as a group using "magic floating" (foam) boards without falling into the "ocean" (floor). Once the whole team has one foot on their island (in the hula hoop), they are allowed to plant their team flag on it and move onto their next one. That's the key - everyone has to be there; they can't leave anyone behind.

A little boy, whom I will rename "Arnold," was growing frustrated with this game. Travelling by foam boards re-

quires the kids to squish together, and so allow their personal space to be invaded. Arnold appeared increasingly upset by this arrangement and made the choice to sit out for a few minutes to calm down. When Arnold's team arrived at their first island I asked, as I always do at this point of the game, "Ok, is everyone here? Can I give you your flag?" And, to my delight, many on the team replied, "No!" and pointed to Arnold. They had not forgotten about him; he was part of their team and they could not complete the task without him. Arnold beamed with pride as he rejoined his team to plant their flag.

Anyone who works with kids will agree that their choices are constantly surprising and insightful. That day, Arnold and his team showed me that it is not so much the **destination** that is important. After all, Arnold's team *did* make it to their first island without him. Of most significance to them was that they complete the task together. It is often the case in school or at work that one assertive member of a team takes over a project. The task gets done, but the team as a unit is unsuccessful. Cooperation, then, is the thorough conviction that nobody can accomplish their goal unless everybody helps to accomplish it.

By Shira Lurie, Dynamix lead facilitator, Toronto Office

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STARTING SOON! QFHSA ESSAY CONTESTS 2014

Home and School Literacy Activities

QFHSA invites schools and individual students to explore their culture and family history through participation in our Essay Contests. Objects, foods, places and stories all play a role in our family history and identity. Share what makes your family special with your community and be surprised at what is right next door!

Family Treasures <http://qfhsa.org/treasures.htm>

Famous Family Recipes <http://qfhsa.org/recipes.htm>

From Farm to Fork <http://qfhsa.org/farm.htm>

For more information, contact the QFHSA office and look to the QFHSA website. These are a great way to encourage your child to participate and learn a thing or two about their family history.

Of course, there will be prizes!

AN ISLAND OF STORIES / MAPPING THE MOSAIC

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NETWORK

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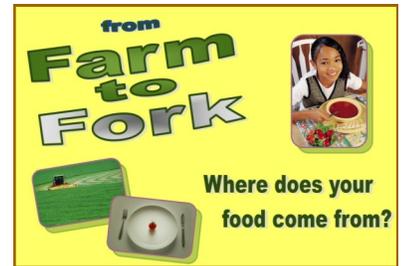
Are your Students all set to enter?
Contest begins January 1, 2014

An ISLAND of STORIES

Email home@qahn.org or call 1-877-964-0409 for details

A new participatory essay and mapping activity dedicated to the heritage of Montreal's English-speaking communities.

The Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network (QAHN) and The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) are pleased to invite the school community to participate in our first "An Island of Stories/Mapping the Mosaic" essay project, launched November 22, 2013 at the QPAT Teachers Convention. The writing of essays can begin on January 1, 2014 and will run until April 30, 2014. An Island of Stories will give students an opportunity to participate in an inter-generational activity that explores their family's history through the research of a special place/building/site on the island of Montreal and surrounding area. Mapping the Mosaic is an innovative and easy-to-use mapping website that will chart the collected memories of English-speaking communities in the Greater Montreal Area. It is a participatory website where users of all interests



can share experiences and expertise of where their history happened, by pinning favourite stories to an interactive map of neighbourhoods throughout Montreal, Laval and off-island suburbs.

No point is too small for Mapping the Mosaic. Primary Cycle 3 and Secondary I-V students are all invited to take part. Grandparent's childhood memories of life in a particular neighbourhood? Archival photos of lost buildings? Little-known episodes in the life of a neighbourhood school, place of worship or local hangout? Memories of colourful characters or local sports heroes? The achievements of entrepreneurs, artists, or innovators? An Island of Stories/Mapping the Mosaic will be a "people's history" that welcomes all these and more.

An Island of Stories submissions will be divided into two main sections: Memories and Histories. Memories tell personal stories of real, lived experiences - from first-hand recollections of life in a particular neighbourhood, to inherited family stories or archival anecdotes of traditional ways of life. Histories focus on factual history - stories about the people, places and events that have shaped Montreal history.

Essays that are submitted to QAHN and posted to the Mapping the Mosaic website will be eligible to win prizes.

For more information, please contact Matthew Farfan of QAHN execdir@qahn.org or visit the QFHSA website at <http://qfhsa.org/island.htm>

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TEACHER & STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK 2014 - TSAW

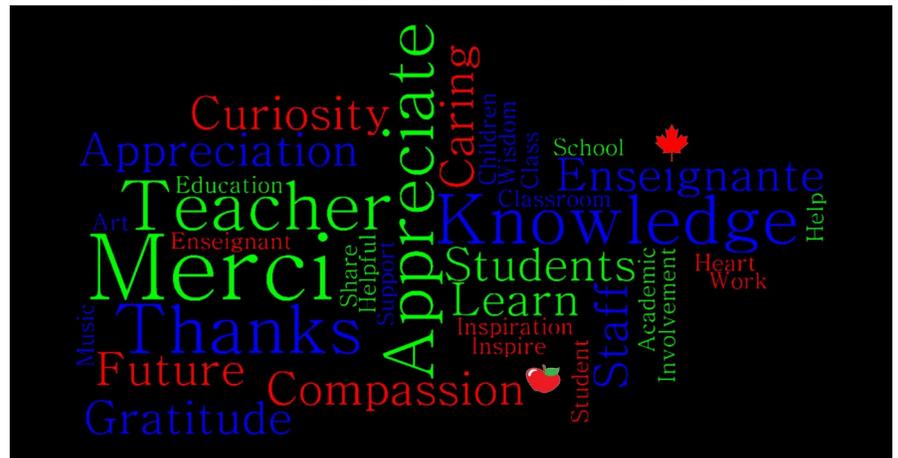
A chance to say thank you to all teachers and staff!

Home and School volunteers usually play a large part in schools' Teacher and Staff Appreciation Weeks (TSAW) each year, usually held in the month of February. The national appreciation week set by the Canadian Home and School Federation (CHSF) is February 9 to 15, 2014. The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) has the Quebec week set from February 2 to 8, 2014. No matter when your school decides is best to host its appreciation week, you can be sure there will be many happy, well-fed teachers and staff.

Many of us have had a teacher or school staff member who left a positive stamp on our days in school and, sometimes, even on our lives. Through their teaching methods, philosophy, dynamism, originality and devotion, these professionals were positive influences on our path through school and shaped a facet of our personality.

So let's take advantage of Teacher Appreciation Week to pay tribute to the women and men who inspired us and who inspire our children too.

NATIONAL TEACHER/STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK FEBRUARY 9-15, 2014



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<http://www.canadianhomeandschool.com>



From the Canadian Home and School Federation

GREAT MINDS DON'T THINK ALIKE

On October 19 Concordia and Lester B. Pearson held their annual workshop. This year's workshop was entitled Great Minds Don't Think Alike. It sounded intriguing since I have heard my whole life that Great Minds Do Think Alike.

Dr. Kass and her team based the workshop on the Myers-Briggs Instrument Test, a personality assessment instrument used in psychology. It is designed to measure psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions. We were each given a sheet to fill in. The sheet had four squares with two columns in each square. The instructions read "Choose the ONE word in each pair which most accurately describes the real you." It quickly became apparent that great minds did not think alike. My friend and I took a completely different approach to filling in the sheet. Even when people beside us looked over there was still confusion. After much laughter we called over someone from the team to be reassured that we were on the right track.

Throughout the day, we watched snippets of videos and examined how we felt about certain points, trying to determine if we approached life as introverts or extroverts. In smaller groups, we

looked at concepts of intuition, sensing, feeling, thinking, perceiving and judging. We learned that more men are of the Thinking type (60%) whereas more women are more of the Feeling type (60%). We also found that North Americans have more of a corporate personality and therefore in line with the Thinking type while Asian culture is more of the Feeling type. We also learned in couples that the Feeling people are hurt more in arguments and the Thinking people don't necessarily understand those feelings.

At the end of the workshop, we reflected on the day. We were asked to think about the preferences we have. Perhaps that could be why some people hate their jobs, as it is just not compatible with their preference style. We also need to think about our children, and students, perhaps their style is not the same as our style, and the interactions we have need to be looked at from a different behavior standpoint. It was an interesting and thought provoking day. Thank you to Dr. Kass from Concordia and her team along with Lester B. Pearson for hosting the event.

By Chrystal Henderson, Beurling Academy Home and School

CANADA DAY CHALLENGE 2014

If you're between 8 and 18 years old and live in Canada, you're invited to express what Canada means to you by submitting an original poster design, a digital photograph, or a piece of creative writing inspired by the theme Canada: Strong and Free. You could win some really great prizes, including a VIP invitation to attend Canada Day 2014 events on Parliament Hill!

DRAW IT!

Draw, paint, and sketch—you decide! If you love to create art, then this is the category for you. Draw inspiration from Canada's past and present to create a colourful poster design that highlights the theme Canada: Strong and Free.

SNAP IT!

This is your opportunity to inspire us with your angle on Canada's rich history and diverse character. Submit up to 5 of your best

digital photographs that highlight the theme Canada: Strong and Free, and captures Canada through your eyes and lens! **Please note that photographs may not include images of people.**



WRITE IT!

If you love to write, then be sure to enter this category. Share your thoughts about what Canada means to you and capture Canada's amazing spirit in writing! Your original work can be a short story, a poem, or an essay that highlights the theme Canada: Strong and Free.

Entries will be accepted until February 15, 2014. Be sure to check out this [How to Enter](#) link to learn more about this year's exciting contest!

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LITERACY — BOOK REVIEWS

Time for Flowers, Time for Snow

A Retelling of the Legend of Demeter and Persephone

Written by Glen Huser,

Illustrated by Philippe Béha,

Music by Giannis Georgantelis,

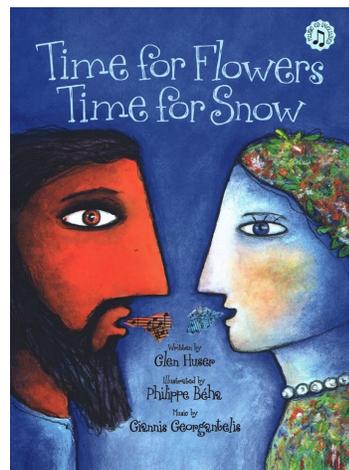
Publisher: Tradewind Books

Page count: 54 pages

Released: Sept 2013

What do a Governor General award winning author from Vancouver, a talented illustrator from Quebec, a composer from Greece, a famous member of Monty Python, and 184 students from Montreal have in common? A Time for Flowers, A Time for Snow! The book/CD project which was released in September 2013, was a project dreamed up by Dimitris Ilias who brought together all the above-mentioned elements to create an unforgettable project.

Glen Huser, the award winning author from Vancouver, wrote this version of the ancient Greek myth of Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, and Hades, the ruler of the Underworld, and of how the seasons came to be with a bit of a modern twist. The book is illustrated by Quebec artist, Philippe Béha, with vivid colors and decorative details. It is an absolutely beautiful book. To make it even more special, the book contains a CD which features the lyrics of Glen Huser, the music of Giannis Georgantelis and the voices of 184 children from 5 Montreal schools: Gardenview Elementary, Pierre de



Coubertin, Sinclair Laird, Socrates and Demosthenes. Terry Jones, of Monty Python fame, narrates the story on the CD interspersed with the beautiful songs sung by the choir.

The book may be difficult for younger readers to read on their own but the fact that they can listen to the CD and look at the beautiful art will definitely make this a favorite. This book /CD is a wonderful project which brings together superb storytelling, beautiful drawings and music that will touch your heart. A great gift idea! Available for \$20 from the Gardenview Home & School Association, please contact ghsa.info@gmail.com.

By Mary Skagos, QFHSA Administrative Assistant



Youth Theatre/QFHSA CONTEST WINNER

Valois-Perkins Family from Birchwood Elementary

They won a Family 4-pack of tickets to the YOUTH THEATRE presentation of "**Dreaming Now**" on November 3, 2013. A good time was had by all who attended this technological digital surreal world.

More at www.youththeatre.ca



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Winter is just around the corner and rather than staying inside this winter, the Canadian Ski Council (CSC) encourages you to get out and have fun hitting the slopes! Skiing and snowboarding are some of Canada's most popular winter sports and one of the best ways to stay active this winter. Once your kids feel the pride and exhilaration of zooming down the hills they won't want to stay home!

Your child's SnowPass is valid from December 1st until the end of the season. If your child is in grade 4, their SnowPass is valid until the end of grade 5, so it can be used over a two year period. The SnowPass includes three lift passes for each of the 150+ ski areas that are participating all across Canada.

Learn more about the Grade 4 and 5 SnowPass online at www.snowpass.ca or www.passeportdesneiges.ca. You can also pick up an application form from your child's grade 4 or 5 elementary school teachers.

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HEALTH MATTERS

'Tis the season for safety

Food Safety

Food safety is an important issue for Canadians. We can all play a role in making sure the food we put on our tables is safe to eat by learning how to handle and prepare it with care. High-risk groups such as seniors, people with a weakened immune system, and pregnant women should also take additional precautions to protect their health. For more food safety information, please visit

<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/index-eng.php>



© 2000, Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety



Holiday Decorations

The holidays are a time for family and fun - and are often when many new toys and decorations come into the home. Some of these could contain hidden health and safety hazards if not used properly.

- If you have a Christmas tree, keep it secured in a sturdy stand so that it can't be knocked over easily.
- Place the tree away from high-traffic areas, doorways, heating vents, radiators, stoves, fireplaces and burning candles.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended and always keep candles out of the reach of children and away from anything that can catch on fire.
- When putting lights on a tree, make sure there are no exposed wires and that no bulbs are broken or cracked.
- Keep 'bubble lights' away from children as they contain a hazardous chemical that may cause irritation or burns if the bulb breaks.
- Choose tinsel, artificial icicles and other trimmings made of plastic or non-leaded metals. Don't let children put decorations in their mouths, as some may be harmful to their health.
- Avoid decorations that are sharp, breakable or have small removable parts.
- Keep trimmings and candles that look or smell like food away from children since they might try to eat them.

For more information, check out the Government of Canada Healthy Canadians web pages under

<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/kids-enfants>

YOUTH EXPLORING SCIENCE (YES)

The QFHSA would like to invite your school to participate in a series of 3 Youth Exploring Science workshops to be offered in March/April of 2014.

The local Home and School associations and the Community Learning Center schools are being invited by the QFHSA to participate in a series of workshops. We invite all schools interested in including three science workshops to enhance their extra-curricular activities, to fill out the registration form below and email/scan/fax it to info@qfhsa.org.

The workshops will be broadcast through the video-conferencing network of the Community Learning Centers on Saturday afternoons. Once the workshop choices have been announced, schools will be notified and can register their students and the science kit materials will be mailed out to the schools in early March 2014.

An orientation session will also be offered to the teacher/coordinator/supervisor in preparation for the workshops.

Registration opens January 10, 2014 so send us word if your school is interested in participating and we will keep you up to date on the scheduling. Cost is approximately \$7 (for Home and School members) or \$10(for non members) per workshop.

We look forward to hearing from you!



Youth Exploring Science Workshops March/April of 2014.

I would like to offer my students the opportunity to participate in the three YES workshops. Please inform me of the workshop topics, dates and fees.

School Name: _____

Teacher: _____ Email: _____

Number of Students: _____ Grade: _____

Focus on the Locals

Get your school in the spotlight in the QFHSA NEWS! Send in your articles and pictures to news@qfhsa.org. We look forward to hearing what your local association has been up to, what you are planning and what concerns you might have that you would like to share with others. So do other local associations.

SEND IN YOUR NEWS!!!

**Upcoming March NEWS DEADLINE
submit by Feb. 24 , 2014**

For publication in March/April 2014

news@qfhsa.org

HONORÉ MERCIER ELEMENTARY St-Leonard



I recently read an article in the *Enfant Montreal* magazine highlighting the importance of parental involvement in schools. It brought me to think about our school, Honoré Mercier. I believe our school is making big steps in having each and every family member involved in the schools fundraising and volunteering. It is not compulsory to be involved but each and every family is involved in one way or another. This is what sets us apart. We have 82 members to date. For every 4 children in the school there is 1 parent volunteering. That is pretty amazing.

We had picture day on October 17th and 18th. Our committee leaders Julia Avampato and Lori Jordan along with 19 volunteers made sure the event went smoothly. They organized the classes, children, staff and administration who each took their turn at being photographed. They also managed to have a photo taken of their great team.

Halloween Haunted Mansion was on October 31st, 2013. For this activity, parent volunteers created a haunted house in our school library. There were a total of 14 parents donating their time for a total of 7 hours of preparation and 6 hours of activity. All classes came to visit. It was a memorable event for all. They were given the choice to go in with lights on, flickering or lights off for the courageous ones. Congratulations to Miss Nancy's kindergarten class; they went in lights off!

We are encouraging new parents to join our committee. No experience is needed. We are a group of dedicated people with a common goal. Our goal is to make our children's grade school years memorable.

By Stephania Vitetta



BIRCHWOOD ELEMENTARY

St-Lazare

We are a hardy group of volunteers at Birchwood Home and School! On the coldest night so far this year, we held our festive fundraising orders pickup. Volunteers helped parents tie up Christmas trees and wreaths to their cars, served hot chocolate and helped others with their orders, all while outside! We took shifts going in to warm up. The children were given cookies, muffins, hot chocolate and candy canes while the volunteers danced to Christmas music to keep warm. This is our second year running this tree and wreath fundraiser and its popularity has grown since last year! Thanks to all of our volunteers who were able to brave the cold and help out.

By Lisa Fougère



BEACON HILL ELEMENTARY

Beaconsfield

At the end of the 2012-13 school year and over the summer, the Beacon Hill Home and School Association assisted in a school yard improvement project. With the fundraising from our 2013 Art Gala, a grant received from a parent and the school's participation in le Grand défi Pierre Lavoie, we raised enough money to update our school yard with new basketball court lines, champ games, hopscotch, snakes and ladders, and wall target lines. Some of the equipment purchased were mini soccer nets, an outdoor drum set, and even new picnic tables for an outdoor classroom! The students are really enjoying their new activities! Special thanks to the dads who assembled and installed the soccer nets.

On September 19th, the Home and School sponsored an entertaining "Welcome Back to School" activity for our 318 students and staff members. Samajam led the group through 3 musical challenges using drumsticks, musical tubes, and "gumboots" body percussions. It was a fun, energizing, and team-building experience!



Parent volunteers also helped to clean up and maintain our garden area and helped some classes that wanted their own garden spot.

Congratulations to the school community who once again raised approximately \$15 000 for the annual Terry Fox walk. Parent volunteers distributed juice freezies to all the students after the walk as they watched the grade 6 students battle the teachers in a game of soccer baseball....was anyone keeping score?



On October 16th, together with 3 other local schools, the Home and School invited Alissa Sklar to come and speak to the parents about "Positive Parenting-Preventing Risky Activities in All Ages". Ms. Sklar gave an extremely informative presentation with great tips on how to stay connected with our children when they need us most. We look forward to sharing in more parent workshops as the year goes on.



In spite of the rain, Beacon Hill participated in the Halloween Box campaign for the Diabetic Childrens' Foundation in great numbers.

Thanks to everyone who made these events, and the many other daily events at Beacon Hill the special place it is!

By Lisa Yee

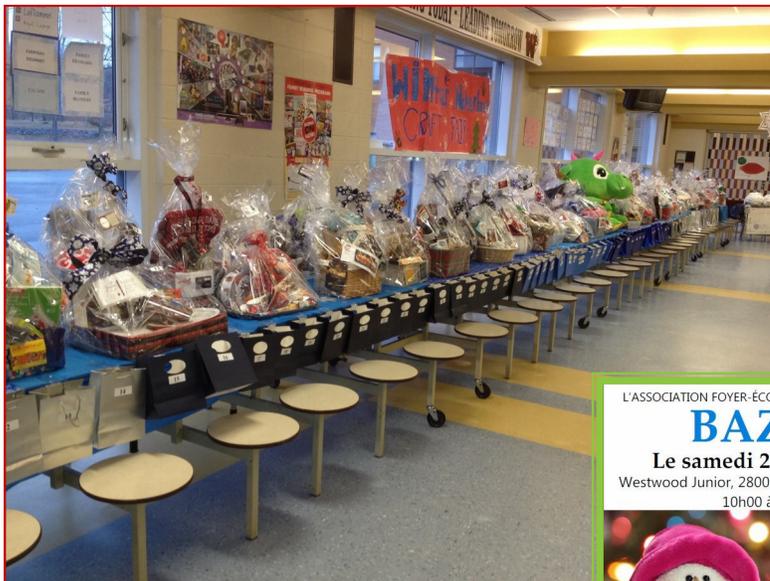


"WHERE'S MYSCHOOL?"

Disappointed that your school is not on the Focus on the Locals pages? Please talk to your Home and School members to submit the wonderful things your association is doing for our next issue in March 2014 (deadline February 24, 2013), to news@qfhsa.org

WESTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL St. Lazare

We have such fun at the Westwood High School Home and School! Our parents and volunteers are so dedicated and make wonderful events like our annual Winter Wonderland Craft Fair possible. This year was no exception! Home and School hosted **Westwood High's 12th annual Winter Wonderland Craft Fair** on Saturday, November 23rd. Each year we have a waiting list for crafters wishing to book tables with us! A very lucky position indeed.



At the Craft Fair, shoppers were out in full force all day long, getting a jump on their holiday shopping with 40 craft and gift vendors in the large double gymnasium. Once done in the gym, shoppers visited the mile-long raffle basket table with over 100 beautiful gift baskets, all prepared by Home and School volunteers from generous community donations.

Also at the Craft Fair was Westwood Senior's Grade 11 babysitting service, courtesy of International Development Project (IDP) students, fundraising for their humanitarian trip to Peru. Student groups like Bridge to Burundi hosted a table to spread news about the great work they are doing.

Over at the Westwood Café, hungry shoppers enjoyed hot dogs, chili and smoked meat. On to the bake room where tables and tables of delicious home-made treats were sold.

To all our wonderful volunteers, an IMMENSE THANK YOU!!!

It is not just the work on that craft fair day, it is also the behind the scenes and leading up to the day, the planning, the organizing and coordinating. It is a huge event and each volunteer helped contribute. To the Senior Campus artists who made the beautiful snowflakes, to the students who unloaded cars, set up tables and many other jobs, to all of you who rushed to get the Café moving when people started ordering lunch at 10:30!, for the donations

and collections of raffle prizes, for organizing all the crafters, for organizing the students, for giving the crafters muffins and lunch, for the Bake Sale ladies who run their own show smoothly for so many years, to all our bakers, to the Coupon Book/Welcome/Volunteer help (despite the chilly draft), to the Bretons for opening their home to us for two weeks to let us take it over to prepare baskets, to the Westwood Staff for their support, to the last minute runners to pick up gifts, to the Treasurer's team collecting and counting money, to all those who helped clean up and to all the others who helped in so many ways, including the shoppers among us – a heartfelt thank you!

It was an amazing Craft Fair, many people commented on how wonderful it was and what a great team of students and volunteers that Westwood has. Thank you to each and every one of you!

And last but not least, to our Junior Campus principal, Marie-Josée Coiteux, thank you for allowing us to take over the school and for jumping in to help all the time, especially with the helpful announcements throughout the Craft Fair. It feels as if you've always been at Westwood Junior and we so appreciate how much you support us at Home & School! And thank you to Sheila Honeybourne and Lee

Petford at the Senior Campus for supporting us with Westwood Senior's community of students with messages home to parents. We couldn't do it without you.

Until next year!

By Arlene Griffin and Colleen Jackson

L'ASSOCIATION FOYER-ÉCOLE DE L'ÉCOLE WESTWOOD

BAZAR

Le samedi 23 novembre
Westwood Junior, 2800 du Bordelais, St-Lazare
10h00 à 15h00



40+ TABLES

- * Grand tirage
Huge raffle
- * Café
- * Garderie/Babysitting
- * Vente de gâteaux/
Bake sale
- * Livres d'occasion
Used Book Sale
- * Jeux, DVD, CD, Games

WESTWOOD HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

CRAFT FAIR

Saturday, November 23rd
Westwood Junior, 2800 Bordelais, St. Lazare
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



GARDENVIEW ELEMENTARY Ville St-Laurent

In early 2012, Dimitris Ilias, choir director at Gardenview, Pierre de Coubertin, Sinclair Laird, Socrates and Demosthenes schools had a vision to bring together students from these five Montreal-area elementary schools, along with an alumni choir and international talent to collaborate on an unforgettable project. That is how the wonderful "Time for Flowers – Time for Snow" project was born.

By September 2012, the book and songs had been written by award-winning Canadian author Glen Huser and the music had been composed by Giannis Georgantelis, an accomplished composer from Athens, Greece. The story is the tale of how Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, the Greek goddess of Harvest, is kidnapped by Hades, the Ruler of the Underworld, and how Demeter's sadness brings on the changing of the seasons.

Auditions and rehearsals started as soon as the school year began. By the end of February 2013, all 180 children came together and performed together for the first time ever, along with the Orchestre Symphonique Pop de Montréal.

As spring arrived, the children were ready to record their parts, and had an amazing learning experience about recording and engineering a CD, when they recorded their songs at the Oscar Peterson Hall at Concordia University.

By the time the students returned to school in the fall of 2013, the CD narrated by Terry Jones of Monty Python fame and the book which is beautifully illustrated by Philippe Béha had been published, and it was then time to launch the book/CD. In early

October 2013, the choir was invited to perform at Montreal City Hall, complete with the red-carpet book launch at the Palace Reception Hall. The children dressed up in their beautiful cocktail gowns and best suits, arrived in stretch limousines ready to wow an audience of more than 1300 people who were awaiting their performance. After the special performance, a few speeches and award presentations, the choir, along with Mr. Huser, Mr. Béha, Mr. Georgantelis, Dimitris Ilias and Maria Diamantis participated in a book signing session, where parents and fans had an opportunity to get their books autographed.

The book has received excellent reviews in Canada's biggest literary magazine, Quill and Quire, and can be purchased at local bookstores or online. Gardenview's Home and School Association is also selling copies of the book for 20\$ and all proceeds are being re-invested into this year's project. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the book, please email the Gardenview Home & School at ghsa.info@gmail.com.

The fun is not over at Gardenview School. This year, the project enters phase 2 as Gardenview Home and School is sponsoring the musical production of "Time for Flowers – Time for Snow", which will be performed on April 5, 2014 at Royal Vale High School. A cast of 140 children started rehearsals in October in preparation for the big event. This is the fourth time that the Home and School have worked along with Dimitris Ilias and Karen Pearce to stage a musical event, and for the first time, an original piece is being performed. You can follow the progress of the play on the "Time for Flowers – Time for Snow" on the Gardenview school website page.

By Betty Skagkos



Gardenview Elementary Students, and book signing at the Palace Reception Hall, Montreal Hôtel de Ville, October 2013.

Photos by Andre Knox.



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Upcoming QFHSA Events:

Annual General Meeting

Saturday, May 3, 2014

Time: 10:00 am - 5:30 pm



Followed by **Annual Awards Ceremony**

Time: 5:30 pm - 10:00 pm

Location: Novotel Hotel, Dorval, QC.

All Home and Schools will receive the details for this event as it becomes available. Please check with your local Home and School representative or contact our office (contact details are on page 2 of every newsletter).

DECEMBER 2013

QFHSA NEWS

QFHSA NEWS

3285 Cavendish Blvd., Suite # 560
Montreal, Qc H4B 2L9
www.qfhsa.org

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.

