



THE VOICE OF  
THE PARENT  
IN EDUCATION

# QFHSA NEWS

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DECEMBER 2011



*From our  
Families to  
Yours  
We wish you  
Happy  
Holidays!*

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## QFHSA BUSY BEES

While in the midst of setting up and hosting the Fall Conference, the Quebec Federation of Home and School Association's ever-busy staff have been looking ahead to the coming months to plan for events to benefit our members. We have booked the **2012 Annual General Meeting (AGM)** and **Awards Dinner** for April 21, 2012! Months of planning and preparation go into our annual events such as the AGM, Fall Conference and Executive Workshop evening. We hope our members attend these invaluable events and networking opportunities.

Have you found us on **Facebook**? QFHSA posts education-related items and contests in between publication of our newsletters to make sure our members have what they need to be up to date. Click LIKE on our page and you will be updated with our newsfeeds.

Do you receive our **NEWSLETTERS**? We have gone electronic and send our newsletters by email to the local association membership chairs. From there, the membership chair should email the newsletter to all their Home and School members. Our newsletters are published quarterly: December, March, June and October. We also include some advertising that is relevant to parents as well as Home and School associations. The issues are full of information to read and help with your Home and School. In this issue, our Focus on the Locals section is brimming with local association news.

At our **Fall Conference**, our DM Family & School Services workshops were very popular. In fact, they were so popular, QFHSA is hosting re-runs at our office on Cavendish Blvd. Our first re-run was Dec. 6, titled "**Don't Worry! Helping your Child deal with Anxiety and Stress**".

The next one titled "**Resolving Conflicts Peacefully**" will be held on January 17, 2012



Suzanne Longpré at Fall Conference

at 7:00pm, also at our office. **Workshop description:** Two people can't be expected to agree on everything at all times. In fact conflict is a normal and necessary part of healthy relationships. Learning how to deal with conflict—rather than avoiding it—is a crucial life skill. The purpose of this workshop is to help participants identify and better understand conflict, while providing techniques for improving conflict resolution and communication. Together we can find a way to learn key skills to manage our frustration and resolve conflicts peacefully and productively.

QFHSA has a partnership with **DM Family & School Services** as well as **Dynamix**, offering our local member associations discounts on locally-hosted workshops.

The new year is also a great time to forge new Home and School relationships. Why not have a Bring-a-Friend night at the next meeting? Get together with another local Home and School at a regional council, share ideas and solutions to your Home and School issues. In the new year, we are looking forward to adopting resolutions for our AGM as a result of local association input. Above all, know that your involvement really does make a difference in education.

Please call our office to find out how we can help your Home and School or to make reservations for the above workshops. We can be reached at the QFHSA by phone 514 481 5619 or by email to [info@qfhsa.org](mailto:info@qfhsa.org).

*by Lisa Fougère  
QFHSA News Editor*

## Oh the Things We LEARNed!

**A**s the days get shorter and the cold weather sweeps in, the QFHSA waved its final goodbye to Autumn by holding its Annual Fall Conference at Sherwood Forest Elementary in Beaconsfield, QC. On that Saturday, over 65 parents representing 29 schools, participated in the many different workshops that were offered. Forgive us for tooting our own horn, but it was a huge success!

Our keynote speaker, Suzanne Longpré, taught us the many little known features of the **LEARN** website: [www.learnquebec.ca](http://www.learnquebec.ca). The website is actually loaded with information and also has a micro-website within it:. It can be found at: [www.learninglandscapes.ca](http://www.learninglandscapes.ca).

From information on the curriculum, to tutorials for students, to videos and pictures to help your children with special projects, the **LEARN** website is a true treasure trove.

In order to access the entire website, you will need to get a user name and password from your school. If your

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



school doesn't have the information, do not worry: Christy Schwartz, from **LEARN QUEBEC**, can help you. Simply send her an email at [christy.schwartz@learnquebec.ca](mailto:christy.schwartz@learnquebec.ca).

Don't forget to include your children's complete name as used on their report cards and the school that they each attend. LEARN will be happy to send you the information through email... And then... Let the fun begin!

The Fall Conference wouldn't have been complete without our wonderful workshop moderators who gave of their time and expertise to the great appreciation of our Home and School members. We

must also thank the displayers who took the time to come show us many new ways to help our fundraising activities or offered various educational opportunities for our students.

On another note, the QFHSA's Committees have started scheduling their meetings and all members are welcome to attend: either in person or by phone. Some very interesting concerns and news issues will be discussed. Your opinions and views do count! If you are interested in attending a future meeting, please send us your coordinates by email to [info@qfhsa.org](mailto:info@qfhsa.org), stating which Committee meeting you would like to attend and you will be contacted by the Chair.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that if your school has a resolution to bring forth at the Annual General Meeting and need some help with it, you can contact us and it will be a pleasure to assist you.

Thank you again to everyone who participated at the Fall Conference. Each and every one of you made it a success!

*Liette Chamberland*  
President

Interested in commenting on education affairs?

Contact Liette Chamberland at [president@qfhsa.org](mailto:president@qfhsa.org) or visit our website @ [www.qfhsa.org](http://www.qfhsa.org)

### QFHSA NEWS

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## A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As you can see by the caption above this article, I am wearing a new hat these days. After serving 5 years as a Director on the Board including two years as the President, I feel ready to take on the responsibilities of Executive Director. My experience at my local association at Merton Elementary, from the first Home and School event I participated in, (the Terry Fox run in 2000), to serving on their Executive committee in 2007, has given me a valuable grass roots perspective on the whole QFHSA operation.

In addition to my duties as Executive Director, I will be taking on the membership coordinator responsibilities as well. I will be keeping track of the local associations' activities and concerns. If you have any questions, just call or email the office.

The QFHSA is often asked to sit and participate at various consultation tables and welcomes these opportunities to represent our parent members and their perspective. One of these consultations is being spearheaded by the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) in the next few months. The QCGN is undertaking a Community priority-setting process for the English-speaking community of Quebec. This consultation will be governed by the [Priority Setting Steering Committee \(PSSC\)](#), a standing committee of the QCGN Board of Directors. The priority setting process began with "roving consultations", collecting information on trends and areas of collective interest from numerous community organizations. I, along with Lawrence DePoe, VP, participated in just such a consultation on October 31, 2011 on the behalf of the QFHSA.

As the Executive Director, I had offered the PSSC the priorities as determined from the perspective of the Board of Directors. Some of the priorities the Board had identified were:

- \* To have sufficient support and financial resources available to the English school boards to allow them to provide the quality of education that the parents

request for their children and the support needed for the teachers to deliver that quality of education to the students.

- \* To widen registration to English language schools so that their populations remain healthy and the school communities remain vibrant.
- \* To provide sufficient resources and services to English speaking communities as a whole on the island of Montreal and in the regions.

It became evident to us, however, that it would be preferable to consult our parents and gather the priorities and concerns as determined by our members as well. As the voice of QFHSA parents, any priorities submitted should include those of our parent volunteers at the grass roots level. As a result, the QFHSA has been requested by the Chair of this Priority Setting Steering Committee, Mr. Noel Burke, to consult you, our QFHSA parents.

Therefore, I am asking you to include this topic as an item for brief discussion at your next Home and School meeting. Tell your friends about this project. Have your friends consider their concerns and priorities, in regard to education and school life. Give it some serious thought.

In January 2012, we will be sending out a survey to our Home and School Presidents to circulate amongst their parents. The survey will also be posted on the QFHSA website. Participation is, of course, voluntary, but this is exactly the sort of opportunity we welcome to have our voices heard, our perspective acknowledged and to contribute to the future health of our own communities.

Look out for more information about this survey in the weeks to come. We will be sending out a reminder to the local associations to look for it in January.

Enjoy this winter season, get ready for the snow, (it will come) and look forward to the challenges of the New Year.

Sincerely,

*Carol Meindl*

**Executive Director**



## Advertising with QFHSA News

Our QFHSA Newsletter Advertising Rate Kit is available for 2012-2013. Please send inquiries to [info@qfhsa.org](mailto:info@qfhsa.org) or [news@qfhsa.org](mailto:news@qfhsa.org) for more info. The QFHSA News is the best way to reach over 5000 Quebec parents!

Our next advertising deadline is Feb 6, 2012 with the Newsletter published mid-March.

## EXECUTIVE WORKSHOPS Starting off Right

A successful Executive Workshop evening was held on Sept. 23, 2011 at our QFHSA offices. We held this evening to provide information to local association executive committee leaders on how to fulfill the responsibilities of their positions; to distribute materials pertinent to their executive positions; to offer an opportunity to network and exchange ideas with representatives from other schools; to meet the Board of Directors and office staff; to visit the provincial office and to learn about the resources available to them and their schools.

### *The take on the evening:*

In the Presidents' workshop session, Jennifer, Home and School President from Greendale said "It is often that people don't join H&S because they don't understand what the funds will be used for. Once you communicate that, parents will join and help however they can and often by paying their annual family membership fee. That is how they help."

From Joanne Shea, Treasurer Forest Hill Senior Home and School:

"As the new Treasurer of Forest Hill SR, I found the QFHSA Executive Workshop to be packed full of useful information. I made many valuable contacts to help in my efforts to contribute to an established successful association. Our QFHSA moderator, Leah, discussed the ins and outs of useful spreadsheets for treasurers. The duo-tang that we received included sample financial reports, as well as a job description for the Treasurer, a terrific guideline for a newbie, such as myself! She discussed insurance at the end of the meeting with more details coming soon after some further clarification. She also discussed tax receipt details and how to issue receipts for donations of \$20 and more. I would highly recommend these workshops for anyone in a Home and School executive position, new or returning!"

Our raffle winner was Diane Neupert of Mount Pleasant Home and School Association who won a QFHSA bag and a National Geographic hardcover book for her school library. Her name was pulled from all the evaluations that we received.

QFHSA wishes all our associations much success in the coming school year and remember that help is only a phone call away.



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## FALL CONFERENCE Raffle Prize Winners



A number of prizes were drawn at the end of our Fall Conference.

Here are the lucky winners:

### **QFHSA Evaluation Book Draws**

Elementary School -*Valerie Cameron, Arundel Elementary High School -Chrystal Henderson, Beurling Academy*

**Epicure Basket** – *Barbara Schnider, Lindsay Place High School*

**Prestige Chocolates** – *Stephanie Hill, Thorndale Elementary*

**Dynamix** – *Julie Jackson, Sherwood Forest Elementary*

Special mention: *Joanne Legouffe, New Richmond High School*

**eCause Gift Bag** – *Pamela Huntington, Shigawake Port Daniel Elementary*

**Sunsweet Box of Cards** – *Kuljinder Kaur, Dorset Elementary*

### **Geordie Productions Tickets**

*Kuljinder Kaur, Dorset Elementary* won 2 tickets to "Pinocchio"

*Patricia Gaudio, East Hill Elementary* won 2 tickets to "I, Claudia"

Congratulations to all!

## FALL CONFERENCE

Each year the QFHSA brings together Home & School members from across the province offering an opportunity to develop leadership skills and networking opportunities through regional council meetings. This year's Conference hosted at Sherwood Forest in Beaconsfield was another success. We had 29 schools represented and 8 workshops! Our delegates were able to mingle with other members during lunch and visit with 15 displayers on site to learn more about their products and services. On the next few pages, you will find reviews of the workshops written by some of our local members. Thank you to all for participating and we hope to see you at our next event!



### WORKSHOP REVIEWS

*By local association parents who attended our conference*

#### HOMework SOLUTIONS

*Presented by Justine Dansereau, Human Relations Consultant*

Having trouble getting your child to do their homework? Who better than an ex-“terrible student”, who eventually found her way, to lead us through a very interesting workshop! Justine, helped us understand why our child may be procrastinating, and shared many helpful strategies on how more effective work methods could be adopted. Ultimately, she helped us realize that as parents, it is our *relationship* with our child which is the most important thing of all, even more important than battling over homework.

By Lisa Yee  
Beacon Hill  
Home and School



***“School is not a preparation for our children’s lives, it IS their life.”***

Suzanne Longpré, Communications and Public Relations Consultant with LEARN

***“My wife reminds me that if parents do not stand up for their kids, who does? We often underestimate the importance of parents in our schools.”***

David D’Aoust, President Quebec English School Board Associations (QESBA)

#### SUCCESSFUL PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS

*Presented by Cindy Finn PhD., LBPSB Director of Student Services*  
When Dr. Finn discussed some communication strategies, I felt empowered because now I knew I could talk to my child’s teacher about my concerns. Using her “I-message” technique summarizes what was a thorough, interactive, and practical 90 minute workshop on how to make the most of parent-teacher meetings. It is easy for both sides to enter these meetings in “defensive” mode, but Dr. Finn helped us to remember that our goals are the same: student success.

By Lisa Yee  
Beacon Hill Home and School

# FALL CONFERENCE REVIEWS

## MERIT PAY FOR TEACHERS

*Presented by Serge Laurendeau, President of Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT)*

Serge's objective at this workshop was to refute the suggestion that merit pay would improve teachers' performance.

The crux of his argument came though in numerous examples of fraud and cheating in U.S. School districts where merit pay programs were implemented. Teachers and administrators were shown to collude in order to artificially boost results.

Further, the call to have a "College of Teachers" in Quebec to oversee the quality of teaching was also refuted, with examples of poor performance and inefficiencies cited in colleges in other parts of Canada.

He also highlighted the graduation rate in English secondary schools as evidence that our current system is working.

Serge admitted that the lack of training and experience of school administrators, as well as university level supervisors hinders the proper evaluation of potential candidates.

At the beginning of his Power Point presentation, Serge showed the results of a Montreal survey regarding the evaluation of teachers' performances, as well as the platform of Coalition pour l'Avenir du Quebec (CAQ) on education.

It is evident from the results of the survey as well as comments from attendees that people are unhappy with our present system. This cannot be ignored; the debate should and must go on. People are afraid of change.

Change is good.

By Martin Roloff  
Member of Home and Schools of  
MacDonald High, St Patrick Elementary and Dorset Elementary



## TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

*Presented by Corey Szwarcof of Dynamix*

I was very pleased that I attended The Transition to High School session facilitated by Corey. Not only was Corey witty, he also came across as very genuine and connected well with the group of parents. The fun exercises (such as backbook), discussions and the hands-on approach used in this session helped me remember how I felt when I was in high school. I left the session with a very positive feeling and certain that I could use some of the tools learned to help my boys make their transition into high school easier.

By Sue Lamy, Evergreen Elementary Home and School



## LITERACY

*Presented by Nicholas Aumais, Literary Consultant with Bayard Publishing*

Nicholas is an engaging and enthusiastic young man. His passion for literacy in youth is apparent from the start. For his energy alone, he was a treat to watch.

For the presentation, Nicholas came armed with a variety of French books from the publishing company for which he works. He used each one to highlight the importance of literacy and to offer strategies on introducing literature to youth. His focus was often on the lower level of interest in boys towards reading. Some of his suggestions included tailoring the boys' interest to reading opportunities. Example: boys' love of automobiles could be enhanced through the annual Guide de l'Auto, full of text and specifications.

Additionally, Nicholas warned of the pitfalls of books categorized by age. A youth of nine years of age at a six-year-old reading level might be turned off reading with the offer of books blatantly labelled for a six-year-old.

Though much of his presentation and suggestions seemed geared to teachers and librarians, parents attending still benefited from hearing him speak.

All the attendees were quite pleased to walk away with books generously donated by Nicholas.

He is available to visit school libraries and can be reached at [nicholas.aumais@bayardcanada.com](mailto:nicholas.aumais@bayardcanada.com)

By Martin Roloff (see review on left for associations)

## FALL CONFERENCE REVIEWS CONTINUED TEAMWORK BEGINS AT THE TOP

*Presented by Marlyn Brownrigg, Barbara Schnider and Betty Skagkos, experienced H&S executives involved in QFHSA and at the local level.* At the Teamwork Begins at the Top workshop, our trio of presenters gave a very concise overview of the duties of each of the Home and School Executive positions, as well as some excellent tips for smoothly running a Home and School Association. They emphasized the importance of collaboration, not only among the executive but also with the school administration, parents, and the local community. They stressed the value of keeping the communication lines open, being receptive to new ideas, acting professionally, and publicizing accomplishments, not only in the school but also in community newspapers. They suggested using nametags and providing a map of the school for new members and volunteers, helping everyone feel quickly at ease and a part of the school community. Most importantly, they reminded us of the need to respect the school space – always remembering that we are guests in the school. Thank you to Marlyn, Barbara and Betty for their excellent suggestions and continuing support.

By Charlotte Martin McCaffrey, Willingdon Home and School



## RESOLVING CONFLICTS PEACEFULLY

*Presented by Deb Kellman and Mona Segal of DM Family & School Services*

Deb and Mona presented a very logical and clear picture of what conflict is and how it happens. They gave us very good strategies on how to deal with conflicts with our children so that they do not escalate. They gave us tips on how to keep control of the situation when we are in such emotional situations such as watching our body language, being careful of our words, knowing when to disengage and knowing when to draw the line on an issue. They made the time go by very fast with their entertaining presentation materials and their use of entertaining clips from popular TV shows and movies. The only thing that I would change is the amount of time given for these workshops. There wasn't enough time for more interactions from the parents present and for people to ask questions. But this an understandable limitation of a one day conference. I would highly recommend this workshop for people that truly need help with their children and controlling conflict situations.

By Marissa McWhiter  
Bonaventure Polyvalent Home and School



## DON'T WORRY!

*Presented by Deb Kellman and Mona Segal of DM Family & School Services*

As a parent of a child who has been struggling with anxiety in the past 6 months, I can honestly say that the information provided by Deb and Mona was very helpful. The presentation of the information was well done, the use of examples really helped listeners visualize anxiety-provoking situations that are present in our everyday lives. As well, the tools and techniques that were introduced to help parents deal with anxious children were very valuable. These are tools that I use with my own child, and they have proven to be effective with him! I look forward to attending future workshops given by Deb and Mona. We will definitely be inviting them to our school in the New Year.

By Karen Rassi, Evergreen Home and School

## Associations at Fall Conference Nov. 2011

Arundel Elementary  
Beacon Hill Elementary  
Beaconsfield High School  
Beechwood Elementary  
Beurling Academy  
Birchwood Elementary  
Bonaventure Polyvalent  
Dorset Elementary  
East Hill Elementary  
Edinburgh Elementary  
Edward Murphy Pre-K  
Evergreen Elementary  
Gardenview Elementary  
Hillcrest Academy  
Honoré Mercier Elementary  
Lindsay Place High School  
Macdonald High School  
New Carlisle High School  
New Richmond High School  
PETES Elementary  
Sherwood Forest Elementary  
Shigawake Port Daniel  
Elementary  
South Hull Elementary  
St. Charles Elementary School  
St. Patrick Elementary  
St. Paul Elementary  
Thorndale Elementary  
Wilder Penfield Elementary  
Willingdon Elementary



## **\*\*Regional Councils\*\***

# **HUGELY POPULAR AT FALL CONFERENCE**

*By Mary Skagos, QFHSA Administrative Assistant*

As seems to be the case every year, one of the highlights of the Fall Conference is the time spent in the Regional Council Meetings. Regional Council meetings are an opportunity to sit down and network with other Home and School members who have similar interests. They are a forum for various Home and School members to exchange ideas, issues and concerns about their schools and school boards.

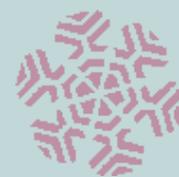
With 29 local Home and School Associations represented at the Fall Conference this year, the Regional Councils were quite lively and many animated discussions took place. The members in attendance were divided into 3 groups – High Schools, LBPSB elementary schools & all other elementary schools. The moderators for each group helped guide the discussions at the beginning of the meeting but as the ideas started to flow, everyone had something to contribute.

The Regional councils covered many topics of concern and it allowed members to realize that they were not alone and that others were also going through the same issues. When problems were



presented, solutions were then offered from others who had already been through the same issue. Some of the topics that were discussed were finding new members to join, finding a way to make parents understand what Home and School is and what members do, communication problems amongst members or with administration, after school activities, fundraising dilemmas, leadership issues, the current lack of librarians, and finding volunteers.

Everyone felt an hour wasn't enough and wished they had more time to continue their discussions. We hope that these meetings encouraged the participating Home and School members to forge connections and continued communication with each other. It is always easier to do a job when you have the support of your members and your peers. Hopefully, various local Home and School associations will come forth and offer to host a regional council meeting at their school in the coming months. If you are interested in hosting a regional council, please send an email to Mary Skagos at the QFHSA office ([info@qfhsa.org](mailto:info@qfhsa.org)) and we can help you with the arrangements.



## **Vocational & Technical Training Symposium**

*By Carol Meindl, QFHSA Executive Director*

The Provincial Interlevel Table for the English Sector invited members of the QFHSA to attend the second Vocational & Technical Training Symposium: Exploring Career Paths - Partnering to Build Futures held on November 9, 2011, at the Sheraton Airport Hotel.

The objective of this provincial symposium was to support educators and stakeholders by providing information and resources that will allow them to better counsel students regarding the very interesting and challenging career paths offered through studies in vocational training and career/technology programs. The focus of the symposium was to provide up-to-date information on the careers open to graduates of these programs.

Information such as:

- The nature of the work done by graduates of these programs;
- Work environments in the various sectors;
- The challenges of the work in the different fields;
- The skills and attitudes that ensure success in a particular field;
- The elements of job satisfaction in a particular field;
- Employers of graduates in the field;
- Certifications, trade and professional associations;
- Opportunities for career development and further studies or training;
- Trends and innovations in the sectors;
- Labour market demand for workers in the different fields.

In the next 5 years, there will be a significant shortage of skilled tradesmen and women, as 400,000 tradesmen begin to retire. The variety of careers available today is impressive and the demand will certainly be there for graduates as soon as they finish their training.

University is not the only option! Technical and Vocational Training can lead to lucrative and satisfying job placements, with plenty of room for advancement. Encourage your sons and daughters to seriously consider this option. Higher education always remains an option, as the demands of jobs and the aspirations of the young people evolve.

If you have any doubts, attend the Symposium next year and see for yourself.



## DM FAMILY & SCHOOL SERVICES

### DM Offers In-School Parent Workshops

20% Reduction  
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Schools !!!

#### ABOUT DM

DM Family & School Services work together with young people, their families, and schools, to build partnerships and find solutions. DM offers services in the following areas :

1. Therapy for individuals (adults, youth, adolescents, play therapy for young children), couples, & families.
2. Parenting Groups in DM's offices
3. Community Groups for youth in DM's offices or by arrangement in the community
4. In School Programs for students.
5. In-school Professional Development
6. In-school Parent Workshops on a variety of topics.

**TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE !**

*Dear DM,*

*My 10 year old son is a wonderful boy. He's well-liked and has lots of friends. His teachers say he is polite and respectful, and I'm happy to hear this. The problem happens around homework time - he argues incessantly and does anything other than homework. I am sad to say we always end up in a huge fight getting him to start. Day in, day out - the homework arguments drain my energy and I'm so afraid will damage my relationship with my son.*

**From: Tired of homework hassles**

**Dear Tired of Homework Hassles,**

The homework dance is a common event in homes all over the country – you have a great deal of company. Before a change can be made in homework habits, you will need to make sure that your child understands what is being asked of him, and that he is not struggling with undiagnosed learning difficulties. A good place to start your investigation is with his teacher, or (if you already have reasons to be concerned) perhaps a learning assessment.

If we can assume that learning challenges have been ruled out, then we need to try and understand why he is behaving in this manner. In other words, what motivates his avoidance behavior? Might he be trying to have more time with his friends or X-Box, or trying to get more individual time with you? Or perhaps he is hopeful that his procrastination will lead to you throwing your arms in the air and leaving homework decisions up to him? As tempting as that may be, our children

need our guidance. Although we adults understand the value of education, it is often very difficult to motivate young people to stay focused on a far off goal of how their adult lives will be improved by education. It's just too distant a goal for most.

Some parents describe their homework dance as a giant power struggle. If this is your situation, your best move is to disengage respectfully and end the conversation ASAP, as chances are it's a no-win situation, and unlikely to be a teachable moment. At times like these, "deflectors" can be invaluable. In a respectful yet serious tone say: "I'm sorry you feel that way. In this house we use kind words only" or "Nonetheless, the clock says it's 4.30pm - that's homework time." The message is that homework is not negotiable.

For some young people, reluctance to begin homework is about making the transition from a fun activity to a less fun one. It often helps to give "transition warnings". These can also be accompanied by "structured choices", i.e. providing 2 choices that are acceptable to you. "In 20 minutes it will be homework time. Would you prefer to start with Science Project or Math?" "Which questions would you like to do first – even or odd?" This gives the child some choice and control while signaling a clear direction and outcome.

Good homework habits are difficult to cultivate - sometimes our young folks need optimal conditions to flourish. An organized, regular homework place and routine, and tools they need to accomplish this task, are great places to start. As the adults, we have the ability to help our children develop good habits. It is hard work... but it sure is worth it.

*From DM Family & School Services*



**DM FAMILY & SCHOOL SERVICES**  
offers confidential services in our offices  
in Montreal & West Island

514.483.9339

[www.dmfamilyschool.com](http://www.dmfamilyschool.com)

## THE LEADER IN US - *A Review by Chrystal Henderson*

On Saturday October 22 and Sunday October 23, the Lester B. Pearson School Board & Concordia University held two one-day interactive workshops entitled “**The Leader in Us — The Art of Influence**” based on Ken Blanchard’s leadership book.

According to the theory, there are four leadership styles: Directing, Coaching, Supporting and Delegating. We move from one style to the other at different times and in a perfect world we would use all four. As we moved through the morning we were placed into groups. The group were made up of parents, teachers, administrations, students, commissioners, and even retired members. We all came together with different perceptions of our own leadership styles. Throughout the day we participated in many exercises and role-play opportunities. We concluded that we sometimes or often:

- confuse one method of leadership for another
- hear but don’t really listen
- make assumptions about people’s knowledge or lack thereof
- find it is important to ask a question and then ask again
- inaccurately perceive the situation
- see someone that is very capable and we perceive that the person does not need any help

Our ah-ha moment came near the end of the session. In one scenario, everyone believed we had done a good job supporting one another. One member of the group that was the person responsible for getting prizes from sponsors spoke up and said “*I didn’t feel supported.*” The group was surprised. She went on to tell the group that although she said she didn’t know how she was going to do it and had real concerns, no one gave her any real

help, direction or support. We learned that we really do need to ask specific questions. Not everyone feels comfortable to ask for needed help.

What we all learned that day is that we should never assume. We learned that to lead is to follow and to follow is to lead, that there are leaders all around us. We learned to ask questions and not to always provide answers. We learned that to fall short is another opportunity to learn. We should take things in context, trust ourselves, delegation is not abdication, know when to step in and when to step back, and we all experience the four styles at different times.

We learned a lot about ourselves and our group in a few short hours. A special thanks to all the members at Lester B. and Concordia University that took the time to make this workshop happen. It was a great learning experience for all.

## WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN

**Innovative program helps families prepare children**

**By Karen Rallis**

The Learning Partnership, a national charitable organization that champions public education, has been actively seeking funding to implement a pilot of its innovative Welcome to Kindergarten™/Bienvenue à la maternelle<sup>MC</sup> program in some Quebec school communities.

The program helps families prepare their pre-school children for the start of school, and makes them more aware of available community support. The philosophy behind *Welcome to Kindergarten* is that active engagement in early learning by parents and caregivers is crucial. Families that participate are invited to attend a *Welcome to Kindergarten* orientation at their neighbourhood school. At the orientation, parents receive a *Welcome to Kindergarten* bag of early learning and literacy resources, and learn strategies for using the resources at home with their children, before they begin school. Materials include a “tips” sheet for parents, available in over 20 languages.

The program is making major inroads into changing a troubling statistic – one in four Canadian children who start Kin-



dergarten every year aren’t prepared in terms of numeracy, literacy and social skills. The program touches over 94,000 families in seven provinces – 78 times the number of families reached in 2004, when the program started.

The pilot approach that The Learning Partnership would like to take in Quebec was used very successfully in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick and Manitoba. Pilots give communities an opportunity to realize the value of *Welcome to Kindergarten* for children and their families – in all cases, the program has grown significantly since the pilot. In Alberta and Ontario, many local school councils or home and school associations now share the cost with schools. They’ve found that the program helps schools develop trusted relationships with families before children enter school. For more information contact Karen Rallis, the *Welcome to Kindergarten* national program manager. Phone 416-440-5118 or email [kral-lis@thelearningpartnership.ca](mailto:kral-lis@thelearningpartnership.ca)

# ENERGY DRINKS

## *Let's Talk*

By Amanda Tweedie-Smith  
QFHSA Resolutions Committee Chair

I have been thinking about resolutions lately. Probably because I agreed to chair the Resolutions Committee; but it got me wondering about our past resolutions and how they have an impact on our lives. For instance, in 2010 the QFHSA passed a resolution regarding access to "energy drinks". What happened after we did that? Well, the mailings went out to all the recommended offices of MNA's, Ministry offices, health officials etc... But then what?

What happened next is that the "Media" became much more interested in reporting on this topic. In fact, local television media showed up at that QFHSA AGM to collect comments on the topic. Print media such as the Montreal Gazette printed articles on energy drinks. As late as Sept. 21, 2011, the Gazette had an article by Sarah Schmidt on a report made to Health Canada by an expert panel. According to this article an astounding 7 million units of these drinks are sold in Canada each month. Much of it is admittedly marketed to our youth and young adults. <http://www.montrealgazette.com/health/Energy+drinks+drugs+panel/5433513/story.html#ixzz1dhGv9mfv>

Among the recommendations of the panel were; "stricter control of energy drinks is important in order to address consumer confusion." They also recommend renaming "energy drinks" to "stimulant drug containing drinks". According to a spokesperson for Health Minister Aglukkaq, "If the advice of its expert panel is accepted, Canada would set a global precedent for its tough stand on energy drinks." At the time of this printing, Health Canada

was still considering the matter. My question to the Minister would be why shouldn't Canada set that precedent?

Health Canada has in fact released its recommendations and changes to regulation of these drinks and to read them, please go to: "Harper Government Announces New Measures to Support Families - New Approach on Energy Drinks" on Oct 6, 2011.

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/\\_2011/2011-132-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/_2011/2011-132-eng.php)

Other media were posting stories about side effects. Some reported mild effects, from lack of attention/focus and hyperactivity to severe and even life-threatening effects such as seizures and heart palpitations. One of those stories posted on ESNB's website, involved 17 year-old Dakota Sailor who drank two 16-ounce cans of NOS resulting in a seizure that nearly cost this young man his life. He freely shares that he routinely bought these drinks at his local convenience store before his games. <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/e60/news/story?id=5726418>. See below for numbers to report adverse reactions. It is estimated that only 10% reactions have been reported.

So my message to you, our members, is that what happens after we pass a resolution is that we create dialogue, we create interest, we raise an alarm sometimes, and we point out inadequacies and injustices in our systems. We start conversations that make a difference.

Now is a good time to start dialogue in your own Home & School about drafting a resolution on an issue that matters to you and others. Draft one and contact the Resolutions Committee to get important conversation started. Conversation which can make a difference.

To report an adverse reaction to an energy drink, please call the following toll-free phone or fax lines at Health Canada:

Telephone: 1-866-234-2345 Fax: 1-866-678-6789

## CONGRATULATIONS ST. PAUL on a New Outdoor Classroom!

Everyone from St. Paul Elementary is celebrating the recent announcement that their school placed first in the nationwide Majesta Trees of Knowledge contest. They have been awarded with a \$20,000, custom-design outdoor classroom from Majesta in conjunction with Trees of Canada. Popular vote decided the winner of the contest and St. Paul Elementary received 59,727 votes. We cannot wait to see the pictures!

## QPAT Supports QFHSA Resolutions

Our long term partnership with the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers, QPAT, is a reciprocal one. QPAT usually has an important presence at our QFHSA events such as our Annual General Meeting and our Fall conference. The association is no stranger to facing education issues in this province. This fall, we received a letter from Serge Laurendeau, President of QPAT, stating that QPAT has adopted and supported the QFHSA resolutions passed at last April's AGM.

Specifically they were:

**Resolution 2011/1 Funding for Libraries and Librarians**

**Resolution 2011/2 Special Education Services in Mainstream Schools**

**Resolution 2011/3 Alternative Programs for Students with Special Needs**

**Resolution 2011/4 Students with Learning Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties**

QFHSA appreciates their support and will continue to be a strong partner in ensuring the needs of our students are met with the best quality education they deserve.



## QFHSA DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT

Occasionally in the QFHSA News, you can find out more about members of our Board of Directors, who they are and how they came to the QFHSA. For December, we have:

### VERA YOUNG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

It may be unusual that someone with no children has chosen to serve as a director of the QFHSA. My interest in children and their school life originates in the classroom. I have recently retired after forty-eight years of teaching young children. Young people, and their well-being at school, has always been one of my priorities. From the days before entering Grade One at a small school in Kilmar, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. I graduated from Grenville High School, was certified at McGill, specialized with courses from Concordia and received a BA from Mount Allison University.

I had my first teaching contract when I was still 16, just out of high school. I taught in Namur for one year before enrolling in McGill at MacDonald College campus, knowing that, without certification, a teaching position would never be assured. I was more interested in spending my time at the front of the classroom than as a student at university. It is hard to imagine that at that time, a degree was not a requirement to teach elementary school. Having completed the "diploma program", I returned to teach in Namur for another year before moving to Trois-Rivières where I taught first grade for thirty-three years. During the early years of teaching, I enrolled in extension courses to complete my degree, always aware that my preference was the elementary classroom and fearing that if I completed my degree, I would be expected to leave my first grade classroom to take on a secondary level. I could, however, take any number of professional courses. My continuing education was during summer school classes where I gained a Diploma in the teaching of Reading, A Diploma in the Teaching of Mathematics (Elementary) and a Preschool Diploma. Then the day came I had been waiting for! Degree requirements for teaching young students. I took a sabbatical to attend Mount Allison University where I completed my BA.

I taught in Trois-Rivières (now renamed Mauricie Elementary) until 1995. At that time, I took early retirement to return to my home in Grenville to become the principal care-giver for my mom who was an alzheimer patient. Although these responsibilities required most of my time and energy, I accepted a position as Teacher's Aid at Grenville School, a few doors from my home.

I continued to work three mornings a week, thoroughly delighted with the children in this milieu. When I next found myself free to consider what to do with my retirement, a kindergarten position opened up at Grenville Elementary. I have always referred to that "job" as my "bonus". I spent five wonderful years teaching in this small, community school, where both students and their parents are priorities.

Throughout my working years, I served without exception as a staff rep on Home & School, School Committees, etc. I organized volunteer parent committees to staff a library, started a volunteer reading support group, organized a Book Club, and many other such worthwhile activities with parents and community volunteers. Provincially, I served on the Parent Liaison Committee with PAPT (currently QPAT) and volunteered on the Convention Committee.

I have now retired - again. I continue to serve on Home and School in Grenville, last year as treasurer. I found that my work on Home & School, church life and community interests were beginning to narrow my focus, feeling that I was missing out on the "broader view" I had been used to. I chose the QFHSA because it has that broader view that will widen my horizons from the "small town" perspective (which I value and want to maintain), yet involves me in the provincial level of activities which had previously been such an important part of my routine. I look forward to making a significant contribution to QFHSA in one of the capacities that I have developed during my busy professional life.

*By Vera Young*



### Updates from the CHSF

The Canadian Home and School Federation (CHSF) held its Semi-Annual Board Meeting November 9-13th in Ottawa. The Directors attended the National Remembrance Day Ceremony and laid a wreath on behalf of the Parents of Canada. Discussions at the Board Meeting centered on giving Canadian parents a stronger voice for matters pertaining to our children and youth. Items that were discussed include:

- the establishment of a Secretary of State for Children and Youth;
- Bill C-11 which concerns the Copyright Modernization Act;
- drafting a letter petitioning the Ministers of Health (federal & provincial) to restrict the sale of energy drinks to children and youth under the age of majority in their respective provinces;
- finalizing arrangements for the National Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week which will be held February 12-18th.



Debra Giesbrecht, 1st Vice President and Owen Parkhouse, Director place a wreath on behalf of the CHSF

## THE BENEFITS OF A POSITIVE RECESS ENVIRONMENT

*By Shea Woods, Dynamix Lead Facilitator  
In conjunction with the Dynamix Recess Success Program*

Everyday, elementary school children are given the opportunity to take a break from their schoolwork and go outside for recess. There are many benefits of allowing children to take recess breaks during school. From an educational perspective, children are found to be more attentive to academic work following recess and demonstrate improved cognitive performance on school related tasks (Pellegrini & Bohn, 2005). Recess can provide exercise and physical activity for children as a preventative measure for obesity (Barnett, O'Loughlin, Gauvin, Paradis, & Hanley, 2006). The social implications of recess are substantial and have a lasting effect on the developing child. Interacting with peers (rather than adults) at recess is a predictor of positive school achievement (Pellegrini & Smith, 1993), and the opportunities that exist for social interaction assist with developmental tasks—such as improved social skills and cooperative play—and building close relationships with peers (Pellegrini & Bohn). In general, recess behavior is a positive predictor of social cognitive development in children (Pellegrini & Smith). In addition to being proven in studies, teachers and parents often witness these positive outcomes of giving children a recess break during school.

Although recess time provides students with opportunities for positive growth, children don't always necessarily receive these benefits. For many children, recess is not a time for positive social interaction or physical activity. *It is important to keep children active and engaged on the schoolyard at recess and break times.* Given the potential recess has for influencing the educational, cognitive, and social development of children, it is important that we take steps toward creating a positive recess environment that supports and encourages children to experience the benefits of recess time. Here are a few ways that peer-led, organized games on the schoolyard can help with this goal:

1. **Provides opportunities for inclusion and social interaction in play.** Research on the benefits of peer interaction at recess suggests that peer-led games may be an excellent way of allowing children to engage in positive, meaningful



interaction. Social skills and peer relationships often develop within the context of active, social games such as tag, soccer, and jump-rope (Pellegrini & Bohn).

2. **Provides structure in order to decrease opportunities for bullying.** The elementary playground/schoolyard was found to be a school location where the highest frequency of bullying takes place (Vaillancourt et al., 2010). Organizing structured activities on the schoolyard may reduce bullying, as children are engaged in goal oriented, cooperative and, often, competitive tasks.

Let's set our children up to succeed. If we do our part to create a positive recess environment, our children will thrive.

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## LITERACY Your Committee in Action!

By Casey Stilwell, Literacy Committee Co-Chair

Since late July 2011, the QFHSA Literacy Committee has been working hard to continue in the long tradition of excellence exemplified by the committee's founder Marion Daigle and subsequent chairpersons Diana Donnelly, Giovanna Spadafora and Rosalind Hoenig.

The first major project was to apply for the 2011 Raise-a-Reader grant. Kuljinder Kaur Magee worked hard to get the application completed in record time, during a slow time due to summer vacations.

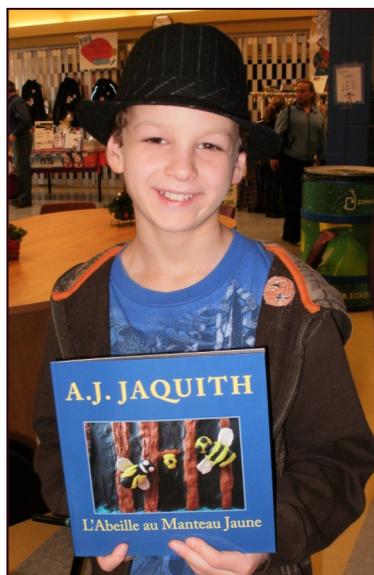
Following on the heels of back-to-school, Kuljinder and I, committee co-chairs, participated in the Raise-a-Reader fundraiser held in Montreal on September 28, 2011. Along with *Gazette* volunteers and other local literacy organizations hoping to benefit from the Raise-a-Reader grant, we spent 2 hours handing out complimentary copies of the *Montreal Gazette*, in exchange for donations from passers-by. According to Audra Yearwood, marketing coordinator of the *Gazette*, and organizer of the Montreal Raise-a-Reader event, just over \$23,000 was raised during the lunch hour!

A meeting followed with Nicholas Aumais, Youth Literacy Consultant from Bayard Presse, which was energizing and inspiring. Nicholas was invited to share his expertise in youth literacy at the QFHSA Fall Conference.

On October 25, past-chair, Rosalind Hoenig and I were privileged to attend the TD Canadian's Literature Award gala evening at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. This year's winning French-language book was *La fille d'en face*, by Linda Amyot (Leméac editor), the story of a young girl's coming of age.

On November 11, Kuljinder and I were invited to present an information session, on the topic of Children and Family Literacy to the students of John Abbott College Information and Library Technologies. The presentation included information about the QFHSA, our current involvement in literacy programs, such as Born to Read, and suggestions to the future librarians on how to encourage families and help them develop strategies to improve family literacy. The students surprised us with an extremely generous donation of \$200 to the QFHSA, which they had raised by holding a bake sale!

The Literacy Committee had a meeting December 2 where we began planning our coming events. For all our meetings, there is a standing invitation to all QFHSA members. Please check out our website or follow us on Facebook for more information and future events and meeting dates.



## THE BEE IN THE YELLOW JACKET

Written by young author Aidan Jaquith, age 11

Aidan, wrote and self-published a book called "The Bee in the Yellow Jacket". The cover and pictures were illustrated by using modelling clay. The story is about an adorable little stinging insect, Harry, who thinks he's a bee. Harry sort of looks like a bee, acts like a bee and is often mistaken for a bee. However, small differences start to become noticeable. Harry isn't covered in a fine layer of hair like his friend Bill. It also seems that Harry has a bit of a

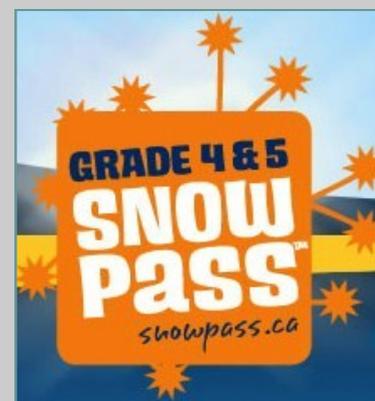


weight issue – he's too skinny. It started as a fun summer project and has evolved into so much more. A donation of one dollar from the sale of each book will be given to the Brick by Brick foundation. Titled "L'Abeille au Manteau Jaune" in French, you can find more on the book at

<http://remembernewvember.blogspot.com/2011/09/bee-in-yellow-jacket.html>

Also available on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) in English and French. Kudos to you Aidan! How very inspiring for budding young authors everywhere!

Source: Remember Newvember Blogspot web site



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## EDUCATION SUCCESS

By Larry DePoe, QFHSA Director, Education Committee Chair

In October, I had the privilege of attending a conference on school perseverance and school success. Sponsored by QESBA, FCSQ, BMO and Rio Tinto Alcan, the conference was attended by about 900 people - teachers, resource personnel, community representatives, and businesses who have an interest in student success. The Quebec Minister of Education presented statistics showing that the dropout rate is improving but we still have a way to go. The consensus of the group was that it *does* take a village to raise a child. While parent participation in schools has long been a part of the education culture in the anglophone communities, it has not been widespread in the French sector.

When parents are involved in their children's education, there is a growing body of research that shows that students' achievement is improved. The links between family, community and school are critical to improving school perseverance and may explain in some part why the anglophone sector has a higher percentage of high school graduates. Home and school associations, governing boards and school committees are examples of the types of involvement that promote student success. Community learning centres also promote parental involvement, and now there are 37 in the anglophone sector.

Several workshops presented success stories, and among the more interesting was the example of schools in the Saguenay where parents and students are committed to 15 minutes of reading per evening - which helps to involve the whole family in school success. Each 15 minutes is a building block of success. Over three years, they have accumulated 37 million blocks! In one school, the principal made a point of catching the students doing something positive. He would then call their parents weekly to inform them of the progress - and the school went from being one of the worst performing to one of the best. A weakness in some of the programs that have been implemented so far is the lack of evaluation.

Success stories can only be duplicated if we understand why they were successful and any new program that is implemented must also be evaluated. In order to improve the dropout rate,



CALLING ALL YOUNG WRITERS  
AND POETS!

Book Week 2012

# WRITING CONTEST

for Kids & Teens

### Do you love to write?

This year Book Week celebrates the importance of sharing stories with the theme **Read a Book, Share a Story**. The Book Week 2012 Writing Contest for Kids & Teens invites young writers to let their imaginations soar and share their stories or poems of adventure, humour, mystery and fantasy!

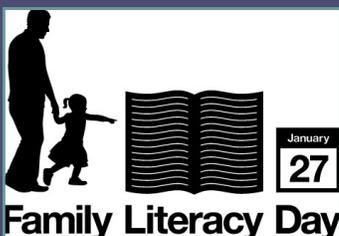
Students from **Grades 4 to 12** are eligible to enter and **one winner from each grade will receive a \$250 gift certificate to the bookstore of his or her choice!**

Winning entries will be posted on the Book Week website - [www.bookweek.ca](http://www.bookweek.ca).

we need to change - we need to understand that things need to be done differently - and change is not always comfortable. Some of the answers for the dropout problem may lie in increasing vocational options, particularly with boys, as well as adapting the curriculum to favour different learning styles. There are roughly 400,000 skilled tradespeople retiring in the next 5 years or so, and we will face a severe shortage in skilled trades unless we take measures to correct this shortage. This is just one example of the challenges that we face. We need continuity, coherence and cohesion in our approach.

It is important to remember when communicating with parents in a school setting that there may be as many as 1 in 4 that have difficulty reading. If you need to communicate important messages to parents, a written notice may not be an effective tool for a large number of parents in your school.

The school boards in the English sector are committed to improving the dropout rate by 2020. It can only be done if everyone gets involved!



On January 27, 2012, the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Family Literacy Day<sup>®</sup> will take place across Canada, encouraging parents and children to learn together through fun literacy activities. Finding time to learn with your child can be hard to do with today's hectic schedules, but the benefits of dedicating this time together on a daily basis are far-reaching for everyone.

Thanks to the support of HSBC Bank Canada, ABC Life Literacy Canada is pleased to offer fun learning activities for the whole family with a brand new Family Literacy Day Activity Book. Parents can download the activity book for free at [FamilyLiteracyDay.ca](http://FamilyLiteracyDay.ca) and complete it with their children to instill a love of lifelong learning.



**Learning happens in everything we do.**

Whether you team up to sort laundry, write a grocery list, or discover a new route to school, you are learning together. How will you learn with your family? Take the learning journey at FamilyLiteracyDay.ca and download your Journey to Learning Passport.

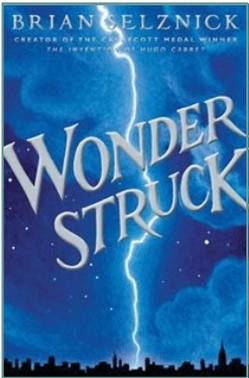




# CHILDREN'S LITERACY — BOOK REVIEWS

## WONDERSTRUCK \*

By Brian Selznick



Wonderstruck is a beautiful book telling two different stories at the same time, both 50 years apart: Rose's story in pictures and Ben's in words. Ben was born deaf in one ear, his mom had passed away and he never met his dad. One day Ben finds a bookmark which he believes contain his dad's phone number and address. He

picks up the phone and calls. At that moment, lightning strikes his house while Ben is holding the phone to his ears. Sadly, he becomes deaf in his other ear as well. Needing to go to the hospital in New York, we follow Ben's adventures to figure out who his dad was.

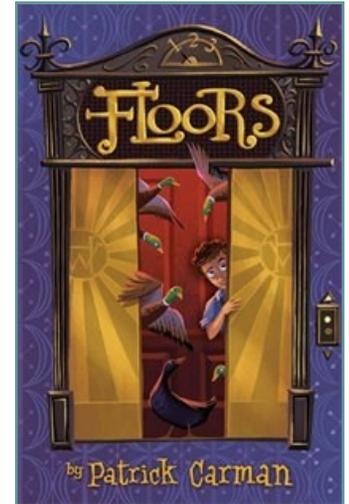
If you would like to know more, go to your local book store or library and start reading this wonderful book. This is one of the most detailed books I have read. I would recommend this book for ages 9 to 12. Adults would enjoy it too. I rate this book 9/10.

*India Kaeleigh Legendyk  
Gr.5, Kells Elementary*

\* Wonderstruck & Floors courtesy of Scholastic Canada

## FLOORS \*

By Patrick Carman



Floors is about a boy named Leo who works as a repairman with his dad at the Whipit hotel. When the owner, Mr Whipit, leaves the hotel for no apparent reason, the hotel starts to fall apart. Months later, Leo finds a box in an elevator holding 3D diagrams of a secret room in the strange hotel. With his new friend Remi, together they will have to get through the rooms alive and find the secret room in order to fix up the hotel.

I liked the book for its humour. It added some new twists to the story with all the mystery and suspense. I say I'd rate it 8/10. When I finished the book, I was quite excited to see a #1 on the spine of the book. I hope I get to read the next book.

*Liam Legendyk  
Gr.7, Kells Academy*

Recommended for Kids Aged 9 to 12

## CURIOUS CRITTERS.



## CURIOUS CRITTERS

By David Fitzsimmons, compliments of Wild Iris Publishing

Curious Critters is gorgeously adorned with stunning photographs that look as if your child can touch the creatures on the pages. The pictures are very inviting on white backgrounds and the fun stories that accompany each animal are entertaining and suitable for kids aged up to grade 4. All the animals featured in the book can be found in our own backyards. My 8 year old daughter's favorites were the O-Possum, O-Possum and the jumpy Southern

Flying Squirrel. Super links and activities on the book's web site too.

*Lisa and Katie Szeibert Gr. 3 from Birchwood Elementary*





## Welcome to the QFHSA Family!

### Two new Home and School Associations

Birchwood Elementary in St. Lazare

Leonardo da Vinci Academy in Montreal

QFHSA looks forward to hearing from your local associations and wishes you much success in your maiden year!

## SUNSHINE ACADEMY GOES TO THE DOGS!

By Martha Farley

Last year at Sunshine Academy, we opted to start a project called Paws to Read. I had read a lot about how dogs can be very therapeutic for the elderly as well as for children. It is a proven fact that when dogs are introduced into and visit nursing homes, the patients feel calmer, more relaxed, patients' blood pressure goes down and there is a general feeling of serenity. With that in mind I wondered if we could have a dog come into our school daycare to see if it might have a positive effect on the children. It just so happened that I stumbled across an organization called Therapeutic Paws of Canada, TPOC.

TPOC is a non-profit organization, with part of the program geared toward seniors and the other toward children. They have a program in place called Paws to Read where the children get to read a story to the dog that visits. After a couple of calls, I contacted Barbara who had a volunteer and dogs looking to complete a dog certification at a local school. The volunteer, Dave Pettigrew had two Shelties, Willow, a daddy dog 12 years old and Lian, his daughter 9 years old. Willow had been visiting at long term care facilities and seniors residences for 5 years. Lian started last year.

Dave came to visit Sunshine with the dogs last year in June and the project was an instant hit. The children were so enamored with the two dogs, and they read them books and gave them treats. Dave taught the children how to hold the treat for the dog, what to say to the dog and how to cuddle up and read a good book with a beautiful dog and friend by their side. This year we are so excited and happy to have Dave and his dogs back with us again. We had our first visit of the year in early fall with Dave, Willow and Lian. Dave has an hour and a half with four children and each child gets to read to either Willow or Lian for about ten or fifteen minutes. One of the little boys today was overheard saying to his friend "this is the most special day ever."

My hope was not only that the children enhance their reading skills but that they also learn empathy toward the dog. Hopefully that experience will transcend into their relationships in the school yard, the classrooms and the world. By having this special relationship with the dogs, I hope that the children learn other important life lessons; lessons such as love, and friendship, and caring for those more vulnerable than themselves.

So every Monday, at least twice a month, Dave will bring his



Allison in grade 5 at Sunshine Academy with Lian, volunteer dog from Therapeutic Paws of Canada

beautiful Sheltie dogs to our daycare. We are so thrilled to have this project in our daycare and lucky to have such great dogs, Willow and Lian and a wonderful volunteer and dog handler, Dave.

Without TPOC and its volunteers, these kinds of projects would not exist. I believe our most precious resources are our community and the very talented and incredible people in it that have so much to offer us and our children.

I sincerely hope that the Paws to Read project is one that is successful and that each of the students at Sunshine Academy reap great benefits from Paws to Read. I know I will be looking forward to watching the children light up when they see Willow and Lian arrive at the daycare.

If you would like more information about TPOC or if you would like to make a donation to their organization, you can email Barbara Paul at [barbarun@sympatico.ca](mailto:barbarun@sympatico.ca). Your donation and or volunteering will go a long way in helping our seniors and our children in the community. Their website is <http://tpoc.ca>.

## ST. CHARLES ELEMENTARY Pierrefonds

### Together We Can Achieve

How quickly the time has gone as we near the upcoming holidays!!! Here at St. Charles we strive to help you along and welcome everyone (new and returning parents) by supporting you through our Home & School Association (H&S). Our H&S is made up of many dedicated volunteers whose sole objective is to enhance all our students' school years. St. Charles H&S believes that "Together We Can Achieve" and we are excited to continue to be your connection between Home and School. We encourage everyone to become a H&S member and enjoy all the benefits that the membership has to offer. An \$18 family membership fee is an investment towards your child's education as it guarantees that you stay connected with your child's school. Whether you attend the meetings or not, there's no better way to know what's happening at your child's school by being a member.

Why should you consider volunteering at your child's school? Volunteering shows your child that you are interested in your child's education, which in turn will give your child the excitement and curiosity to learn. A child who has a parent volunteering at the school is proud to know that his mother, father or grandparent etc. cares enough to be involved in their education.

The St. Charles Home & School is always there for you and so never hesitate to contact us with any questions by leaving a voicemail in the H&S mailbox at 514.626.0480 or by e-mail at [stcharleshomeschool@gmail.com](mailto:stcharleshomeschool@gmail.com)

St. Charles Home & School would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone Happy Holidays and truly enjoy the quality time with family and friends!!!

*By Colomba Monteleone*

# FOCUS ON THE LOCALS

Get your school in the spotlight in the QFHSA News! Send in your articles and pictures to [news@qfhsa.org](mailto: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.

### Upcoming NEWS DEADLINES MARCH 2012 = submit by Feb. 6, 2012

We realize that the Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week happens after the deadline so we will be accepting only TSAW submissions up to Feb 24<sup>th</sup> at the absolute latest!

## SOUVENIR ELEMENTARY, Laval

The Holidays are meant to be a time of celebration and happiness. However, there are some families who celebrate the holidays with mixed emotions. As we gather with our loved ones to open gifts and eat delicious feasts, we often forget that there are other families who will not share in the same happiness. There are many children and families who celebrate the holidays from their rooms at the Montreal Children's Hospital.

Franco Gagliano (7), a student at Souvenir Elementary, wanted to make a difference for these children, and came up with a wonderful idea to make their holidays a little more joyful. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2011, Souvenir Elementary School held their first annual "Crazy Hat day". The children were invited to



express their creativity and silliness by wearing a fun and "crazy" hat. The students came to school in colorful hats of all kinds; some children even got really creative and made their own! The children were asked to bring in a donation of a new toy to benefit the Montreal Children's hospital. The response was overwhelming! Souvenir students donated more than 200 new toys and \$1500.



*By Laurie Modugno*

**BEURLING ACADEMY**  
Verdun



On Sunday October 2, 2011 on a cold wet morning over 50 students at Beurling Academy braved the cold wet conditions at Parc Maisonneuve and took part in the CIBC Run For The Cure. Students along with staff and some parents came out to support the cause. This year was the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary for Beurling students. They raised \$4545 this year. It was the second highest total for the group in 5 years. Congratulations to all the students for their hard work and thanks to the staff and parents for their support.

*By Chrystal Henderson, photo provided by B. Dubois*

**HILLCREST ACADEMY**  
Laval

**Promoting a social consciousness**

Hillcrest Academy in Laval believes that it is important for their students to contribute to the community outside their school walls. Over the last several years, Hillcrest Academy has had a day every month where students could put away their uniforms and “dress down” with donations going towards special causes. For the 2011-2012 school year, Hillcrest is proud to be affiliated with the Montreal Children’s Hospital and it has committed to donating the proceeds of its monthly dress down days in order to be a founding member of the New Children’s.



Hillcrest Academy principal Nathalie Rollin along with students holding a the "Founding Member of the New Childrens' souvenir shovel

The parents and students of Hillcrest Academy are excited to be participating in fundraising for a cause that has touched many of our lives. Every parent wants to know that there is a place they can bring their child if the need arises, and what could be better than supporting the best care that can be provided for all children. The Children’s is an important part our history and future in Quebec. Hillcrest believes in the Children’s and we feel that all young patients deserve the very best care.

*By Nancy Carbone*

**WILLINGDON, Montreal**

The Willingdon Home and School Association, with the help of many parent and grandparent volunteers, outdid themselves with this year’s Halloween Celebration in the gym on Friday, October 28, 2011. The event was a huge success, with many games to be played, crafts to be made, face painting, fortune telling and other ghoulish activities. The haunted house was a huge hit amongst students and adults alike. The grade six students helped staff the event tables and made the experience extra special for the smaller children as they walked through the haunted house. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make it a fantastic event!

*By Charlotte Martin McCaffrey*



## LINDSAY PLACE HIGH SCHOOL Pointe Claire

Lindsay Place Home and School would like to thank graduating student Nicholas Greschner for his inspiring and beautiful Art work. His 35 original paintings were used to



decorate the gym for this year's pre-prom reception sponsored by Home and School. Thank you Nicolas for sharing your talents and good luck in your creative future.

By *Marlyn Brownrigg*

## GENESIS ELEMENTARY Laval



Our school had the honor of being one of the 150 schools across Canada, and 1 of 3 in Quebec, to be adopted by the Indigo Love of Reading Adopt a School Foundation. The purpose of this Foundation is to help schools replenish their school libraries and to foster the love of reading among school children. The fundraiser started on September 11th and ended on October 1st. Donations were made in several ways: parents went online to donate and adopt the school, donations were made at one of the three Indigo locations that had adopted Genesis, and people bought \$25 e-gift cards online. Every e-gift card equalled 1 book donated, every \$12 donation also equalled one book and for every 100 people that adopted our school online, we received one book. Over the 3 week period, our school raised enough to equal 584 books. Our school library will need new bookshelves to hold all these books! Encouraging our children to read and helping them develop a passion for reading is, as parents and teachers alike, the greatest gift we can give to them. A heartfelt thanks goes out to Indigo and to our community for going online, for making donations and making this happen.

By *Filomena Borsellino*



## ROSLYN ELEMENTARY, Westmount

This year at Roslyn, the Home and School decided to start the year by doing things a little differently. On the first day of school, while new families to the school were waiting in the gym (nervous, anxious, excited & overwhelmed), several Home and School parents set up a table and served coffee, tea and iced tea along with something to munch on. The small gesture of a cup of coffee along with smiling friendly faces was warmly received. Simple questions were answered, while the school gradually placed all returning children and newcomers to the school into their new classrooms for the year.

On the second day of school, the sun was shining and the kind-hearted group of Roslyn Home and School parents returned (along with some graduating Kinder Mums of the year prior). This time we had a picnic table set up on the front school lawn and a delicious spread of baked goodies. So while the 2011 Roslyn kindergarten children came for their first morning or afternoon session, parents could come and enjoy a cup of tea/coffee and something to eat while asking a myriad of questions from parents who had been though the same experience the year before. Again this was a wonderful experience as it created a small community of kindergarten parents. Also knowledge about the school and its values were able to be shared in lighthearted discussions. Sometimes it is just a touch of thoughtfulness that makes the start to a new school year a more positive one.

By *Janet Danielson*

**AWAKENING YOUR CHILD'S POTENTIAL IS JUST THE BEGINNING.**

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## BEACON HILL ELEMENTARY Beaconsfield

**Drumming Up Some Fun!** H&S sponsored a “Welcome Back to School” activity in September with Rhythm Exchange. The students and teachers alike had a great time during this interactive activity by working together to learn some energizing beats and dance moves. **\$10,000 Terry Fox Dress!** For the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, Beacon Hill’s popular physical education teacher, Derek Lagomodière, has been organizing the school’s Terry Fox Run. This year, he put out an extra challenge to the students: raise over \$10,000 and he would wear a dress to school as an extra incentive.



Students from all grade levels rose to the challenge, asking family, friends, neighbours, and even emptying their piggy banks, to raise \$10,200. Thank you very much, Mr. Lag, for bringing Terry Fox’s dream to Beacon Hill, 31 years later, and for teaching our kids about his enduring legacy. **Parenting Workshop:** In November, H & S sponsored a parenting workshop attended by 32 parents on “Putting an End to Power Struggles”. Thanks to Mona and Deb from DM Family & School Services for an informative evening.



By Lisa Yee

## NEW RICHMOND HIGH SCHOOL

### New Richmond, Kicking Off Another Great Year

New Richmond High School Home and School kicked off the beginning of another great school year by hosting a welcome back BBQ and an afternoon of fun games for students, parents and staff. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to soak up some sunshine and catch-up with one another after the summer holidays. The Home and School stayed busy over the month of September. They held their first meeting of the year where they greeted returning members as well as some new faces. The team then came together to cater a lunch for the teachers of the school board during a professional development day. The month finished with the organization of a Terry Fox Walk at a local park. Students walked laps around track and through the Rotary Trail to raise over \$2200 for the cause. During the month of October Home and School supported the school board's annual soccer tournament by running two canteens for students at the event. The month

## ST. PATRICK’S ELEMENTARY Pincourt

It has been a great start to this new school year and as first time co-presidents we are enjoying every moment. We look forward to working together with you to make this year another successful one.

Thank you to everyone who supported Home & School and St. Patrick's by attending the 10th annual family BBQ. It was a great place to meet families and staff of this wonderful school. Although it was chillier this year, many families still showed their support resulting in a great turnout. We managed to raise over \$1100. We would like to thank all the families who volunteered their time. You created a warm and friendly atmosphere true to St. Pat's spirit. Without you, it would not have been the success it was, so THANK YOU!

Thank you to all those who volunteered at the Terry Fox run by guiding and ensuring a safe course for all students and staff. Thankfully the weather co-operated this year, unlike last. The students ran around the course with pride and honour. Some brave students even ran the course several times guiding the younger kids. Way to go St. Pat's on another successful run!

Our first pizza lunch was held on October 28<sup>th</sup> along with Halloween activities and it was a great success. We are looking forward to our Scholastic book sale and bake sale at the end of November, and preparing for our Christmas lunch and Santa Store on December 13.

We are looking forward to having a wonderful holiday season!

By Maureen Bird and Stephanie Femia

concluded with a dance held on Halloween. A local DJ rocked the house all afternoon and the Cycle One



class sold popcorn and juice as a fundraiser for Home and School. In addition to all these activities, the Home and School continues to assist the students and staff of New Richmond High School by running a snack and hot lunch program, acquiring books for the school library and funding student activities. Much thanks goes out to all the volunteers and supporters we have had over the past two months, your help has been much appreciated and we hope to continue to see you at future events.

By Natalie Hardy

**BAIE COMEAU HIGH SCHOOL, Baie Comeau**



On September 16<sup>th</sup>, a Back to school welcoming lunch took place at Baie-Comeau High School. The purpose of this event was to highlight the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. Students, parents, teachers and other staff enjoyed the meal and mingled with each other in the simplest of ways: corn, delicious chilli and hot dogs were on the menu.

The lunch was generously organized by the Home & School Association, whose members are volunteer parents and school staff. Thanks to the H&S, the event was a hit! The new school year began in a friendly, welcoming and homelike atmosphere. Let's wish a wonderful back to

school to students and a very successful year in their studies!

**Cross Country Success Story**

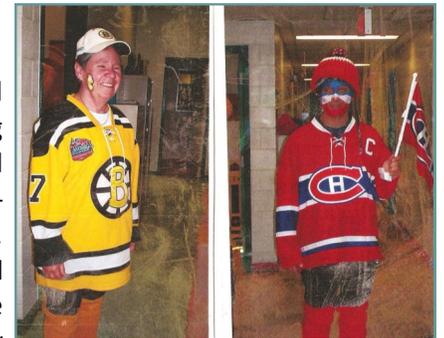
A cross country run was organized September 30<sup>th</sup> behind the Henri-Leonard Sport centre. The Baie-Comeau High School hosted the event which turned out to be an incredible reunion between students from three different schools. Polyvalente de Bonaventure and Polyvalente de Gaspé were the two schools from the Eastern Shore School Board that responded to our invitation to participate in this sport's event. We had 33 student athletes that ranged from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to Secondary 5. The challenge included tracks that ranged from 2 to 6 km depending on the level of the students. The day started as if it was going to rain but it turned out to be just a bit windy. The sun even came out to get everyone smiling, increasing the encouragement to our racers. Parents, teachers from the three schools and support personnel helped out in organizing the events. Even the Home & School was there to heat up the day with hot chocolate, apples, muffins and bottled water. Thanks to all for the tremendous success of this event.



*By Sylvain Audet*

**EVERGREEN ELEMENTARY, St. Lazare**

Evergreen students should be very proud of themselves! In September, Home and School held the annual Terry Fox Run and all students participated in this amazing event. The goal this year was to raise \$6000. Home and School added a special incentive for the students, Evergreen's Principal Carole Osborne, and Caretaker Jean-Guy Cote each agreed to wear their rival hockey team jerseys if the goal was reached. The day before the run, special guest Eddy Nolan from Roslyn School visited Evergreen to speak to the students. Mr. Nolan spoke about his dedication to The Terry Fox Foundation, and about his own ordeal with cancer. Students listened closely as he emphasized the importance of raising money for cancer research. Thankfully, Mr. Nolan's cancer is in remission, and he can continue his efforts to promote the Terry Fox Foundation. Thank you Mr. Nolan! Evergreen was extremely proud to be able to present a cheque to The Terry Fox Foundation for the amount of \$ **7723.45!** Our goal was reached and it was an exciting day for all students to see Ms. Osborne and Mr. Jean-Guy decked out in Habs and Boston outfits!!



The Evergreen Holiday Craft Fair returned this year on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The school gymnasium was transformed into a winter wonderland, filled with goods from crafters and local merchants. The Classroom raffle baskets were a huge hit as always, as was the bake sale, concession stand, and Scholastic Book Fair. A huge thank you goes out to all volunteers that made the day possible, and a special thank you to Home and School Co-Chair Sue Lamy for organizing this huge event!

The Staff at Evergreen continues to add excitement to the atmosphere with the school's "Around the World" theme. In November, the students celebrated "Oh Canada Day" and were asked to dress as "Canadian" as possible for the day. Prizes such as Tim Horton's gift certificates went out to several students for their outfits, and each class received participation points for a larger prize at the end of the year. The students look forward to learning about and celebrating the next country on the map!

On behalf of Evergreen's Home and School Association, we wish all students and their families a safe and Happy Holiday season! See you in 2012!

*By Karen Rassi and Sue Lamy*

## WESTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

St. Lazare

### HOME & SCHOOL GROWING AT WESTWOOD

Westwood's Home & School Association has had a great start to the year with a record number of members signing up. At last count we have 101 members, compared with just over 70 last year and in previous years. Home & School was represented at agenda days, curriculum nights at both campuses and Westwood Junior's open house evening where parents signed up at a steady pace, although we're not sure if our growth is attributable to our good works or the homemade baking we offered at our table! We are also delighted to welcome new members to our Executive Committee and our monthly meetings to help plan activities. Fall is our busiest time with the launch of our magazine fundraiser with QSP. Parents and schools in the LBPSB are welcome to subscribe online at [www.qsp.ca](http://www.qsp.ca) under Supporters; click Shop Now and enter Westwood's group #30669. A portion of the sales will come back to Westwood as one of our 2 main fundraisers, so if you are planning to order magazines at least one of our schools will benefit.

Our second fundraiser was our Westwood Winter Wonderland Craft Fair that took place Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup> at Westwood Junior. It was a huge success this year thanks to our wonderful volunteers! The Fair hosted over 35 crafters, fed visitors in our Holiday Café and featured our very large raffle tables with over 70 chances to win gorgeous baskets courtesy of our very generous local merchants. Westwood Junior students will be fundraising to build a medical clinic as a companion project to the Senior's built and supported school, now in its second year of teaching 2 classes of kids in Burundi, Rwanda, Africa; others will be selling necklaces with beads made by women from Burundi. There was a room full of gently used books, CDs, DVDs, puzzles and board games with proceeds going to Junior and Senior libraries. We were so happy to see everyone there and we wish you all Happy Holidays!

*By Arlene Griffin*



## BIRCHWOOD ELEMENTARY

St. Lazare

We are proud to have a brand new English elementary school in St. Lazare with a super new Home & School! We formed our executive in October and have been off making waves ever since. We launched a very successful cookie dough fundraiser in November. We then hosted a section at the Westwood High School Craft Fair on Nov 26, with baking, face painting with our art teacher Mme Erin, guessing jars and a ton more! We owe a HUGE thanks to the Westwood H&S for helping us feel like one of the family. It was nice to put a face to the Birchwood parents who, until now have been scattered throughout 4 different host schools while we patiently await the completion of our Birchwood building. We should be in our new digs by the time this newsletter is out so wish us luck! We have a wonderful team of volunteers and are looking to growing our membership once we are all in one location. A huge thank you as well goes to the Forest Hill H&S and the Petes H&S, both of whom contributed significant H&S funds to helping ours establish a bank account with funds representing the families that were rezoned. We look forward to an exciting year ahead, more to come!

*By Lisa Fougère & Crystal Ouellette-Scheiss*



## My Quebec Roots Video Contest

Are you between 13 and 18?  
Send us a 2-3 minute video about your roots in English-speaking Quebec and you could win:

First prize – IPAD 2 16 GB

Second Prize – IPOD 8 GB

Third Prize - \$50 CBC Shop gift certificate

Deadline: April 30, 2012

Full details @ [cbc.ca/montreal](http://cbc.ca/montreal) or [qcg.ca](http://qcg.ca)

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## RESERVE THE DATE FOR OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



### SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 2011

LOCATION:

The Sheraton Airport Hotel  
12505 Côte de Liesse, Dorval

More details in the new year!

Get ready to send in your nominations, awards information and any resolutions your Home and School is considering.

Start a discussion on our Facebook page.

DECEMBER 2011

QFHSA NEWS

QFHSA

## NEWS

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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.*

