



VOLUME 58 ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2020

QFHSA NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR HOME AND SCHOOL MEMBERS

An Unexpected Adventure:

How we lived and learned during the Spring lockdown

We've Made It!

How H&S associations managed the COVID-19 crisis, p. 3

Reflecting on Racism:

The QFHSA's Board of Directors wants to hear from you, p. 7

The Spring Parenting Webinars:

What we've learned, p. 13



The Quebec
Federation of
Home and School
Associations

In this Issue

We've Made It!	3
Message from the President	4
Executive Director's Message	5
Dates to Remember	6
Back to School in Spring 2020? Not So Fast...	6
QFHSA Reflection on Racism	7
Highlights from Western Quebec Regional Council	8
Legal Challenge to Law 21	8
Congratulations to the Class of 2020!	9
Art During COVID-19	10
Reflections on COVID-19 Family Life	12
Parenting Webinar: Where Are You on the Curve?	13
Parenting Webinar: It's Off to High School We Go!	16
Farewell to Bing Bai	20
Summer Reading	20
Literacy Initiatives	21
Focus on the Locals	22

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

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***A huge thank you to all of the students
who generously contributed artwork
and photos for this issue.***

WE'VE MADE IT!

How Home and School Adapted During the 2020 Shutdown

WHEN PREMIER LEGAULT ANNOUNCED that schools would close on March 13th for an undetermined period of time, the world got a whole lot more interesting (and challenging). Parents started the work from home/teach from home scramble and Home and School Associations found themselves in completely uncharted territory. There were some immediate challenges like “Can we get back in the school soon to take care of a few things?” to more long-term challenges like “How are we going to finish out the year?”

By late April, it was apparent that Home and Schools would have to start cancelling plans for fundraisers, end-of-year barbecues, graduation activities, etc., and come up with a reimbursement plan for pre-paid activities.

The QFHSA purchased a Zoom account license for its own Board of Directors meetings and this allowed the QFHSA to organize a series of online Regional Council meetings. Two sets of meetings were organized. In May, four Zoom meetings and two teleconferences were held. In June, there were four more Zoom meetings and one teleconference. Over 35 executives participated in each set of meetings.

These exchanges allowed Home and

Schools to obtain information on the following:

- Refund strategies and associated costs
- Finances: Reviewing the current situation/adjusting spending priorities
- Access to and the challenges of online learning

account to Home and Schools for their online meetings. The QFHSA may decide to continue to lend the Zoom account into the Fall months to those associations that need it.

QFHSA staff has been tag-teaming and taking turns going into the office once a week. The staff continues to work mainly from home and the QFHSA Board of Directors continues to meet regularly online.

The QFHSA's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and awards dinner had to be postponed. The AGM has been rescheduled online for Saturday, August 22nd. The current plan is to hold the awards dinner after the Fall conference if government directives allow.

The QFHSA would like to thank the Home and School volunteers who dedicated the time to tie up loose ends and extend their terms until

September to make sure a team is in place for 2020-2021. Congratulations on making it through all of the unexpected challenges of the 2019-2020 school year. Hopefully, the next few months will look a bit more like summers past.

Thank You!

Marlyn Brownrigg,
Membership Services Coordinator



Photos of this Spring's Regional Councils

- Graduation activities
- Reopening of schools outside Montreal
- AGMs and elections
- Community events and fundraisers in Fall 2020
- QFHSA housekeeping items

Another set of Regional Council meetings will be scheduled in late August.

The QFHSA also lent the Zoom

Message from the President

Navigating the Winds of Change

NORMALLY AT THIS TIME of the year, the summer message of the president of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations would be simple: I would be giving my best wishes to you and your children for a wonderful summer season. Summer is usually a time when images of children playing, summer camp, swimming lessons, horseback riding, and backyard and community barbecues are dancing in our heads. The joys of summer allow us to put all the trials and tribulations of the past school year behind us. It is a time when we look forward to a new school year with anticipation—our kids moving up a grade, changing schools, graduating.

Unfortunately, the Summer of 2020 will not resemble this scenario by a long shot. While I still offer you and your family my best wishes, I am compelled to address the feeling of uneasiness we all share at this time. We are concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic and how it will affect the summer life we have always known. The situation seems to change daily as we receive new and sometimes conflicting instructions to keep our families safe. Some days, we don't know which way is up anymore! We are worried if schools will be able to create safe and secure classes for our children in the Fall.

Along with these uncertainties come the proposed changes under Bill 40. This summer, our minority English community has had to go to court to protect our right to manage and control our edu-

cation system in Quebec. We absolutely could not let the Quebec government dismantle the most effective education network in the province just because a minister has got a bee in his bonnet over school boards. (It is also curious that the minister postponed the selection for the School Service Centre Boards process in the French sector but will not postpone the elections in the English network.)

Finally, the winds of change have been blowing mightily around the world and across North America—forcing us to confront and understand the racism that minorities face daily. The message

“We can no longer stand idly by and let the status quo remain.”

is loud and clear: minorities feel excluded from the Canadian narrative in society in general. They are also keenly aware of their absence from the history of our country that is taught in our schools. I am convinced many of us would not have imagined our complicity in the systemic racism and lack of diversity and inclusion that many people of colour, Indigenous peoples, and members of the LGBTQ2 community have faced throughout their educational experience.

I believe we are at a crossroads. We feel helpless, powerless, and guilty, without knowing which road we can or should choose to change our lamentable situation. However, we have left it to others to protect



minority rights for far too long with very unsatisfactory results. We can no longer stand idly by and let the status quo remain—in our schools, our institutions, and our society. Clearly minorities across North America are not letting that happen in their communities. Neither should we as the English minority in Quebec. It is time for all organizations, the QFHSA included, to re-examine their corporate behaviour, giving it the same scrutiny now being demanded by all sectors of our society.

No, it will not be one of those “lazy, hazy crazy days of summer” that Nat King Cole once sang about in the ‘60s. I suspect the Summer of 2020 will resemble more the tumultuous times of that long-ago decade. It was a time when the people started to reject the conventional reasoning of the day and chart new paths of their own. We could use a little more of that now it seems to me.

Linton Garner, *President*

Executive Director's Message

Year of the Rat? More Like Year of the Virus!

IT IS HARD TO TALK about anything other than the present situation we all find ourselves in. Lockdowns, working from home, juggling home life/work life/school work/social life. We all find ourselves in a new reality, and one that we are slowly getting used to, one that will become our "new normal."

Home and Schools have been scrambling to finish up their school year, balance budgets, reconcile accounts, assist with Grad, and tie up loose ends such as prepaid services. At this time, you would all be enjoying your summer break, getting away to see extended family, or spending time at the cottage/camping, or relaxing by the backyard pool.

The Ministry of Education has been scrambling too, trying to figure out how best to finish off the 2019-20 school year, along with how to restart the economy and get everyone back to school in September.

Everything is at loose ends...

The fall may look very different from the one we saw in 2019 and we do not yet know to what extent parents will be invited into their schools to volunteer and run programs. Home and School executives will be exploring how to transfer their activities/fundraising to online formats but at some point, we are all going to be so "zoomed-out" that we will be desperate for physical, hands-on activities. Getting away from the computer and into nature, in one way or another, will be absolutely necessary. Finding a balance will be a challenge.

By August we should have a clearer idea of what the role of Home and Schools will be in Quebec, under the new system of School Service Centres. One thing that is certain is that school board elections currently scheduled for November 1st will probably be the last thing on anyone's mind. If the Court Injunction



against Bill 40 is granted, the elections may not take place. If not granted, the results of those elections will likely have serious ramifications on education going forward.

Like everything else that has washed over us these past few months, we will just have to keep our heads above water and keep our eyes on the shore. Once we get there, we will know what we can and cannot do.

Until then, "just keep swimming..."
Enjoy the summer.

Carol Meindl, *Executive Director*

Ben (Grade 2) and Clara (Grade 6) at work on their COVID-19 drawings



Coming Up – Dates to Remember

June/July	New executive lists and President and Treasurer’s reports to be sent to the QFHSA office.
August 22 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.	QFHSA Annual General Meeting online via Zoom. <i>Please remember that each H&S is invited to send one delegate to the meeting.</i> Please confirm your attendance by emailing info@qfhsa.org
August 24 - 31	Regional Council Meetings via Zoom
September	Executive Workshops
October 24 10 a.m.	QFHSA Fall Leadership Conference for Parents

Back to School in Spring 2020?

Not So Fast! said QFHSA Members

IN EARLY MAY, the QFHSA surveyed our members to hear their opinions on the Quebec Government’s plans to reopen elementary schools later that month. We learned that a **very small minority of respondents** planned to send their children back to school when it reopened.

As we know, most elementary schools outside the Greater Montreal area reopened on May 11th. When the government announced on May 14th that Montreal-area schools would not reopen in the spring after all, the news was a relief to many.

Why did parents want to keep their children at home this spring? By far **the biggest concern was the safety**

of the children and school staff. Other issues raised most often were the challenges of social distancing and the sanitation measures required. While parents were worried about their child’s social isolation, this did not outweigh their worries for their safety.

At the time of the survey, parents gave mixed reviews for the distance-learning services they

had at their disposal. For more information on the survey and its results, please visit our website, www.qfhsa.org.



Photo of Emma (Kindergarten) and her COVID-19 artwork

QFHSA Reflection on Racism

June 23, 2020

Dear Members,

In ordinary times the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) would be getting ready to prepare for our Annual General Meeting (AGM). But these aren't ordinary times. COVID-19 and the social upheaval we see in the U.S. and around the world concerning anti-Black racism have seen to that. Both events, although completely independent of each other, have highlighted certain social and economic disparities and pointed directly to the inequality and exclusion within our societal structures.

The present day anti-racism movement coupled with comments we have received from minority community members of the QFHSA have led us to reflect on whether our organization is indeed really living up to the values we espouse. Our Rights, Resolutions and Education Committee authored a resolution on Diversity and Inclusion, which was adopted at the 2015 AGM. However, we are an extremely homogeneous group when we look at the composition of the executives of our local associations and the Board of the Federation over the years. Is the lack of diversity within our structures at the provincial and local levels an indication of some type of intended or unintended bias that we are not aware of?

Perhaps the messages and actions we engage in contribute to making minority communities feel unwelcome in our organization. Or perhaps the cost of our membership and the time commitment required are hindrances. It might be the situation where the same people volunteer year after year for the activities. Or it might be that cliques exist that see Home and School as their particular territory. Whatever the reasons may be, the reality is that we are seeing less participation of minorities in our organization than their numbers might merit. **We need to discover why minority communities do not participate in our activities and in our organizational structure.**

To that end, the QFHSA is developing a survey of its membership to discover any systemic barriers that might be preventing minority communities from feeling welcome in our organization. An organization that is 76 years old should be mature enough to face any inconvenient truths that emerge from the survey and address them head on. It is one thing to adopt a resolution on Diversity and Inclusion and quite another to implement it successfully into our day-to-day activities.

If members wish to share their experiences and feelings on the topic prior to the survey, we would love to hear from you at info@qfhsa.org, where your anonymity will be assured.

Thank you.

The Board of Directors, *Quebec Federation of Home And School Associations*



Artwork by Rylie, 12

News for You

WESTERN QUEBEC REGIONAL COUNCIL

Highlights from the February 8th Meeting

WELL BEFORE THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN, the Western Quebec Regional Council gathered for a meeting at the Western Quebec School Board. The event was hosted by the Lord Aylmer Home & School in partnership with the QFHSA. The Western Quebec community was very well represented at the meeting. Home & Schools from Chelsea, Eardley, South Hull, St Mike's, Onslow and PETES joined the team from Lord Aylmer and QFHSA President, Linton Garner.



The morning began with small group discussions where members had the opportunity to share their successes and explore a wide range of topics including the following: fundraising events; the role of the H&S; how the H&S can work successfully with governing boards and school staff; how to increase membership and volunteers; as well as best practi-

es concerning by-laws, minutes and running a successful meeting. The afternoon focussed on the different roles and responsibilities of the H&S Executive Committee.

A thank you to Natalie Filio, Terri Cameron, and Debi Brown for organizing this event. It was much appreciated by all—and we look forward to future in-person get-togethers when they are possible again! The organizers would like to extend a special thank you to the QFHSA for providing the refresh-

ments and snacks.

All Home & School members in the West Quebec region are invited to join us in the “Western Quebec Home & Schools” discussion group on [Facebook](#) to continue our discussions and share your latest successes. :)



FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION IN QUEBEC: SUPPORT THE LEGAL CHALLENGE TO LAW 21



IN THESE TURBULENT TIMES, when we are struggling with COVID-19 as well as the injustices we see playing out every day in Canada and in our neighbour to the south, we often feel helpless and frustrated.

We do not have to look far afield to see examples of discrimination in our own backyard. **Loi 21 (the law banning religious symbols) is systemic discrimination.** The *Comité juridique de la Coalition Inclusion Québec* is proceeding with its court challenge to Law 21, which will be heard in November. In the meantime, although the lawyers are all working pro bono, they need help with the court fees. The QFHSA has dedicated some of its funds to this cause as has the NL21 Campaign. We invite our H&S members to either make individual contributions, or perhaps their H&S Association might like to dedicate some funds toward this court challenge. Donations large and small are welcomed and much appreciated. You can make your donation via Canada Helps by selecting the “No to Law 21 Campaign” option in the appropriate section: <https://bit.ly/3e4t7w3>.

As the saying goes, “There is no more neutrality in the world. You either have to be part of the solution, or you’re going to be part of the problem.” — *Eldridge Cleaver*

Living with COVID-19

Congratulations to the Class of 2020!

When our Grade 6 and Grade 11 students started their final years in August, they had no idea what the world had in store for them. By mid-March, life as they knew it had moved to the confines of their homes and the internet. Between Zoom, TikTok, Messenger, Instagram, Discord, and other platforms—the conversations kept going, but things were not quite the same. Then the cancellations started—Grade 6 grad trips and parties; Grade 11 proms.

But the story does not end there. Our students, their families, school staff, and volunteers still managed to make new, often wonderful memories in this unexpected year. COVID-19 was kind of like the Grinch stealing all the holiday decorations and gifts—and we, like the residents of Who-ville, found ways to celebrate the milestone year with joy, hope, and love.

Exactly how does one celebrate grad in the Spring of 2020? With lots of creativity! Parents put signs in their windows and front lawns (pink flamingos optional). School staff and volunteers organized drive-by graduation ceremonies, small in-person ceremonies, Zoom parties, YouTube videos of grads in their prom outfits, photo sessions, diplomas, and gifts. Some schools still managed to publish a Grade 6 yearbook; others created cds chockfull of pictures and memories. Schools printed lawn signs of each graduate for all to see on the grad drive-through.

Beacon Hill's H&S Association had a clever idea to remember their 2020 graduates. Volunteers purchased padlocks, each engraved with a graduate's initials. The locks were attached to a school fence along with a plaque that will be a permanent reminder of this exceptional school year and graduating class. Other schools are hoping to hold homecoming parties for their grads in the fall. All of these efforts show our strong, resilient 2020 grads just how much they mean to their families, schools, and their communities.

Congratulations!



With thanks to Amanda from St. John Fisher Sr.; Ben from Cedarcrest; Clara from Beacon Hill; Dillon from Beaconsfield High; and Noah from Royal West Academy for sharing their photos with us.

Living With COVID-19

What do you do when you are stuck at home during a pandemic?



Emma, Kindergarten



Elody, 12



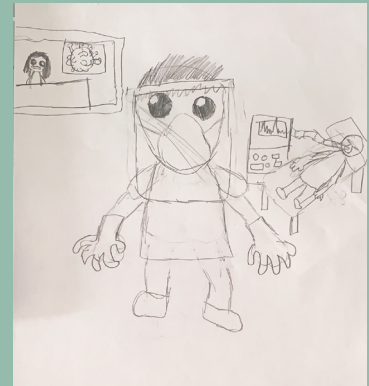
Grayson, 7



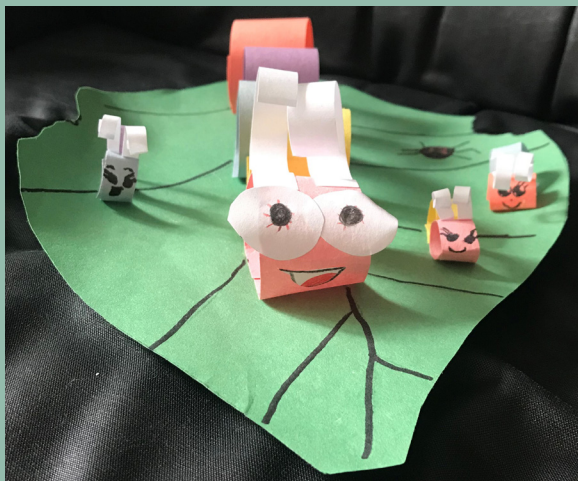
Skateboards by Anatole, 10, and Jonas, 10



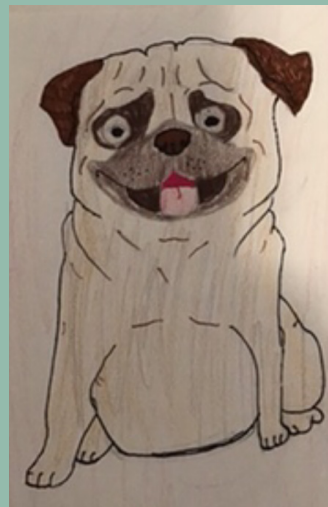
Grayson, 7



Nevan, 9



Grayson, 7



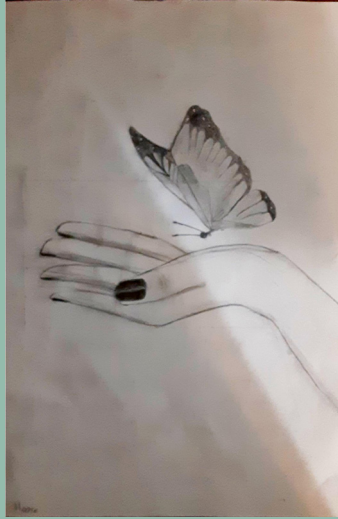
Sara, 11



Grayson, 7

Living with COVID-19

You create wonderful art! Thank you, artists, for sharing your work!



Sarah, Grade 5



Grayson, 7



Anatole, 10



Mini-paintings on cardboard tiles by Ben, Grade 2 and Clara, Grade 6



Sara, 11



Jade, 5



Homemade masks by Clara, Grade 6

Living with COVID-19

Does this Look Familiar? *Reflections on our New Family Life by Mimi Tabaczuk*

THIS IS OUR FAMILY’S STORY. In one week, we clocked 36 Zoom calls for our family of five. This is our quarantine reality with three kids in school and two parents working remotely. The chart below does not include all of the other platforms our kids are using to connect with their friends.

We are extremely grateful that our livelihoods were spared during this crisis and that our kids are continuing their education. Their teachers are quickly becoming tech masters and are using innovative ways to inspire from a distance. Quite a feat!

Zoom Call Schedule – June 8-12 (Family of 5)

Time / Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00	C2: 9:00 – 10:00 Math C3: 9:30 - 10:00 Eng/Fr P1: 9 – 10 Work internal Meeting	P1: 9 – 10 Work internal Meeting	P1: 9 – 10 Work internal Meeting	C3: 9:00 – 10:00 Phys ed P1: 9 – 10 Work internal Meeting	C3: 9:30 – 10:30 Eng/Fr P1: 9 – 10 Work internal Meeting
10:00	P2: 10:30 – 11:30 Work Communication Comm.	C2: 10:00 – 11:00 History	C3: 10:00-10:30 ELA/Math C2: 10:00 – 11:00 Science	C2: 10:00 – 11:00 French	C2: 10:00 – 11:00 English
11:00				C3: 11:30 – 12:00 Fr/Sci/His	P1: 11:00 – 12:00 Dept Meeting
12:00				C2: 12:00 – 1:00 Design	
1:00	C1: 1:00 – 2:00 English			C3: 1:00 – 1:30 Music C1: 1:00 – 2:00 Contemp. W	
2:00	C2: 2:00 – 2:30 French tutoring	P1: 2:30 – 3:00 Client call		C1: 2:00 – 3:00 Math P1: 2:00 – 3:00 Client call	C1: 2:00 – 3:00 French
3:00			P1: 3:00 – 4:00 Inter-Dept call	P1: 3:00 – 4:00 Client call	
4:00				P1: 4:00 – 5:00 Client call	
5:00					
6:00					
7:00		P2: 7:00 – 8:00 Exec Committee CT	C1: 7:00 – 9:00 Convocation	P1: 7:00 – 9:00 Gov Board P2: 7:30 – 9:00 H&S Execs	C3: 7:30 – 8:30 Cubs
8:00	P1: 8:00 – 9:00 Scout Meeting				P2: SATURDAY 10:00 – 2:00 Work Minuting

Parent 1 = P1, Parent 2 = P2, Child 1 = C1, Child 2 = C2, Child 3 = C3

The truth is, though, that we grown ups need to stop for a moment and think about the impact of our quarantine life. Creating this 1-week schedule validated what we (and we are certain many other parents) are feeling. We are overwhelmed. On a lot of days, we are feeling mentally exhausted. Here’s the thing. If parents are feeling this, you better believe our kids are too.

Photo by Crissy Pauley from FreeImages

What have we learned from these months of lockdown with this hectic online life? First and foremost: It is important to find quiet islands of self care to keep the family ship afloat. In this necessary new world of daily online communication, it’s IRL (in real life) where our sanity lives—and where our sanity can be saved.

Take the time to pull the handbrake daily on your online life and get out for a little fresh air, draw, tell some jokes and laugh, practice yoga—in short, do your sanity-saving activity. This will be the true anchor we all need in this storm.



For Parents: News and Information

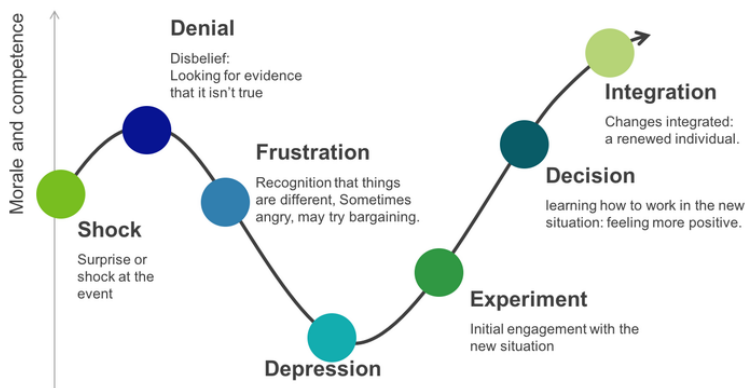
Where Are You on the Curve? Finding Effective Ways to Handle Change

ON MAY 13TH, THE QFHSA teamed up with LEARN Quebec to host the first of two parenting webinars with Family Life Educator Karen Delage. The topic of the workshop, *A Time for Crisis = An Opportunity for Transformation*, was very appropriate considering we were in Week 9 of the COVID-19 lockdown. It was a welcome opportunity to step back from our current reality and think about change—how we react to it, adapt to it, and how we can help others do the same. Here is a summary of what we learned in Karen’s informative presentation.

Understand the Change Curve

Change is an unavoidable fact of life, but that does not stop us from wanting our lives to remain stable and predictable. As Karen explained, when change comes along, we can feel thrown off balance. We need to adapt to our new circumstances. Adapting to change, we learned, is a process, not a one-time event. To describe this process, Karen used the Change Curve developed by renowned psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross.

The Kübler-Ross Change Curve



Artwork by Sandra Norval, Bluedotaug

As the chart shows, when faced with change, we typically move through five stages: shock/denial, anger/frustration, depression, experiment, and decision—until we reach the point of acceptance. Karen emphasized that moving through the stages is not always a

linear process. We sometimes move forward and then find ourselves slipping backwards. Moreover, individuals go through the stages at different speeds. The model is helpful for understanding how we navigate change. And, best of all, we can feel reassured that the reactions we are having are completely normal.

But what do we do if we find ourselves (or someone we know) lingering too long in a difficult stage on the curve? How can we help? Here are Karen’s suggestions:

Stage in the Change Curve:	What Can Help
Shock and Denial	Listen, be patient.
Anger/Frustration	Show empathy, limit judgement.
Depression <i>(The lowest point; where feelings of powerlessness persist.)</i>	Be compassionate. Show understanding/validate feelings. Limit judgement. Avoid the temptation to think/say one should “just snap out of it.”

As you can see, compassion and empathy are the name of the game when it comes to helping someone deal with change. And supposing you (or someone you know) needs a little help to move forward from the depression stage? Karen suggests you try the following:

- Redirect, bring the perspective elsewhere.
- Ask: How did I handle a similar issue in the past? How did I get through it?
- Search for small victories: Do something you like to do; try to slowly build a sense of motivation.
- Create schedules, routines to bring some feelings of normalcy, control.

Once we have worked our way through the depression stage, it is time for some experimentation. We

Continued on Page 14

For Parents: News and Information

have reached the point where the focus is less on what we have lost. Instead, we start looking for solutions. It is important to remember that mistakes and false starts come with the process. Though it may seem hard, it is important to try, to go out on a limb, and keep learning and changing. The end goal is to reach the acceptance/integration stage, where we accept what has happened, deal with the change as best we can, and move along with our lives.

Webinar participants had an opportunity to share the challenges their own families were facing at this time. Karen discussed strategies to help children recover from the loss of their school lives, the disappearance of routines, social lives, and important rites of passage.



Photo by Alfonso Romero from FreeImages

Watch What Your Children See

Karen then explored how we as parents deal with change and how our behaviour can influence our children. She reminded us that when parents are stressed out, their children will be too. This makes it crucial for parents to take care of ourselves, be self-aware, and **strengthen our capacity to self-regulate**. Self-regulation, Karen explained, is the ability to take a pause between what we feel and how we react. In that pause, we have the opportunity to think through how we want to handle the change/situation before us. It is what happens when instead of blurting something out in anger or frustration, we think about what our other alternatives might be. These few moments of reflection often allow us to tackle the situation in a

more calm, measured way. And the good news is that your children will see this approach and learn to use it themselves.

Coping Strategies to Avoid

Karen also talked about ineffective methods people sometimes use to cope with change. We learned what to do when we find ourselves exhibiting these behaviours. Here are some questions to consider:

Do you dwell a long time on negative thoughts? Do you allow these thoughts to keep turning in your mind? If so, try to redirect your attention, change your focus. Take a break, do something you like to do.

Do you suppress your feelings or avoid dealing with them? According to Karen, chances are pretty good that your children are noticing this behaviour. Moreover, bottled up feelings can lead to disastrous explosions of anger and frustration or troublesome coping mechanisms like alcoholism. Try to open up and share your emotions. As Karen explains, “It is better to be honest. Let your kids know. It is perfectly okay to say, ‘I’m sad,’ ‘I’m having a hard time.’”

Do you come across as inflexible or rigid when confronted with a new challenge? Instead, try to allow yourself to admit that you don’t know how to react to a new situation, be open to suggestions from others, show some flexibility.

Are you susceptible to cognitive distortions? This happens when we reinforce negative thinking or as Karen describes it, “when we catastrophize” a situation. We focus on what is wrong—and make really tough conclusions like, “I’m a bad parent!” or “I can’t get anything right!” This type of thinking often happens when our stress levels are high. When you find your thinking going this way, try to take a step back and change your perspective. Remind yourself of the positive things in your life, think of all that you are grateful for. Karen en-

Continued on Page 15

For Parents: News and Information

couraged us to draw inspiration from the expression, “Change how you see; see how you change.”

Make Time for Self-Care

How can parents thrive amidst all the daily challenges they face?

Put a cap on worry time. Mulling over negative thoughts is not helpful. Allow yourself a fixed amount of time for worry, and then force yourself to challenge those negative feelings with positive thoughts.

Raise the bar on empathy. Be more compassionate with yourself. When you are feeling down, limit self-judgement. Remember that absolutely everyone makes mistakes. Acknowledge the mistake, but then move on. And catch that negative self-talk—and redirect to positive thoughts.

Practice gratitude. Remind yourself of the positive things you do. Congratulate yourself on victories, both large and small.

Make Time for Family Care

Now that we have taken care of ourselves, we are ready to take care of our families. Karen encouraged us to see the COVID-19 lockdown as a gift, an opportunity for families to explore what their values are and what they can do to reinforce those values. Gather the family together to discuss what is important to the group. Is it honesty? Is it teamwork? Karen explained that when a family is clear on what their

core values are, this facilitates the creation of rules to reinforce those values. To illustrate: if as a family, you decide that honesty is an important value, then when a child lies, it follows naturally that there will be a consequence. These family discussions bring clarity for all—and make our rules make sense.

Another part of family care is understanding what the family needs to thrive. Figure out as a family what makes you happy—what activities do you like to do together? Remember to make the time for these activities—and even seek out new activities and experiences to share.

And Continue on the Journey ...



Photo by Anissa Thompson from FreeImages

For parents, children, families, it is inevitable that change will affect our lives. Whether it is the disruption of the COVID-19 crisis or something else, a change sets in motion a series of reactions. The goal is to reach the end of the process, where we are able to adapt, incorporate the change into our lives, and move on.

All along the journey, we need to support and encourage ourselves and our families through patience, empathy, understanding, self-regulation, and a lot of care. Thank you to Family Life Educator Karen Delage and our collaborators at LEARN Quebec for inspiring us to find our way.

Interested in watching Karen's webinar? You can find it on LEARN's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/TaX-WfxM58YI>

For Parents: News and Information

It's Off to High School We Go! *Navigating an Important Transition in Your Child's Life*



Photo by Adrian Krupczynski from FreImages

ON MAY 19TH, THE QFHSA presented ***Helping Families Navigate School Transitions***, the second webinar in the two-part series offered in collaboration with LEARN Quebec. For this presentation, Family Life Educator Karen Delage drew on her over 15 years of experience working with families and youth. Transitions, she explained, can be very challenging for both children and their parents. And just how challenging is the transition to high school? Karen described it as a very destabilizing and chaotic time for the child. It is a time when parents need to develop new tools and strategies to adapt to their child's changing needs.

Understanding the Stages of Development

But before parents can address their child's needs, they need to understand exactly what their children are going through. To help, Karen explained the stages

in a child's development from their middle elementary school years to adulthood.

From 8 to 10 Years: The Age of Rules

How your child sees the world:

- They have a strong focus on the rules.
- Things are black and white; rule breakers are tattled on.
- They are incorporating an understanding of right and wrong, but it's done in a rigid way.
- They are hard on themselves when they make mistakes.
- At the same time, they are starting to question the rules—particularly if these rules don't seem to make sense.

Continued on Page 17

For Parents: News and Information

Tips for interacting with your child at this age:

- Be coherent; make sure your rules make sense because at this point your child wants to understand the reasoning behind them.
- Welcome questions—because this is how your child is developing his/her critical thinking skills.

From 10 to 12 Years: The Age of Idols

How your child sees the world:

- They are looking for role models. Media becomes a big influence. They are developing their personal interests and building their sense of identity.
- They leave elementary school proud of their success/accomplishment and may be acting very sure of themselves.
- They are ready to challenge your rules. Their sense of justice/injustice is very strong.

Tips for interacting with your child at this age:

- Encourage their budding individuality; support their new interests.
- But be watchful—check in to see what they are watching on social media, what games they are playing.
- Be ready to open up a dialogue and redirect your child's interests to healthy/positive choices if necessary.
- Welcome challenges from your child. Make sure you can explain the reasons behind your rules for your child to understand. You may find you have to adapt/revise a rule to make it a better fit for life right now.
- Show that you are human and—like everyone—you make mistakes. Own up to your mistakes—it's a good model for your child.

From 12 to 14 Years: The Age of Individualization

How your child sees the world:

- They are now on the route to adulthood.
- They are starting to separate/detach from their parents.
- They are centred on themselves.

Tips for interacting with your child at this age:

- It is a hard time for parents—more closed room

doors and less affection from your child.

- Patience is the key!

From 14 to 16 Years: The Age of Power

How your child sees the world:

- Your child's new independence can lead to conflict with parents.

Tips for interacting with your child at this age:

- Cultivate a partnership with your child. Try to work together as a team—but keep in mind that you are the leader of this team.
- Avoid acting the authoritarian. This will lead to power struggles.

From 16 to 18 Years: The Age of Autonomy

How your child sees the world:

- Your child looks at himself and the world around him with greater understanding and takes on new responsibilities.

Tips for interacting with your child at this age:

- Enjoy this time of stability.

Photo by Rafal Swidzinski from FreeImages



Helping Your Pre-Teen

The context set, Karen turned to the real focus of the presentation: how to parent a child on the verge of entering high school. What do we need to do? What new skills should we learn? You will find Karen's tips on the following page.

For Parents: News and Information

1. Find Effective Ways to Communicate with Your Child

- Open up the channels of communication between you and your child.
- Make sure it is a two-way dialogue. Try asking open-ended questions; ask them what they think.
- Listen to them. Validate their feelings.
- Explore tough topics together (like bullying, alcohol)—to help you understand what your child is dealing with, share your values, and help your child figure out how to handle situations with their peers when they come up.
- Be mindful of the way you react to situations. Try to stay neutral and in control. If you tend to have strong reactions, your child is less comfortable opening up with you about challenges they are facing or mistakes they have made.
- Set aside time each day for a one-on-one conversation.

2. Support Your Child's Individuality

- What is your child interested in? Learn something about it so that you can discuss it together.
- Work on connecting with your child. It's the time of their lives when their peers become more important than their parents—but you want to remain a part of their lives too.

3. Help Your Child Develop Critical Thinking Skills

- Encourage your child to gather the information they need to make an informed decision.
- Ask questions to guide your child in their decision making.
- Get your child to explore solutions—but without telling them what they should do.
- Suggest some tools they can use. For example, break a problem down into small, more manageable parts. Make a pros and cons list.

4. Encourage Your Child to Express their Emotions

- It is an emotional time of their lives and they are feeling a lot of stress—so encourage them to share how they are feeling.

- Don't discredit how they are feeling—it is all too real to them! See if together you can understand the emotion, talk about it, and if needed, finding solutions/coping strategies together.
- Kids at this age tend to be hard on themselves. When you see a lot of negative thinking, bring a positive perspective. Point out your child's strengths; get your child to change his/her perspective.
- Be ready to help if your child is developing negative coping strategies. Be there to redirect/intervene if there is danger.



Photo by Crissy Pauley from FreeImages

5. Find Effective Ways to Handle Conflict

- Ignore the small stuff—those exasperating, but typical teen behaviours (eye rolling, etc.).
- Know when you need to take a step back to keep control. It is okay to disengage/stop a discussion when you see it is getting out of control. Leave the room; keep your cool.
- The goal is mutual respect at all times. If you find yourself losing your cool—don't be afraid to apologize.
- When your child's behaviour is an issue, try the 1,2,3 Rule. Step One: Remind your child of the rule he is breaking. If the behaviour continues, go to Step 2: Warn the child that the third time he breaks the rule, there will be a consequence. If the problem continues, move on to Step 3: The child gets a consequence (and be sure to follow through with the consequence).

Continued on Page 19

For Parents: News and Information

6. Encourage the Development of their Autonomy

- It is time to shift our focus from doing everything for our child to doing less.
- Encourage your child to start doing things with you or even on their own.
- Give them more responsibilities—Karen’s suggestion is to search Google to find age-appropriate tasks for your child.
- Provide guidance and support when your child takes on new responsibilities.
- Make your expectations clear. You want your child to feel accountable for their actions. Remember to reinforce positive behaviours, point out the natural consequences that happen when responsibilities are ignored.

As you can see, Karen’s presentation on school transitions was full of wise and helpful suggestions. She concluded with this important message: **Parents need to be kind, to be patient with themselves.** In the end, our goal as parents is to show our children that we are willing to listen to them and we will always be there for them. Together, parent and child can navigate the transition to high school as well as other life challenges that come their way.

Interested in watching Karen’s webinar? You can find it on LEARN’s YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/r60XKk9roFA>

More about Karen Delage, our Workshop Leader



Family Life Educator Karen Delage has a keen interest in building strong, harmonious relations between parents and their children. She brings to her parenting workshops the insights she has gained from over 15 years of experience working with Youth Protection.

Karen offers parenting workshops and webinars as well as one-on-one counselling for parents of tweens and teens. For more information, email parenteenfocus@gmail.com.

You can also find Karen on Facebook at Parenteenfocus, where she shares parenting tips, self-care suggestions and humour too!

Looking for More Resources?

Here are Karen’s Recommendations

1-866-APPELLE

A bilingual 24/7 telephone service that helps individuals in crisis/distress. Counsellors provide suicide-prevention support and help individuals suffering from anxiety, depression, and addiction problems.

cmha.ca

The website of the Canadian Mental Health Association. Here you will find information and resources.

1-800-361-5085

The Parent's Help Line, a bilingual 24/7 service.

1-800-668-6868 or TEXT: 686868

The Kids Help Line is a 24/7 bilingual service. You can also visit their website: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

Empoweringparents.com

This site offers over 100 free articles for parents. Learn how to handle specific behaviours and issues and reinforce your parenting skills.

Verywellmind.com

This site offers information on a large variety of mental health topics.

News for You



Farewell to Bing Bai

OUR “HISTORY OF ACHIEVEMENT” PROJECT has been crafted by many hands, and it is with wistfulness that we say farewell to Bing Bai, who worked on

the second part of this project from September 2019 to February 2020. Bing took over the project from Jing Zhang, after she departed Montreal for a job opportunity in Elk Point, Alberta.

It was Bing’s turn to work on the Interactive Map, which pinpoints the location of more than 340 Home and School Associations over the past 75 years. Bing sifted through the archives to find photos and articles to include with many of the Home and Schools identified on the map. He pulled together information to create the three Memory Books that were presented on November 9, 2019 to the Roslyn, Macdonald, and Willingdon H&S Associations during the Historical Retrospective event that took place at Macdonald College’s Ceilidh Room immediately following the Fall Conference.

Bing, originally from Hanzhong, Shaanxi Province, China, came to Montreal from Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, where he had earned his Master in Education in 2016. He had already earned a Bachelor of Arts from Xi’an International University in Xi’an, China, followed by a Master of Arts in Communications and Journalism from Communication University of China in Beijing.

While working part time for us, Bing attended classes at McGill University, where he earned a second Master of Arts degree this spring, this time in Information Sciences. And just as the History of Achievement project was winding down, COVID-19 was ramping up, the QFHSA office was closed and we never did get a chance to give Bing an official farewell luncheon or say a proper good-bye. But Bing’s legacy will go on... he spent several weeks working on designing a new QFHSA website for us. It has been complete for a while now and would have been launched this spring had the office not been closed and the opportunity lost to put the finishing touches on it.

When the new website is launched, it will be an additional contribution Bing has made to the future of the QFHSA. Thank you, Bing, for all your work and we wish you much success in the future, wherever it may take you. Drop by for a visit whenever you are in town.

Win a
Set of
Books!

SUMMER Reading: *Books to Help You Talk to Your Kids About Race and Racism*

SCHOOL IS OVER and kids will have time on their hands. Once they have been running around all day, they may be ready to sit down in the evening or on a rainy day with a few good books to amuse themselves and learn about themselves and others.

There are lots of great books out there that can help parents talk about the challenges faced by members of our minority communities. Children need to be aware. They need to see the world through a different set of eyes.

First Book Canada has provided the QFHSA Literacy Program with a \$100 gift certificate and we have purchased two sets of books that deal with Race and Racism. Each set contains the following books:

- **Africville** Written by Shauntay Grant, Illustrated by Eva Campbell
- **I am Enough** Written by Grace Byers, Illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo
- **Cool Cuts** Written and illustrated by Mechal Renee Roe

Continued on Page 21

Membership Services – The Latest News

- ***Sulwe*** Written by Lupita Nyong'o, Illustrated by Vashti Harrison
- ***Viola Desmond Won't Be Budged!*** Written by Jody Nyasha Warner, Illustrated by Richard Rudnicki
- ***Shomburg: The Man who Built a Library*** Written by Carole Boston Weatherford, Illustrated by Eric Velasquez
- ***Dream Builder*** Written by Kelly Starling Lyons, Illustrated by Laura Freeman

We plan to give one set of books to the Strong Hinkson Organization for their Black Literature Expo, which had been originally scheduled for March 28th, but, like so many other events, has had to be postponed.

The second set of books we would like to make available for a draw from our H&S members. If you would like a chance to win this set of seven books for your kids, contact the office and give your name, email and the code word COOL CUTS to be entered into the draw. The happy winner will have the set of books mailed to their home in the Fall. *Good luck and happy reading!*



LITERACY INITIATIVES

Born-to-Read: The QFHSA recently donated 50 Born-to-Read bags to the Benny Farm *On Our Own* group. Board books for the bags were purchased from First Book Canada and the QFHSA was pleased to support these (mainly) single mothers and their families.

Strong Hinkson Project: 35 books from First Book Canada were donated to the Strong Hinkson Project to provide resources for single parents who are pursuing post-secondary studies.

High School Literacy Support (Reluctant Readers): The QFHSA was thrilled to have five teachers apply for funding for their high-school classroom libraries. Four of the teachers had never participated in this programme before. Students from New Carlisle (ESSB), New Richmond (ESSB), La Tuque (CQSB), and Gaspé Polyvalent (ESSB) benefitted from this programme.

This year, teachers were allocated a monetary grant and as their schools met the criteria, a grant to buy books through First Book Canada. There are still some books to be shipped from the QFHSA office, but this will have to wait until the Fall.

Updating the Children's Literacy Resource Guide: In March 2020, Mayali Cousineau-Paley was hired to update the QFHSA's *Children's Literacy Resource Guide*. The new digital version will be available for Home and Schools to use as they wish.

Information Officer: Karen Henchey was hired as the QFHSA's information officer. In addition to posting information on the QFHSA website and Facebook page, Karen is the new editor of the QFHSA NEWS. Please send articles to news@qfhsa.org.

— Marlyn Brownrigg

Focus on the Locals

In the *Focus on the Locals* section, we share the news and information of our schools. We would love to hear from your school too! We invite H&S members to send in your news to news@gfhhsa.org.

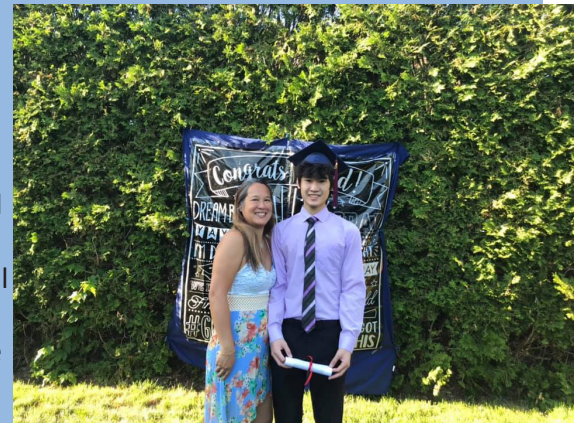
Graduation Day at Beaconsfield High School



The Class of 2020 faced a unique and unprecedented situation. Prom, convocation, Grad trips, Senior pranks—these are all rites of passage that high-school students look forward to for 5 years. Unfortunately, their year was interrupted by a pandemic. We prepare for all kinds of unforeseen circumstances, but never had we imagined that a COVID-19 lockdown would be their reality.

Beaconsfield High School has been amazing at keeping in touch with our students and families and especially the grads throughout the shutdown.

They prepared cute little videos with messages from the staff to brighten our days. There were weekly email updates and check-ins from individual teachers, the administration, as well as the school as a whole. The school also organized a drive-through grad for the students, their families, and the teachers to say goodbye. As the students entered the event, they received their caps, then their diplomas as well as many other little treats. There was even a photographer on hand to take pictures of the graduates with their caps and diplomas. This was all done with safety distancing measures. The students and their families really appreciated this gesture from the school and cannot wait to have a proper convocation and prom in the Fall.



Going Green at Beacon Hill Elementary



This year, Beacon Hill Home and School organized a couple of green fundraisers. There was a Zero Waste Store and a Garden Seed Sale—appropriate for this spring of plentiful COVID-19 Victory Gardens!



All totalled, the money raised from both events was about \$2000. The funds were destined for the graduating class of 2020.

Focus on the Locals

A Look Back on the Year with Grenville Elementary

As we look back on the 2019-2020 school year, we reflect on the happiness of our children. All the silly smiles from the fall corn boil, teeth full of kernels. The whipped cream pie throw after the Terry Fox Run



filled the school yard with buzzes of laughter. Our Halloween, cupcake, book fair and hot chocolate days were enjoyed by all. Students' full smiles (and bellies) from

our chef's lunch hour meals and breakfast with Santa. Our Craft Fair, which raised over \$2500, and our Born to Read Program was yet again the talk of the town. We had a couple of great fields trips too.

Unfortunately, our school year ended a few months early. Our Home and School had so many more plans for the year... In early May, Home and School had an email vote and all agreed to help out by offering to pay for the school agendas and math books for the 2020/2021 school year.

Home and School promises to be there for our students in the coming year—we are ready to take on 2020-2021 with full force!

At Lord Aylmer: A Successful Family Literacy Day and TSAW Appreciation Week



On February 1st, our Lord Aylmer Home & School organized a full day of fun family activities and a Scholastic Book Fair in celebration of National Family Literacy Day.

Guests included Sunshine Tenasco, who shared her book, *Nibi's Water Song*, a story about an Indigenous girl on the search for clean water to drink. Fanny Robert read her story book, *Le grand peur de Moly*, about a young girl who overcomes her fears. Krishnan Sundaram, Outreach Coordinator from the Western Quebec Literacy Council, led our families in a fun song writing and rhyming game. And several local community organizations such as the Regional Association of West Quebecers and Connexions Resource Centre, shared information about their non-profits and organized fun literacy-based games and activities at their kiosks. A special thank you to our Aylmer and school community for helping us raise over \$1,800 in books during our Scholastic Book Fair.



From February 5th to 7th, our Home & School had a blast organizing TSAW, spoiling our teachers and staff, and thanking them for their ongoing dedication and support of our students. On Monday, our wonderfully generous families dropped off yummy treats and baked goods. On Wednesday and Thursday, our Home & School surprised our teachers, staff, bus drivers and crossing guards with healthy Bento Box lunches. On Friday, we distributed our TSAW Wellness Gifts, which included a stress ball, a soothing organic sugar scrub, and an essential oil roller ball and room spray. And throughout the week, our students created cute drawings and inspirational messages to stick to the teacher and staff Message Boards. Find complete articles about these events here: <https://bit.ly/2YyPRQv>

Natalie Filiou, Communications Coordinator for the Lord Aylmer Home & School

SHARE YOUR NEWS!



Photo by Anissa Thompson from Freelmages

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

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