

# St. Francis de Sales School Council News

Kids win when parents get involved

December 2006

## Christmas Message...



The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree is the presence of a happy family. Wishing all our St. Francis families a wondrous holiday season. Offering peace, love and hope this Christmas season.

God Bless

Debbie Shea, School Council Chair

## Provincial Funding to Increase Parent Involvement

Parents play a vital role in the development and education of their children and in the success of schools. The Ministry of Education appreciates that the needs and contributions of parents have been undervalued and that the education system needs to create several new points of reinforcement in order for the “parent factor” to realize its potential.

The reasons for a genuine partnership with parents are self-evident. Parents are the most important influence in a child’s life outside of school, and this is also true for a child’s education. Long after direct learning from parents in a child’s early years gives way to formal education, parents continue to play a key role in student success through the attitudes they help to shape and the direct supports they provide. Moreover, good schools are better where there is a stronger connection with parents as part of the learning community.

Last year, the province announced it would provide funding for parents

and school councils to improve parent involvement in their schools. We have received this funding.

A new provincial Parent Involvement Policy lays out the requirements for the Minister of Education, the Ministry, school boards, schools and their staffs to contribute to successful outcomes by recognizing effective parent involvement in schools.

Parent involvement is not just about fundraising and volunteering in the school. There are at least eight different categories of parent involvement. We are happy to be able to report many activities ongoing here at

St. Francis de Sales that contribute to these categories:

- ① Communication:
  - school newsletter and calendar
  - student agendas
  - school council newsletter
- ② Helping at home
  - homework tips
  - homework sign-and-return
- ③ Attending school events
  - annual BBQ
  - monthly school masses
  - fun night fundraiser

- primary/junior plays
- primary pajamas party

- ④ Building parenting skills
  - Catholicity and link to St. Francis de Sales Parish
  - Student Support Worker
- ⑤ Volunteering
  - active recruitment of volunteers to support fundraising, class trips, committee work
  - annual volunteer appreciation luncheon
- ⑥ Fundraising
  - efforts by both school and school council consistently enhance school finances
- ⑦ Participating in decision-making
  - invitation to serve on, and/or participate in school council
- ⑧ Leveraging community resources
  - Terrific Kids
  - Community Representative on school council

We would like to build on what we have and continue to improve. We know that the busy lives all parents lead today means that it is more challenging to become involved. Many parents face genuine barriers to involvement. We feel it is our mandate to work at understanding those barriers and to find new and innovative

# Provincial Funding to Increase Parent Involvement, Continued...

ways of increasing parent involvement. School councils have also been asked to report back to the Province regularly on the level of parent engagement in their school.

The St. Francis de Sales School Council has formed a Parent Involvement Committee. An initial meeting took place

**“The busy lives all parents lead today means that it is more challenging to become involved.”**

on November 28, 2006 with the CDSBEO Trustee, Nancy Kirby in attendance. This gave participants a chance to get a better understanding of the Provincial initiative and to share ideas. The next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2007.

Although this is a good start, increasing parent involvement will not hap-

pen with a single meeting or event and cannot be effective without input from various sources. This is a process that will take place throughout the school year.

To be effective, we need your input and we'd love to have your participation. *Please contact Debbie Shea at 613-283-5349 or Shelley Nadeau at 613-283-3832 to share ideas or join the committee.* [Web Resource: www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

## What's Happening...

**Advent Celebration:** Wednesday, December 20, 2006 at 1:30 p.m. at St. Francis de Sales Church. Everyone is welcome.

**Parent Involvement Committee Meeting:** Wednesday, January 10, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. in the library – so many ways to get involved in your child's education. Everyone is welcome.

**Next School Council Meeting:** Wednesday, January 17, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. in the library. Everyone is welcome.

**Volunteers Needed:** We are looking for volunteers to fill several roles. If you would be interested in volunteering in the library or volunteering to help with head lice checks, please contact the school at 613-283-6101. Planning for the annual family Fun Night is underway. Volunteers are needed to form a committee to help plan for this very popular event. Share your ideas and help organize Fun Night by calling Debbie Shea at 613-283-5349.

**Greening Project.** The greening project at the entrance of the school is now complete. With the addition of a security camera, School Council's contribution totaled \$2,820.97. Special mention goes to parent member Monica Wilson for initiating the project and to our principal, Mr. Bujacz for seeing the project through to its completion. Thank you.

**New Shirts:** School Council contributed \$570.00 for new sport shirts to be used by school sport teams. These shirts replace older worn shirts and will keep our teams looking awesome as they continue to make us proud.

**Trees:** Student Council and School Council combined efforts to send a letter to the Town of Smiths Falls requesting the replacement of trees along Elmsley Street. Thanks to all students who signed the petition.

**Advent Materials:** School Council contributed \$221.20 toward the purchase of Advent I Spy Books for primaries and juniors and Advent Calendars for intermediates.

## Contact us:



If you are interested in volunteering or you would like to learn more about the St. Francis de Sales School Council, please contact Debbie Shea at 613-283-5349 or approach any member of council.

### 2006-07 School Council Members:

Debbie Shea—Parish Rep./Chair, Connie Smith—Vice Chair, Margaret West—Treasurer, Shelley Nadeau—Secretary, Tammy Demidoff—Parent Liaison Rep., Bernice Chiniborch—Community Rep, Patricia Meagher—Non-teaching Rep., Susan Hoysted—Teaching Rep., Alex Bujacz—Principal, Nancy Fontyn, Tracey Stringer, Debi Cunningham, Monica Wilson, Lorraine Fenn, Dorothy Hudson, Cyndi Galazzo, Debbie Burns, Melody Lefebvre