

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWS


St. Francis de Sales School
613.283.6101

Message from the Chair

To paraphrase the song from “The Sound of Music”, the halls are alive with the sound of music... and it sounds wonderful. As all parents are aware, as more and more cutbacks are made to budgets and the curriculum, more and more arts programs are reduced to mere shadows of what was available to us when we were in school. But to walk the halls of St. Francis, I am overjoyed to hear a chorus of young voices making beautiful music. The source of the music, as it turns out, is a large gathering of students from grade 1 all the way up to grade 8 practicing for the upcoming musical, “Seussical Jr.” It is amazing to see so many happy and eager faces, belting out their best efforts and doing such a great job. I am proud to say that my own two daughters are part of the 80+ students that make up the cast of the show. They practice everywhere they go, with the older giving the younger “lessons” to make her sing better, and car trips of any length become rehearsal times. Some of the skills that they are learning from being in the production you can’t put a price on how important they are. They learn to listen to everyone around them, to hear their cues and know when to speak. As a musician myself, I know this is one of the hardest skills to learn when you are performing with others. They learn to work as a team, and that everything isn’t all

about them, nor is it all about the lead roles either. The supporting cast is just as important as the leading members. Their personalities change once rehearsals start too. They become more outgoing, and even carry themselves differently, as if, indeed all the world’s a stage. Their confidence blooms, and suddenly they can organize themselves better because they know they have rehearsal commitments that have to fit in between sports commitments and homework commitments too. They not only memorize their own parts, but the parts of the entire cast. I know this will translate as a great life skill not just throughout their school years, but their whole lives. Then there is the physical aspect of it. Not many people think of being in a play as a terribly physical undertaking, as in physical fitness, but the amount of dancing that is required is equal to many sports. Of course, I admire their bravery for being able to stand up in front of large numbers of people and put themselves out there, wanting to do their best, and hoping to entertain. Where else could they learn that? In the remainder of this issue we examine the role that extracurricular activities play in your child’s education and learning.

Lorraine Fenn

Extra, extra...

Children are constantly learning through their interactions—interactions with other children, teachers, coaches, leaders, other adults and parents. Although chances are they won’t be working out of a textbook or taking quizzes and tests, there is no doubt that extracurricular activities enhance a child’s education. In addition to helping a child discover their own personal strengths, extracurricular activities also help children develop critical life skills such as organization, teamwork and cooperation. Many extracurricular activities also help reinforce key academic subjects such as Math and English.

Drama

Drama has proven over and over again what a benefit it can be to human society, not only through the pleasure an audience gains from watching a theatrical production but also the sheer amount of knowledge and skill that can be gleaned from participating in a production. Grade 7/8 teacher, Kristy Angel, is the driving force behind the highly successful drama initiatives at St. Francis de Sales Catholic School. Since orchestrating Higgins & Jacobson’s “Three of a Kind” with the primary grades five years ago, Ms. Angel

has continued to engage our children in increasingly more challenging musicals each year leading up to this year’s “Seussical Jr.” from the Broadway Junior Collection.

“Through participating in musical productions, students have the opportunity to reinforce many areas of the curriculum. What other activities involve music, drama, dance, reading, oral communication, design, sound and lighting, construction, money management and sales? These are only a few of the skills needed by those involved in a production. Musicals offer an opportunity to explore many diverse disciplines in one arena, and every student’s talents can (and will) be used to put together a first rate production.

Aside from learning and reinforcing a variety of academic skills, musicals also help students develop important social skills. Through participation in a musical, students meet others with similar interests, and get to work with students from different grades, who they might not otherwise meet. All members of the production must

Extra, extra... Continued

collaborate to create a successful show, whether they are a part of the lighting crew, a member of the chorus, or if they are playing the lead role. Students must listen to one another and the directors, wait their turn as they learn parts of the show and students take positive risks while conquering fears and building self-confidence.

Participating in a musical is a great opportunity where everyone involved gets to have fun. Students participate positively in an activity that stresses strengths, rather than weakness and that allows them to use their talents and be rewarded for them. Students spend time with friends and get to sing, dance, act and create through a variety of mediums. In the end, students create a bond with one another through hard work and the performance of a one-of-a-kind production of their show. The experience and skills build up to the applause at the end of a performance, but can impact a student for a lifetime."

Kristy Angel, Teacher

Sports

In general, children who participate in sports become more physically fit and tend to have higher self-esteem. The educational benefits of sports are many and varied. Organized sports help our children learn cooperation, self-discipline, perseverance and social skills while doing something fun. The academic benefits of many sports should not be overlooked either. For instance, Math plays a vital role in the sport of ice hockey. At any given time, players are estimating the speed of an attacker and the angle of attack to quickly calculate an angle through which they might move the puck to another teammate or at least beyond the reach of their attacker. A goalie's focus is on playing angles to reduce the size of the net in hopes of limiting the number of pucks that enter the net.

A wide variety of organized sports are offered through local associations (i.e. figure skating, hockey, soccer, football, etc.), through clubs (i.e. karate, gymnastics, curling, golf, etc.) and at school (i.e. volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, cross-country skiing, etc.) giving young people an assortment of options. In the end, the best sport for a child is one that he or she finds most interesting and fun. Parents can help their children get involved in sports by spending time with them learning about each sport and trying those that fit within the scope of family time and budgets.

Adventure

Scouting and guiding continue to provide an ample assortment of activities that support children in learning vital life skills. Through organizations like Scouts Canada and Girl Guides of Canada, boys and girls learn about personal organization, time management, and youth leadership. Activities like camping and hiking promote fitness, confidence, awareness of the environment and conservation. What children learn about the arts, music and other cultures helps increase respect for and acceptance of others.

Conclusion

While extracurricular activities play a vital role in character development, community building, citizenship and personal fitness, their role in reinforcing academics cannot be underestimated. We are fortunate in our community and in our schools that our children have many opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. As a parent, we must also be prepared to make a commitment to extracurricular activities whether it's ensuring that your child has the proper sports equipment, supplies or simply providing transportation to and from practices and events.

For information on extracurricular activities at St. Francis de Sales School, please call the school at 613-283-6101. For information on clubs, associations and groups operating in the town of Smiths Falls, visit <http://www.smithsfalls.ca/rec-programs.cfm> or contact the Town of Smiths Falls Recreation Department.

Upcoming Events:

Next School Council Meeting:

Monday, February 23 @ 6:30 p.m. in the library. Everyone welcome!

**"KIND WORDS CAN BE SHORT AND
EASY TO SPEAK, BUT THEIR ECHOES
ARE TRULY ENDLESS."**

MOTHER TERESA

If you are interested in volunteering, would like to attend a meeting or if you would like to learn more about the St. Francis de Sales School Council, please contact the school at 613-283-6101 or approach any member of council:



Chair—Lorraine Fenn, **Treasurer**—Margaret West, **Secretary**—Heidi Johnston, **Community Representative**—Bernice Chiniborch, **Parish Representative**—Lorraine Fenn, **Non-Teaching Representative**—Irene Tweddle, **Teaching Representative**—Anik Blanchard, **Principal**—Derek Haime, **Vice-principal**—Dan Lesser, **Parent Representatives**—Sally Beattie, Lisa Brennan-Trudel, Shelley Nadeau, Tracey Nichols, Tracey Stringer, Janet Yanosik