



## St. Mary Catholic High School Canned Food Drive

Beginning at the end of November, students at St. Mary Catholic High School in Brockville, kick off the annual Canned Food Drive to support local food banks. The initiative is organized by the Justice League, a group of students focused on carrying out acts of social justice in the school community. The group hosts a pep rally for students and staff to kick off the initiative, and generate excitement for the annual event. In addition, the students create a video to promote the food drive and create community awareness.

J.P. Elliott, Principal of St. Mary Catholic High School, along with Cathy Cavanagh, Chaplaincy Lead, and students Alisha Bhatt, Jo Purcell and Maddy Roddick, presented information to the Board about the annual initiative, which has been a school tradition for 19 years.

"St. Mary's staff takes great pride in maintaining curricular, athletic, and arts programs that develop character and the values of responsibility, respect, honesty and informed decision making," began Mr. Elliott. "The efforts of our school community during our annual Canned Food Drive over the years has been outstanding."

Chaplaincy Lead, Cathy Cavanagh and student Alisha Bhatt noted that "about forty per cent of food bank users are children, which is a very large number. Even some students from our school use the food bank."

"Our record as a school is 50,000 items," continued student Maddy Roddick. "However a few years ago we developed a points system, to encourage students to bring in larger items that food banks need most, such as baby food and diapers. One class each year is also responsible to count the cans and distribute them evenly among the area food banks."

The class competition in the high school division is based on the points system, which are allocated based on nutritional value, as well as the larger items which are less often donated. Trophies are awarded for the high school, the elementary school as well as the "Battered Can Trophy" for the class with the most points overall. The winning classes are also recognized with pizza parties to celebrate their success.

Elliott also highlighted the large dinner which is hosted by St. Francis Xavier Parish, organized by Fr. Price, and hosted in the cafeteria at St. Mary CHS. Fr. Price works with Mr. Elliott, custodial staff, and the Plant Department, along with countless volunteers from the community.

In a letter written by Fr. Price, Mr. Elliott noted, "Community supports are very important to make this event happen, and we are very proud to be able to give a Christmas Day meal to those who would be alone on Christmas. This dinner has taken place since 1973, and we are grateful to have served 150 people this year."



Transportation is provided to those who wish to attend, and a Christmas gift is given to each attendee. The event is supported by gifts in kind, and Fr. Price covers the cost of any expenses which are not covered by donations.

Student Trustee Fenn thanked his peers for their presentation.

"As a grade 12 student I have participated in this canned food drive since grade 7," he noted. "It opened my eyes to how I am meeting my expectations as a Catholic graduate, as well as the impact I was having on my community. I loved getting involved with the video, and I would just like to thank my peers and the staff for all of their work in making this annual event such a great success."

## Neurolinguistic Approach to Second Language Learning

The Neurolinguistic Approach (NLA) to second language learning is a new way to teach and acquire a second language for the purposes of communication, in a regular classroom setting. It is a methodical literacy-based approach to learning a second language and all strands of the French as a Second Language curriculum are targeted (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

The Neurolinguistic Approach is based on recent research in neurolinguistics that has provided a better understanding of how we learn to speak a second language. Developed by Joan Netten, C.M., PhD, of the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) Faculty of Education and Claude Germain, PhD of the Université du Québec à Montréal Department of Language Teaching, the NLA was created in response to data which indicated that existing second language teaching strategies were largely ineffective.

Lyne Gratton and Sharon O'Brien, French Second Language Curriculum Consultants with the Board, presented the benefits of this approach for second language learning, and its implementation within the CDSBEO.

"One of the fundamental principles of the NLA is the teacher modelling of, and the use and reuse of simple, full sentences and language structures by the students in authentic situations," began Gratton.

"For example, for many of us, French class involved verb conjugations, practice sheets, and dictation. Teachers are not excluding these practices in the Neurolinguistic Approach, but are rather blending them with the modelling of full, simple sentences. The students then learn to use, and reuse these full sentences and language structures in a variety of authentic situations."

"The strategies used in this approach are beneficial to help students learn French – they are not learning about French, instead they are learning French, in French."



According to this approach, it is not necessary to know grammar rules and understand the structures of a language in order to be able to speak that language.

"In the past, French vocabulary was taught in isolation and not used in full sentences and meaningful situations," noted O'Brien.

"In the past, we would learn to conjugate verbs in a variety of tenses, but not necessarily use them in a meaningful situation. Grammar and language conventions are important, and they are still taught, but they are taught in the context of the sentence that the teacher has modelled for the students."

With a book chosen, and a writing task mapped out, a NLA trained teacher will model the structures orally for the students, and the students will use and reuse them with the teacher, and with their peers. The students will also read and write about what has been discussed.

Currently, over 60 per cent of all CDSBEO FSL teachers have been trained in the Neurolinguistic Approach, and the goal of the FSL Curriculum Department is that all CDSBEO second language teachers will be trained in this approach.