



## ST. MARY'S SCHOOL

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Issue 4



### Principal's Address

It is very hard to believe that December is here. It truly is a time to celebrate. The month of December will undoubtedly be a busy one with Advent celebrations, Christmas activities, and our school Christmas Celebration at the Knights of Columbus Center on December 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. It is with much excitement and anticipation that we prepare for the Holy Christmas Season.

Our Church's new year has begun with the season of advent. St. Mary's community certainly displays the spirit of giving through their generosity with many outreach projects. During these days of Advent let us remember Jesus' first coming in Bethlehem and review and reflect on our lives in preparation for his coming at Christmas.

Our Outreach Projects for the Christmas Season are gifts for the Huron County Christmas Bureau, Operation Christmas Child which we have completed, and gathering food for the food bank at St. Vincent de Paul.

**All Christmas Bureau gifts must be at the school by December 11<sup>th</sup>.** The staff at St. Mary's asks that students give gifts to the Christmas Bureau in lieu of teacher gifts. **"What ever you do for the least of my brethren, that you do unto me".**

*I wish to extend to all families warm wishes for a holy and safe Christmas season and a happy and prosperous New Year.*  
*Jackie Simpson*



### School Mass

Our December School Mass will be celebrated Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:15 a.m. in the gym. Our grade 2/3E & 7/8F classes are helping to prepare the Mass. All parents and community members are invited to join us for this last celebration before the Christmas break.

### SIGN IN AT THE OFFICE

All parents and visitors to the school are reminded that they must sign in outside the main office upon their arrival. This is crucial in order to ensure the best safety possible for our students.

### A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF CARING

A huge thank-you goes out to all those families who are supporting our Christmas Outreach projects. We must never get so busy in our lives that we forget about those in need. A whopping 42 shoe boxes were donated from St. Mary's for the Operation Christmas Child campaign. Thanks to all who donated to these boxes.

**HELP NEEDED** We are currently looking for a volunteer to offer a couple of hours each week to accompany students for visits at the local nursing home. If you think you could help in this capacity please contact the school.

### ADVENT CELEBRATIONS

On Sunday, Advent began. Advent is a time of preparation and prayer in anticipation of the birth of our Saviour. The first coming of Jesus, at Bethlehem, will not happen again but at Christmas we remember and celebrate that coming.

Each Monday during Advent our school community will join together for a brief Advent celebration in the gym. Each class will take turns leading the prayer services. The celebrations will begin at approximately 11:15 a.m.

Parents and community members are invited to join us for any of these special celebrations. Term 1 award winners will be recognized at our December 8<sup>th</sup> assembly.



**Rosary Apostolate:** St. Mary's is delighted to have begun this wonderful activity with all our students. Once a month volunteers from our parish community visit each classroom to introduce and pray the rosary with them. Through this program we teach our students one of the most beautiful and powerful prayers of our faith as well as help them gain an understanding of what this prayer is all about. Our next visits from our volunteers will be on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. We sincerely thank all the volunteers who are dedicating their time to this cause.

### HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD NEWS

It is with sadness that we say good-bye to our current Director of Education. Larry Langan officially retires from this position as of Dec. 31, 2008. Martha Dutrizac, our current Superintendent of Education will be succeeding Mr. Langan in the role of Director of Education. JoAnn McGregor has been appointed as the new Superintendent of Education overseeing all elementary schools. We thank Larry for his years of service and dedication to the Huron Perth Catholic District School Board and wish him all the best in his retirement. We welcome Mrs. Dutrizac and Mrs. McGregor to their new roles and look forward to working with them.

## UPDATES

### SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

In preparation for the Holy Season of Christmas, we remind all of our families of the importance of this sacrament. Please see the church bulletin for confession times and locations.

We congratulate the following students who received the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time this fall:

Jacob Abbott, Ben Chambers, Liam Doherty, Vanessa Elliott-Sheardown, Michael Gerdes, Eavlan Graham, Cienna Janman, Gavin Janman, Olivia Kerr, Tom Kerr, Jessica Lierman, Liam Morley, Kailey O'Keefe, Damien Priebe, Jacob Renon, Callum Robinson, Kyle Stanbury, Keltie Talbot, Eden Wick, Nathan Zoethout.

### STUDENT RECOGNITION

It is with great honour that we recognize the following students for receiving the Principal's Award for Term 1. This award is given to students who demonstrate excellence in the learning skills described on the Provincial Report Card. Congratulations goes to: Jared DeWinter, Cleo Lewis, Maya Doherty, Lena Robinson, Chloe Chambers, Elle Doherty, Rachel Peet, Sam Cox, Torin Sissing, Kyla Warner, Marley Doney, Emily Greer-Allin, Lauren Doherty, Matthew May, Riley O'Keefe, Jakov Marinic, Aiden Cale, and Jordan May.

We also recognize the following people for being a person who demonstrates our theme "What Would Jesus Do?" Congratulations to: Faith Wilson, Liam Morley, Sydney Durnin, Indianna Crook, Henry Dobson, Luka Marinic, Colin Dobson, Aja Hogan-Cann, Abigail McGuffin, Jakob Trebish, Thalea Lewis, Vanessa Dredge, Cienna Janman, Aaron VanAaken, Tatiana Trebish, Lauren Doherty, Matthew May, Madison Thomlinson, Teegan Muggridge, Caleb Warner, Carly Tigert, Ivana Valentic, Alison Bedard.

The above award winners will be recognized at our assembly on Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:15 a.m. Parents are most welcome to join us.

### LOST AND FOUND

Please take time during interview days to look through the huge amount of items in our school lost and found. All articles from Term 1 are on display in the front foyer. The majority of clothing that finds its way into our Lost and found box appears to be from senior grades. The students are asked repeatedly to leave their clothing in the designated areas provided for them; however, the clothing inevitably finds its way to our lost and found box and despite announcements goes unclaimed. We ask parents to discuss this continuous problem with your children and to put a stop to these expensive items of clothing turning up as discards in our lost and found. All articles unclaimed will be sent to St. Vincent de Paul Society on a regular basis.

### PUBLIC SPEAKING AND STORYTELLING

Public speaking and storytelling is traditionally held in early February in our local legions. This is an extra-curricular activity that students do primarily at home for those who so choose. If your child is interested, more information will follow.

## SAFE & HEALTHY SCHOOL UPDATE

St. Mary's continues to be a designated Safe & Healthy School. We have a number of initiatives underway to help promote this designation.

1. We continue to be involved in daily physical activities in all of our classrooms.
2. With parents support, we encourage healthy lunches only and water only in classrooms.
3. We will be initiating a school-wide snack program.
4. We continue to provide a Nut Safe School environment. This means all eating is limited to classrooms only and the classrooms with nut sensitive students are nut or nut traces free.
5. Our school wide Peer Mediators program is getting established. More information about this program will be sent to you soon.
6. If you would like to access support from our school based social worker, please contact the school.
7. Our school Safe & Healthy School Committee will begin to meet once a term.



We thank all of our families for their continued support on helping keep our school a safe and healthy environment for our students.

### PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Our Term 1 parent/teacher interviews are being held on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. As part of the learning team, parents contribute significantly to the goal setting required for the development of their child's growth plan. You can support your child(ren) in several ways. Make positive comments to them after interviews and express confidence in your child that they will be successful as a learner. Please ensure that page 3 of your child's report card is completed and returned. Be watching. The school has many excellent books regarding parental issues. These books are available for sign-out anytime. Check out the display during interview times. A new book display will be installed in the main foyer after Christmas.

### Thanks!

Thanks to everyone who supported our recent Gr. 7/8 Quebec Trip candle fundraiser. The funds earned are going to help offset the cost of this trip for our Gr. 7 and 8 students. If you have not been approached to buy candles and would like to order please contact any Gr. 7/8 student or contact Mr. Baxter.

### SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWS

The SAC Nov. meeting was held on Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. The school's School Improvement Plan was discussed as well as many other initiatives. The next meeting will be on **Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>** in our school library.

### Thanks to each and every one of you!

A **huge thank-you** goes out to all those parents and families who helped decorate and ride on our school float that was in the Goderich Santa Claus Parade. A special thank-you to Madame Spaleta and Canadian Parents for French (Huron) for being instrumental in bringing the float together.

## Sports Update

November has seen the beginning of the volleyball season. We applaud the grade 7-8 students who tried out for our school teams. The teams are busy preparing for the divisional competition on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Special thanks to Mrs. Sloan, Madame Bilton-Gagne, Mrs. Wilkie and Madame Lefebvre who are busy preparing our teams.

## BUS CANCELLATIONS / SCHOOL CLOSING DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

With snowy weather upon us, we wish to remind you to listen to the following radio stations for details regarding school closures:

AM – CKNX Wingham 920, CFPL London 980, CJCS Stratford 1240, CJBK London 1290, Kitchener 570.  
FM – Goderich 104.9, Wingham 101.7, London 95.9, London 103.1, London 103.9, Stratford, 107.7, London 97.5, London 92.7, Kitchener 105.3

If you do not hear the message on the radio, it means the school is open. It has always been the position of the Board and of the Transportation Dept. that the safety of students is paramount. When transportation services are cancelled due to inclement weather and/or poor road conditions, announcements of the closures and cancellations will be broadcast on the above radio stations. The same information can be found on the Board's website at [www.hpcdsb.edu.on.ca](http://www.hpcdsb.edu.on.ca) under School Bus Delays/Cancellations. When schools are open with no buses running, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to decide if conditions are safe for a child to walk to and from school.

## SPARTAN CHEERS!

**Cheers!** to the O'Keefe family for the Canada Exemplary Service Award presented in memory of their father.

**Cheers!** to our LSAC for their constant support of St. Mary's.

**Cheers!** to our Grade 7/8 FI class for their very touching Remembrance Day assembly.

**Cheers!** to all our students for an excellent first term.

**Cheers!** to all those who took time to complete the school volunteer forms sent home this fall. Volunteers will be organized and ready to support St. Mary's in the new year.

## From the Desk of Allyson Austin School Based Social Worker

The Importance of Empathy: Many young people today have underdeveloped interpersonal skills as they spend more time communicating through technology and less time communicating in person. They lack the ability to know what it would be like to "walk in someone else's shoes". Empathy is a corner stone of societal empowerment, and without it, we can not live with a sense of unity. By teaching your children to be empathetic, you will encourage them to be kind, considerate, compassionate and caring.

*Inspirational Quote: "There are two lasting bequests we can give our children. One is roots. The other is wings"*

-- Hodding Carter, Jr.

## SAFETY UPDATE



With winter approaching it is extremely important that students take extra caution in walking to and from school. Students are reminded not to play or slide down snow banks along the road. If sidewalks are not accessible, students should walk as closely to the base of the banks as possible.

### Pick-up and Drop-off

A reminder to aid in the safety of everyone concerned during arrival and dismissal times. **Dropping students off at the primary playground has become a major safety concern in the morning. Parents are reminded that they are not to park in this area. If you wish to park to walk your child to the playground area you must park legally on a side street area or utilize the main parking lot of the school.**

**Scarves** Parents are asked to not allow children to wear scarves to school. We suggest neck-warmers only. Scarves, especially when children are using our playground can become a choking risk.

**Yard supervision** Parents are reminded that no yard supervision is provided before 8:30 a.m. or after 3:30 p.m. Students are encouraged not to linger on the yard before or after those times.

## SUMMARY of UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>** gr. 7/8 Volleyball Tourney in Clinton  
**Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**  
JKA / SKA on Tuesday ~ JKB / SKB on Wednesday ~ to the Huron County Museum for a Christmas program. 1-3 p.m.

**Our School's Family Christmas Mass and Celebration** will be on Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at the Knights of Columbus Center at 6:30 p.m. All students in K-8 are involved. We hope all parents and family members will be able to join us for his special evening. Immediately following the concert there will be a Christmas Social and a time for visiting for our school community. The staff of St. Mary's school is once again providing the cookies and refreshments for this social. It is our small way of thanking you for all the support you give our school. A huge thank-you to Mrs. Hogan, Father John, and the committee for all their work in preparing for this special evening.

**Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup>** Grade 4/5 English and French to Lambton Heritage Museum for Medieval Times program. Bus leaves at 9 a.m., returns before dismissal.

**Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup> 9:15 a.m.**

Celebration of Mass in the gym; everyone welcome

**Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>**

Last day before Christmas Break ~ regular dismissal time.

### LOOKING AHEAD to 2009

**Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>** School resumes – pizza day!

**Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>** Confirmation Candidates Super Sat.

**Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup>** SAC meeting, 7 p.m. in the Library

**January 20 – 23** Grade 7 & 8 away on Quebec Trip

**Wednesday, January 21**

Grade 4/5E & Grade 5E to Wawanosh

Outdoor Ed. facility all day program.

**Saturday, January 24**

K of C Free Throw Competition in our gym

**Thursday, January 29 P.A. Day** ~ no school for students.

