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THE INFORMER

The Official Newsletter of O.E.C.T.A. - Simcoe Muskoka Elementary Unit

ELEMENTARY UNIT

Human Rights

As Catholics, it is our duty to lend a hand to those in need. This can happen both locally and abroad. Our Human Rights Committee currently "donates" to KIVA. It is not actually a donation to KIVA, but a loan that is given to an entrepreneur. When you sign up, you get to choose who your money is loaned to. This gives you the opportunity to be quite specific in terms of who you are loaning to, and what they are going to do with the money you are loaning. For example, you can lend money to an agriculture group to buy seeds, or someone who needs money to go to school. The borrower then repays you when he/she can. You can choose to loan your money again, or withdraw your money. Check it out at www.kiva.org or have a look at our [Human Rights Committee Portfolio](#).

President's Message

It is hard to believe we are in our fourth month of the 2016-17 school year. We as teachers have experienced much in our school communities and personal lives in these three plus months. It is during the Christmas Holidays that we have time to reflect on the past and prepare for the future.

As we see the end of 2016 and the beginning of 2017, I hope everyone can take some time for themselves and leave the work-related stress at school. Our lives are stressful, and it is important to re-energize ourselves by spending time away from our stress and in a more restful environment.

During the time away from work, I hope that we can share some joy with friends and family around us, and everyone we spend time with. The joy we find can erode away the stress and fill our hearts with the happiness needed to help us through January and February.

Finally, I hope we experience the love of those around us. Be it our immediate family, or with those that we haven't seen since last Christmas. It is through receiving love and expressing love that clears our hearts of the pain and anxiety that may have built up during the school year.

The lead up to the Christmas Break is always a very busy – but joyous time in our Catholic schools. During this Advent season our schools help prepare

Conferences, Conventions and Workshops

There are a plethora of conferences, workshops and conventions out there for teachers who would like to learn more about their profession and improve their professional knowledge and practice. Simcoe Muskoka OECTA members may be eligible to receive funding up to \$500 to attend a conference, convention or workshop. To find out the criteria for approval, reference Memo #6 on our local [OECTA website](#).

They can sometimes be a little hard to find. Click on a few of the links below to see a few of the options that are out there:

[OECTA Workshops](#)

[OTF Workshops](#)

[OCT Workshops](#)

[Ministry of Education](#)

our students for the birth of Jesus and the significance He has within our Faith. Our teachers stress the importance of Hope, Joy and Love in their daily lives.

Unfortunately, this joyous time is not experienced by everyone in our school communities. There are several families that are experiencing hardship and for some, Christmas can be a time of sadness, stress and despair. It is now, we, as Catholic Teachers reach out to those in need in our communities to help spread some Hope, Joy and Love. Furthermore, we teach the importance of giving to those in need, because it is as important as lessons in Math, that we teach the need to care for those that are experiencing hardship. Teachers in Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board prepare our students not to be just good students, but to be even better citizens within our communities.

Pope Francis recently stated, “May Advent be a time for hope joy and love. We go to encounter the Lord who comes to encounter us.”

On behalf of Shannon, Jeannette, and myself at the Unit office, I would like to wish every member a safe and joyous Christmas. May each of you enjoy this very special time of year with your family and friends. Wishing all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2017! Merry Christmas!!



Important Dates

Dec 15-OECTA Executive Meeting-Unit office

Dec 22-Last day before Christmas Break

Jan 9-Back to School

Jan 18-Board Meeting at the Board Office-7PM

Jan 19-OECTA Executive Meeting-Unit office

Young Authors Contest

OECTA is proud to sponsor the annual Young Authors Awards/Prix Jeunes Écrivains. The awards celebrate the writing talents and accomplishments of students, who submit short stories, poems, nonfiction articles, and reports in either English or French. Teachers of all grades and subjects are encouraged to submit their class entries to their OECTA Rep. The deadline for submissions isn't until early March, but get started with your class now. Click [HERE](#) to have a look at Young Authors on the OECTA Provincial Website.

Alms Giving

The Christmas season is a time for the celebration of Jesus' Birth. The hustle and bustle of the malls and roads can distract us from the reason we celebrate Christmas. As we prepare ourselves spiritually during Advent, we must keep others in mind as well. Most of us have a chance to reconnect with family and friends during the holiday season. For others the Christmas season is not as easy. Donations of gifts, clothing and money can brighten the season for those that aren't as fortunate or are going through a tough time in their lives. Consider giving to some local charities such as the David Busby Centre, Youth Haven or the Hospice Simcoe. Open your hearts and help make someone's Christmas one to remember.

New Years Resolutions

It's that time of year again..make a resolution, work hard at it for 2-3 weeks...start slacking off...eventually give up. That's not going to be me...not this time! Here's some tips to help you make this year's resolutions stick!

1. Make sure your goal is achievable. You need to be able to get there! Start small, but be specific. A goal of getting to the gym 3 times a week is better than a goal of losing 10 pounds!
2. Write down your goal on paper. Revisit your goal each morning and remind yourself why you made the goal.
3. Make a pact/bet with a friend to keep your resolution.
4. Forgive yourself if you slip up. Don't give up...start again.



OTIP/Pearson Teaching Awards

Teaching can sometimes seem like a thankless job. We put in hours of research, planning and preparation behind the scenes, before those great lessons are delivered. Here's a way to thank a teacher for all that hard work that goes on in the classroom, and beyond! Recognize a colleague or one of your children's teachers for the great job that they are doing. Thousands of great teachers out there can be nominated for various awards and recognitions. You can access a nomination application through [OTIP Teaching Awards](#).

Births

Congratulations goes out to:

Kasia McKinnon, Teacher at St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic School, and her husband Brad, on the birth of their daughter Sophia.

Kelly Porter, Teacher at Saint John Paul II Catholic School, on the adoption of her two children, Kelda and Clawens.

Bereavements

Please Keep In Your Prayers:

Paula Butineau, Teacher at St. Antoine Daniel Catholic School, on the passing of her grandmother Marie Butineau.

Helen Laferriere, Teacher at Monsignor J.E. Ronan Catholic School, on the passing of her father Llewellyn "Skip" Gadd.

Stephanie Maher, Religious Education and Chaplaincy Coordinator at the Catholic Education Centre, on the passing of her brother, Dr. Chris Bernier.

Barbara Crowther, Teacher at Monsignor Lee Catholic School, on the passing of her son, Ryan Crowther, also cousin to Brittany Fess and Nicole Murray, Teachers at Holy Cross Catholic School.

Amy Moreau, Teacher at St. Bernard's Catholic School, on the passing of her Grandmother, Dorothy Smith.

Nelly Raposo, Teacher at St. Nicholas Catholic School, on the passing of her sister, Elizabeth Barrett.

Mary Jenkinson, Teacher at St. Mary's Catholic School, Huntsville, on the passing of her mother, Rose Moher.

Arlene Ahern, Teacher at Monsignor J.E. Ronan Catholic School, on the passing of her father, Jim Burns.