Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education
Toronto

Happy New Year! We hope that everyone had a restful Christmas holiday filled with the many blessings of Love, Peace and Joy that accompany this time of year. All of us at OAPCE Toronto wish you a new year filled with the promise of Hope and Happiness and Good Health.

COURAGE

January’s Virtue of the Month is Courage...

The New Year celebration is often accompanied by the need to make resolutions. Some of us promise to take better care of ourselves, take more time for ourselves or to simply be happier. Every change or challenge that we face in our lives takes courage. We are all courageous and it can show up in many different ways. It can be someone that we know, struggling with mental illness or a neighbor facing cancer. It can be a parent asking for help for their special needs child or even that child telling you “I can do it myself”. Sometimes we overlook that we are courageous every single day of our lives. Let’s take a moment this month to appreciate ourselves and those around us as courageous beings, even if it’s to acknowledge something as small as having the courage to put the cupcake back!

Upcoming meetings & workshops...

Monday January 25th at 7pm on the 3rd floor of the CEC, large committee room. Mark it on your calendars! CSPC members, do you know what a “SLIP” is? It’s a school learning improvement plan and it should be coming before council for discussion and input. Did you also know that the TCDSB has a partnership department that can help you apply for grants and funding for your local school?

The workshop on January 25th will highlight the alignment of Fundraising with the School Learning Improvement Plan. You will learn how to navigate the TCDSB Grants 4 You Site, about board support services to access grants, and the policies governing donations and sponsorships. Participants will have the opportunity to exchange successful fundraising tips, practices, grants information and contacts. Our parent engagement “guru”, Carla Marchetti will be there to answer any questions that you may have as well. Hope to see you all there!

OAPCE Toronto, c/o TCDSB 80 Sheppard Ave. East, Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6E8,
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Mark Your Calendar, 2016!

All regular meetings take place at 80 Sheppard Ave. E. at 7:00 p.m.

Monday January 25th 2016
Monday February 29th 2016
Monday April 25th 2016
Friday May 6th & Saturday May 7th OAPCE Provincial Conference, more details to come...
Monday June 14th 2016

Join our e-mail list for updates and more details!
http://www.oapcetoronto.ca/contact/

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FYI.....

Ontario Budget time is just around the corner. The Ontario Provincial government is the entity that decides and provides funding for our schools' programs and services. The Ontario Provincial government has opened up an online link where you, as a taxpayer, have the ability to provide input into the upcoming Ontario Budget for 2016. Unfortunately, many people wish to dismantle the Catholic school system and opt for a single public school system.

The Education Act provides for a Catholic education system, it's a part of our history. Make this an opportunity for your voice to be heard. Here is the link to the Budget consultation web-page: https://talks.ontario.ca/

You may wish to contact your Provincial Member of Parliament and/or your local Catholic School Trustee as well. Ask your elected officials to represent your views to Premier Wynne.

Special Education Corner...

We hope that the many transitions of the holidays did not overshadow the Joy of the Season. The holidays can definitely be a difficult time for children with special needs; the revolving door of visitors, different routines, and different menus and even those pretty dresses and dapper suits can be a stressor for our kids! https://www.understood.org/en/family/events-outings/holidays-celebrations/10-holiday-stressors-for-kids-with-learning-and-attention-issues

Have you seen the new Autism resources from Sesame Street? You might find something of interest... http://autism.sesamestreet.org/

It’s never too early to start looking at camps and day camp activities for the kids for March Break. Always remember to involve them in decision making as this is an opportunity for self-advocacy skill building... http://www.camps.ca/march_break_camps.php#listing-tab

Don’t forget to take time and smell the roses (or the daisies). Take a break for yourself too. Since we are so “connected” these days, try finding apps that can help you stay mentally fit: http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2013/09/20/top-10-free-mental-health-apps/

Look into if you qualify for respite care... http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/specialneeds/specialservices/index.aspx

Promise me you’ll always remember: You’re braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. ...Christopher Robin to Winnie the Pooh

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This Year’s Focus!
The mainstay of OAPCE Toronto’s focus this year remains the same; to support parents and to advocate for parent engagement and student achievement and well-being in Catholic education. This year however, is very exciting as we are hosting the OAPCE Provincial Conference in Toronto! This is a two day conference which will take place on Friday May 6th and Saturday May 7th. The theme for the conference is “Living Our Virtues in a Virtual World”. Our keynote speaker will be Michael Redfearn, who will be speaking about digital literacy and how it integrates with Catholic Education. We will be holding several informative and exciting workshops such as UPower with Sara Westbrook, social media with Paul Davis and many more interesting workshops which will be hosted at Madonna CSS. The conference will come to a close with a gala dinner event at Montecassino Hotel & Event Venue. More details will come in the weeks and months to follow! Keep checking back at http://www.oapcetoronto.ca/ Twitter: https://twitter.com/oapcetoronto Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/OAPCEToronto

Dates to Remember:
- January – Alzheimer’s Awareness Month
- January 27 – Family Literacy Day
- February – Psychology Month
- February – Black History Month
- February 11 – World Day of the Sick
- February 24 – Pink Shirt Day
- March – National Social Work Month – Developmental Disabilities Awareness
- March 8 – International Women’s Day
- March 20 – International Day of Happiness
- April – Autism Awareness Month
- April 2 – World Autism Awareness Day
- April 2 – Pope John Paul Day
- April 3 – Good Friday
- April 5 – Easter
- April 7 – World Health Day
- April 22 – Earth Day
- May – Allergy/Asthma Awareness Month - Mental Health Month - Asian Heritage Month
- May 2 – 8 Mental Health Week
- May 7 – National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day
- May 15 – International Day of Families
- June – National Aboriginal History Month
- June 1 – International Children’s Day
- June 27 – Canadian Multiculturalism Day

The Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education and OAPCE Toronto presents:

Living our Virtues in a Virtual World
OAPCE 77th Annual Conference
AGM & Gala Dinner
Friday May 6th & Saturday May 7th 2016 in Toronto
At Madonna C.S.S. & Montecassino Venue & Hotel

Networking & Reception
Keynote Speaker: Michael Redfearn
Informative Parent Workshops
Vendor Mall & Resource Fair
Workshop presenters include:
- Paul Davis
- Ministry of Education
- Sara Westbrook & many more....
Holy Mass led by His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins
Awards & Gala Dinner
**PRAYER TO CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME**

Father of all,  
Creator and ruler of the universe,  
You entrusted your world to us as a gift.  
Help us to care for it and all people,  
that we may live in right relationship—  
with You,  
with ourselves,  
with one another,  
and with creation.

Christ our Lord,  
both divine and human,  
You lived among us and died for our sins.  
Help us to imitate your love for the human family  
by recognizing that we are all connected—  
to our brothers and sisters around the world,  
to those in poverty impacted by environmental devastation,  
and to future generations.

Holy Spirit,  
giver of wisdom and love,  
You breathe life in us and guide us.  
Help us to live according to your vision,  
stirring to action the hearts of all—  
individuals and families,  
communities of faith,  
and civil and political leaders.

Triune God, help us to hear the cry of those in poverty, and the cry of the earth, so that we may together care for our common home.

Amen.

This prayer from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is based on Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*.

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**Draft TCDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP)**

**Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

Welcome to your opportunity to provide direct input as the Board refines its strategic directions to produce a revised Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) that will guide the organization for the next several years.

As approved by the TCDSB Board of Trustees, the community engagement is being conducted at the “CONSULT” level, which is designed to: “Obtain input from community members and the general public on proposed Board directions and decisions.”

**Community engagement activities:**

**Local School Level:** Principals will facilitate information sharing and input with their respective CSPC Chairs to ensure input from the local school level.

**Direct Community Engagement:** All TCDSB stakeholders are invited to complete the online survey and submit their personal comments regarding the DRAFT MYSP. Note, the survey is anonymous to ensure the confidentiality of those providing feedback or comments.

**Virtual Town Hall Meeting:** Streamed live online Tuesday, January 19, 2016, 7:00 pm – 9:00, via the TCDSB website. Join us for an open forum discussion on the recommended changes and refinements to the MYSP. [WATCH IT LIVE HERE.](https://www.tcdsb.org/board/mysp/pages/2016-mysp-consultation.aspx)

**Can’t attend the Virtual Town Hall?** No problem. Submit your question(s) here and we will answer it “LIVE” during the online broadcast on January 19, or post it after the Virtual Town Hall.

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**HPE Curriculum Update…**

As OAPCE Provincial Directors and as partners with the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) we have had the opportunity to learn firsthand of the implementation of the Curriculum that will be taught through the Catholic Lens through our Family Alive Religion program.

On Monday February 29, 2016 we will be presenting this update in our meeting to all parents in conjunction with the TCDSB and ICE. There will be a presentation overview of the Fully Alive Program and supporting ICE curriculum materials for new HPE components.

This will be your opportunity to understand how the new curriculum will be incorporated in your child’s classroom. There will also be a time for questions and resources will be provided.

Our meetings are always held at the CEC and will begin at 7:00 p.m.