

St. Charles Catholic School



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Courage, Excellence and Respect

Tuesday, December 20, 2016

A letter to the St. Charles Catholic School Community:

Come join me on a typical morning as I meander through the halls of this delightful school. As I glance into the main office I see several children coming to give Ms. Iaccino the attendance book. After greeting Ms. Iaccino, they leave the office with smiling faces and stickers for undertaking such an important role. I approach the grade one class I see our young scholars sitting in a circle, their eyes focused on Ms. D'Ambrosio and the three dimensional chart that they are making depicting their favourite juice. Ms. Ierullo is working quietly with an individual student. Then I proceed to Mr. Zacheja's boisterous class. I find them busily working in groups to produce a photo video. Ms. Cipollone's class is busy making a spiritual bouquet for Ms. Bottero. They continue to work undistracted as I meander around the desks observing their careful attention to the task at hand. In Ms. Demski's grade one/two class they are trying to figure out why Alexander the Elf has lost his powers and what they can do to help him regain them. The discussion is lively and all of the various suggestions demonstrate impressive creative thinking skills.

Next I make my way upstairs. I pop into Ms. Galati's class and see the students absorbed by a series of photos on the white board. They are involved in an interdisciplinary study of window displays. Their follow up includes writing a marketing piece and designing a window display that is attractive and appealing to customers. Ms. Marchese's class is just finishing up some nativity scenes. These beautiful artifacts will be a welcome addition to everyone's home. In Ms. Malfitano's class, the students are presenting work in the area of math to their peers. Their oral presentations are an excellent way to observe whether the students have understood the concept being studied. The students in Ms. Alves' class have the daunting task of charting all of the food items coming in from the food drive. They have been busy writing public service announcements encouraging the rest of the student body to participate. Further down the hall I come across Ms. Grande's class making beautiful covered scrapbooks. They're busy demonstrating their artistic talent that they have inherited from Ms. Grande. In Ms. Sade's class the students are working on individual programs designed to meet their personal learning needs. Ms. Bruno is monitoring a group of students working on an online reading program called Lexia. The students' enthusiasm is highly evident. Further down the hall Mme. Siciliano is reviewing the correct answers to questions from the French lesson. All the students are eager to give the correct answer and then they are being encouraged to compare their answer to the one written on the chart. Ms. Berry's class is getting ready to go on an excursion to the Microsoft store where they will spend several hours learning to code. They are excited and enthusiastic about the prospect of this educational experience. It reminds me of Ms. Zeltway's class. They went on a tour of City Hall several days ago. They too, were filled with the same sense of anticipation.

As I make my way out into the hall I run across Mr. Medeiros, our custodian, mopping up a spill near the boys' washroom. He is always working to make sure that our school is safe. I know full well that Mr. Clauser, our afternoon custodian, will do his best to prepare the school for the learning that will take place the next day. Then I make my way to the kindergarten classes. I catch Ms. Brennan and Ms. Pacheco monitoring the students as they sit at their



tables eating their snacks. The snacks are healthy and nutritious and everyone is eating enthusiastically. Kindergarten work and play makes them hungry! Ms. Servello and Ms. Zeppieri are in their classroom busily discussing the plans for the upcoming concert as their students are with Signora Calce in the auditorium. From the auditorium, I hear their sweet, delightful voices singing *Stella di Natale*. Signora's counterpart, Mr. Tirelli, has taught Ms. Grande's class. They started the day by saying prayers in Italian. Ms. Pignataro is in the gym with Ms. Demski's grade one/two class. They are scattered in the gym, showing how skilled they are as they take a big rubber ball for a walk. I am sure that the students have an equally active time with Ms. Colla and Ms. Lonerio.

As I make my way back upstairs I peek in the music room. Mr. Bileychuk is playing the piano while Ms. Brennan's students with their angelic voices are singing, *Take a Walk to Christmas*. Ms. Raposo has been practicing *Alleluia* with the grade 6 students and they will be singing it for the entire school on Friday. In the library Ms. Pham has a class that is working on coding. They are each at a computer learning this new skill. In the second floor hallway, I meet Ms. Budani, a dedicated parent volunteer and lunchtime supervisor. She has just finished organizing the pizza order single-handedly. She wisely puts the leftover pizza in the freezer to give to students who come to school without a lunch. As I see her trying to meet the lunch hour deadline I think how wonderful it would be if there were other parent volunteers to help with this task. Then I remember that this particular table does get a lot of use with parents from the Catholic School Parent Council sitting there to work on a number of tasks. Ms. Leo and Mr. Franco are often seen collaborating and doing many of the behind the scenes tasks that are so time consuming. Mr. Nicolucci has made his way to Mr. Zacheja's class where he is reviewing the value of the notes just before the students get ready to play their respective instruments. I meet Mr. Armstrong in Ms. Demski's class. They are just wrapping up a lesson on fun with words.

Now it is lunch time and I make my way to the school yard. There is fresh snow on the ground and the temptation to throw snow is great but in looking around I am amazed at how well the students are playing. Several groups have built incredible snow structures...so many so that it looks like an art gallery. Many of the primary students go over to Ms. Bianchi, our lunch time monitor, and ask her to come and witness their creations.

I have asked you to accompany me on this tour of the school so that you might see what I see. Your children are thriving in stimulating learning environments. They are eager participants in the teaching/learning process. They respect and admire their teachers; they enjoy sharing and playing with their friends; they are in an ideal situation that will ensure that they have an outstanding elementary school experience.

I write this account knowing that my time here is limited and that I will be saying goodbye shortly. It has indeed been an honour and a privilege to have been the principal at this remarkable school. It is our anticipated hope that Ms. Bottero will be back to resume her rightful place as principal. I want to thank you again for your warm and hospitable welcome. I wish you and your children good health and much happiness in the coming New Year.

Sincerely,

Sara Camilleri
Acting Principal

