Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

“To Err is Human, to Forgive is Divine.”
Alexander Pope

It is hard to believe that March has arrived! This month brings with it warmer temperatures and sunnier days. March Break is around the corner and everyone is looking forward to the opportunity to rest and reenergize for the last term of the school year. Continue to celebrate your child’s achievements and successes and offer them support as they persevere with academic goals.

March First marked the beginning of Lent. We mark this liturgical season with the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday. Throughout the season of Lent, we are called to reflect on the relationship we have with God and with our friends and family. During this time, we are encouraged to concentrate on strengthening these relationships. We can ask ourselves a simple question: “What must I stop doing or start doing to be the very good person God made me?” Prayer, fasting and giving alms are the three Lenten disciplines that will help us. When we pray to God, we strengthen our bond. Fasting reminds us that there is nothing more important than God and those in need. We may choose to give up one activity and replace it with one that will help others. Finally, almsgiving is charity. We can donate food, clothing or money to the poor. At St. Fidelis CS, our students are engaged in these three disciplines daily.

This month we focus on the virtue of forgiveness. The greatest example of forgiveness is Jesus. While dying on the cross he forgave his persecutors. We are called to forgive others and ask God for forgiveness. Reconciliation is a perfect way to become closer to God and heal.

Thank you for supporting our initiatives to help those in need and being examples of our Gospel Values. On behalf of the entire school staff, I wish each of you and your families a safe and enjoyable March Break.

Mackie Coluccio
Principal
Congratulations to all the students who demonstrated the virtues of Love! You are role models for the rest of the school and we thank you for your leadership!! Well done!! Names of all the Virtue of the Month recipients for February are on the next page.
Virtue for the month of March is...

Forgiveness

Forgiveness can be shown in many ways!

Here are some examples:

Let your actions be guided by the idea that Jesus said, “Let he who is without sin, cast the first stone.”

The first step to forgiveness is to take responsibility for your actions.

If you want to be forgiven, you need to make sure you forgive other people.

Live your life in a way that makes others know you are a follower of Christ.
### Virtue of the Month

#### Happiness
I think a good quality for people to have is happiness. I would like that all people in the world should be happy. I want them to be happy because some people or children they’re not happy. Some children don’t have families like others. They have to go to other family homes because their moms and dads don’t have enough money to buy food for them. They are in foster care.

Older children become resentful and unhappy because they are not with their parents. They can become depressed. Money doesn’t guarantee happiness, so we need to have support and love from our family. These are the things that make us happy. Happiness is being able to do things that give us joy! What gives me happiness is playing outside with my friends. We should all practice being happy!

- Belmo Andrea Padilla

#### Compassion
The quality I believe every human being should have is compassion. I notice that most people don’t help each other and don’t care about the people that need assistance. They just care about themselves. I suggest that we should help people who live below the poverty line. If we help them by giving them food, clothes and a job then they can get off their feet and feel better about themselves. We should help them because then they can help other people and we are going to have a better world to live in. If you don’t help people then no one is going to help you when you need support.

How would you feel if you were going to be left out, poor, with no food and with no help from anyone. Helping humanity is important because one day you will need help too!

There was one point in my life that I felt left out. It was when I first moved to Toronto, Canada from Portugal. It was hard to adjust to the many changes and my father struggled to find a job. My Mom didn’t work and we are four children in the family. I couldn’t buy anything I wanted because my Dad didn’t have enough money to buy the things I wanted. I know what it means to struggle and not have enough money. That is why we should have compassion for others. It is a good quality to have.

- Jose Freitas Rocha

#### Honesty
I believe that all human beings should have the quality of honesty. If you are not honest, people will not be honest with you. I’ve been through many experiences where people were not honest with me. Once my friend borrowed a pencil from me. When I asked for the pencil back, she told me that she didn’t have my pencil. I think people have to be honest because if they are not honest, you will not want to be friends with them. You never know when they are telling the truth, so you can’t be friends with them.

Honesty has to be inside your heart. So if you are not honest, your future will not be honest either. Being honest builds positive relationships of trust. We need to trust each other, otherwise life is difficult.

- Brenda Ribeiro

#### Courage
Courage is needed to work through difficult situations in your daily life. When I moved from my country of Argentina to Canada for a better life I had to have the courage to stay in this new country and learn how to speak English fluently. I felt lonely and insecure about being in Canada. If it wasn’t for the support I received and my own ability to face difficulties and be courageous, I would have given up quickly to go back to Argentina.

The people that I know who have courage are my mom and dad. I know that they have courage because my dad has to work very hard to support our family and buy what we need. My mom has courage too. She has to care for our home and she helps my brother and I with our homework. When I don’t understand something in English she tries to help by staying close to me. My mom tries to speak English as well.

I believe that having courage is important in all of our lives.

- Sofia Giordano

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CELEBRATING AFRICAN CANADIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ballet Creole: The Flying Colours of the African Diaspora. Thank you CSPC for funding this performance.
Emerita Emerencia reinforces the message of being humble, and the importance of sharing and respecting what was here before us. Thank you CSPC for funding this performance.
Student Life

FIRE SAFETY PRESENTATIONS
Student Life

MS. REIS’ STUDENTS CREATE AND PLAY MATH BOARD GAME
AIR AND FLIGHT WORKSHOP

Mrs. Dodaro’s class participated in a Scientist in the School-Air and Flight workshop. Thanks CSPC for funding this learning experience!
BUILDING BRIDGES

Students in Ms. Marino’s class build bridges (with only 40 straws and tape) that will withstand “wind” and load tests.
Student Life

CARNIVAL D'HIVER TUQUE & SASH DAY!!
Student Life

CARNIVAL D’HIVER
Student Life

VALENTINE DANCE FUN
FRENCH SPEAKING CONTEST

Daria M. finished in first place at the French Speaking Contest! Congratulations to Daria and to Madame Stalteri for their excellent work!!
Join us for Pasta and BINGO!

BINGO

on Friday March 31st 6 PM

ST. FIDELIS CATHOLIC SCHOOL GYM

Don't miss out on all the fun!
GREAT PRIZES TO BE WON!
Doors open at 6pm
Tickets $15 per person
Price includes: Pasta, Salad, Drinks and Bingo Cards.
Please bring dabbers for bingo.
Dabbers available on sale for $1.50

STUDENT ________________________________
#ADULTS/CHILDREN ______________________
TOTAL _________________________________

DEADLINE FOR TICKETS FRIDAY MARCH 24TH, 2017
CONTACT LUCY AT 647-206-0093 OR
BERNADETTE 416-788-0628 FOR INQUIRIES
January Dress Down for Charity

St. Francis Table
Capuchin Outreach to the Poor

Funds Raised:
$ 985.62

Thank You!!
Good News.
Great Joy.

In Appreciation of Your Contribution

Thank you for partnering with Samaritan’s Purse to bring joy and the Good News of Jesus Christ to millions of suffering boys and girls around the world through Operation Christmas Child.

Presented to
St. Fidelis Catholic School

January 2017

Date

Franklin Graham
International President
Samaritan’s Purse
STUDENT COUNCIL
VALENTINE COOKIE SALES

A $240.00 donation to:

Operation Smile
Canada

A $142.00 donation to:

Central Italy Earthquake Relief Fund

Your support made this possible!!

THANK YOU!!
February 28, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The TCDSB is considering the implementation of an online application that would allow parents to make payments electronically to cover the costs of items such as pizza lunches, field trips and overnight excursions.

An online payment system has an added safety benefit, as students would not need to carry cash with them to school.

Two payment methods could be made available to parents/guardians:

**Method 1:** Parents can transfer funds securely from their bank account directly to an online ‘myWallet’ account. When they wish to make a payment to the school, they simply add an item to their shopping cart and pay for the item from their ‘myWallet’ account.

**Method 2:** Parents can use a credit card such as VISA or MasterCard.

In order to offer this application, the TCDSB would have to charge a 3% administrative fee to all items to help offset the cost of the application. For example, an item that costs $9.90 would cost $10.00.

At the time of the purchase, $9.90 would go to the school to pay for the item and $0.10 would go directly to the TCDSB central account to help offset the cost of the online application.

To determine interest in such an online application, we are engaging in a consultation process, in the form of a short survey, which you are invited to complete by clicking on this link: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/Onlinepaymentconsultation](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Onlinepaymentconsultation)

Or by scanning this QR code using a QR code reader app on your phone or tablet:

![QR Code]

**The survey is open until Tuesday 7 March at 12 noon.**

We encourage your participation and welcome any feedback and comments.

Sincerely,

Rory McGuckin
Associate Director, Academic Affairs

Cc: Education Council
TCDSB Trustee
CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL (CSPC) for 2016/2017

We are confident the new council will continue to work in tandem with the school as well as working with the many committees to continue the annual traditions and events.

1. Licinia Antonio
2. Alenna Emer, Secretary
3. Sandra Grilo, Chair
4. Linda Lisi, Treasurer
5. Suzy Marotta, Special Education Rep
6. Lucy Pompilio-Schroeter
7. Elena Seymour, Vice Chair
8. Jennifer Sgrignoli
9. Melissa Haber-Tonks
10. Bernadette Tucci
11. Jeff Yorke

If you have any questions or concerns for a member of CSPC, please call:
(416) 222-8282
Voice Mailbox #88358

PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is a characteristic and life skill we strongly encourage at St. Fidelis. It is important that a child develops this responsibility early in life for it will serve him/her well in years to come. For all aged children, it is the responsibility of the parent(s) to ensure they get to school on time.

Students must arrive to school before the 8:30am bell, and be present, in-line with his/her class, when the school bell rings at 8:30am. A student is not permitted to use the main door to access his/her classroom unless they are late. All students entering the front door at 8:30am or later are considered late and will receive a late slip.

Punctuality is one of the many duties of a pupil, as outlined in Regulation 298 of the Education Act. A pupil who is frequently late can be said to be in “habitual neglect of duty” and can be referred to the school principal and/or school social worker if the problem persists.

Thank you for your support in addressing this matter with your child!

REPORTING OF CANCELLATIONS OR CLOSURES DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

Cancellation of school bus transportation or school closures due to inclement weather will be reported through the following vehicles:

- News releases to all media outlets in Toronto (Note: although the news release is provided to the media outlets, there is no guarantee that all television and radio stations will broadcast the information in a timely fashion.)
- Communications will endeavour to send an email to everyone on the TCDSB email exchange to advise them of any cancellations or closures.
- Communications will also send out the information electronically to E-News subscribers (Note: If you do not already subscribe to E-News, but wish to do so, please visit our website at www.tcdsb.org and click on the E-News icon on the top right hand side of the homepage).
- Updates will also be posted on the Board’s 24-hour information line, 416-222-8282, extension 2873.
- The information will also be posted on the Board’s website at www.tcdsb.org
- The Transportation Department will post this information on its website at:
http://www.torontoschoolbus.org
PARKING
A reminder to all that the school parking lot is for staff only. Please do not use it for parking, as we do not have enough spots for staff. There is absolutely NO PARKING in the handicap space at the front of the school. The fine is substantial and we need to have the space clear for the appropriate users that need it over the course of the day.

Please observe and respect the “in” and “out” flow in the school’s Kiss N’ Ride loop. A reminder to all that THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO PARKING PERMITTED ON BANNERMAN STREET. Everyone is encouraged to either walk to school, carpool, use the Kiss N’ Ride in the school parking lot, or to park on Grovedale St. or Rustic Rd. and walk to school. Police and Parking Enforcement have assured us that Bannerman will be closely monitored for proper use.

In the event of an evacuation at St. Fidelis CS, our students & staff will be escorted to one of the following locations:

- St. Francis Xavier CS
  53 Gracefield Ave,
  Toronto, ON M6L 1L3
  Phone: (416) 393-5271

- Maple Leaf PS
  301 Culford Rd,
  North York, ON M6L 2V4
  Phone: (416) 395-2670

- St. Fidelis Catholic Church
  33 Connie St
  Toronto, ON M6L 2H8
  Phone: (416) 247-8741

SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM
Student Illness or Absenteeism
If your child is to be absent from school for any reason, please telephone the school to inform the secretary before 8:30am of the day of absence. (We also have a voicemail box for your convenience to call at any time to leave a message.) This will reassure the school that your child is safe. If a child is absent, then we will call home if we have not been notified.

When a student returns to school after an absence, he or she must bring a signed and dated parental or medical note to explain the reason. If you are picking up your child early, please send a note to your child’s teacher. Please be sure to report to the office to sign them out. If you are returning before the end of the day, please sign your child back in at the office.

If children are not feeling well, please give them an opportunity to recuperate at home. It is assumed that if children are well enough to be at school, they are also well enough to take part in recess. Children need time to get some fresh air and stretch their muscles. If they are dressed properly, they will be able to do this in comfort, even on our cold Canadian winter days.

Also, please ensure we have a current emergency number where you can be contacted.
ST. FIDELIS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

IMPORTANT INFORMATION • POLICIES • PROCEDURES

ANAPHYLAXIS ALERT

Allergen-Aware Environment

Please take special note that we have children in our school who have a very serious, life-threatening allergy to tree nuts, peanuts, all nut/peanut products, all seafood products, called Anaphylaxis.

We are notifying all parents that students should not bring any nuts, peanuts, peanut butter or any food containing nuts or peanut products such as peanut oil, sesame seeds, etc., as well as any seafood products to school.

We ask that you DO NOT bring any personal baking or other treats to the school to share with the class. This is important to ensure the safety and welfare of these children.

MEDICATION

Principals, teachers and support staff of the TCDSB are not permitted to administer any type of prescription medication during the school day, unless we have written authorization signed by you the parent, and the prescribing physician.

The forms to dispense any medication must be updated on a regular basis and are available from the school principal. Please be advised that staff in TCDSB schools will not dispense non-prescription medications to students.

Students who require an Epi-Pen must have 2 Epi-Pens at school. One to be kept in the office and one to be kept with the student at all times. Students that require “puffers” should have one at school and at home.

All medications will be stored in the main office. Please notify the school if your child suffers from any type of allergy.

LUNCHTIME RULES & LUNCH PROGRAM

To further ensure student safety, students will not be permitted to leave school property to purchase a lunch at a neighborhood food establishment unless they are signed out and accompanied by the parent or guardian of the child, or an authorized adult. The responsible adult must have previous written consent from the parent, a record of which must be on file in the school office.

Children are encouraged to eat lunch at home. Children going home for lunch should leave the school no later than 11:15am and return to the school yard no later than 12:15pm.

If your child eats lunch at school, please ensure that he/she brings a lunch to school every day. We ask that lunches not be brought to school for the students. For those odd times when students do forget their lunches, we ask that lunches brought in be clearly marked and left on the lunch table outside the main office by 11:15. Students can pick up their lunch during the lunch period. Parents Guardians will not be permitted to drop off lunches in the classrooms, nor will students be permitted to pick up their lunches during class time. This is to minimize disruption during important instructional time in the classroom.

SAFETY REMINDERS

ONLY SOFT, “NERF-TYPE” BALLS ARE PERMITTED IN SCHOOL YARD AT RECESS.

WALK HOME IN A GROUP or with an ADULT; AVOID WALKING HOME ALONE!! CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 9 SHOULD NEVER WALK HOME ALONE.

There is always more safety in numbers!!
**SCHOOL BUSES**

Please note that if your child is registered to ride the school bus, he or she must ride the school bus and not take the liberty to walk home on any given day. All students on buses must ride the buses to and from school every day.

**INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOL BUS DELAYS**

Traffic congestion and varying road conditions can impact on the flow of traffic in Toronto, and this is particularly true during the winter months when snow and ice can be a major factor.

The Toronto Student Transportation Group is pleased to provide information about school bus delays digitally through their website at [http://www.torontoschoolbus.org](http://www.torontoschoolbus.org)

Click on the pink bar at the top of the homepage to get a listing of any bus routes that are being impacted.

**INDOOR & OUTDOOR SHOES**

We remind all students from grades JK to grade 8 to have indoor and outdoor shoes ready each day!

**INCLEMENT WEATHER**

On days when the weather is inclement the students may be permitted to enter the building at 8:15am. On such days, the recess periods may be indoor and those students who stay for lunch will be supervised in the building. Weather conditions must be particularly severe; cold weather alone does not warrant an early entry into the building or indoor recess periods.

Those decisions will be made accordingly. It is important for children, particularly the younger children in the primary grades, to come to school dressed properly for the weather.

A reminder to everyone that students who are well enough to be at school are well enough to go out for recess. We do not have personnel to supervise students who wish to stay in for recess due to illness. If they are too ill to go out for recess, then they should be home for the day. This will allow for quicker recovery and less teaching and learning time lost to illness.

**DRESS CODE**

The Dress Code for Pupils Policy of the TCDSB:

- Reflects the mission of the Board, which includes providing a safe and welcoming learning environment that is an example of Catholic community and sense of belonging in all our schools
- Endorses and supports our commitment as visible role models of Gospel values and Catholic doctrines, teachings, and integration of Catholic beliefs into the total learning experience
- Contributes to providing a learning and working environment that is respectful of the needs and well-being of all individuals.

**APPROPRIATE DRESS CODE:**

- A plain solid navy blue bottom – pants must be worn around the waist and skirts/shorts must be knee-length; jogging pants are permitted for all students; leggings/tights are permitted for girls up to grade 6
- A plain solid white or navy blue top-with or without the school crest
- A plain solid navy blue cardigan, sweater, hoodie or pullover – with or without the school crest
- Shoes for indoor wear and shoes for outdoor wear
- *****NEW*****St. Fidelis SPIRIT WEAR

**INAPPROPRIATE ATTIRE:**

- Clothing with logos;
- Short shorts/skirts, halter tops, cut-off tops, low cut tops or tops that are buttoned too low, bare midriffs, tank tops, spaghetti straps, sleeveless shirts that are baggy/revealing;
- Jeans
- Tights/leggings for students in grade 7 & 8;
- Hats/caps/bandanas/gloves/sunglasses worn inside school;
- Language and/or representations on attire that indicates gang affiliation (e.g., gang colours/bandanas), that depicts violence, profanity, racial or gender discrimination or discrimination of any kind whatsoever, or that otherwise demeans an identifiable individual or group;
- Oversized jewelry such as earrings or necklaces/make-up and/or body art/markings.
St Fidelis CS

NO REFUNDS OR EXCHANGES DUE TO INCORRECT SIZING
All prices include taxes. Please make cheques payable to: St. Fidelis CS

To place orders online go to: sfd386.topuniforms.net

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<td>#10</td>
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<td>#11</td>
<td>Cap-print - White</td>
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Grand Total: _____
Monthly Update from the Board

March 2017

TCDSB Expands French Immersion Sites
The Toronto Catholic District School Board is pleased to announce the expansion of French Immersion sites, making it possible for more children and their families to take advantage of French Immersion programming. Parents and guardians can re-register their child for French Immersion using the SOAR-French Immersion application until March 10, 2017. Apply for French Immersion here: http://fisoar.tcdsb.org

Focus on Youth Summer Employment Program
The “Focus On Youth” program is a partnership between the Ontario Government, school boards, and local community agencies, providing summer programs for students in recognized high needs urban neighbourhoods, as well as employment opportunities and leadership training for youth. Focus on Youth supports the use of TCDSB school space and the employment of TCDSB students by non-profit community organizations participating in the program, and school space was offered to 85 community groups in 58 schools. Employment Applications Are Now Being Accepted For: Custodial /Maintenance, Clerical Positions and Camp counsellors for July 4 – August 11, 2017. Deadline for applications is March 9, 2017. https://www.tcdsb.org/FORSTUDENTS/FocusOnYouth/pages/employmentapplication.aspx

Anonymous Alerts
Starting in March, students in TCDSB secondary schools will be able to anonymously message their school principal about a range of issues including bullying and other safety concerns. www.anonymousalerts.com/tcdsb

Let’s Get Ready to Celebrate Canada 150
Everyone in the Toronto Catholic District School Board community is invited to join in Canada’s 150th birthday celebration throughout 2017. The 150th anniversaries of our nation and our province, coincide with our ongoing focus on our Pastoral Plan: “Together With One Voice: family, parish and school” which honours the three partners who have created the solid foundation on which Catholic education has been built. Catholic schools have been a rich and vibrant part of Canada’s and Ontario’s heritage since before confederation. JOIN US as we recognize our Boards unique place in Canadian history during this sesquicentennial year. A website has been created for the many exciting events and initiatives that are already underway around the board: https://www.tcdsb.org/Canada150

Parish Family Day Happening May 5, 2017
As we continue to celebrate our Year of the Parish we want to know what makes your pastor and/or your parish unique.

Students are invited to create a short video, an original song, or piece of original artwork, write a short story or poem, or express themselves in any way artistically to highlight the relationship that the students have with the local parish and/or the priest/pastor at their church.

Remember that this does not have to be an additional assignment. Why not use the pastor/parish theme for a regular classroom lesson--whether that be a writing exercise, a poetry writing session or visual art project.
“Promote Your Parish” and let’s celebrate the many ways that our parishes and our parish priests contribute to our schools and communities. Submit the completed projects via email to parish.project@tdcsb.org by no later than April 7, 2017.

2017 ShareLife Parish Campaign
During this, our Year of the Parish, we encourage all students, staff and their families to consider supporting the many local Catholic charities that are funded through ShareLife. These Catholic agencies help families, single parents, the elderly, individuals with special needs, immigrants and refugees, the homeless and the needy, as well as the education of clergy within our own City of Toronto. Learn more about these organizations here: http://www.sharelife.org/Public/ShareLife-List-of-Agencies.
During Lent, and throughout the coming months, we invite you to consider partnering with your parish and support the work of ShareLife as it continues to “work wonders” in our own community and around the world.

A Mission of Hope for Haiti--Lenten Project with Missionaries of the Poor
This year, in co-operation with the Missionaries of the Poor, we are inviting our schools to participate in a special Lenten Drive, A Mission of Hope for Haiti. Our goal is to fill a 40-foot-long container with food, toiletries and school items that we may take for granted—e.g. food items, like rice and beans, toiletries, like toothpaste and toothbrushes, or school items, like pencils and pens. These items would be picked up from your school by volunteers from the Missionaries of the Poor, and through Canadian Food for Children, these items will be shipped to the Missionaries of the Poor to Haiti. The hope is that all schools will consider participating to some extent. If every student and staff provides just one item, it would be a tremendous help to the people of Haiti. Details are online here: https://www.tcdsb.org/board/nurturingourcatholiccommunity/pages/hope-for-haiti-lenten-project.aspx

March Mental Health Newsletter
https://www.tcdsb.org/ProgramsServices/SpecialEducation/mhs/newsletters/March%20MH%20Newsletter%202017.pdf

Event Reminders:
March is Celtic Canadian Heritage Month
https://www.tcdsb.org/FORCOMMUNITY/HeritageCelebration/CelticCanadianHeritage/Pages/default.aspx
March 1, 2017—Ash Wednesday; Lent Begins
March 3, 2017—World Day of Prayer
March 6, 2017—Education Support Staff Appreciation Day https://www.tcdsb.org/pages/education-support-staff-appreciation-day.aspx
March 12, 2017—Clocks go forward 1 hour
March 13-17, 2017—March Break
March 20, 2017—Voices that Challenge Student Leadership Conference
March 21, 2017—International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination
https://www.tcdsb.org/pages/international-day-for-elimination-of-racial-discrimination.aspx
March 22, 2017—World Water Day  https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/environment/water

Follow @TCDSB on Twitter or subscribe to Enews  https://web1.tcdsb.org/InterestSubscription/subscription.aspx to get all the latest news and information throughout the year.
As we begin Lent, I am reminded about how fortunate we are as a Catholic community. 40 days of fasting, which begin with Ash Wednesday on March 1st, remind us of the sacrifices made by our Lord as we prepare ourselves for His resurrection on Easter Sunday. Contact your local Parish for Confession and Mass schedules.

Over the last several months the TCDSB has been engaged in developing and refining a comprehensive long term plan designed to position the Board, and the students it serves, for long term success. Known as the Long Term Accommodation and Program Plan, or LTAPP, the process seeks to identify and implement the programming students and parents are looking for and accommodate growing communities by identifying where new and expanded facilities are needed. For more information on the LTAPP please visit https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/PlanningandFacilities/LTAPP/.

As we move closer to the end of the year the Board of Trustees are preparing to debate and decide on the budget for the 2017/2018 school year. As you may be aware, the Board has had to make some tough choices over the last several years to move towards a balanced budget. As we begin these discussions again I look forward to your input. You can find more information on the budget online at https://www.tcdsb.org/Board/BudgetandFinance.

Finally, make sure to eat your fill of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday! Also, a quick reminder that March Break runs from March 13th to 17th. Take some time to rest and recuperate as we drive towards the end of the school year.

Sal Piccininini
Trustee – Ward 3

TCDSB School Year Calendar 2016-2017

Number of school days: 194
Number of Professional Activity Days: 7
Labour Day: September 5, 2015
First Instructional Day: September 6, 2016
Thanksgiving Day: October 10, 2016
Christmas Break: December 26, 2016–January 6, 2017
Start of second semester for secondary schools: February 6, 2017
Family Day: February 20, 2017
Mid-Winter Break: March 13-17, 2017
Good Friday: April 14, 2017
Easter Monday: April 17, 2017
Victoria Day: May 22, 2017
Last day of classes for elementary students: June 29, 2017

Seven (7) Professional Activity (PA) Days for ELEMENTARY schools:
October 7, 2016: Provincial Education Priorities
November 18, 2016: Parent-Teacher Conferences
December 2, 2016: Provincial Education Priorities
January 20, 2017: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting
February 17, 2017: Parent-Teacher Conferences
June 9, 2017: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting
June 30, 2017: Provincial Education Priorities

More details including PA Days here: https://www.tcdsb.org/school/SchoolYearCalendar/Pages/FutureSchoolYearCalendar.aspx
Student Mental Health and Well-Being

TCDSB Mental Health Services provided by Psychology, Social Work, and Guidance personnel

Boys Mental Health

Many children experience challenges from time to time and reach out to a trusted adult for support and guidance. A recent study indicated that, “five thousand times a week young Canadians across the country reach out for help from the Kids Help Phone”. When children reach out and receive support it is highly effective. However, it was also discovered that seventy-three percent of children who call for help are girls. It begs the question, “what about the boys?”

Boys are less likely to express their feelings due to societal norms. Boys are taught that “real men” don’t show their emotions and should be “strong”. However, this “bottling up” of emotions can negatively impact on a boy’s mental health and behavior.

We're pleased to send you the March edition of the Student Mental Health and Well-Being Newsletter. Please feel free to share and pass it along.

The Canadian Mental Health Association explains that “symptoms of mental illness in boys may look like “typical” teenager behavior, leaving mental illness unnoticed for many years.” Some symptoms may include, substance abuse, risky behavior, conflict with others, and inability to focus. There are several things we can do to support boys to speak out and stop the stigma:

Create a positive message: Show boys that it’s okay to express their emotions. Encourage them to express how they feel without judgement.

Discuss healthy coping skills and self-care practices: By doing this, boys will be more aware of unhealthy thoughts and behaviors and better equipped to recognize them should they occur. This will also help them to receive the message that it’s okay to take care of themselves.

Information obtained and adapted from the Canadian Mental Health Association; www.globalnews.ca/545193/young-minds-boys-arent-reaching-out-for-mental-health-help-in-great-numbers/
Fostering The Family:


Friday May 5th is Parish Family Day. There will be a special celebration at the Catholic Education Centre to showcase student work focusing on the ways that our parishes and our parish priests contribute to our schools and communities.

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A prayer for encouragement and strength

Lord,
You are the wind in my sails
You guide me as I steer and find direction.
You give me strength to keep on going.
You watch over me as I navigate stormy seas.
You are the harbor where I stop for rest.
You are my encourager when I lose hope.
You are the lighthouse that keeps my path safe.
You are always with me.
Amen

Mental Health Benefits of Physical Activity

Engaging in physical activity not only helps your child’s physical health but it has also been shown to improve mental health and well being. When children exercise, their brain releases endorphins which helps to improve sleep, energy levels and mood. It also can reduce anxiety, and improve relationships.

Exercise helps to reduce anxiety: When children are anxious they tend focus on negative thoughts, which in turn may make them feel more anxious, creating a negative cycle. Participating in physical exercise may help break this negative cycle because your child is focused on the demands of the activity rather than their negative thoughts. As well, when your child exercises their body releases hormones called endorphins, which make them feel good.

Improved Relationships: Engaging in shared physical activities may give a child or teen the opportunity to feel a sense of companionship or belonging. Participating in sports may alleviate some of the social pressure that anxious or shy children and teens may otherwise experience when interacting with peers.

Information obtained and adapted from www.aboutkidshealth.ca

Mental Health Initiatives 2016-2017

- Support for schools in developing a mentally healthy classroom. See Supporting Minds on the Ministry’s website and edugains.ca.
- Building partnerships with community agencies, families, and parishes.
- Inclusion of mental health to school SLIPs
- safeTALK suicide awareness workshops for staff available via PAL
- Psych. And SW supporting Newcomer Mental Health, as well as Mental Health in HPE
Suggested Readings and Websites:

Books:
“Everyone” by Christopher Silas Neal
“Lots of Feelings” by Sheley Rother
“My Many Colored Days” by Dr. Seuss
“The Invisible Boy” by Trudy Ludwig
A Boy and A Bear: The Children’s Relaxation Book by Lori Lite

Websites:
www.aboutkidshealth.ca (Hospital for Sick Children Mental Health Resource)
www.hinksdellcrest.org/abc (The ABCs of Mental Health)
www.cmha.ca

A Laugh A Day...
“When you love and laugh abundantly you live a beautiful life”

Patricia Marra-Stapleton, Psychological Associate/Mental Health Lead
patricia.marra-stapleton@tcdsb.org

Marci Buhagiar, Psychologist
marci.buhagiar@tcdsb.org
PERSONAL RESILIENCY

THE BASICS OF SELF-CARE

EAT
The expression “You are what you eat” applies to us when we need to refuel. If we are under a lot of stress, be mindful of the foods you choose. Also, keep a healthy snack close by so that you can refuel easily and avoid being “Hungry”.

SLEEP
Aim to get seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Research has shown that getting five hours or less of sleep a night can create health problems. Getting enough sleep also helps you to better deal with the stresses of everyday life.

DRINK
A lot of water and consider decreasing or discontinuing your caffeine intake as the latter creates a stress reaction in your body and can cause you to feel nervous or contribute to sleeping difficulties.

MOVE
The positive effects of being physically active are astounding. It increases your energy, enhances your immune system, reduces insomnia, stimulates brain growth and even acts as an anti-depressant. You can achieve these benefits by as little as a 30-minute walk. Endorphin production following physical activity is nature’s gift to you for stress management.

CONNECT
Strong social connections are one of the most powerful influences on our mood. Those who are dedicated to spending time with friends, and family show the highest levels of happiness. If you can’t see your loved ones every day, you can still send an email or make a phone call.

PAUSE
Make sure to take time for yourself during the day, to listen to music, take a few deep breaths, meditate, write in a gratitude journal, do a few stretches, take a brisk walk or do some other activity that helps you feel restored.

ACKNOWLEDGE
Be mindful of your thoughts and feelings, both positive and negative, as part of your self-care. Finding a healthy outlet (see some suggestions below) to process your emotions and self-talk can lead to optimal self-care practices.

REFLECT
Take time to reflect on what is important to you both personally and professionally. Your values and sense of purpose help you focus on what is meaningful for you. Taking time to reflect can assist you to intentionally and systematically make decisions in your life.

REPEAT
Research has shown that trying a new skill/habit/routine for 21 days in a row will increase the likelihood of maintaining this new practice. It is recommended having an accountability partner during these first few weeks; it’s a helpful strategy to enhance your success rate of maintaining your new practice.

WHY BOTHER?
Taking care of oneself is a crucial and necessary ingredient for those who care for others. This is especially true of those working in helping professions (mental health professionals, teachers, nurses...) and of those who are parents or engaging in elderly care. Self-care is just like the oxygen mask on a plane. We need to place it on ourselves before we can possibly hope to help others.

BUILDING HAPPINESS

External factors often only have partial influence on our level of happiness.

Promotions, new relationships, and lucky lottery wins give only a temporary boost to happiness before we return to our baseline.

Sustained happiness takes work. Listed here are a few exercise ideas that, when practiced frequently, can build habits of happiness.

Choose a few exercises that fit well with your life and make a point to practice them every day.

From: TherapistAid.com © 2012

Journal About Gratitude
Every night write down three good things about your day. They don’t have to be major. They might be as simple as a good meal, talking to a friend, or getting through something difficult.

Write a Letter
Think about someone who has had a major impact on your life, someone you would like to thank, or someone who you appreciate having in your life. Write a letter with specific details about what it is you appreciate about them, and send it.

Visit Someone Whom You Appreciate
Take the idea of a gratitude letter a step further and actually visit the individual whom you would like to thank. You can choose to deliver and read a gratitude letter, or simply visit and tell them why it is that you appreciate them.

Say, “Thank You”
Keep your eyes open throughout the day for reasons to say “thanks”. Try to notice and recognize the actions that people do, such as a coworker who works hard or a friend who seems willing to listen.

Take a Gratitude Walk
Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings. You might notice the smell of flowers, a pretty building, or a soothing breeze. Spend a few minutes focusing on each of your senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) to find new things you may not have noticed.

MAKE A LIST OF THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY
MAKE A LIST OF THINGS YOU DO EVERY DAY
COMPARE THE LISTS
ADJUST ACCORDINGLY