



St. Martin de Porres Catholic School

March Newsletter

*To everyone is given the manifestation of the Spirit
for the common good. – 1 Corinthians 12:7*

Principal's Message

It is hard to believe that we are already two weeks into Lent and Easter is just around the corner. Perhaps more important for student and staff right now is the upcoming Mid-Winter Break from March 15 to 19. I hope that this is a time for all of us to find some special family time and rejuvenate for the beginning of the final school term.

I was very impressed with the attendance at our latest CSAC/Parent Evening. The conversation was rich and impassioned. Please note that we are planning another "big" CSAC meeting towards the end of April. I hope as many of our parents as possible will be able to attend.

In the very near future, you will be able to access the school newsletter and many other resources on our school website. The site will be available on the School Board sever. In this newsletter package you will also see a coloured form for you to complete for email notices. The school will keep a confidential email list and share vital information with you when it is necessary. You will get notices of newsletters posted to our website, essential school updates, and other information as necessary. Simply complete the form with your email address and return it to your child's teacher.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at the school and set up an appointment if you have any ideas or concerns you would like to discuss.

Does Spider Inspire?

By Anna Maria Filipiak

It was during the month of January when a man named Spider Jones, in real life, Charles David Jones, came to St. Martin de Porres to share an inspiring speech with the grades 7 and 8 students. Spider told us of his past. He grew

up in the Detroit Projects and got himself into trouble with the police. He had joined a violent gang with his cousin. Spider went to jail four times for a total of seven years in prison, but going to jail only made Spider a stronger person.

After a successful career as a boxer, Spider achieved his earliest dream of becoming a radio broadcaster, a dream he had since the age of ten. Mr. Jones became a very successful man even though he had an unsuccessful past. The focus of his speech, "Anyone can succeed but only if you believe in yourself." Thanks, Spider Jones, for coming to our school and sharing your inspirational story.

Parent Night A Big Success

On Wednesday evening, February 24, about 75 parents and 15 staff met in the school gym for a "big" CSAC meeting. Following prayer, a brief introduction by the Catholic School Advisory chair, Mary Fildilio, and principal, Gary Swain, parents worked at small table groups to discuss several important issues.

First, our school code and progressive discipline policy was reviewed. The document currently amended and in draft form has been developed over the past month by staff committee. Parents were accepting of the Respect, Responsible, and Reliable model format of the school code and discussed how they could support the school in implementing a positive and healthy disciplinary culture at the school.

Parents and staff also discussed the upcoming dress code being adopted by the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). The parents and staff generally felt that work should begin in committee to review the possible implementation of a uniform code for the 2010

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School Year. The CSAC is currently taking nominations for this committee. If you are interested, please contact the school.

Finally, parents discussed some of their "wishes, dreams, and concerns" for the future of their school, such things as better fundraising efforts and bullying prevention programs. The next "big" CSAC meeting will be held in late April.

Parent Teacher Conferences

On Tuesday, March 2, all students will receive their report cards for the second term of school. With your child's report card you will also receive an interview time to discuss your child's progress with your child's classroom teacher.

Because the interview time is so short, it is always a good idea to come to the interview prepared. Write down a few questions or comments you really want to share with your child's teacher. Listen and take notes so you can share comments with your child after the interview. If need be, ask if it would assist for your child to attend the interview as well.

Remember: be specific and be positive. The emphasis for the interview is improving your child's achievement and well being at school.

French Cafe is Coming!

On Thursday, March 4th, the first night of parent-teacher interviews, the French Club will be having a French Café. It will be held in the gym where the students from the French Club will be serving the parents that wish to buy anything to drink or to eat. After your interview with your child's teacher, you are all welcome to come to the gym and sit down with a nice cup of coffee or a nice warm cup of hot chocolate. There are many other choices on the menu such as croissants and fruit cups. As the servers take your order, the kitchen group will be preparing your order. There will also be runners traveling around the school to ask if you would like to come down to the gym. So even if you happen to forget, they will be there to remind you. In advance, the French Club would like to show the menu ahead of time before the interview sessions. It is at the end of this article..

The proceeds of the French Café will go to-

wards the French newspaper which will be given out to all the French Immersion students from grade 5 to 8. This is to promote the Extended French program and to promote the French community to everyone in the school. Please feel free to stop by if you have time and enjoy.

French Café Menu	
Spring roll with salad	\$1.00
Cookies	\$0.50
Fruit Cup	\$0.75
Croissant	\$0.50
Coffee	\$1.00
Hot Chocolate	\$1.00
Tea	\$1.00

The Science Fair is Coming!

Early March brings a very exciting time for the students of St. Martin de Porres School who enjoy the challenges that the different fields of Science bring about. This is aimed for students in Grades 6 to 8 with a few grade 5 students who are given the opportunity to do an independent study of a discipline in the science fields. The first stage of the Science Fair will take place on Wednesday, March 3rd. The Fair ends on Friday, March 5th. Parents and younger students will have an opportunity to view these projects and the presenters will have an opportunity not only to discuss their findings with judges (staff and high school students formerly of St. Martin de Porres School) but also the rest of the school.

The judges will chose 5 projects from grades 6 to 8 students to represent our school in the Ontario Science Fair at University of Toronto (Scarborough Campus) and 3 projects from grades 5 to 6 students, who will join them in displaying their work in a non-competitive atmosphere. This level will take place on April 9th and 10th. The winners will be able to join approximately 500 students from across the GTA

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to compete for advancement to the next level. These students come from Catholic, Public and Independent schools. All entries fees are paid by the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

Best of luck to all those involved and many thanks to the staff who have helped their students and have given students time to work on these projects. A special thanks in advance to all the judges. Keep the science coming and, hopefully, one day, we can be proud to say we have the new Einstein or Newton.

Book Fair 2010

Next week, you and your child will be able to purchase books at the school library during our annual Scholastic Book Fair. Students will be able to purchase books on Wednesday morning and all day Thursday with their classroom teachers. On Thursday evening and Friday morning—during our Parent Teacher Sessions—(5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.) parents are invited to the library to view and purchase books to add to their child's home library.

U of T Volunteers in School

Over the last few weeks a contingent of some 20 students from the University of Toronto Scarborough (Frontier College) have been working with students in grades 3 to 6. The university students have been focussing on developing the mathematical skills of our students by working on areas of need with several students from each class.

The "tutoring/mentoring" happens every Thursday in the school library from 2:05 p.m. to 2:50 p.m. The experience is not only great learning for our students but for their volunteer helpers as well. Many thanks to the hard working students from the University of Toronto.

School Uniforms

As you are probably aware, beginning in the 2011-2012 school year, the TCDSB has adopted an appropriate dress code for all students in elementary school. The appropriate dress code includes navy blue pants or bottoms with white shirts or tops. All schools will have to revamp their dress codes to accommodate this new initiative.

At our last CSAC meeting a large number of parents in our community expressed an interest in adopting a new dress code policy for the 2010-2011. The particulars of the dress code/uniform policy have not been decided, but a number of parents have volunteered to create a committee to investigate the possibility of a 2010 uniform or appropriate dress policy at St. Martin de Porres School. Updates will be communicated to you as the committee begins its work.

Adopting an appropriate dress code or uniform policy prior to September 2011 requires a vote within our school community in order to comply with Board policy. As the committee meets to discuss the possibility of a new dress code, regular updates will be available on our website and through written correspondence.

Girls off to City Finals

If you are perusing this newsletter on Friday evening, our Girls Basketball team may be in the midst of the City Finals. After a stellar performance at the Regional Finals at Hoop Dome on Tuesday, February 23, only St. Wilfred's School stands between the girls and a City championship. Best of luck girls, and further updates will be coming in our April newsletter.

The game will be held at Senator O'Connor Secondary Catholic School beginning at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, February 26. Go Panthers!

I-Lite Conference

On Friday, February 26, a group of 20 grade 7 students were off to Blessed Mother Teresa Secondary School for a leadership conference. The students, accompanied by Mr. Nianzou and Ms. Mathias, will be at the high school for the day, listening to a key note speaker, Andy Thibodeau, and working throughout the day in various leadership activities. A full update will be available in our March newsletter from several of our grade 7 attendees.

March Break Reminder

Just a final reminder that the Mid-Winter or March Break begins Saturday, March 13th. Students and staff do not return to school until Monday, March 22nd. Have a safe and happy holiday!