



Spotlight

on

NIAGARA CATHOLIC

Nurturing Souls & Building Minds

www.niagaracatholic.ca

January 17, 2012



Niagara Catholic Celebrates Class of 2029 at Second Annual Baby Celebration



Niagara Catholic Vice Chair, Maurice Charbonneau, and Director of Education, John Crocco, didn't speak for long during the Second Annual Baby Celebration at the Catholic Education Centre on January 18th, but when they did, they got the attention of even the youngest guests. The Father Kenneth Burns Board Room was filled with the joyful sounds of babies playing during the event, which celebrated babies born to Niagara Catholic staff in 2011. The guests of honour ranged in age from one-year-old Joshua Gualtieri, born last January 5th, to 19-day-old Rocky Sacco, who was born on December 30th. Donna Dalglish, Co-ordinator of the Ontario Early Years Centre at Mary Ward Catholic Elementary School in Niagara Falls, and Early Childhood Educator Theresa Sottile led activities for the event and provided books for the babies and information for parents. The packages also included special Niagara Catholic bibs and wooden crosses, which were hand-made by a member of the community and donated anonymously to Niagara Catholic last year. Notre Dame College School teacher Monique Mastrionni, student teacher Julie Kileen, and students from Notre Dame's parenting class were also on hand to help with the babies and to lead crafts for the older siblings, who also attended.

Working Together for Kids' Mental Health

Due to the success of Niagara Catholic's *Working Together for Kids' Mental Health* Project, the scope of the project will expand into its second year.

Working Together for Kids' Mental Health ran from September 2010 to June 2011 in five Niagara Catholic schools. It was designed to address and build a child and youth mental health system that was coordinated, collaborated and integrated at all community and government levels. The program has been extended through the Special Education Services to all Niagara Catholic schools.

Students aged four to 17 who met criteria through the school based team process as having possible mental health or behavioural concerns were the participants in this study.

The report is part of the January 17th agenda found at niagaracatholic.ca.

Niagara Catholic To Host Public Information Sessions on Consolidation of Schools

As part of Niagara Catholic's commitment to open and transparent communication with our school communities, the Board will host two community information sessions regarding the recommended consolidation of St. Thomas More and Our

Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary Schools in Niagara Falls, and St. James and Michael J. Brennan Catholic Elementary Schools in St. Catharines.

The Niagara Falls information session will take place on January 23rd at St.

Thomas More school.

The St. Catharines information session will take place at Michael J. Brennan school the following evening. Both meetings will begin at 7 p.m. All parents have been invited to their respective session.

Copies of the letters are posted on the main page of the Board website. The report recommending the consolidation, is available in the January 17th Committee of the Whole agenda, which is also available at niagaracatholic.ca.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School Hosts Book Launch



Niagara Catholic Director of Education, John Crocco, left, joined author Sigmund Brouwer at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School in Niagara Falls for the launch of Brouwer's latest book, "Falls Honour" on January 11th. The special edition of the novel, which is set in Niagara Falls, celebrates the 2011 Canadian Sports Hall of Fame inductees. Mr. Brouwer is a regular visitor to Niagara Catholic schools through his "Rock and Roll Literacy" Program, which is aimed at increasing literacy rates among boys. Joining Mr. Crocco and Mr. Brouwer in this photo are Our Lady of Mount Carmel Principal Elizabeth Davey, Superintendent of Education Mark Lefebvre and Sheila Lohnes, Niagara Catholic's Supervisor of Library Information Centres.

New Homework Help Program for Students

Niagara Catholic has a new program to assist students in Grades 7 to 10 in need of help with math.

Homework Help is an e-Learning Ontario provincial initiative, operated by the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) in conjunction with e-Learning Ontario. It replaces Niagara Catholic's Mentor Connector project, which completed at the end of June 2011.

Homework Help incorporates many of the ideas and initiatives of Mentor Connector, which pioneered online homework help in Ontario.

Students in need of help with their math homework can log onto Homework Help for free, online tutoring from Ontario-certified teachers Sundays through Thursdays from 5:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. A number of other features are available online 24/7.

Homework Help is available at <https://homeworkhelp.ilc.org>. The report is available at niagaracatholic.ca.

Niagara Catholic 2011-2013 Improvement Plans for Student Achievement Presented to Board

The Niagara Catholic District School Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement: BIPSA 2011-2013 provides direction for the School Improvement Planning Process for Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary schools with School Improvement Plan (SIP) teams.

The Board Improvement Plan aligns with the Vision 2020, System Priorities and the School Effectiveness Framework to establish expectations, goals, strategies and partnerships to support

the achievement of all students from the Early Learning Kindergarten Program (ELKP) to graduation.

The Board Improvement Plan incorporates the following information to support school improvement in all schools:

- Niagara Catholic Mission Statement;
- Foreword on Catholic Schools and Faith, and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGE's) and the
- Strategic Directions and Priority Indicators from Vision

2020: Build Strong Catholic Identity and Community to Nurture the Distinctiveness of Catholic Education and Advance Student Achievement.

The four pillars of Catholic Faith, Community, Culture and Caring, Literacy, Numeracy and Pathways were revised as a result of the "Needs Assessment." This assessment is based on historical and broad analysis of data from school assessments, report cards, student success indicators and EQAO Primary and Junior Assessments,

Grade 9 Mathematics and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.

The Board Improvement Plan focuses on Nurturing the Distinctiveness of Catholic Education through Faith Formation programs with staff and students in the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

Read the report at niagaracatholic.ca.

January 27th
is
Family Literacy Day