



ST. JEROME JOURNAL

APRIL 2021 SPRING NEWSLETTER

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SPRINGTIME BLESSINGS

BY MS. ROCCA PRINCIPAL

With spring here we are welcoming the new signs of life and the wonderful hope it has to offer. A few short months ago in January we started our new year with a closure which had us all pivoting to remote learning. Students and staff seamlessly transitioned to this model having made great strides in adapting and accepting change. During those weeks we were proud to offer our special needs students the opportunity to learn in person. Our dedicated special education team worked collaboratively to provide our students with an enriched learning experience. Returning back to in-person learning in February we continued to keep safety as our top priority with a focus on mental health and our enduring faith. Although we are uncertain what the next few months will bring, we continue to forge ahead together. Our SJE school community is resilient, supportive, hard-working and compassionate! Our students have always been, and remain at the centre of all that we do and achieve...together!

Mane Events

Living The Rosary Liturgy- May 7
CSC- May 17
FDK 1st Impressions- May 27

Parent Night (Paul Davis)-May 31
Graduation Liturgy -June 24
Report Cards-June 29

Next issue of St. Jerome Journal:
June 2021

May the renewal of life this Easter bring new blessings of love, hope, peace, and good health to our St. Jerome families.

OUR FAITH

Our faith continues to be a strong part of our school life. Coming together through our many virtual liturgies has given us a greater feeling of community, especially during this time. In January, we gathered to celebrate **Hope and Unity** in a liturgy that was also reflected with the same virtue certificates we honoured our students with. We also came together in a liturgy commemorating **Black History Month** and started our lenten journey with an **Ash Wednesday** liturgy led by our grade 5/6 and grade 6 classes. We prepared our hearts for Easter during Holy Week when our grade 7's presented the **Stations of the Cross** for our school. An **Easter** Liturgy followed, led by our grade 1-3 classes. We look forward to **Living With The Rosary** liturgy in May and of course, our **Graduation** liturgy in June.

OUR FAITH CONTINUES...

Our Lady of Grace Parish continues to connect with our students through virtual classroom visits. Each month, all our students have received and continue to enjoy these messages of faith from Father Frank and his team. Our school participated in the ShareLife Campaign with classroom activities from April 6-9. Families who wish to make a donation may continue to do so via e-transfer to ShareLife2021@ycdsb.ca.

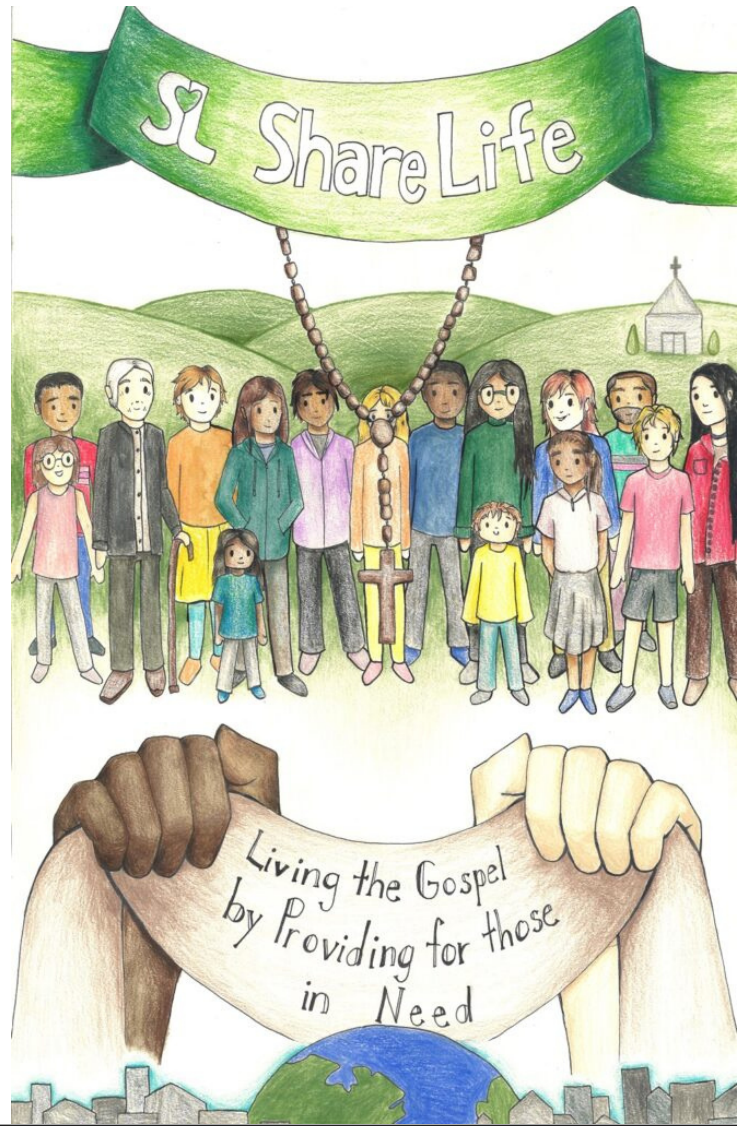
OUR CATHOLIC VIRTUES

We continue to celebrate our Catholic virtues each month. Students who exemplified Unity in January, Wisdom in February, and Perseverance in March, received awards. We look forward to honouring students in April, May and June for their Reverence, Responsibility, and Honesty.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

During the month of February we celebrated Black History Month. We were able to acknowledge the stories of leaders, everyday people and heroes that cannot be fully told in a month alone. We were proud to remember those notable figures in our Canadian history who have made a remarkable difference.

Students in grade 7 participated in a virtual "Reading Rainbow" project, which was shared among other schools and students. We look forward to continuing our learning as we journey together.



Catholic Education Week ~ May 3-7
Nurturing Hope

VIVE LE CARNAVAL!

Students had fun learning and celebrating carnival with a week full of daily themes and activities! Students enjoyed dressing up, styling their hair in wacky ways and of course the ever popular, wear your P.J.'s to school day!

Bonhomme brought good cheer to SJE!
 Joyeux carnaval mes amis!

**Be courageous, be strong,
 be everything in love.
 1 Corinthians 16: 13-14**

WORKING ON WELLNESS

Mental health and wellness is an important part of our school life.

We have made a concerted effort to address the strategies that students could adopt in establishing and maintaining a positive perspective.



We started this initiative by welcoming students back to in-person learning with our colourful, motivational staircase.

WOW time was shared throughout the school on Mondays and Fridays taking some time to pause and learn some techniques that would be helpful in caring for ourselves.

Youthspeak presented to some of our classes virtually on the "Importance of Building a Self-Care Tool Kit" and "Empowering Young Minds For New Times." Stefanie Rico also presented virtually to some classes on demonstrating the importance of working through big emotions by stretching and caring for our bodies. Nancy Davie, our Board religion consultant, provided an informative and thought-provoking presentation to some classes on the importance of being sensitive to mental health needs of others through a Catholic perspective. Lisa Wood from the CMHA will be presenting to our Intermediate students in a 4 part session called the Choices Program. We will continue to Work On Wellness at SJE!

WOW!
 really means, "Working on Wellness".
 At SJE, this is the term we have established and will continue to use to demonstrate to our students that mental health strategies and learning how to manage our feelings, thoughts and anxieties are an important part of learning and growing stronger!

SCHOOL SPIRIT-STAYING PAW-SITIVE & LOVING SJE



Demonstrating a vibrant, positive, inclusive and supportive school climate is an important part of maintaining healthy morale and wellness. At St. Jerome we showed our love with paper cut out hearts with the most touching sentiments written and decorated by our students. The most common reasons why students love St. Jerome is because of their friends, teachers and the fun activities! How amazing! We decided to keep our spirits alive and well by taking a virtual trip around the world during what would have been our March Break. Students both remote and in person participated in these travels to Paris, Australia, Ireland, Thailand and lastly to Disney World. We learned about these regions, dressed up and had a lot of fun along the way. We look forward to future school spirit events!

INTERNATIONAL WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

The March 21st International Down Syndrome Day was recognized on the Monday, March 22nd. Markers were placed along a walkway where classes participated by walking and reading each marker to learn more about Down Syndrome. We also wore colourful socks as a way to represent our effort to learn, love and accept differences in everyone!

SRO VISITS
 School Resource Officer Kydd continues to visit with our classes with VIP virtual presentations.



INTERNATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

We look forward to learning more about Autism awareness during April. It is a way to create greater opportunities for us to be inclusive, accepting and supportive to those who with autism.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On March 8th we celebrated International Women's Day. Each staff member wore yellow floral pins to honour the strength, inspiration, and achievements made by women in history, as well as in our everyday lives. Each of them serve as a positive example to us all.



SCHOOL PHOTOS & YEARBOOK

We were happy to have recently had our grade 8 graduation photos taken. However, we are still working on the arrangements for the remainder of our students to be photographed. Once we are given clearance to do so I will be communicating with parents/guardians. Nevertheless, we are working on a 2020-2021 school yearbook encapsulating the unique year we are having and recording our positive memories and experiences.



EVERY FRIDAY IS SPIRIT WEAR DAY!

Students are encouraged to wear their St. Jerome spirit wear and/or school colours on Fridays! We are unable to have another spirit wear campaign as intended this Spring due to Covid restrictions, but we plan on having one in the Fall.

OUR NEW MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS!



On April 1st we adopted a new morning announcement style. We went virtual through Google meet! Each morning we are able to begin our day with a visual slide deck of our anthem, special intentions, prayers, announcements and a celebration of student birthdays! This is an ideal way to include our remote students and create a greater sense of unity within our school.

TECHNOLOGY

With our continued commitment to enhance technology within our school, we have been able to purchase and install 4 Promethean Boards in classrooms this year! Although we have a few more classrooms to outfit, our goal is for every classroom to have these interactive boards by next year. We are well on our way!

SAFE ARRIVAL REMINDER

If your child is absent or late, please call our Safe Arrival Line at 1-855-856-7862, or visit the website, www.go.schoolmessenger.ca. All absences and lates must be reported through this system. School staff will be directing all calls to the Safe Arrival Line.

recess!

WITH ROCCA

"Recess With Rocca" is my way to get build rapport and get to know your children in a positive and interactive way. It is also an ideal opportunity to give in-person students an extra recess with the ability to use gym equipment in a small supervised setting. It is also an excellent chance for me to spend some time with remote-learners playing virtual games or participating in art activities. Using a lottery system, classes are individually selected to have some extra time with me. In an indirect way, it also provides teachers with some time to work with a set of students from either modality in their hybrid setting, plan or even participate with us. So far, students have enjoyed playing with our newly purchased tennis equipment, took part in drawing Picasso-styled portraits and went on an exploratory nature walk! Recess Rocks!

PLANNING AHEAD



Soon we will be beginning to plan the school organization for September 2021. It would be appreciated that you advise the office if your family is planning to move out of the SJE boundaries or change schools. In May, an email will be sent to parents and guardians regarding class placement of their child(ren) for the upcoming school year. More information to follow.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL

Although our year has not been how we anticipated it to be, Catholic School Council has been active in planning and preparing new ideas for our school. Even though we were not able to fundraise, we decided to focus our energies on creating vision and next new steps! Our CSC has met on several occasions to research and apply for grants.

One exciting initiative is an outdoor grant that would see a school garden planted .

With community involvement, this idea would incorporate a wonderful return to basics after a time when students have been immersed in so much technology. A return to nature by learning further about our ecosystem, growing food and furthering this into healthy living and well-being. We have designed a garden space and connected with community partners to see this small seed bloom in a project that we could all take pride and joy in. More information to come as we continue to scope and scout for new grants to apply for.

SAVE THE DATE! PARENT EVENING~MAY 31st WITH PAUL DAVIS~ INTERNET SAFETY & AWARENESS

The Catholic School Council has been successful at securing a grant from the Ministry of Education to fund a special online event for students and parents. On **Monday, May 31st at 8:00 p.m.** St. Jerome will host this event inviting the Notre Dame school community to join us. Together we will welcome Paul Davis, an educational speaker who specializes in social media and online safety. Paul has spoken at many schools across the province and offers valuable information especially relevant for our times. Stay tuned for more details.



VISION & GOALS

This year, most of my communication centred on the necessary COVID protocols and the absolute need to keep our school safe. I will continue to reach out and deliver information via email as we proceed with the remainder of the school year. However, this time I am excited to shift the focus and share some the vision and goals I have for our school. I look ahead to a time of normalcy when we could return to a school year we are all accustomed to and are striving to have. After having spent much time with technology, I find the CSC idea of a garden most exciting. It is grounding and wholesome, with hopes the concept could be transferred indoors with future activities and extensions. To add to this, I am working to create a sacred space in our school where we could finally gather after so many virtual liturgies. I would like to create the **St. Jerome School Chapel.** Above the library is a perfect room where plans are already underway for the transformation. We were lucky to receive a donation of church pews from Markham Bible Church. We are most grateful for their donation and the help we received from Mr. Pecchia and Mr. Reid in transporting the pews to our school. I look forward to the day when students could gather in faith and enjoy their very own school chapel.

VISION & GOALS CONTINUED

My next project is to establish a DPA room (Daily Physical Activity) room. Instead our school will call it the **WOW Room** (Working on Wellness). Several schools already have implemented a DPA room where besides the gymnasium, students may access a space for exercise and wellness. Right now this space is our "isolation room" but once Covid is behind us I would like to open up this room and provide our students with an environment to gain a greater sense of health and wellbeing! These ideas bring hope along with the thought that there will be a time when we could enjoy them fully! In the meantime, we continue to plan and prepare.

NEXT FEW MONTHS

What a year this has been so far! As a new principal, I have often said that I miss getting to know the community as we would have done in normal circumstances, I hope our open communication and these newsletters have been helpful in connecting and keeping us all informed. Teachers, support staff, and parents have all worked tirelessly to make this year operate as best as possible for our children. We don't know what the next few months have in store for us, but I am confident that our shared understanding, patience, and acceptance of things we can not change, will continue to keep us strong. We are reminded that we are all trying our best under trying circumstances. Even if many of our expectations have to be realigned in a year that continues to challenge us, it is my hope that our families are all healthy, safe, and find comfort in the many blessings we are fortunate to have. I will continue to do my best to help make the remainder of the school year successful for our students and staff.

God Bless!



KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION CONTINUES

Kindergarten registration continues. If you have a little cub or know of one who intends to register at SJE, please refer to the YCDSB website for information or call our school if you have any questions. We intend to have a virtual "Welcome to Kindergarten" in May and would like to include our newest members to our pride of lions!



God grant me the
Serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change, the
Courage
to change the things I can,
and the
Wisdom
to know the difference.