



THE VOICE OF
THE PARENT IN
EDUCATION

QFHSA NEWS

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Welcome Me. Sebastien Proulx



We have a new Minister of Education, Recreation, and Sport, of Families, and responsible for the Gaspésie -Îles de la Madeleine region. Me. Sébastien Proulx, a lawyer by profession, has been the Québec Liberal Party Member of the National Assembly for Jean-Talon in the Québec City region since he won the by-election of June 8, 2015.

Me. Proulx first ran for a seat in the National Assembly during the 2003 general election in Laviolette riding under the banner of the Action démocratique du Québec.

Finishing in third place, he was appointed director general of the party in 2004, and became the main political consultant to Mario Dumont, party leader, in 2005. He was elected in the 2007 general election in the riding of Trois-Rivières and on March 29, 2007, he was appointed Official

Opposition House Leader and the ADQ critic for electoral reform, parliamentary reform, and access to information. However, he lost his seat in the 2008 general election. Me. Proulx was also a member of the advisory committee of the Director General of Elections of Québec from 2003 until 2005.

Me. Proulx, I am sure that you know that job security in the portfolio of education is a fleeting thing. There have been seven Ministers of Education in less than four years – Pierre Moreau (2016), François Blais (2015-2016), Yves Bolduc (2014-2015), Marie Malavoy (2012-2014), Michelle Courchesne (2012), and Line Beauchamp (2010-2012).

And what a changing political landscape – Bill 86. Mr. Minister, please read the report and the recommendations of the Election Systems Study Panel chaired by the Honourable Marlene Jennings. I understand that your children are enrolled in private schools, so it is important for you to spend the time necessary to inform yourself about the general assemblies of parents in all the schools coming up in September, the governing boards, the parent participation organizations, the parent committees, the special education advisory committees, the parent commissioners, and the local home and school associations in 85 English schools across the province. Did you know that over 4,000 families pay an annual membership fee to be local association members of the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA)?

QFHSA recently distributed a questionnaire through our local home and school associations asking members about Bill 86. The QFHSA Rights, Education, and Resolutions Committee co-chaired by Linton Garner (rights chair), Ginette Sauvé -Frankel (education chair), and Rickhey Margolese (resolutions chair) has been mandated by the QFHSA Board to prepare a brief regarding Bill 86 to present to the National Assembly of Québec Committee on Culture and Education. The QFHSA officially requested the opportunity to present in person, and the Clerk of the Committee announced to QFHSA that permission had been granted to appear. So it's off to Québec City on March 22!

I would like to thank Linton, Ginette, and Rickhey for the extraordinary work that they have accomplished in preparing our brief, and the QFHSA office staff – Carol, Marlyn, and Charlene for the important support that they have provided.

Yours in education,
Brian Rock



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Cover photo credit: "Lost" by Tim Pierce

Thank you to the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) and the Ministère de L'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) for their financial support in helping us publish the QFHSA NEWS.

A message from the Executive Director



This past year has been a roller coaster ride for public education in Quebec. With the tabling of *Bill 86: An act to modify the organization and governance of school boards to give schools a greater say in decision-making and ensure parent's presence within each school board's decision making body*, the community has feared the changes proposed could weaken the community's representation on school board decision-making bodies. Couple that with the uncertainty of who the actual Minister to lead the proposed changes will be, as well as the on-going cuts to school board budgets, and the situation has remained unsettled for months.

The Committee for Culture and Education had finally called for public consultations in January and had invited interested organizations to submit briefs and request an opportunity to present their opinions on Bill 86 at the National Assembly. With the various cabinet shuffles however, and MNAs being moved in and out of the Minister of Education portfolio, the hearings were delayed, over and over again. Although frustrating at times, this situation gave various organizations additional time to prepare their briefs and gauge their member's positions in preparation for their presentations.

The QFHSA submitted a brief to submit to the Election Systems Study Panel over the summer of 2015 and was pleased to see many of the recommendations incorporated into Marlene Jennings' final report. The QFHSA submitted a request to be invited to present our position before the Committee on Culture and Education and did receive a spot on Wednesday, February 17, 2016. In the meantime, work began to revise our brief as there were now specifics on what the Minister had in mind regarding school board governance reform. These delays gave additional time to collect responses from the Home and School membership through the online survey on Bill 86, circulated amongst the local associations. Our new date to present has been set for March 22, 2016 and we are ready!

Response had been high on the Bill 86 survey and those opinions were taken into account when revising the brief. A copy of our brief can be found on the QFHSA website under Briefs/Memoires or by following this link: www.qfhsa.org/briefs.htm

Regardless of the pertinent information likely to be presented at the hearings, the government seems determined, nonetheless, to rush this legislation through its readings and have the changes implemented by the beginning of the 2016 school year. This accelerated schedule is unnecessary and hazardous, not to mention un-democratic. The community waited seven years for school board elections to finally be held in 2014 and the individuals who were elected to office committed themselves to four years to serve their terms. They should have the opportunity to serve those terms in full and the government should take that time to work with the community to come up with school board reform that everyone agrees will improve the educational system for the students.

Whatever happens, Home and Schools will still be working beside their Governing Boards and school administrations to bring after school activities and cultural opportunities to their schools. If we keep our mind on our mission, we should be able to ride this rollercoaster and/or any other... we just need to hold on to our hats!

QFHSA Mission Statement

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is an independent, incorporated, not for profit, volunteer organization dedicated to enhancing the education and general well being of children and youth.

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. promotes the involvement of parents, students, educators and the community at large in the advancement of learning, and acts as a voice for parents.

Membership Services

The “home stretch” time of the year is upon us and, like you at the local level, I am tying up loose ends before the QFHSA’s AGM preparations get into full swing. Please take note of the following important items.

Insurance for your end-of-year events: Please remember to advise the QFHSA of any year-end events so that the insurance company can be notified. There is no cost for this service.

IMPORTANT - Insurance requirements for Inflatables: The QFHSA’s insurance company has spelled out the requirements for inflatable games (bouncies) at Home and School events. Please ensure that your Home and School follows the guidelines in this newsletter.

The Associations in “good standing” list: The list of Home and School Associations in good standing (as of February 25th) is in this newsletter. Only associations that have submitted the “magic 7” are on the list. The required documents are the: 2014-2015 President’s activity report, 2014-2015 Treasurer’s report, 2015 -2016 Executive list, 2015-2016 Administration fee, 2015-2016 Local Association Renewal form, the complete 2015-2016 membership list and the 2015-2016 membership fees. Email notices about missing documentation were sent out in December and a notice (if applicable) was included with the AGM voting delegate letters that were mailed out the last week of February. Please contact Marlyn for more information and to report any extenuating circumstances.

Constitution/By-Laws/Annual General Meeting: Please respect the deadlines in your association’s current constitution and by-laws when notifying Home and School members about the annual general meeting and proposed changes to your association’s constitution and by -laws. Please contact Marlyn for more information.

Delegates to the QFHSA AGM: Local associations have a duty to send delegates to the QFHSA AGM (see the local association renewal form). Your association may send at least three (3) delegates and they are nominated at a Home and School meeting to represent the local association. These representatives do not have to be a member of the executive.

Have a great rest of the school year,
Marlyn Brownrigg
QFHSA Membership Services Coordinator
marlynbrownrigg@qfhsa.org

Thoughts of Spring: Inflatable Games

The QFHSA’s insurance company has issued the following guidelines for the rental of inflatable games for your spring events. If you need more information please contact the QFHSA office.

1. The vendor company shall provide an insurance certificate listing the QFHSA and your Home and School as additional insured. The insurer does not have to receive the certificate but a copy must be saved by your Home and School in case of a claim.
2. At least two volunteers shall be posted at each inflatable game for security purposes (orderly).
3. No fighting inflatable ring of any type will be accepted.
4. If your Home and School owns an inflatable game, please note that our insurer will not provide coverage of any form in case of bodily damage. The owner will need to obtain a separate policy for this item.
5. It is to be noted that our insurance contract terms and conditions are the ones which will apply in case of a claim.
6. First-aid qualified person on-site (can be a volunteer)

Home and Schools in Good Standing

As of February 25, 2016

Arundel	Jules Verne	Shigawake Port Daniel
Baie Comeau	La Tuque	South Hull
Beacon Hill	Lakeside Academy	Souvenir
Beaconsfield High	Lauren Hill	Springdale
Beechwood	Lindsay Place High	St. Charles
Buckingham	MacDonald High	St. Edmund
Cedarcrest	Dr. S.E. McDowell	St. Gabriel
Chelsea	Merton	St. John Fisher
Ecole Primaire Beaconsfield	Metis Beach	St. Patrick
Edgewater	Mount Pleasant	St. Paul
Les Petits Bouts de Chou	Mountainview	St. Vincent
Flemming	Nesbitt	Thorndale
Gardenvue	New Carlisle	Westpark
Genesis	New Richmond	Wilder Penfield
Greater Gatineau	North Hatley	Willingdon
Greendale	Onslow	
Grenville	P.E.T.E.S.	
Honore Mercier	Royal West Academy	
John Rennie	Shawinigan	

Essay Contests

FAMILY TREASURES/ FAMOUS FAMILY RECIPES

There is still time to submit an essay for the Family Treasures/Famous Family Recipes Contest. Deadline for Submissions is April 1, 2016. If you have a great story to share, please do! Submissions can come from individuals as well as from school. For more information on the guidelines, here is the link: <http://www.qfhfa.org/family.htm>

Are English school graduates bilingual enough to take their place in Québec society?

In the last Newsletter (Winter 2015) the Advisory Board on English Education (ABEE) asked each local Home and School Association to respond to a few questions and send in their answers by the end of January. If you haven't yet had a chance to so, it is not too late because we are still working on this brief. The Board would greatly appreciate your feedback.

The questions were:

- Why did you chose an English school for your children
- What were your expectations of parents for the schools as regards bilingualism and biliteracy?
- Do you have any other comments about your expectations and experiences?

Your replies can be sent directly to ABEE at: celaabee@education.gouv.qc.ca

Bill 86 in a Nutshell

By Carol Meindl

Bill 86, according to the Ministry of Education, is about increasing student success and giving parents more decision-making power in how their schools are run. But does it deliver? In my opinion, no, not really. There is nothing in the entire 55 page document that says anything about student success. It does, however, address at length, the organization and governance of school boards.

It replaces the current Board of Commissioners with a School Council made up of 16 positions : 6 parent member positions (voting), 6 community member positions (voting) and an additional four positions (voting), of which two are for principals, one is for a teacher and one is for a support staff position—non-teaching.

ON FACE VALUE, THIS MAY LOOK LIKE A POSITIVE CHANGE AS THE PARENT MEMBERS WOULD NOW HAVE A VOTE. HOWEVER, THOSE PARENT VOTES WILL ALWAYS BE OUTNUMBERED: 6 TO 10.

It also replaces the simple process of universal suffrage for the election of community representatives to the Council of Commissioners with a complicated and convoluted process for selecting and appointing: parents members from an electoral college of Parent committees, selecting community members from appointments from parent committees or by universal suffrage, if the parent community decides to go that route, and staff positions appointed through their own electoral colleges. If this sounds complicated, it is because it is incredibly complicated and almost impossible to administer. It may sound like democracy, of a sort, but it is not.

Currently, every one over 18 years of age, living in a school district is eligible to vote in a school board election and anyone over 18 yrs old is eligible to run for a position. Under Bill 86, a year in advance of an election, the Director General of the school board must open up a process for parents with children in the school system, to sign a registry. If, upon the results of a subsequent



referendum, less than 15% of the parents registered vote in favour of holding elections, the community representatives will be appointed by the parent committees instead. If the vote is in favour of elections, only parents with children in the school will be eligible to vote. That means all other residents, despite the fact that they all pay school taxes, will not be given an opportunity to vote for a representative to the school council. This is taxation without representation! This is not desirable in a democratic society.

If the Parent committees must choose the six (6) community positions, four (4) of them must come from one of each of the following 4 areas: Culture and Communication, Sport , Employers and Municipalities. These nominees do not have to live in the district, only work in it, and of the two (2) remaining community positions, they do not have to live or work in the district. They do not even have to be an Anglophone. They can be from anywhere. With all the constraints and specifications demanded by this new legislation, it will be unlikely that some boards, especially small ones in rural areas, will be able to find enough eligible candidates. Consider the difficulty some governing boards currently have just to find their own community representatives.

What happens in the case of a school council that cannot find enough candidates for its community rep positions?

The Minister will appoint individuals of his choice into the vacant positions. In fact Bill 86 is all about power. Power to the Minister to appoint people to whatever positions he chooses. When one reads Bill 86 closely, it says in 459.5 *The*

Minister shall prepare a decentralized management practices guide for school boards and see that it is distributed - and in 459.6 Within the scope of the Minister's responsibilities, the Minister may issue directives to a school board concerning its administration, organization, operations and actions. Such directives may also complement or clarify the budgetary rules during a school year.

Over and over again, Bill 86 stipulates how decisions are to be made, how they are to be submitted to a ministerial committee for approval and how the Minister may either approve or reject a decision.

IN ESSENCE, THE MINISTER RESERVES THE AUTHORITY TO OVERRULE ANY AND ALL DECISIONS MADE BY A SCHOOL COUNCIL, A PRINCIPAL, A GOVERNING BOARD AND A SCHOOL BOARD.

In that light, where is the empowerment of parents?

The QFHSA has grave reservations regarding the implications of Bill 86 if it is passed into law. That is why we are asking for major amendments to the bill and a slowing down of the time line, to give all these concerns proper and adequate time to be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of everyone. To see what the QFHSA submits as desirable amendments to Bill 86, see the article on page 8.

What makes the majority of English School boards currently work so well is their commitment to equity, not equality. Bill 86 proposes to impose equality to the Quebec public education system, French and English alike, and assumes that this is the answer to the problem. However, it is not equality that we need in our system, but equity. And the Minister has not yet really said what he understands the actual problem to be.



QCGN Meeting with Quebec Government Cabinet Ministers and MNAs a Success!

QFHSA President Brian Rock was a member of the Quebec Community Groups Network delegation that travelled to Quebec City on November 18th to meet with Cabinet Ministers and MNAs of the Quebec Liberal Party at the Morrin Centre.

The members of the Couillard Cabinet in attendance included Minister of Justice and the Status of Women Stephanie Vallee (Gatineau), Minister of Finance Carlos J. Leito (Robert-Baldwin), Minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion Kathleen Weil (Notre-Dame-de-Grace), and Minister of Native Affairs Geoffrey Kelley (Jacques-Cartier).

The majority party Members of the National Assembly present included former Minister of Education Pierre Reid

(Orford), Chief Government Whip Stephane Billette (Huntingdon), David Birnbaum (D'Arcy McGee) who is the Parliamentary Secretary to Premier Philippe Couillard, Andre Fortin (Pontiac), Luc Fortin (Sherbrooke), Germain Chevarie (Iles-de-la Madeleine), Sebastian Proulx (Jean-Talon), and Norbert Morin (Cote-du-Sud).

A surprise guest was Manon Masse, Quebec Solidaire MNA (Sainte-Marie/Saint-Jacques).

The Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations Inc. is a member of the QCGN and is funded by the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research of Quebec, and our generous members.

QFHSA Recommendations to Jennings Panel

The Rights and Education Committee of the Québec Federation of Home and School offered the following recommendations to the Election Systems Study Panel to improve School Board Elections:

1. In place of eliminating school boards, the government should look at the successful model developed by the English school board system.
2. Improve the election system by the introduction of electronic voting as an option for voters, and by the twinning of school board and municipal elections.
3. Mandate Le Directeur général des élections du Québec (DGEQ) to run the elections and to hold them on a week day as is the case with provincial and federal elections.
4. Consult with other English speaking community organizations to work to build a process that would assure our community's right to vote, and to modify the regulations governing school board electoral lists, to ensure a true representation of the English-speaking community.
5. Explore the idea of enticing the voters through tax credits or deductions.
6. Mandating that both Parent Commissioners and Student Commissioners have the right to vote and not be prohibited from exercising their franchise, as they are presently under the Education Act.

7. Assist current school boards by instituting mandatory training for all commissioners under the law concerning their roles and responsibilities.
8. Amend the Education Act to decentralize the offices of commissioners to local schools, particularly in regions where vast geographic territories are under the jurisdiction of a single school board such as the Eastern Shores, Central Québec, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and Western Québec school boards.
9. Use technology such as videoconferencing, Skype, and other technological platforms, to increase participation, save money and reduce bureaucracy.
10. Take into account the cultural and linguistic nature of our communities and respond to our repeated requests for recognition of our unique needs in preserving the number, nature and character of the English-speaking communities of Québec.
11. Amend the regulation de-listing graduated English students and their families from the English Voting List and placing them automatically on the French Voting List, in order to preserve the constitutional right of all members of the English-speaking community to vote for representatives on their English language school boards.

Youth Exploring Science 2016



Once again, the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations is pleased to offer the Youth Exploring Science workshops for our Home and Schools in the regions, through our partnership with Community Learning Centers and LEARN. This year, our students will learn All about Sharks, take a crack at forensic science in Find the Culprit and explore spa science by producing their own Bath Bombs.

Students from Eastern Quebec will participate through the Gaspé Tri-School CLC. Students from Central Quebec will participate through the La Tuque CLC and students from Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board will participate through Laurentian Regional CLC.

The workshops will be held on Fridays and Saturdays, April 1, 2, 15, 16, 22 and 23.

Evelyn Castillo, a Biologist by training, will once again animate these workshops and take the kids step by step through the experiments. The students love the hands-on aspects of the workshops as well as the take home elements (who wouldn't like a genuine shark tooth pendant of their very own and bath bombs for Mother's Day?) The QFHSA gratefully acknowledges the financial contributions of Canadian Heritage, the Quebec Ministry of Education, and the generosity of LEARN for the donation of their video conferencing network, to allow us to provide these fun activities to region member associations with fewer resources than our Island of Montreal member associations.



Flexible Learning could cut Dropout Rates

How to make our schools more inclusive

By Cam Oulton, Assistant Superintendent, Alberta Distance Learning Centre (Troy Media)

I have been profoundly deaf since the age of three. As a deaf child, the best thing that happened to me was being included in regular classes at Scott Robertson School in Edmonton Public in the 1960s. I was invited in, even though I learned in a different way than my classmates. I learned with the aid of technology (in 1965!) through a large hearing aid bolted to my desk with a set of headphones that may have been salvaged from a Second World War bomber.

Flexible learning a 21st century reality

Because I was included, I wanted to include others, so I became a special education teacher. In my opinion phasing out the 'Opportunity Room' – the room that isolated so many children with different learning needs – is one of the best things to happen in education.

I am sure that every September each student thinks, "This year is going to be different, this is going to be my year." While I hope this is true for all students, the drop-out rate alone tells us otherwise. What can we do for 20 per cent (Alberta statistic) of our young people who do not feel included and so drop out of school before graduation?

The traditional image of education is still safely ensconced in the 1950s. Meanwhile, advanced digital technology and the diverse learning needs of today's students are 21st century realities.

When the two meet – that is, when most people understand that apps and tablets are as much a part of modern learning as textbooks – more students will be engaged and feel included. More students will have the chance to be successful.

As the associate superintendent at Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC), I want to help make sure that the same inclusive philosophy that I benefited from is applied to the many barriers that still exist for children in education.

What barriers?

First, there are the ones of ability and prior accomplishment, both for those who would like to work ahead, and for those who need more time and support to understand. Second, there are barriers of physical distance, age and interfering work schedules for students who have already dropped out, but who still want to take another stab at completing their diplomas. And third, there may be significant barriers caused by dated parental expectations of what school ought to look like. We have a generation of students which learns easily through digital media while living with parents whose personal experience demands the sight of a student bent over a book.

Digital material can be a resource to make learning more effective. For example, learners can walk through a distant battlefield after learning from a textbook what happened on it. Together, software and the wired world provide the flexibility to enhance student potential beyond what we as parents and grandparents experienced.

An example is an online version of Grade 9 Science. Some students use it to catch up, while others can get done early, and apply themselves to Grade 10 Science when they are ready, rather than when the semester system says it's time.

Consider the power of an online resource developed by ADLC called CSI Macbeth. It places the immortal stories in Shakespeare's famous play within a modern justice-system context so today's students can connect to it more easily.

Let me be clear that ADLC is only one source of ideas and programming in this new world of adapting school to individual needs. But because we still leave 20 per cent of students behind, I want to encourage teachers, learners, parents – indeed all who have a stake in educational success – to recognize, value, and take advantage of our 21st century capabilities.

Cam Oulton is Assistant Superintendent of Alberta Distance Learning Centre, which serves students from grades 1 -12 across the province with over 60,000 course enrollments in the current year.

Volunteering Matters

By Carol Meindl

As a longtime member of Home and School, I was happy to attend the Volunteering Matters conference on February 5th at the Historic Chateau Ramezay in Old Montreal. This conference was brought to us courtesy of the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network,(QAHN) through their Fostering Organizational Renewal through Enriching Volunteer Experience and Recognition (FOREVER) project. The QFHSA subsidized the registration fee for members of Home and Schools and we were all very interested to hear any new advice that was offered about recruiting and retaining volunteers.

The morning began with a welcome and introductions by Dwane Wilkins, project manager at QAHN. He gave an explanation of the work that QAHN does, how the day would proceed and mentioned that there would be other venues across Quebec that will host similar conferences in this series. (QFHSA will keep you posted)

The first workshop was presented by Alison Stevens, Executive Director of the Volunteer Bureau of Montreal. Alison has had many years of experience training volunteer recruiters and began her workshop with having us consider why people volunteer their time and what we can do to keep them motivated. One has to start with the definition of a volunteer: Their involvement with an organization/cause is freely chosen, it is a rewarding experience for both parties and it is unpaid. Canada is one of the few countries that actually have a code for volunteering through Volunteer Canada.
(<http://volunteer.ca/ccvi>)

VOLUNTEERING MUST NEVER BE CONSIDERED JUST “FREE LABOUR”, IT MUST BE CONSIDERED SOMETHING THAT HELPS BUILD THE CAPACITY OF AN ORGANIZATION.

We considered some of the changes in volunteering over the past 50-60 years and acknowledged that it is much more co-ed, much more inclusive now than ever before. People’s time, however, is more limited and they want to be able to make a meaningful contribution, so the importance of targeted recruiting is crucial. Specifying manageable tasks for individuals to complete, according to their unique skills and strengths, and then acknowledging their contributions with a sincere thank



you, helps build meaningful relationships. This approach is not to be under-estimated. When volunteers feel valued and appreciated, they feel ownership of the mission, and they are more likely to stay involved.

The second presentation was from Louise Brazeau, the Coordinator of Education and Promotion at the Chateau Ramezay. Her responsibility is to oversee the training of the volunteer tour guides. Interestingly, the training programs are done by two separate associations, the English Guides Association and the French Guides Association. Each has their own approach and interpretation of the Museum’s collections. In addition, each volunteer guide has their own special interest, be it cultural, economic, transport, etc., and is encouraged to bring their own unique perspective to their tours. In this way, the volunteers feel trusted and valued for what they, as individuals, can bring to the organization. The commitment to be a volunteer tour guide for Chateau Ramesay is for five years, so it must be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, for both parties.

The final presentation of the day was given by Heather Darch, Curator of the Missisquoi Historical Museum. She introduced the participants to some of the emerging trends in volunteering. There have been clear changes in motivation and commitment from volunteers over the years and it seems to be influenced by age. Heather divided volunteers into three main groups: the Baby Boomers, the Generation X’ers and the Millenials. She explained that Baby Boomers (55- 70 year olds) grew up with structured organizations. They like serving on

committees and accept starting at the bottom and working from the ground floor upwards. They have little trouble committing their time over long periods. In contrast Generation X'ers (37-55 yr olds) often come from a two career family and do not like structure or long term commitments. They like the idea of being involved in a specific project, getting in and out quickly, and being involved for shorter periods of time. Their availability is often geared toward their children's needs and pleasures and consequently, are reluctant to give up week-ends or evenings. These individuals would appreciate being given a project to work on, and once completed, receive an honest thank you with perhaps a reminder of something else that is coming up later they might also be interested in.

The Millennials (16-35 yr olds) also have no interest in long term commitments, but they definitely want to be involved and want to see tangible results from the time they do give. They are likely to do research beforehand (on line) which will influence their initial interest in an organization. They want the activities done in minutes, not months.

THE SOLUTION IS MICRO-VOLUNTEERING. THIS APPROACH REQUIRES RECRUITERS TO BE VERY CLEAR ABOUT THE TASKS AND ACTIVITIES THEY NEED HELP WITH AND TO TAILOR THE REQUESTS TO THE VOLUNTEER'S INTERESTS AND SKILLS.

In other words, one needs to find the good fit. When one has, one has found the hidden treasure. Volunteer profiles can be a big help in knowing who has the skills and expertise you are looking for in any particular task or project.

Something to avoid in an organization is a committee structure simply because "that is the way we have always done things!" Today's volunteers are changing and so must yesterday's volunteering structures. For some people, attending meetings is their only volunteer work, and they enjoy it a great deal, but this may not necessarily move an organization forward, if the committee itself does nothing. Zombie Committees benefit no one if the main activity is attending the meetings but never actually doing anything. Do not be afraid to close down inactive committees.

Home and Schools are in a unique position as their volunteer base is constantly renewed and stays in roughly the same age group while their children are in primary and/or secondary school.

HOWEVER, HOME AND SCHOOLS THAT HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR A LONG TIME AND HAVE INHERITED OLD STRUCTURES SET UP BY BABY-BOOMERS, CAN NOW BE FACED WITH THE CHALLENGE OF FILLING THOSE COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES WITH GENERATION X'ERS AND, EVENTUALLY, MILLENIALS.

Heather Darch suggests adopting a system for "adocracy"-a temporary project group or taskforce set up to accomplish a specific task. Home and Schools will acknowledge that Grad Committee, for example, is almost always successful and is made up of parents who are there for the one main event, and may not be seen again. All too often, all other committees are filled with variations of the same group of individuals, and this can lead to volunteer burn out as people become exhausted. By breaking an event or project down into many small tasks and farming those tasks and responsibilities out to a larger pool of volunteers who are not daunted by a commitment of a few hours, here and there, the energy level of your all your volunteers can stay high.

Heather Darch had many more valuable insights and suggestions for engaging today's volunteers that could not be included in this article. However, the QFHSA is looking forward to inviting Heather Darch to present this workshop to our members at the Fall Conference in November 2016.



Indigenous Book Club Month

On Friday, January 8, Anna Maria Tremonti interviewed Carolyn Bennett, Canada's Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs on the CBC radio program, The Current. Among the topics discussed was the idea for an indigenous book club month.

"WE'RE HOPING TO MAKE JUNE INDIGENOUS BOOK CLUB MONTH SUCH THAT ALL THE BOOK CLUBS IN CANADA COULD PICK AN INDIGENOUS AUTHOR OR THE BOOK OF AN ALLY. THAT WE COULD ACTUALLY BEGIN THIS WORK OF SAYING IT'S NEVER TOO LATE, AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING IS NOW ONE OF THE PILLARS OF AN ACTIVE AGING MOVEMENT"

One of the 94 recommendations coming from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report is:

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above

Home and Schools can play a significant role in purchasing and providing books on Aboriginal culture and history, both fiction and non-fiction, for school libraries and classrooms. Parents can go one step further and educate themselves through an Indigenous Book Club. Select a book and encourage yourself and your friends to read it and then discuss it.

Books recommended in the CBC segment:

"A Coyote Columbus Story" by Thomas King
"My Mother is Weird" by Rachna Gilmore
"Halfbreed, The Book of Jessica, and Stories of the Road

Allowance People" by Maria Campbell
"The Outside Circle" (collection)

Authors recommended in the CBC segment:

Joseph Boyden, Richard van Camp, Leann Simpson, Marilyn Dumont, Jeanette Armstrong, Beatrice Culleton Mosionier, Louise Halfe, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Eden Robinson, Richard Wagamese.

Home and School Associations in High schools could consider a project where they purchase some of these books for the school library as a start of a significant collection of Indigenous literature for their students to access. It can serve as one way in which Home and School can honour the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. In the Fall issue of the QFHSA NEWS, we offered a review of a selection of books recommended for younger students to read. Here is a recap:

"Julie of the Wolves" by Jean Craighead
"Tuk and the Whale and Orphan Ahwak" by Raquel Rivera
"Les Mohawks et les masque des récoltes" by Michel Noel
"Berry Magic" by Teri Sloat and Betty Huffman
"Howling Hill and Beardream" by Will Hobbs
"The Old Ways" by Susan Margaret Chapman
"Les Dico des Indiens" by Michel Piquemal
"Dictionary of Northern American Indians and Other Indigeonous Peoples" by Gilbert Legay
"Cradle me" by Debby Silier
"Les Jeux de ficelle" by Sylvie Roberge
"Absolutely True Diary of a Part -time Indian" by Sherman Alexie

Speak with your school librarian about what books are already included in your school library and ask him/her which additional books he/she would like to see included in the collection.

Home and School adopted Resolution 2015-01 History of Residential School and urged the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research to incorporate the History of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) as an integral compulsory part of the Elementary and Secondary curriculum; and to develop the curriculum on the history of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) in collaboration with leading Indigenous Peoples educators.

Rather than wait for the Minister of Education to move on this, Home and School is encouraged to take a first step on behalf of their schools and students and provide appropriate reading material for their students.

AGM BOOK DRIVE

The QFHSA, through the Literacy Committee, supports various projects over the course of the year. Volunteers scour book fairs, used book stores and library sales for books in good condition. These books are sent to a variety of schools, community centres, etc. throughout the year.

This year, the QFHSA will collect gently used books for the infant-to-teen age group at the

**Thank you for
your generosity.**



Celebrating Canada's 150th



In 2017 our country of Canada will be celebrating an important birthday. Some of us are old enough to remember Canada's 100th anniversary in 1967. Who can forget that iconic theme song by Bobby Gimby?

(Link available here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18-oRTLle3I>)

Now Canada will be 150 years old and the country will be gearing up for celebrations, from coast to coast. Schools, community groups, churches, cities and towns will all join in, holding events and launching projects.

WHAT WILL HOME AND SCHOOLS DO TO HELP THEIR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES CELEBRATE THIS IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN OUR COUNTRY'S HISTORY?

- A special picnic in the school yard?
- The launching of a scholarship?
- The publishing of a special 2017 yearbook?

There are many things a Home and School could do to help mark this occasion. We strongly encourage our Home and Schools to put this topic on your agendas and start collecting ideas.

One wonderful idea would be for Home and Schools to march in the 2017 Montreal Canada Day Parade. Schools could create banners and select families to represent their Home and School Associations. Associations from across the island would be invited to participate. Additionally, associations from other areas around Quebec could participate locally at their own Canada Day parades. Perhaps QFHSA could even encourage the Canadian Home and School Federation to reserve a spot at our nation's capital Canada Day Parade and have representation from across the country? Why not think nationally as well as locally?



It is time to celebrate the wonderful country we live in! HOME AND SCHOOL has a role to play!

Sample Letter to send to your MNA

The QFHSA encourages you to contact your local MNA to express your concern regarding the proposed Bill 86, *An act to modify the organization and governance of school boards to give schools a greater say in decision making and ensuring parents' presence within each school board's decision making body*.

In order to help you, we have prepared a template you can use and adapt as you see fit before sending to your MNA below.

Date:

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you to express my grave concerns over the proposed provisions in Bill 86.

Section 23 (1) of the Constitution Act, 1982 (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms) confers minority language educational rights. It is important to note that *Mahe v. Alberta* (1992) clearly defines minority language educational rights to include the right to manage and control minority language community educational facilities.

There is a fundamental link between Quebec's English schools and the English -speaking communities they serve. I support the principles and recommendations contained in the Election Systems Study Panel 2015, chaired by the Honourable Marlene Jennings, which consulted widely throughout the English linguistic minority.

Bill 86, *An Act to modify the organization and governance of school boards to give schools a greater say in decision-making and ensure parents' presence within each school board's decision -making body*, –if enacted –will confer powers to the Minister of Education, Leisure and Sport that would encroach on areas exclusive to minority language educational rights holder.

The Government of Quebec has offered no pressing and substantial need to amend the current sound, efficient, and successful system of school governance.

Therefore, in agreement with the Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations , I reject Bill 86, An Act to modify the organization and governance of school boards to give schools a greater say in decision -making and ensure parents' presence within each school board's decision -making body. I demand that the Government of Quebec acknowledge its duty to support and respect Quebecers' minority language educational rights and I demand that the Government of Quebec formally recognize, and enter into a formal and comprehensive consultation with the English linguistic minority community to identify and address our legitimate right to control and manage our institutions.

Sincerely,

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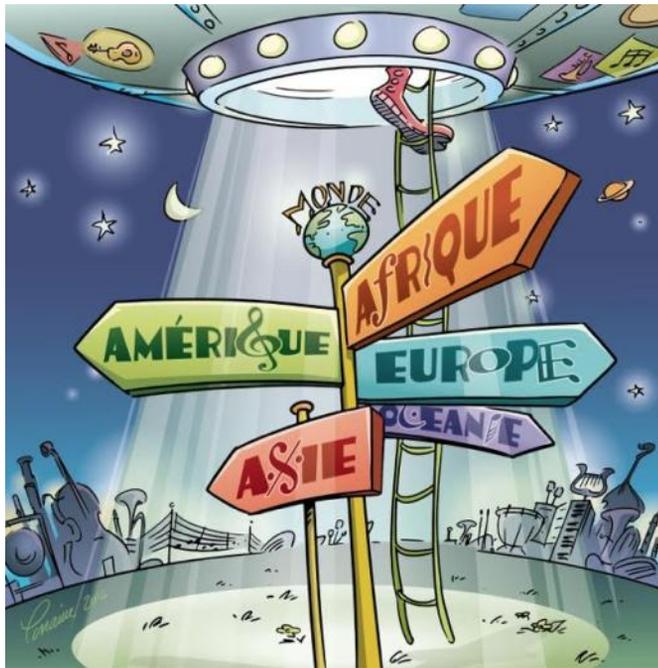
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For more information: manager@expoormstown.com
450-829-2776

Isabella Tarantella – A Story of Diversity



*A multi-media, multi-disciplinary and interactive student concert
Join us on January 19, 2017*

“Musick has Charms to sooth a savage Breast, To soften Rocks, or bend a knotted Oak.” or so thought author William Congreve. Actually music has much more than that. It has been shown that classical music increases brain synapse in infancy, and even in the womb. The Mozart Effect?????? The Greeks knew all about the importance of music and included the study of music in their compendium of universal education. Studies have shown that listening to and performing classical music sharpens the human intellect, has a direct relationship to acquiring math and language skills and helps foster that most important engine in our society, creativity.

The McGill Chamber Orchestra in collaboration with Jeunesse Musicales Canada seeks to expose young audiences to orchestral music in a series of annual concerts in the intimate setting of the Ecole Le Plateau, former home of the Montreal Symphony

Orchestra. The concert hall seats 600 giving every child a clear and unobstructed view of the stage. In addition the huge screen behind the orchestra provides close-ups of musicians, conductor and other important program related visuals.

MCO’s bilingual Education Concerts are programmed for school children , Kindergarten to Grade 8 at Ecole Le Plateau.

Concerts are hosted and conducted by Boris Brott one of Canada’s most well known Maestros and renowned for his ability to inspire and engage students of all ages. Isabella Tarantella features narrator Danielle LeBlanc, Artistic Director of Jeunesse Musicales Canada.

Presented annually and sponsored by the Azrieli Foundation, these Education concerts awaken and reinforce the positive experience of listening to a live orchestra in a concert hall setting. Our greatest compliments come from students saying “I never knew how cool an orchestra could be” ...”It was fun and I liked singing with the orchestra” .

MCO Education concerts are directly related to the language and social studies of the school curriculum. MCO provide the information you need to make this a complete and interactive experience for our students. From receiving pre and post-concert lesson plans, information about instruments and music, and biographies of the performers, to participating in musical activities, your student will be engaged before, during and after the performance.

Prior to MCO concerts, teachers instruct their students in songs and interactive games which will be played during the concerts. “My students liked that the concert was more than just music – it gave them a chance to get involved.” Teacher Grade 7.

MCO Education concerts have social as well as musical goals. Isabella Tarantella centers on the issues of prejudice and diversity which are constant challenges in our schools.

Isabella Tarantella is a script written by celebrated children’s author Ardyth Webster Brott . Isabella visits us on planet Earth from Mars to discover verbal chaos. Isabella travels the world and finds that music is an international language that breaks down barriers, and is understood by all regardless of race, religion or colour. MCO Education Concerts will inspire, engage and educate.

For further information call (514)487-5190
www.ocm-mco.org

EVERBLAST CARNIVALS

THE PERFECT WAY TO END YOUR SCHOOL YEAR!!

WHAT IS AN EVERBLAST CARNIVAL?

Everblast offers a wide range of fun, unique and active games to make your carnival a huge success. You have the power to mix and match from a variety of games your kids will love! Check out some of the games and go to everblastplay.com for more information

What is a bundle?

A bundle is packed of 4 games based on a specific theme.

How many games do we need?

We recommend an average of 1 game for every 15 kids.



GIANT SLINGSHOT

Who doesn't love to sling objects through the air? Using a 3 person operated giant slingshot, unique to Everblast participants get to take their best shot as they try to hit targets.



HUMAN VELCRO

Human Velcro is the modern dunk tank! Whether it be an Everblast Play Pro or an adult from your organization, kids will have a blast attempting to hit targets on the Human Velcro suit.
WARNING: No adult has ever gotten hurt in the playing of Human Velcro!



SPORTS LOVERS

Calling all sports lovers!! Everblast has a variety of cool and unique sports activities perfect for a carnival. Sports includes Soccer, Hockey and more!!



GIANT GAMES

Giant games include a variety of classic supersized board games that everybody loves! Games include: Giant Connect Four, Giant Jenga and more...



TERRIFIC TEAMWORK

There's no better feeling than completing a challenge as a team! In Terrific Teamwork, kids get to feel great as they take on fun and active team challenges and races.



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About the Great Book Swap...



WHAT IS IT?

The *Great Book Swap* challenge is a fundraising event where students make a Toonie donation and swap books with one another.

WHEN IS IT?

You can hold your *Great Book Swap* at any time throughout the year or during Indigenous Book Club Month (June), or during Family Literacy Day held in January.

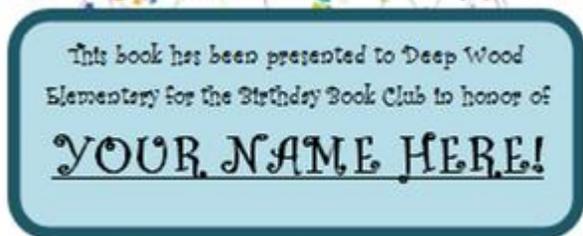
HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Have your students register. Display posters.
2. Choose the day for your fundraiser.
3. Invite your participants – students, teachers, staff, parents – to bring a book from home that they have really enjoyed but can bear to part with. Ideally books should be not just an unwanted item but a book that they think someone else would enjoy as much as they did. You may wish to ask them to record why they cherish the book on a GBS Book Plate that can be included with the book.
4. Ask your participants to bring their book(s) to school in advance of your swap. You may need to organize a drop-off point for books during the preceding week or students can just bring their books and coins on the day. Display the books, perhaps grouped according to reading age or genre, in a central local, e.g. a library or hall. Hold discussions about them.
5. On your swap day display the books brought by participants on a ‘shop’ table. Invite participating students, either a class or a year level at a time, to donate a toonie in exchange for the right to choose a book. Give the collected money to your school librarian to purchase resources or send the collected money to a Literacy project of your choice.



Create a Little Free Library in your school or school yard. Build your mini library out of recycled materials, as much as possible. Plans and suggestions are available online at littlefreelibrary.org.

Register your mini library with <http://littlefreelibrary.org/registration-process/>



Everyone likes to see their name in a book. A great way to acquire new books for your school library and acknowledge a special day for a student, is to initiate a **Birthday Book program**. Parents are invited to make a donation of \$25.00 to the Home and School Association for the purchase of a book for the library in honour of a student’s birthday. A request can be made for the librarian to purchase a book of particular interest to that student (Eg: Astronomy, Dinosaurs, Basketball heroes, Science fiction, etc) and a Birthday Bookplate will be inserted on the inside front cover of the book with their name on it.

Future students will open that book, enjoy its contents and be aware that it was of special interest to a former student.



DEAR DM,

I recently found out my son Max is getting into trouble at school: He's walking out of class, refusing to do tests, and, to my complete horror, has been rude to the principal... this is not the Max I know and love ! He says he's stressed out about school — how can I help him ?

DEAR STRESSED OUT AT SCHOOL.

Often students like Max – hardworking, kind, respectful - do not want to show anyone how hard they are on themselves when they do not get the marks they want. In Max's case, on days when there's a test, he wakes up feeling sick. He spends so much time in the washroom that he misses the bus... and the arguments begin. By the time his parents get him in the car, the tension between them is awful. Afterwards he comes home and says he's stupid... this just breaks his parents' heart.

Max's response to avoiding tests, and the uncomfortable sensations in his body, make sense to him. To be fair, avoiding something that makes us uncomfortable makes sense to most of us too sometimes ! Max really believed the situation is hopeless - that he would always "blank out". But like many youth who don't yet have the needed skills to defeat anxiety, Max was unaware that with the right tools he could work through the discomfort and calm his anxious brain. So, following a quick trip to the pediatrician to ensure that he's healthy, a courageous journey began. Working with DM, a 2-part plan was created: 1. Give him tools to respond to stress in a healthy and constructive ways, and 2. Improving his organizational and study skills so he could be more successful at school. Now Max is more resilient and better able to cope with whatever life sends his way. Here are some strategies that can help:

NORMALIZING STRESS: We all have some; it's a normal everyday occurrence. A common trap is to tell our children "don't worry": it's far more effective to say "It's normal to worry before a test/presentation/game/etc, I do too".

REDUCE STRESS: By various techniques, including: mindfulness, breathing, visualizations, music, or talking to a trusted adult. Equally important are sleep, diet, and exercise, which increase our brains' ability to focus and process information, as well as having a good life balance, including "down time". For youth who may need more support, consulting with a therapist using Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) can help.

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING: Youth can learn concrete strategies to take charge of school work, projects, and learning how to study for exams. These types of programs have been shown to be effective in reducing anxiety and depression in children, teens, and young adults - and benefit youth by promoting self-confidence and emotional resilience that can last a lifetime. Together we can make a difference ! Contact DM for more information.

Sincerely, DM FAMILY SERVICES



"THESE PROGRAMS ARE EFFECTIVE IN
REDUCING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION,
PROMOTING SELF CONFIDENCE AND
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Offices in Montreal,
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June 6th is National Health & Fitness Day



Find out more information at: <http://www.participation.com/national-health-and-fitness-day/>

Jules Verne Elementary

Despite the wet winter weather, Home & School hosted a Sugar Shack theme activity at our winter festival. We had a Mobile Maple Taffy on Snow station for the children to enjoy. The station was set outdoors, with Canadian traditional folk music playing for the children to dance around. The taffy was delicious and the kids loved it.

As well, this year, Jules Verne Home & School had a special treat for the entire staff through out staff appreciation week. This was our way to say thank you to each and everyone of them for their hard work for our children. The special week started with a surprise invite in everyone's mailbox. Each day of the week our H&S had a little something special with a personalized special note for them to read. Our week began on Feb 9th, with a light bagel and fresh fruit breakfast. The following day, volunteers went around the school with a Coffee Cart and Cupcakes to treat our staff as they were hard at work. On Thursday, we offered the staff a healthy snack of freshly cut vegetables and dip. We ended the week with a delicious fresh lunch served in the staff room. Fresh healthy salads served with delicious wraps and assorted sandwiches. The staff room was elegantly decorated with lace vases, candle tea light and crystal trimmings. The centerpiece was a tree with customized notes for each and everyone of them. This simple treat was greatly appreciated by the staff and was just as much fun for Home & School to plan for it.



Beacon Hill Elementary

In the spirit of the holidays and after the successful fall fundraiser Book Fair organized by the Home and School Association, parents and children from Beacon Hill Elementary School made a donation of over 500 gently used books to a local LBPSB school. The Book Drive was organized by two students- Ella Cloutier in grade 4 and Gracianne Verghese in grade 5. Students at the receiving school were able to choose books to take home from this large selection. Great job everyone!

In January, volunteer parents supported our teachers and grade 6 ambassadors as families were welcomed through the doors of Beacon Hill for our annual Open House. New families were warmly greeted by the community for a friendly presentation and then given tours by our proud students.

This February, the Home and School Association celebrated the staff of Beacon Hill with a Mexican Fiesta themed appreciation week. Volunteers, parents and students came together to honour the staff for all their hard work and passion in all they do. The school lobby and library were transformed with colorful decorations and with a big sign that read "Muchas Gracias". Staff were encouraged to come take a picture for the wall, and we adorned them in festive attire. There was a Mexican-themed lunch enjoyed by whole staff on the first day of the week, complete with a 'piñata' cake! A smoothie day was the staff's mid-week treat and a gift bag was prepared for each staff member, as well as a group school photo. Thank you again to the Beacon Hill Staff – we really appreciate all that you do!



Beechwood Elementary

Feb 8-12 was Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week at Beechwood Elementary. Parents decorated all the classroom doors with different sayings. For example "We love our teacher because she makes us bloom," "Thanks a Latte," or "Mme. Pressoir is O-fish-ally the best." All the student photos were on each door. The teachers loved them and the students were thrilled to see themselves on the doors.

Monday, the teachers received a breakfast box with a homemade muffin, a juice, a yogurt and an apple. On Tuesday they all received a lotto ticket with a note that said "We hit the Lotto with a teacher like you." Wednesday was the appreciation lunch. The Beechwood families supplied all the food. The teachers did not need to bring their lunches for three days. On Thursday they all received small gifts with little saying such as "Thanks for making us smart cookies" attached to a box of cookies or a container of Lysol wipes with the saying "We have to come clean - you are officially the best." On Friday everyone received a potted flower with the saying "Thank you for helping me bloom and grow this year". We ended the week with a coffee cart. Three moms baked and served coffee and great baked goods to everyone. Throughout the week there were many draws for restaurant, coffee and ice cream gift cards.



Edgewater Elementary

Once again, Edgewater students joined over 2,000,000 students across North America to participate in the "Great Kindness Challenge". The students were encouraged to fulfill as many tasks as possible, as simple as bestowing a compliment, or lending a hand.

We hosted our annual craft fair on November 28th. This year's fair was another brilliant success and was enjoyed by all who attended. As well, we held our English Scholastic book fair in the library on November 19th and we wrapped up another profitable cookie dough fundraiser campaign.

We recently celebrated our love of reading on January 31st, when we held our free family literacy event "Unplug & Play". Students and their families were invited to come to the school to play board games together, create bookmarks at our craft table and shop our second hand book table.

Up next, we will be applauding our teachers and staff during a week for "Teacher Staff Appreciation Week". Before we start our "Winter Break", we will be commencing our "Anti-Bullying" week. This year we have planned for a very special guest speaker, former hockey star, Chris "Knuckles" Nilan.

On February 10th, we launched a new fundraising concept to embody our school spirit, "Spirit Wear", a lively collection of t-shirts, hoodies, sweat pants, baseball hats & stadium blankets which all proudly display our school logo & name.

We have also begun preparing for our spring "Shop Fest" that will be held in our gym in April. We rent tables for a small fee to all who wish to de-clutter and earn a little extra cash on the side.



Wilder Penfield Elementary

BORN TO READ EVENT

January 31st proved to be a very special day for Wilder Penfield Home & School Association as we hosted our first ever Born to Read event in the school's library. Twelve lovely families with children ranging in age from 2 weeks to 19 months came out for an afternoon filled with nursery rhymes, silly songs, funny stories and snacks. The event was held to celebrate early literacy and to encourage parents to take the time to engage with their children - there was not a cell phone in sight during the event!) Two students from the school read some silly stories for the children and Home and School members animated the event. We were absolutely thrilled to see such enthusiasm for the initiative and it was truly wonderful to see both moms and dads sit and sing silly songs to their precious babies. It was a pleasure to see such great interaction and fun between parents and children, and it was very sweet the interest even the youngest babies took in the songs and stories. The successful event ended with each child going home with their own bag of books so graciously donated by the QFHSA to launch the project. We have received very positive feedback from our guests and are hopeful to make the event even bigger and better next year.



WHERE IS MY SCHOOL?

Disappointed that your school is not in the Focus on the Locals section? Please talk to your Home and School members and submit to news@qfhsa.org the wonderful things your association is doing for our next issue in May 2016 to news@qfhsa.org



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Learn valuable insights about

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- Finding and keeping the right people
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Visit www.qahn.org for registration details

Fostering Organizational Renewal through Enriching Volunteer Experience and Recognition (FOREVER) is sponsored by the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, with financial support from the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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