



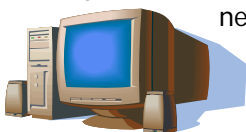
## Riverside School Board Moves

Over the Holidays, Riverside School Board moved into a new energy efficient building in Saint-Hubert. All administrative staff and archives are housed in this new building. An official launch was held on January 17th, with commissioners and other invited guests in attendance. Our new address is 7525, chemin de Chambly, Saint-Hubert, QC J3Y 5K2. Our telephone number remains the same 450 672-4010.



## Behind the Scenes at the New School Board Offices by Gilles Deguire

During the Christmas Holiday, Technology Services worked really hard to ensure a smooth and easy new setup in our new offices. In fact, Technology Services managed and prepared the setup of 110 phones, 135 computers, 20 printers, 3 photocopiers, 6 wireless bases, a new servers' room and a new telecommunication system for our schools, centers and Board Offices. THANK YOU to the Technology Department who helped and gave up precious family time during the Holidays.



## The Past Month at Centennial by Mario Giulione Celebrating the Holiday Season at Centennial

Over the course of the month of December, Centennial hosted a series of events to celebrate the holiday season. To kick off the month, CRHS ran its annual HOPE Basket fundraiser. Staff and students donated both money and non-perishable goods to be given to local families in need. In order to raise additional funds, the Visual Arts Spirit Team sold handmade cards. A school wide Hat Day also took place where everyone was encouraged to pay \$1.00 to wear a hat for the day. All of the receiving families were grateful for the generosity demonstrated by the Centennial community.

Mrs. Wright's Entrepreneurship class also celebrated the gift of giving by organizing a fundraiser for the Montreal Children's Hospital. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, all Secondary 3 students were invited to watch a screening of the film *Elf*. Not only did students share a laugh, they helped support an excellent cause.

The holiday fun continued with several other activities. Centennial's Grad Core ran its annual Send a Friend a Candy Cane fundraiser. Staff and students were able to send anyone in the school candy canes and handwritten messages that were personally delivered by Santa and his elves. On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, Grad Core organized a gingerbread man bake sale and a photo booth where students were invited to take their photo with Santa. Finally, the School Spirit Team organized a variety of gift-wrapping challenges and other games to get students in the holiday spirit.

ERC teacher Mrs. Ruth Latimer, for the second year in a row, took time out on Christmas Day to serve dinner to the less fortunate. We are proud of our students for taking part in this wonderful endeavour!

While December proved to be a busy month for all, it was truly filled with holiday cheer and celebration!

## Hear Our Voices

Once again this year, Centennial students are taking part in Riverside School Board's "Hear Our Voices" initiative.

The first session, held on Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, got off to a strong start. The boys were up first, as representatives from all of RSB's High Schools shared both their ideas and opinions about what works in our schools and what we can do better. Secondary 4 student Darrick D'Allesio, for one, truly enjoyed his experience. In fact, he mentioned how valuable he felt it was to gather with students from the other High Schools in such a positive and enriching setting. "I wish we were able to meet the students from other schools more often. I learned so much in one day, everyone should have the opportunity to do this". Later this winter, it will be the girls' turn to share their ideas. Judging by the success of how things went with the boys, it should be another interesting and productive session!



## St-Jude's Glee Club Spread Holiday Spirit! by Candice Valentine

On December 19<sup>th</sup> the St. Jude Glee Club spread a little holiday cheer within their community. The students sang a selection of holiday songs to the Foyer Grove Residence after school hours. With the help of Mr. Jean Simon on guitar the students were able to get the residents involved, singing and clapping to the music. The residence enjoyed the show and the students can not wait to participate in another community event. Congratulations St. Jude Glee Club!



## William Latter Performs For a Good Cause!

December 22<sup>nd</sup>, William Latter had their annual Christmas musical concert, and this year we performed 'How the Grinch stole Christmas'. Our entrance fee is always either canned goods or donations, with all proceeds going toward the local food center 'Aux Sources de Bassin de Chambly'. We collected 15 bins full of food, plus **\$605.00**. WOW! what a wonderful gift to be able to give back to our community.



## Big Toy Sale at GPIS by Marie-Josée Goulet

With the help of our Eco-Green Club on December 13th and 14th our school held a big used-toy sale. The goal for hosting this sale? To help La Mosaïque, a community help centre, as well as a local animal shelter. Many families donated lightly used toy items, but many more bought them and were satisfied! Classes came one by one to select and buy at very reasonable prices. Even the smallest purchase helped raise funds for the causes. The two day sale resulted in an impressive \$1,500 which were proudly remitted to La Mosaïque as well as a local animal shelter. Thank you to the Eco-Green Club for this great idea!



## How Our Classes Helped by Mia Abarbanel, grade 6 student at GPIS

This winter, GPIS students from classes 5A and 6A wanted very much to help the community during the Holidays. On December 17 and 18, students went to the Greenfield Park Pharmaprix to bag customer's purchases. We raised a total of \$1,025, which went to our Christmas basket fund. We also collected non-perishable food items.

Also, on December 22, we went to a seniors home in St-Lambert to sing Christmas songs. Unfortunately, some of the residents didn't have family to visit them during the Holidays, but we wanted to make sure they had some company!



## Chambly Academy Goes to the Bees!

The 6th annual Spelling Bee at CA was held on January 12, with 24 brave Secondary 1 and 2 students participating. Top spellers were chosen through a selection of in-class written and verbal bees. One contestant stood out, and that was Alyssa Landry who won this year's Spelling Bee contest by correctly spelling 'galaxy' to claim the prize. She will continue on to the Montreal Gazette Regional Spelling Bee on February 12. Congratulations and good luck!



## Last Call for Boarding the Polar Express! Destination North Pole from St-Jude School!

Kindergarten students at St. Jude School started the last week before the Holiday break with a train ride to the North Pole! The train departed from one of the Kindergarten classes along with some hot chocolate. Smiles and happiness were on board for the ride as well, while teachers read and animated this Christmas classic. Magic was certainly in the air that day and the 54 students had an amazing ride on board the St. Jude's Polar Express!



## Amazing Effort! by Terri Ann Pine

Thank you to everyone who helped out with the Christmas Basket deliveries. I know the boxes were heavy but I know the smiles on the families' faces made your sore muscles feel better. At the end of our Christmas campaign, we collected 124 boxes of food, plus an additional 16 large boxes and 8 small boxes donated by **Justin Hunt** (former student) and his fellow Champlain students. Here is a rundown:

We purchased \$5,250 worth of food vouchers.

We spent \$1,107 on toys and gift certificates for 66 children age 5 months to a 19 year old with special needs.

We gave two full bags of baby products to two mothers of young infants, and we also donated food and toiletries to a South Shore Woman's Shelter.

## Commissioner Profile: Michel L'Heureux by Nathalie Brault



**Q: I have asked this question to the other commissioners I have interviewed, and I will ask it to you as well. School boards have figured quite prominently in the news recently. What is your philosophy and opinion of them?**

As long as they are performing well, they are an essential provider of services and expertise to the schools that are their clients. We must never forget that it is the schools that deliver the front line services to our students. But as a coherent team we are stronger together. The school board provides the direction and services that allow our school principals and teaching personnel to be our pedagogical leaders. That is the strength of our board.

**Q: In your opinion, should any changes be made to the organization of them?**

Again, though I am a firm believer in school boards, that doesn't mean I necessarily believe in the status quo. We should not get too comfortable in our way of doing things, and I believe that we can always do better. It is very important to set measurable goals and be result oriented.

**Q: How do we do that?**

Well, our grad rates tell us a lot. A school board, with limited resources, must choose its primary goals. Though certainly not the only one, ours is to graduate students that are equipped to go to the next level of their education. That includes college, vocational education or at the minimum, a high school diploma when joining the workforce. Also, we invest a lot of our resources into special needs. If we didn't, we would have more drop-outs and would not be successful in our mission. But, let's not forget, as important as we want to make ourselves, let's face it, the implication of parents is the key ingredient. Without an equal partnership, I really don't think we could consistently be number one or in the top three in the province.

**Q: What are your thoughts about the government funding private schools?**

Isn't it wonderful to live in a democracy that offers choices. Only kidding, as we all do realize that English boards are being strangled by regulations, accessibility criteria etc. Do we really believe that a student that is skipping school, has no parental guidance, that's enjoying the effects of drugs will miraculously become a better student if we cut funding to private schools? I don't believe in the argument that if I take from someone else, I'll do better.

**Q: How, when and why did you decide to become a Commissioner?**

I got involved in my kids' school (Courtland Park) as a member of the Governing Board, when the school was at risk of closure. Happily the school was saved, subsequently I became president and soon after, applied for the position of Commissioner when the incumbent resigned. You know, I could be wrong, but in our commissioner group, most have or have had kids at this board. It does make a difference. We believe in public education. Especially a good one.

**Q: What is your most memorable (or significant) contribution as Commissioner?**

No doubt that my involvement as chair of the ad-hoc strategic planning committee when it was in function is number 1. Though, being chosen by fellow commissioners as chair of the executive runs a close second. You know when I talk of a graduation rate you wouldn't believe the work done by our teachers, school directors and board administrators in the preparation of a 5 year strategic plan and the direct impact it has on our student success. On a more emotional note I want to tell you an anecdote that better demonstrates what we as commissioners get to live (sometimes). Over a year ago our H.S. principals came to one of our meetings to ask us for help. They described verbally and visually what drugs were doing in our schools. Though we have a great graduation rate we are well aware of the high percentage of non graduates that have drug related issues. Though we have existing programs they asked us for a drug intervention specialist to support their efforts. Well, within minutes we asked them « how many do you need ». They started with one. Sometimes it is very gratifying being a commissioner.

**Q: Tell us about your day job.**

I have been working as a political consultant for a Quebec Member of the National Assembly for the last 7 years. Having studied Political Science and Economics at the University of Western Ontario I've always had a passion for politics. I worked close to 20 years in various management positions in the private sector prior to having this opportunity. I don't regret it. Something different every day. But no doubt, not everyone's cup of tea. It certainly allows me to see crisis as opportunity and the importance of being open minded. We're going to certainly have to think outside the box with these new announced budget cuts. One million per year for the next three years. Quite a challenge for a board our size but always, with student success in mind.

**Q: What is your message to parents?**

Keep your eyes open! Ask your kids what they are up to, and make sure they know that you expect an answer. Respect their teachers; when a teacher offers information or advice to you about your child, really listen to what they are saying and don't always automatically defend him/her. I think it is a blessing to have a teacher's feedback. There not all perfect, but they certainly try hard.

**Q: Who has been your biggest influence in your life?**

When I was in high school (and not the best of student!), Mr. Rooney, my grade 9 World History teacher really woke me up. I am convinced that without him, I would not have graduated. Grade 9 was a tough year for me, I lacked a lot of discipline. Incidentally, I only started University when I was 25 years old. It is never too late; that's why I believe so strongly in education.

**Q: What might someone be surprised to learn about you?**

As serious as I we need to be right now, I do have a warped sense of humour. Case in point, whenever my kids go "Dad, that's so lame", I tell them that a father's role in life is to embarrass them as much as possible, whenever possible (said with a smile). Kid's need to know that we care.