



ST. ROBERT CHS NEWSLETTER

March 2022



From the Principal's Desk

This past month has been quite busy with the start of a new semester. While settling into new courses, students and families completed course selections for the 2022-2023 school year. Guidance and administration are now busy processing the data in preparation for next year. The YRAA winter sports season has resumed, graduation photo appointments are taking place and we begin preparations for the OSSLT.

Although we are getting some small glimpses of regular school life and some of the provincial COVID-19 restrictions have been eased, please note that schools are required to continue following the health and safety and operational guidelines for schools established by the provincial government. Physical distancing, proper masking and the completion of the daily COVID screen are still required by all staff and students.

Last week was the conclusion of Black Heritage Month and we were fortunate to have Anthony McLean deliver a presentation on becoming Anti-Racist (see more below). Although the month is over, we encourage all staff and students to continue the awareness and work beyond BHM. You will see a page below on how St. Robert CHS also continues the work with the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action through *Reconciliation*.

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Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022 marked the beginning of the Lenten Season. The word "lent" means springtime, when the days "lengthen". We use this time of Lent to prepare for Easter. Preparations include fasting, penance and almsgiving to commemorate the death and resurrection of Christ. We ask all families to continue praying for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Ukraine. We will be holding a special Civvies Day fundraiser on March 10, 2022 to support those impacted by the conflict.

Finally, Friday, March 11, 2022 will be the final day before March break. Classes will resume on March 21, 2022. We wish our community a safe and restful break.

Ms. Dharmai
Principal

The Season of Lent

We mark our foreheads with ashes to remind ourselves that **we are not of this world** and are made for **eternity with God.**

Where do the ashes come from?

The ashes are made from the **blessed palms** used in the Palm Sunday celebration of the previous year.



WHY THE ASHES?

"For You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in You."
-St. Augustine of Hippo

Ashes are a public sign of our intent to **die to our worldly desires** and **live in Christ.**

As our foreheads are marked with ashes, these words are said: **"Remember, that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return."**

Ashes were used as a sign of repentance in the Old Testament:

"Then I turned to the Lord God, to seek an answer by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession" -Daniel 9:3-4

Wednesday, March 2, 2022, Ash Wednesday, marked the beginning of the liturgical season of Lent.

Lent is the 40-day season of preparation for Easter that ends on Holy Thursday, three days before Easter Sunday. During Lent, Catholics recall their baptism and do penance – fasting, prayer, and almsgiving as they commemorate the death and resurrection of Christ.

Many thanks to our chaplaincy team and council for preparing a virtual Lenten service for all staff and students. The service began with prayer and ended with the distribution of ashes.



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What are you doing for Lent?

10 IDEAS FOR A MORE MEANINGFUL LENTEN SEASON

1. Give up sin

Show your love for God by keeping his commandments. Turn away from sins.

2. Fast

An empty stomach can lead to more attentive prayer. Give the money you saved on food to others in alms.



3. Pray

Be in constant prayer. Pray for your family and friends, for those who suffer, and for the Church and the world.

4. Do good works

Help those in need. Pray for them and be ready to serve them in their time of need.



5. Give alms

Help the poor and support the good works of the Church. Give cheerfully to God who has given us everything we have.



6. Abstain

Give up meat or other desirable foods during Lent, especially on Friday, the day of Christ's saving death on the cross.



7. Do meditative reading

Nourish your faith by spending time in quiet reading and reflection. Prayerful reading of God's word each day will open your heart to the Spirit, and let God's thoughts and ways influence yours.

8. Control desire for possessions

Build up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. Cut down on material possessions, eliminate frills, lessen wants, share yourself – your time and your talents – with others.

9. Control desire for entertainment

Too much entertainment and other distractions can lead to less or no time for the works of the Lord.

10. Carry out duties in life

Serve God by living out your vocation in love each day. God is calling each of us to be a living sacrifice. Offer your daily life through Christ!



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School Highlights

ANTHONY MCLEAN - A MESSAGE OF BECOMING ANTI-RACIST

On February 23, 2022 STR students along with four other YCDSB schools were invited to hear Anthony McLean's message on 'becoming anti-racist.' Anthony used his own experiences from growing up in York Region to living in California, to differentiate between cancel culture and passive cultures, to what he called "creating brave spaces." A brave space is where we hold people accountable for their words and actions, but where we also bring people into the conversation.

Anthony also reminded us that our work in anti-racism is rooted in our faith where we are called to love our neighbours. Anthony McLean is most certainly an example of #BlackExcellence, and we were truly blessed to hear his insights and calls to action.



CIVVIES DAY FUNDRAISER IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE

As a Catholic faith community, St. Robert CHS will hold a CIVVIES Day fundraiser on March 10, 2022 to support those impacted by the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine. We encourage students to participate by donating a toonie in exchange for the Civvies Day.

Collected funds will be forwarded to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) and the Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT).

Thank you
For your support!

\$2 Civvies March 10, 2022

Reconciliation

Highlights from the English Department

Ms. J. Kurtz, English Teacher

As one of the Truth and Reconciliation's 94 Calls to Action, in September of 2021, YCDSB mandated that all grade 11 English classes are to be run under the NBE3U1/3C1 curriculum. While we have been optionally running the NBE program for the past five years, this is the first school year when all students across YCDSB will be learning about Indigenous Peoples in Canada through a variety of literary sources.

So, what does that look like for all the students of St. Robert CHS?

Guest Speaker - March 1st, 2022



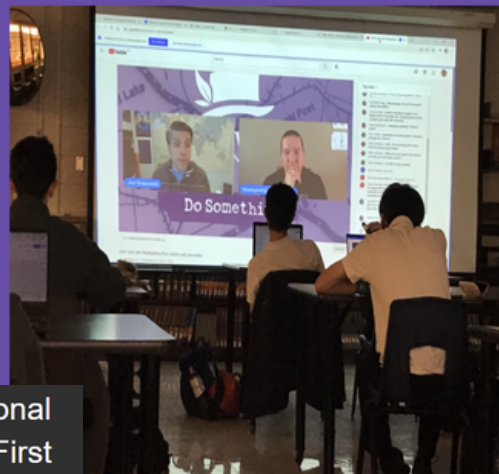
Chad Solomon, of Henvey Inlet First Nation, is an artist, puppeteer, and graphic novelist. His graphic novel series *Rabbit and Bearpaw* focuses of the "Seven Sacred Grandfather Teachings."

While the grade 11 Indigenous Studies English course has been mandated by the school board, the renowned International IB program that runs at St. Robert doesn't have such mandates. As a result, this year IB coordinator, Andrea Steele, along with English department head, Lisa Laviolette have integrated Indigenous content into each grade level of the IB program.

The grade 10 pre-I.B. students and NBE3C1 students are working on separate culminating performance tasks this semester that are graphic novel based. Solomon spent the morning with students discussing the creation of storylines and how to transfer that story in graphic form. Solomon also took questions from teachers and students about his work and the process of creation. He very generously gave the host teacher the thumbs up for a career in graphic novels upon retirement from the teaching field after she shared her creation from the morning's session. As that very host teacher, I can assure you that he spoke more words of kindness than words based in reality. ;)

Chad Solomon

National Event - February 24th, 2022



Grade 9 Pre-IBs join award winning author, Waubgeshig Rice in a nation-wide live stream in preparation for their upcoming novel study of *Moon of the Crusted Snow*. Rice spoke to students across the country about current concerns in First Nations communities as well as the nature of storytelling.

Our St. Robert students were especially excited to have one of their questions selected to be read and answered by Rice during this live session.

Here at St. Robert, we believe it is important to enrich the learning of our students through the inclusion of Indigenous voices as a means to both engage our students and meet the school based requirements of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action. We are forever grateful to our guests and to our admin team who support these learning opportunities.

On *Orange Shirt Day*, a national day of remembrance of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit children who suffered under the abuses of residential school institutions in Canada, grade 11 semester one students of St. Robert hosted informational activities around the school. Their level of sincerity and respect in hosting this event speaks to the values held within the St. Robert community.



Orange Shirt Day
Sept. 30, 2021

OSSLT Updates

The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) is administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), an independent agency of the Government of Ontario. This year, the OSSLT will be a computer based online test offered to in-person Gr. 10, Gr. 11 and non-graduating Gr. 12 students. Remote students will have the option of coming to school to write the test. Please see the email sent on March 4, 2022 for more details.

Successful completion of this literacy test is one of the requirements to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The Ministry of Education has waived the literacy graduation requirement for all Grade 12 students graduating during the 2021–2022 school year.



**Gr. 11 and non-graduating
Gr. 12 OSSLT date:
March 29, 2022**



**Gr. 10 OSSLT date:
April 27, 2022**

Staff began student preparations on Feb. 22, 2022 with a series of activities, practice tests and practice with the online test platform and these preparations will continue throughout the month of March. More information on the OSSLT can be found on the Ministry website.



Worriers to Warriors

Brought to you by the YCDSB Mental Health Team

High school students of the YCDSB:

In this educational group, you'll learn the ins and outs of anxiety: what it is, how it affects people, and skills and strategies for coping with anxiety.

This group meets online Tuesdays starting March 22, 2022 for six, one hour, weekly sessions with registered mental health professionals, and takes place after school from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Interested?

Complete a Google form here: <https://forms.gle/vggDX4L6ugeNY5BdA>

This form can only be completed from a YCDSB K12 email account, and students or parents can complete this form. Once complete, a member of our Mental Health Team will be in touch with you to review the screening process.

Please complete the form by March 4, 2022

If you have any questions or issues filling out this form, please email mentalhealth@ycdsb.ca



March 14-18, 2022

We wish the St. Robert CHS
community a safe and restful break!

