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<http://www.dsb.org/Schools/GeneralVanier>

**“Achieving Success Together”**

**General Vanier School**

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### Principal’s Perspective

Now that spring has officially sprung, the weather and our school calendar will both start quickly warming up. As you can see this month we have a host of programs and events happening in the school, even beyond the typical things that happen each April for Earth Month. Our grade 3 and 6 students wrote a mid-year EQAO practice test to set them up well for the real event that will happen in early June. Our staff are working on effective feedback and have each planned a unit where that will be their focus. All units will be up and under way by Education Week, which this year is from April 11 to 15<sup>th</sup>. Our week will be capped off by Vanier Idol VI on that Friday afternoon.



Elsewhere we had a number of our students apply to the new DSBN Academy and French Immersion, and they will be hearing soon about their placements for September. We wish them well. Continuing this month we have the pleasure of student teacher Mrs. Amanda Riel in our grade 4/5 and Niagara College student Brittany Cooper in with Mrs. McAlpine. We were also fortunate to have Educational Assistant Mr. Brandon Cross assigned to us to support some of our newly arrived students.

We hope this month is one of flowers, sunshine and great weather – even if there are a few showers in between. We also wish you all an enjoyable Easter Weekend with friends and family.

### Working Together for Student Success

During the week of March 21<sup>st</sup> our grade three and six students wrote a mid-year EQAO practice test in preparation for the actual testing, which will happen over two weeks starting on May 30<sup>th</sup> [May 30 to June 3, June 6 to 9]. These tests are designed to assess student skills in language and mathematics, and are written by all children in Ontario in the spring. Beginning last year our Board has implemented a mid-year min-test of the same skills in order for us to better plan for the main event in the spring. Our teachers will be looking at the individual and class results with an eye to addressing any skills that need additional attention between now and then.

In the meantime our school continues with its Pathway focus on giving timely and effective feedback to students in order to improve their work. Each of our teachers has planned a unit where they will focus on ways to give

effective feedback and record its impact on improved student performance. This focus mirrors the focus of our Network of Schools, where a select group of seven area schools are working together to improve teaching and learning. Additionally several of our staff are also working with the Critical thinking Consortium project focusing on improving the thinking skills of our primary students.

### Vanier Idol

Mark your calendars and set aside the afternoon of Friday April 15<sup>th</sup> as our annual talent show, Vanier Idol, will return once again. In its 6<sup>th</sup> season, this year’s version is entitled “Vanier Idol VI – This is It!” and is already causing a stir. We have had several press reports about Vanier’s own famous rock group, J.D. Pielt and the Morons, who intend to include a performance on the 15<sup>th</sup> as a part of their current world tour. Additionally, this is a chance for the many talented students at the school to step up and show us their stuff. Auditions are underway and performers are burning the midnight oil practicing in their basements and garages in anticipation of the big day. Parents and siblings are welcome. We hope to see you in the crowd



### Two Important Folks

Coming up on the 27<sup>th</sup> of this month is “Administrative Assistants’ Day” or what most call ‘Secretary’s Day’. Rest assured we will be recognizing Mrs. Walpole for all the many things she does for the students, parents and staff of our school, but we also invite you to let her know too how much you appreciate her too. Next month on May 18, it will be Mr. Olsen’s turn, when we honour Caretakers’ Day.

### DSBN Academy Update

When all the paperwork was in, the Board received nearly 120 applications from students across Niagara who wished to be considered for the DSBN Academy scheduled to open next September. After the Open House we hosted here on Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, a good number of applications were submitted by Fort Erie and area schools, including several from Vanier. At last report, the number of boys & girls who applied was fairly even, as was the number of students who will be in the grade six and seven classes. The Board is currently in the process of selecting both the principal and the teaching staff for the school, and will soon be notifying the applicants as to whether they have been accepted. Their plan is to do some preliminary work with staff before

inviting their students to an introductory session later in the spring. We wish the best to all those who have applied and await what we know will be good news!

### **French Immersion**

On the same day as the Academy presentation, our grade fours heard about the French Immersion program at McKay School in Port Colborne. Several applications went in from our school and they too should be hearing very soon about their placement for next September as well. Bonne chance!



### **Federal Election**

Well, looks like voters will be going to the polls on Monday May 2<sup>nd</sup>. We'll likely see plenty of signs and hear plenty of speeches leading up to voting day, but Vanier is not likely to be a polling location for the federal election. As for the October Provincial election, that may be another matter, but we'll know in the fall.



### **Easter Weekend**

Weren't we just off for March Break? Easter is one of those holidays that is always shifting around and for good reason. Easter Sunday is always on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, i.e. the first day of spring. That might explain why it is much later this year than last. Nonetheless, we hope your family enjoys the long weekend of Good Friday April 22 through to Easter Monday April 25<sup>th</sup>



### **Graduation Picture Day**

Edge Imaging, our school photographers, will be here on the morning of April 13<sup>th</sup> to photograph our grade eight class of graduating students, and those who are 'graduating' from Kindergarten as well. Looking ahead, our grade eight graduation evening has been set for Mon. June 27<sup>th</sup> while our Kindergarten event will likely be the week before.



### **Fundraisers – Little Caesar's Pizza**

As you may recall, we are trying a different spring fundraiser this time around, as our former chicken supplier, Maple Lodge farms, is no longer in the fundraising business. Our choice this time around was Little Caesar's Pizza, where families can purchase do-it-yourself pizza kits with all the familiar taste of Little Caesar's but made from the comfort of your own home. As we do with each fundraiser, we are giving away daily prizes for those who've brought in orders and will also award a prize to the winning family as well as the top selling student. Our campaign runs until Mon. April 11<sup>th</sup>.



### **Pizza Days**

Speaking of pizza, our school pizza days will continue this month, running on Friday April 8<sup>th</sup> and Friday April 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **School Council Corner General**

School Council met last on the evening of March 29<sup>th</sup> in the school library. They discussed the recent Family Picture night, which in spite of the late spring snow that fell that evening had a number of families from Vanier and neighbouring schools take part. Mr. King shared with them the preliminary results of the School Climate Survey that students completed last fall on the Ministry website. They also reviewed progress on their spring fundraiser, Little Caesars pizza kits, and the allocation of Bingo monies for drama productions and year-end class trips. The School Travel Plan committee updated them on their plans for a Walk to School Day on April 8<sup>th</sup> and some preliminary plans for a Bike Rodeo at the school on Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup>. With the graduation of the children of several long-serving Council members coming in the spring, they also spoke about the need to recruit new folks for next year's Council – especially for the role of chair and treasurer. They will meet next on Tuesday April 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in the school library.



### **Walk to School Day – April 8<sup>th</sup>**

As a continuing part of our year-long School Travel Plan program, we will be having another Walk to School Day on Fri. April 8<sup>th</sup>. Similar to the event we held last October, we are challenging all our students to take a pass on a ride and instead walk to school that day. In addition to taking in the great weather and getting some exercise, our real purpose is to reduce both auto traffic and the amount of pollutants we put into the air around our school. Last fall despite cool weather nearly one third of our school population registered and walked to the school that day. By totaling all the kilometers walked we calculated we avoided putting about 80 kgs. worth of exhaust into our atmosphere – the same air we breathe in each day. Students are asked to complete and return a registration form so that we can total the number of kilometers walked. Those that return the form by Thursday will earn double the kilometers towards their class total, though we will accept forms as late as the following Monday. We will be offering a prize to the class who records the most km saved. We are also awarding prizes to the best poster and to these students who come as a walking school bus – i.e. walkers who come to school as a group lead by a parent or older student. With the prospect of cool, but sunny weather this spring, it should be a great day to Walk to School.



### **Kids Quest Program**

When we returned from March Break we welcomed three new coordinators to our after-school program, Kids Quest: Greg Sentance, Kamelia Sadeghi and Tracy Lapointe. Running each Tues. and Wed. from 3:15 to 5:00 it offers assistance to students with their reading and homework, along with some gym time, crafts, computers and a snack. The program currently helps out about ten students, but has room for several more. If you are interested, speak to Mr. King. Kids Quest will continue to run until just after the long weekend in May.



### **Bowl for Big Brother / Big Sisters**

This organization plays a significant role in the lives of many of our students. From the grade 6 & 7 "Go Girls" social skills program run at nutrition breaks, to the Stepping Stones program designed to assist youth with anger management, through to the many mentoring opportunities we have in place at Vanier, Big Brother / Big Sisters are helping hands indeed. So, when our grade 5/6 class took up their Bowling Challenge, they went at it with real gusto and together they collected \$436 in donations. They represented us with pride and model behaviour on the afternoon of Friday March 4<sup>th</sup>. Our congratulations go out to Mr. Campbell and all the grade 5/6 students.



### **G.R.E.A.T. Program**

Constable Abbott of the Niagara Regional Police continues her good work with our grade four and grade seven classes through April. This program is designed to instruct children how to effectively deal with peer and social pressure and instead make choices that will benefit them now and in the future. The grade four program wraps up early in the month while our sevens will continue into May.



### **Family Math**

In our last school newsletter we spoke of an after-school program called Family Math. This program is designed for students in grades 2 to 5 and a parent, or other significant adult. They will spend about two hours together at six sessions during the month of April and early May. Each session always begins with a cooking lesson where they assist in the preparation of a simple meal, and is then followed by evening of teaching how parents & students can positively interact around school work, in this case learning math together. The instructors have run this program many times and will provide plenty of in-class activities, take home exercises and all sorts of supports. The program will begin Thurs. April 7<sup>th</sup> in our Breakfast Club room.



### **"Parenting Without Panicking"**

Are you already a parent a teen-aged daughter or son, or soon will be? Then this Niagara Region Public Health presentation on Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM will be of interest to you. Our health nurse, Laurie McDowell, will be here to talk to parents about the two issues that matter most in the formative years: helping your child avoid the temptations of substance abuse while keeping the lines of communication open. Laurie will share information on common types of drugs, local and provincial statistics on teen drug misuse, and offer some tips on communication with children in the transition years. We will also let you in on what teens think about alcohol and drug use. You will learn about signs of teen drug use and how to get help if you suspect drug use.



### **"P" is for Puberty!"**

Come to an information night given by School Nurse, Laurie McDowell, to talk about the emotional and physical changes of puberty. This event is for students in grades 5 and 6 and their parent or accompanying adult. Talking to your children about sexuality and puberty helps them to grow into healthy adults. It is good for children to have the right information about changes that happen during puberty. Sometimes the information they get from the media or their friends may not be correct or understood. This is a great chance for parents and children to get the facts and to have a discussion about the changes of puberty! Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011 - 7:00 pm in the school library.



### **Grade 3 Swim to Survive Program**

Over the course of last year over 1000 grade 3 students from 40 schools benefited from this program and an additional 40 more schools will participate in the next few months – including General Vanier. Typically costing about \$20 per student, thanks to the Lifesaving Society, YMCA of Niagara and the Education Foundation of Niagara it will be provided to our students at no charge. The Lifesaving Society wants to ensure every child has the basic skills to survive in water, and having a basic swimming ability is fundamental to avoid drowning. The YMCA provides instructors at a 1:8 ratio in three (3) one (1) hour in water sessions at your local YMCA, plus three 15-minute in class sessions as debrief exercises. They will also provide the cost of the bus to send our students. Our local YMCA will be contacting us directly to book our school for sometime in May.



### **Think Before You Ink**

The popularity of tattoos with teenagers and young adults seems to be growing, but what are the long-term consequences? On Friday April 29<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM, our grade 7&8 class can find out what you need to know before you commit to a decoration that could very well be part of you for a lifetime.



### **Primary Dental Health Presentation**

On Friday April 8<sup>th</sup> students in our Kindergarten and grade one class are to receive a special dental health presentation. Sponsored by Dr. William Schneider, who has run a dental practice Ridgeway for over 30 years, this hour long drama-based event will use student actors chosen from the class to emphasize its message about the habits of good dental health. The program has been shown to only a handful of schools so far and promises to be a very entertaining hour. Parents and younger siblings are also welcome to attend.



### **Spring Hair Cuts**

With the warmer weather promising to return soon, Mrs. Cassidy has arranged once again for Elite Hair Fashions in Ridgeway, to be here at the school on Mon. April 4<sup>th</sup> to provide a trim or a cut for students. At \$5.00 a head, it is

certainly a reasonable price for that important spring or pre-Easter look.

### **Aboriginal Presentation**

On the afternoon of March 25<sup>th</sup> our school had the Ohnia:kara native Drum & Dance Group here to present to the junior and intermediate students. The group impressed everyone with traditional drumming, song and dance that highlighted important aspects of aboriginal culture. Similar in many ways to the performances many of our older students see at the Aboriginal Festival day held at F.E.S.S each spring, it was nonetheless even more impressive having them here at our own school. The presentation was made possible through the support of the DSBN and a Ministry of Education initiative.



### **Carousel Players - Peg and the Yeti**

On the afternoon of Friday April 1<sup>st</sup> our primary students were treated to a performance by Carousel Players of St. Catharines, entitled "Peg and the Yeti" This was an imaginary journey by a young girl to climb the tallest mountain in the world, Mount Everest, and how she needed the help and support of her parents, disguised as the Yeti or Abominable Snowman, to do so. This was the last of three drama presentations sponsored by School Council Bingo money.

### **Class Trips**

With spring upon us many of our classes are off on class trips to some of the outdoor education programs run by our Board. On April 5<sup>th</sup> our grade 2 and 3&4 classes are off to Woodend on the Niagara Escarpment, followed by our grade 4&5 and 5&6 classes the next day. On April 12<sup>th</sup> our Kindergarten class will be going to the St. John's Centre for their Spring Lambs program. In early May we have requested a visit to Heartland Forest in Niagara Falls to attend this year's "Frogfest". In June our 5&6 are on the road again on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, this time to the St. John's Outdoor Education Centre, followed by our 2 and 3&4 class to the same location on June 20<sup>th</sup>.



### **Green Scene at Vanier**

You may have seen our natural area planting around the back of our school by the Primary play area. The plant material was donated to us by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and with the help of student volunteers we did a planting last spring. For our efforts we received a plaque at the March 22<sup>nd</sup> DSBN Board meeting.



In preparation for Earth Hour on March 26<sup>th</sup>, our school turned down our lights and watched the film "Life After People" – a fictional look at what our planet would like if there were no longer any people living here. For home on Earth Hour we challenged families to creatively come up with activities to 'do in the dark' and we awarded several prizes. From the many entries we chose three winners and they were: the Sarmiento, S. & M. Thomas and A., E. & T. Thomas families.

Our School Travel Plan folks have another Walk to School Day planned for Friday April 8<sup>th</sup> and are working on a Bike Rodeo for Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup>. Our recycling contest is heating up as everyone is trying to maximize their point by having the 'right stuff' in and sorted in their boxes grey boxes. Miss Sims' has a narrow lead as we run into the last few weeks, but at least two other rooms are close behind her. Part of our recycling efforts will include a trip to the Niagara recycling plant in Niagara Falls on Monday May 9<sup>th</sup>.



And with Earth Day happening on Good Friday, we have shifted our activities to the day before, April 21<sup>st</sup>. We will of course be cleaning up our school yard and neighbouring Douglas Park, and heading over to the Fort Erie Racetrack to help out our neighbours as part of Pitch-In week. We have also been invited to help clean part of the Friendship Trail and to participate in the Friends of Fort Erie Creeks Earth Day events at Waverly Beach on Saturday April 23<sup>rd</sup>. And with any luck we can begin our annual nature walks sometime late in April. These will run into may as we get out and welcome all the plants and animals that signal a return to the warm weather of spring and summer.



### **Student Council**

In response to the tragedy of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, our Students' Council held a "Hats for Japan Day" on Friday March 25<sup>th</sup>. On that day students able to contribute a loonie or toonie to the Red Cross Relief Fund were permitted to wear at hat at school for the day. Our collection raised just over \$60, but by combining that with some other Students' Council money, we were able to send of \$100 to the Red Cross.



### **Hats for Japan**

We received a total of \$65.12 from students who participated in the Hats for Japan Day. The school added more money to the funds for a total of \$100.00. The money was sent to the Canadian Red Cross Society to help with the Japan Earthquake Relief projects. Thanks to all our students that helped!



### **Jump Rope & Hoops for Heart**

We will again be fundraising for the Heart & Stroke Foundation later this spring as we participate again in the Jump Rope for Heart & Hoops for Heart program. Over the past 12 years our small school has raised over \$20,000 all on its own! A Kickoff assembly will be on Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 2pm with our pledge envelopes going home that same day. The jumping and hooping will happen on Friday, May 20 starting at 1:35 pm. Thanks to Miss Sims for putting this altogether again this year. Let's keep our strong tradition going and do our bit again this year for Heart & Stroke.



## Vanier Chess Club

Several times a week since January about two dozen students have been hard at work sharpening their chess skills in preparation for the year-end tournaments. The first 'test' was March 30<sup>th</sup> when seven of our own earned a spot at the Area One Chess Tournament, held at Fort Erie Public School. Representing our school were Carmen B., Cam D., Kyler J., Cody T., Devon T., Esteban S., Alex P., Brody A., Matt L., and Nicole M. As usual there was plenty of keen competition and some very close games. All members played their best and represented General Vanier well. At the close of the day, our own Kyler J. won his pool and therefore has been invited to play at the DSBN Tournament. That tournament will be on Monday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at the C.A.W. Hall on Bunting Road in St. Catharines – where Kyler will match his skills with the best in the Board. Good luck! Our club will wrap up its season later this month.



## Inoculations

On April 6<sup>th</sup> both our grade sevens Grade 7 [second round of Hepatitis] and our grade eight girls [third round of HPV] will be inoculated by nurses from Niagara Regional Health.



## Sports & Intramurals

Our grade 7s & 8s are busy practicing their badminton skills in the hopes of making our school team. On the horizon are three tournaments: one at NCC April 7<sup>th</sup>, the DSBN tournament on April 29<sup>th</sup> and finally the Brock tournament on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. We are counting on parents to help shuttle the team to and from each event. Our thanks go out to Mr. Badger and his coop assistants, Brian & Patrick, for all their help with the team.



For those looking ahead to Track & field, the Area One Regional meet is scheduled for Pride Field in Ridgeway on Tues. May 24<sup>th</sup>, while the All-DSBN Track & Field event will be at the Niagara Olympic Club in St. Catharines on Mon. June 13<sup>th</sup> [rain date next day]



## BYOBFF is back at the library!

Bring your own Best Friend Forever and get ready to make a different craft every week at this popular program for girls ages 8-12. It will run on Thursdays at 7 pm starting April 7 at the Centennial branch of the Fort Erie Public library. pre-registration required by calling 905-871-2546.



## April is Oral Health Month

April is Oral Health Month. The Niagara Region Public Health Dental Program would like to remind you that

cavities can be prevented. Brushing twice daily with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste, flossing daily, eating a balanced diet, and having regular dental check-ups are the keys to a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums.



Although preventable, cavities are the most common chronic disease of children aged 6 to 19 years. Cavities lead to difficulties sleeping, decreased school attendance, pain, discomfort, and infection. Fluoride is not added into our water supply. Therefore, it is recommended that all residents brush their teeth twice daily with fluoridated toothpaste to prevent cavities.

- Children three to six years of age should be assisted with brushing their teeth by an adult using a pea-sized portion of fluoridated toothpaste until they can tie their own shoe laces.
- Regular flossing is the single most important thing you can do to prevent gum disease. Most children will require help flossing until they are about 8 to 10 years old.

Niagara Region Public Health has two programs to assist children and youth with no insurance in getting the dental health care they need. For more information please call the Public Health Dental Program at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7399.

**Niagara Region**  
PUBLIC HEALTH

# Join the fun IN THE 2011 DSBN Road Race!



**DSBN  
ROAD RACE  
Learners in Action!**

**Sunday, April 17th, 2011**

DSBN Education Centre, 191 Carlton Street, St. Catharines

Proceeds to benefit Education Foundation of Niagara and Niagara Nutrition Partners

1km (10 am) Fun Run and 5km (10:30 am) Road Race for all ages

Barbecue & family fun fair for participants\*

Prizes for top finishers in each age category of the road race

T-shirts and participation ribbons for all who pre-register

School participation prize

Chip Time Results for 5km race

For registration information, please refer to the entry form  
Race entry forms and volunteer forms are available at DSBN schools  
or online at [www.efnline.ca](http://www.efnline.ca)



\* Minimal BBO fee for non-participants with all funds raised going towards EFN & NNP



**Achieving Success Together!**



*celebrating*  
**COMMUNITY**  
 PARTNERSHIPS  
 DSBN EDUCATION WEEK APRIL 11-15TH



The 2011 DSBN Education Week Theme is "Celebrating Community Partnerships". From parent volunteers who assist in classrooms to agencies who coordinate a variety of programs including breakfast programs and after school activities to corporate partners who sponsor scholarships and so much more, our community partners complement the work of our schools to support student success.

**We want to take this time to thank you, our community partners, for everything you do to help support our students and our school.**

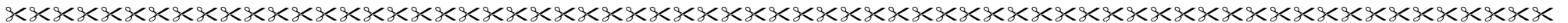
Working together, we make a difference. And that is truly Achieving Success Together!



**Recycle for Education**

Our 7/8 class will, once again this year, be continuing our printer cartridge recycling program as a class fundraising project. If interested, you are asked to please drop off any empty printer or toner cartridges to the Staples store on Garrison Road. We will receive credit for cartridges at the end of the school year.

**Thank you once again, for your support !**



**April Newsletter Draw**

My child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_ brought home this newsletter and I have read it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Parent/Guardian*



**Come celebrate our busy,  
bustling town at the  
Eighth Annual  
Family Literacy Event  
Saturday, May 7, 2011  
10 am to 2 pm  
at the  
Leisureplex - YMCA complex**



**Make crafts Munch on snacks Climb on fire trucks  
Dance to the Smudge Fundaes**

**All this and more ... and it's FREE for families with at least one  
child between birth and grade 3.**

**Special thanks to our major sponsors:  
Each family receives a gift bag that  
includes a book.  
Call 905 991-8378  
for more information**



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>April 2011</h1>						
					1 Carousel Players – 2:00 pm	2
3	4 Haircut Day  Puberty presentation – 5/6 class	5  Gr. 2 & 3/ 4 classes to Woodend  Pizza money due today	6 Gr. 7 – Hep B Gr. 8 Girls – HPV  4/5 & 5/6 to Woodend	7 Substance Abuse Prevention – 7/8's  Puberty Pres.– 7:00 pm for 5/6 parents	8  Pizza Day  Walk to School Day	9
10	11 Education Week begins  Little Caesar's pizza kit orders due today  DSBN Chess Tourney	12 Parenting Without Panicking – 7:00 pm  JK/SK – Spring Lambs trip – AM	13  <b>GRAD PHOTOS –</b> SK and Gr. 8 students	14	15 <b>Vanier Idol –</b> <b>“This Is It”</b>  Pizza Day	16
17  DSBN Road Race	18  Pizza fundraiser delivery – 1:00 pm	19  JK Orientation visits – 9:00 – 11:00 am	20	21  Earth Day at General Vanier	22  <b>Earth Day</b>  <b>Good Friday</b>	23
24	25  <b>Easter Monday</b>	26	27	28  Tobacco Feud presentation – Gr. 7's	29  Think Before you Ink pres.- 7/8 class	30