

Taking the



Pulse

of Palliser Regional Schools

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



As the school year at Palliser comes to an end, it does anything but wind down. With graduation ceremonies in full swing, teachers preparing students for their provincial exams and year-end testing, and the reporting that takes place in all of our classrooms, Palliser schools have never been more active. In addition schools are involved in year-end field trips and sports days, and planning awards ceremonies to celebrate student achievements.

Palliser Regional Schools has a lot to celebrate with the completion of the 2008-09 year. Congratulations are extended to this year's graduating class, who carry forward the skills, hope and promise that comes with the successful completion of Grade 12. Success will follow if you continue to DREAM and

BELIEVE, LEARN and ACHIEVE.

Best wishes to all our communities and schools as they wind up the school year and plan for 2009-10. Have a safe and relaxing summer break!

Kevin Gietz, Superintendent of Schools

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CSA INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION DOWNLINK UPDATE

- The downlink between County Central High School site and the ISS is expected in late September 2009.
- Names of 16 Palliser students selected to ask questions of Dr. Bob Thirsk, Canadian Astronaut, are expected to be released by June 15.
- SHAW has visited the site to tape footage and interview students; three students will be working closely with SHAW to capture the event. A legacy video of the event will also be created.
- Visit the [CSA website](#) to view a videoclip of the Soyuz rocket launch from Baikonur, Kazakhstan, on May 27, 2009, along with other information regarding the mission.
- Palliser continues to work with the Alberta Education to showcase this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Palliser students.



The Creative Team:

Co-Editors: Dan Ryder and Mary Ann Sorge

E-mail: pulse@pallisersd.ab.ca

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For a paper copy, contact Mary Ann at (403) 328-4111 or 1-877-667-1234

"FIRE AND ICE" IN DOWNTOWN CALGARY

Over the past few months, Grade 5 students at Menno Simons Christian School have been involved in the "Fire and Ice" program, an award-winning non-profit initiative founded in July 2006 that develops the "leaders of tomorrow" – our children and students—by connecting schools in North America and Europe with schools in developing nations and engaging them in live, online collaborative projects that address critical social challenges such as climate change and poverty reduction.

"We have made a connection with schools in Colombia and Atlanta and have had the opportunity to find out so many things about them, their culture and their schools," noted Willi Penner, Grade 5 teacher. "We have heard about their goals and listened to their ideas on how to change things they feel are wrong in their neighbourhoods or cities. They in turn have heard about our goals and have been learning about our beautiful city and the wonderful things Calgary has to offer through an online presentation."

The Grade 5 students at Menno Simons Christian School were affected by the story of the 60 trees cut down in the East Village this year. As 10-year-old students, they have noticed that concrete is overtaking trees and flowers in Calgary and brick is shoving green space aside. The student set a goal to replant those 60 trees themselves somewhere in the downtown area. They fundraised to gather the money necessary to take part in this program and to help those schools that could not afford to participate. As a result, on Wednesday, May 13, students marched the streets of downtown Calgary dressed as trees. Beginning at the Calgary Tower, they made their way to City Hall, posing for pictures along the way where concrete is more evident. Upon arriving at City Hall, they presented the Deputy Mayor Brian Pincott with 20 saplings to be planted—one sapling to represent each student in the class. "Our goal is to show awareness of the depleting green space, not only in the downtown area, but throughout the city" stated Penner.



Menno Simons Christian School Grade 5 students pose with teacher Willi Penner in downtown Calgary.

CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS TEACH THROUGH MISSIONS

HERITAGE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HEADS TO COSTA RICA

Mid-March 2009, a team of 24 students, parents and staff from Heritage Christian Academy and two Venture Teams International (VTI) leaders flew from Calgary to San Jose, Costa Rica where they embarked on an experience of a lifetime and make unforgettable relationships with each other, the people of Costa Rica and God.

Over a 10-day period, the team performed gospel presentations, including drama, music and art; and ministered and worked in orphanages, children's homes, rehab centres, local churches and a refugee camp area. They partnered with VTI, as well as Latin America Missions and Christ for the City in Costa Rica. After each gospel presentation there was an invitation for people who wanted to accept Jesus as their Saviour; about 70 decisions made during the trip. A Grade 11 student shared, "It was cool to see that most people who made decisions were put in discipleship classes or Bible studies or had other ways to follow up on their decision. It was encouraging to know that God planted a seed in their hearts and, even after we left, it would continue to grow." Many members of this year's team were attending for the second time. One Grade 11 student who was a returning team member noted, "It was great to see the same people from last year in Costa Rica. We got to see how the places, like the church and the orphanage, grew in the past year, and be a part of that again this year."

VTI has been sending teams from HCA to Costa Rica for the past 10 years, and each year the team stays at "Campamento Roblealto," a local Christian camp that ministers to hundreds of kids each year in Costa Rica. The team is always privileged to be able to serve and give back to the hosting camp by doing maintenance work such as painting cabins, offices and garbage cans. The team not only grew closer to God but also experienced authentic Costa Rican culture. "One of the highlights," said a Grade 12 team member, "was celebrating St. Joseph's day. We joined the Ticos (Costa Rican people) in dancing to fast Latin music in the middle of the streets. There were also people dressed up in crazy costumes, walking on stilts and wearing giant plastic face masks. We didn't exactly blend in but it was so much fun." Everywhere the team went, the Ticos were so welcoming and open to them. Costa Ricans are also very comfortable with each other and have a very little 'personal bubble,' which was a challenge for some members on the team. On the trip, Derek Henson, a teacher at HCA, worked very hard on connecting the team with their community back home. He provided friends and families with daily video blogs and pictures, which can be found on the HCA website (www.hcocalgary.com), along with a link to our official team video. The team also appreciated daily encouragement cards written by staff and classes from HCA. "It was encouraging to know that everyone back home supported us and were praying for us," said a Grade 9 team member.

Before beginning their mission, the team expected to serve God and give all they had spiritually. But as the trip continued, many realized they were receiving more of God's love from the people. Through fellowship, service, and ministry, the team grew closer to God and learned more about themselves and Him. A Grade 11 student said, "It was a privilege to be part of this team. God has used me and this team in amazing ways and I will continue to pray for Costa Rica. I can't wait to go next year!"

INSTALLING PLAYGROUNDS A MISSION AT MASTER'S

Tropical climates, sandy beaches and warm pools were not the reasons for students from Master's College to travel to sunny Dominica, an island country in the Caribbean. That was not the focus of the students and teacher volunteers who invested their spring break to build a playground for children who live in one of the poorest countries in the region.

"I always wanted to build a playground in a third world," said Bev Ness, the high school physical education teacher and Global Impact Coordinator for Master's College. Seeing the need for playgrounds in these countries, Ness quickly found a partner in Gary Debney of CDC Recreation, who each year supplies used playgrounds and the equipment necessary for installation. Ness assembled a team of globally focused Master's students whose mission was to travel to the destination and work tirelessly to install a playground in 7 days. "Students from Master's pay their own way to go on the team," said Ness, who, along with his wife Gloria, and Susan Malkinson-McAllister, the Academic Dean at Master's, have led teams that have so far set up eleven playgrounds in Caribbean and Central American countries. As part of the Master's Global Impact Team, students also raise money to pay for the shipping of the playground.

"Dominican officials said that it would take local workers 6 months to install the playground." The hard work is a testimony of the focus and dedication of students who awoke at 5:30 each morning and worked until 4:00 p.m. digging holes, placing equipment, and putting it together. "I loved seeing the delight on our students' faces when they saw children using the playground for the first time," Ness reflected.

Master's Academy and College celebrates the strong sense of community that Global Impact projects bring students of their school and the children and community within Dominica and the other countries visited.



PALLISER LEADS WITH WESTERN CANADA CHARACTER EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2009

Palliser Regional Schools will host the first annual **Western Canada Character Education Conference (W/CCEC)**, "Teaching Through the Heart," at Kananaskis Lodge November 5-6, 2009. This year's theme is "Bringing Home Character Education." Patterned after the National Character Education Conference held each year in Huntsville, Ontario, W/CCEC 2009 promises to be a landmark event in the promotion of teaching core ethical values in schools.

The program includes a strong lineup of keynote speakers who are leaders in the field, including Eva Olsson (www.evaolsson.ca), Hal Urban (www.halurban.com), Avis Glaze (www.avisglaze.ca) and Parry Aftab (www.aftab.com). In addition, many professionals from school jurisdictions across Alberta have indicated interest in presenting at the conference. It is hoped that W/CCEC 2009 will attract educators and interested parties from Winnipeg to Vancouver. W/CCEC will be a unique experience that will touch the heart, create new ideas, affirm current efforts, and inspire and motivate attendees to do even more in the sphere of character education. Palliser has reserved a number of registrations at the conference to allow a delegation of Palliser teachers to attend. As registrations are expected to fill up quickly, staff are encouraged to discuss with their principal how they can be selected to represent their school at W/CCEC 2009!



Teaching Through the Heart
2009 Western Canada Character Education Conference:
Bringing Home Character Education
11/05/09 Kananaskis, AB

For further information,
visit the conference
website at
www.verney.ca