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# Special Christmas Edition

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The BENN newsletter is a publication of St. Benedict CSS. It is distributed every second Wednesday during the school year using the WCDSB Newswire service. Any questions or comments pertaining to this publication can be sent to the editor [Anton Milardovic](#) or the school's principal [Dan Witt](#).

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## NEXT ISSUE

January 9, 2013

## A Christmas Message

*Christmas is a time for giving. The past few weeks have been a time of tremendous outreach by our staff and students.*

Through our fundraising we have sent baskets to the Fire Department for their annual Christmas Support Program, school supplies for Christmas to our missions overseas and have supported the students and their families in our community. Coats, gloves, toys, running shoes, gift certificates, even Christmas trees have been gathered and delivered to homes in Cambridge!

In this time when we are preparing for, and celebrating the birth of Jesus, the horrific events at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut are the starkest of reminders that we must continue to build God's kingdom of Peace, Joy and Love for our neighbour. Our acts of charity and caring for our neighbours, as well as our daily actions, are how we help each other see the Face of God. In turn, we bring a message of Peace, Hope and Love to our community. Let us continue to pray for God's grace and God's blessings on the St. Benedict community and most certainly let us continue to pray for healing in the community of Newtown, Connecticut as they mourn the loss of their loved ones.

As Christmas approaches let us give thanks for the Blessings of family and friends. Let us find time to share the fellowship of friends and family as we celebrate the birth of Saviour.

Peace and God Bless, The Admin Team

## CHAPLAIN'S REPORT

BY MR. B. REMPEL

The seasons of Advent and Christmas remind us that as God became human in Christ, Christ becomes human through our actions of care and compassion.

We celebrated grade level masses at the end of November as we prepared for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. Mass is a



wonderful way of reminding ourselves that Christ meets us where we are. In the middle of December students were able to receive the sacrament of reconciliation and to know that Christ will empower them to make a difference in the world.

We continue to bring Jesus to the world. This is the 23rd year we have partnered with the Cambridge Fire-Fighters to provide Christmas baskets to families in Cambridge who struggle financially. We filled 40 baskets. As well we filled 35 Christmas stockings with school supplies which will be sent by Canadian Food for Children to students in parts of Africa. Because they will have school supplies, money will be freed up to feed them lunch.

Grades were in competition to see who could donate the most Canadian Tire money, as well as real money. The grade 10s won a civics day. Over \$1200 was raised which will be given to families as gift cards. For \$2, students could wear civics for a day, with the money going to help individuals and families in our local community. On Friday, December 14, we gather together for our annual Advent/Christmas basket faith assembly. We celebrated our generosity and that we had answered many a prayer and had made Christ's presence noticeable in the world.

May your Christmas celebrations be joyful and hope filled. May we be open to the presence of Christ in our hearts, in our actions and in the world.

## IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER...

For up-to-date information on school bus delays, cancellations and school closures, please visit the Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region website ([www.stswr.ca](http://www.stswr.ca)).

Information about student transportation cancellations or school closings due to severe weather is also available through the following media outlets: KFUN FM 99.5, KOOL FM 105.3, CKGL AM 570, CHYM FM 96.7, DAVE FM 107.5, CJOY "Magic" FM 106.1, CKWR FM 98.5, KICX FM 106.7, CKBT "The Beat" FM 91.5, FAITH FM 94.3, and CTV - Southwestern Ontario

**NOTE:** Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Trips will be cancelled when ALL YELLOW SCHOOL BUSES are not running for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board.

# DOMINICAN ENCOUNTER WITH FAITH AND HOSPITALITY

By Miss. C. SMUKAVICH

On Friday, November 23, twenty five students representing each of the WCDSB secondary schools, along with 4 Board Staff, embarked on a week-long adventure of cultural challenge and social justice learning in the Dominican Republic. St. Benedict Catholic Secondary School student representatives were Drew Gheroge, Sara Warner, Lauren Duffy, Cassidy Harlock, McKenzie Craig and Caily Craig. Staff leaders were Mr. Sauve and Ms. Smukavich.

By staying with host families, visiting and dialoguing with many of the poor and marginalized within the DR, the program attempts to provide a transformative experience to students and staff in order that we may live in solidarity with impoverished and often exploited people in the DR and throughout the world.

We were provided with several opportunities to witness extreme poverty first hand, especially on the bateyes. These bateyes are small communities of Haitians (many who have been trafficked) on sugar cane plantations. These people struggle to survive without access to health care and proper sanitary conditions; clean water and adequate food are daily challenges. The brutal working and living conditions of these Haitian cane cutters and their families evoked a deep emotional reaction from all of us.

The group also had the opportunity to have our cushy lifestyles challenged. Albeit for a few moments at the internet cafe (to inform parents and friends that we were okay), we were without our regular access to email, net surfing, cell phones, music players or any of the comforts of our Canadian homes. Our bathing and washroom experiences were also different—no warm showers for us—and the water often came from the "big bucket" and not the faucet. We did learn to share our temporary homes with the native insects and rodents, some of which were quite large. Our comfort zones were certainly challenged.

During all of this, wonderful new relationships were being formed with our host families, leaders of the program and local citizens within the community of Consuelo. We



**Miss Smukavich with members of her host family, Elena and Tatika.**



**Drew Gheorge and Cass Harlock with other members of the group at Bateye Cachena with some Haitian kids from the community.**



**Lauren Duffy with some grade 5 boys in Santo Domingo at the Nichi Bosco school for street children.**



experienced the gracious hospitality of our Dominican host families. They were warm, caring and very generous. We were kept well fed with local cuisine and plenty of smiles. Many participants expressed the wonderment of developing such strong bonds, so quickly, with host families despite the communication barrier. It was comforting that the common language of laughter, games, sport and play is such a powerful connector. In the end there were many tears as good-byes were exchanged amongst new friends.

In short, our Dominican experience has left us with powerful lasting memories that will leave all of us changed in some way. Hopefully it will renew in us our call to live out gospel values of faith, hospitality and justice wherever we go.

Students that are interested in learning more about the Dominican Encounter with Faith and Hospitality program and/or might be interested in applying for the 2012-2013 WCDSB team should [email Ms. Smukavich](mailto:smukavich@wcdsb.com).



**Caily Craig with some grade 5 girls at the Nichi Bosco school for street children in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo.**

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES UPDATE

SAC is looking forward to a very Merry Christmas Assembly period 4 on Friday, December 21. This will be our send off for the Christmas break. There are many acts to perform including Glee, SBTV and our very own teacher band as well as a Christmas tree decorating contest.

We wish all staff, students, and parents of the St. Benedict community a very merry Christmas and we look forward to a fun-filled 2013!!!

### GRAD PHOTOS

Grad photos will start on Tuesday January 8, 2013. Grade 12s should have received information flyers in their period 2 class. Grads need to sign up online for a photo timeslot. Times are available from 8:30-3:00 each day and more days will become available as needed.

To sign up visit [the Lifetouch website](http://www.lifetouch.com). All the pricing and what to bring are included on the website.

There is a sitting fee due at the appointment time, and it covers the cost of the composite picture (received at graduation), and photography services. Proofs for ordering will be sent to the mailing address given online or at the appointment.

Any concerns about the fee or times can be directed to Ms. Skinn in the SAC office at lunch or after school.

## Upcoming Events

### Wednesday, December 19

- 2:35pm Anime Club
- 2:35pm Reach for the Top
- 2:45pm Homework Club
- 2:45pm After-school Intramural Hockey
- 3:30pm Jr. Girls Volleyball vs Rockway
- 3:30pm Sr. Girls Volleyball vs Rockway
- 4:00pm Sr. Boys Basketball @ Rockway

### Tuesday, January 8

- 8:20am Graduation photos
- 10:55am Homework help
- 11:00am Self Defense and Conditioning Club
- 11:00am Glee club
- 11:00am Science Team
- 11:00am Fitness Centre open
- 11:00am Saturday morning cartoons
- 11:00am Intramurals: floor hockey

5:30pm Jr. Boys Basketball @ Rockway  
Spirit Day

#### **Thursday, December 20**

10:55am Homework help  
11:00am Ultimate Club  
11:00am Glee club  
11:00am Making A Difference Club  
11:00am Eco Team  
11:00am Saturday morning cartoons  
11:00am Intramurals: fitness  
11:00am Puzzles Club  
11:00am Univ. visit: Lakehead University  
2:35pm Girls' Workout club  
2:40pm Games club  
2:40pm Yearbook Club

#### **Friday, December 21**

10:55am Homework help  
11:00am Lost Club  
11:00am Fitness Centre open  
11:00am Saturday morning cartoons  
11:00am Intramurals: volleyball  
11:00am Accepting Differences Club  
2:25pm Dismissal for Christmas break  
Winter solstice  
Christmas assembly

#### **Sunday, December 23**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

#### **Monday, December 24**

Christmas Eve

#### **Tuesday, December 25**

Christmas Day

#### **Monday, December 31**

New Year's Eve

#### **Tuesday, January 1**

New Year's Day

#### **Monday, January 7**

8:20am Classes resume  
10:55am Homework help  
11:00am Art Club  
11:00am Fitness Centre open  
11:00am Saturday morning cartoons  
11:00am Intramurals: indoor soccer  
11:00am Puzzles Club  
11:00am Accepting Differences Club  
2:40pm Camera Club  
2:45pm Homework Club

11:00am Puzzles Club  
11:00am Artistic License  
11:00am Saints 4 Life  
2:00pm Boys Hockey vs KCI at HESPELER 1  
3:15pm Sr. Girls Curling vs Southwood  
6:00pm Badminton club, 6:00-7:30

#### **Wednesday, January 9**

8:20am Graduation photos  
10:55am Homework help  
11:00am Lost Club  
11:00am DECA Business Club  
11:00am Fitness Centre open  
11:00am Saturday morning cartoons  
11:00am Intramurals: basketball  
11:00am Puzzles Club  
11:00am Welding Club  
11:00am Wednesdays with Marilyn  
11:00am ACTIVE and Friends  
2:35pm Anime Club  
2:35pm Reach for the Top  
2:45pm Homework Club  
3:30pm Jr. Boys Basketball vs St. David  
3:30pm Jr. Girls Volleyball @ St. David  
3:30pm Sr. Girls Volleyball @ St. David  
5:00pm Sr. Boys Basketball vs St. David  
Spirit Day

#### **Thursday, January 10**

8:20am Graduation photos  
10:55am Homework help  
11:00am Ultimate Club  
11:00am Glee club  
11:00am Making A Difference Club  
11:00am Saturday morning cartoons  
11:00am Intramurals: fitness  
11:00am Puzzles Club  
2:00pm Boys Hockey vs GRCI at KINSMEN  
2:35pm Girls' Workout club  
2:40pm Games club  
2:40pm Yearbook Club

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

**There are NEARLY 1600 entries on our school calendar on the website!**

***This means plenty of opportunities for your son or daughter to get involved!***

Check the calendar on the school website for more information. New information is always being added, and more detailed information about upcoming events can be found there.

On the front page of our website, the calendar displays what's coming up in the next week. If you

would like to see the full calendar, go to **Benny's News ► Calendar of Events.**

## Miscellaneous

### **WE WANT TO KNOW...**

Thank you to those who have taken time to provide us with feedback. Your opinions are important to us! Please [email us](#) with your comments and suggestions. If you like our newsletter, tell others; if you don't like it, tell us!

Check out our school website at <http://stbenedict.wcdsb.ca> for news and information updates.

This newsletter is also available on the school website if you [click here](#). You may want to send this link to other parents rather than forward your email—doing so may alter the layout and generate the page incorrectly.

