

Special Education Superintendent Update

June 2017

On May 31st, the Special Services Department along with three secondary High Schools (Marshall McLuhan, Loretto College and St. Mary Academy) hosted the 20th Year Annual Secondary School Student Special Olympics at the Downsview Hangar to honour and celebrate the gifts of all our special athletes.



The Speech and Language department and the D/HH department celebrated May is Speech, Language and Hearing Awareness Month!

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- The Annual Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Family picnic was held at Our Lady of Mount Carmel on May 26, 2017. Students, families and staff had a wonderful time. We look forward to celebrating our 30th anniversary next year.



Speech and Language

- In celebration of Speech, Language and Hearing Awareness month, the SLP department shared resources throughout the month with schools and families that highlighted strategies to support better communication skills.



Gifted Programs

Over 300 students from the TCDSB Gifted Withdrawal Program participated in North America's largest K-12 science competition, Toshiba/NSTA's **Exploravision**. This competition encourages students to propose a futuristic idea for new technology that currently exists. Working in teams, simulating real scientific research, students outline criteria that include trial and error processing as well as creating a mock website showcasing their concepts. Collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking skills are the back bone of this competition. In this year's competition, 17 TCDSB teams were awarded with Honourable Mention Awards. Check www.exploravision.org for more details about this competition. Congratulations to all our students and teachers who participated.

Three of our Grade 5 Gifted Withdrawal students from St. Rose of Lima Gifted Centre are the 2017 Ontario Regional Winners of the WHERE Challenge. The WHERE Challenge asks students across Canada to discover the answers to these questions: What on Earth is in your stuff and WHERE on Earth does it come from? WHERE stands for the places where Earth scientists work: **W**ater, **H**azards, **E**nergy, **R**esources, and **E**nvironment. St. Rose of Lima Gifted Centre was also awarded an overall school prize for quantity and quality of entries. Check out their winning entries at <http://earthsciencecanada.com/where/>

One of our students from the St. Conrad Withdrawal Gifted Centre was the Grand Award Winner for the Design a Bookmark Contest 2017 (tpl.ca/kidspace). Her design and name were printed on bookmarks that were distributed throughout the Toronto Public Library system.

The team from Holy Name Gifted Centre was awarded the "Team Spirit" award, and a team from St. Monica Gifted Centre was awarded the "Team Spirit" and "Honourable Achievement" awards. These two teams were part of thirteen teams from the Withdrawal Gifted Centres that participated in this year's "Let's Talk Science Challenge". The Let's Talk Science Challenge is a team-based, competitive enrichment event for Grades 6-8 students. Over 20 universities host this event. The Challenge includes an exciting question and answer competition, an interactive, hands-on design challenge, as well as guest speakers. It inspires students to acquire science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) knowledge beyond their curriculum.

Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Charles, St. Conrad, St. Louis, and St. Raymond Gifted Withdrawal Centres participated in the 2nd Annual Gifted Performance Challenge Day. Gifted Withdrawal students from grades 5 to 8 competed against each other in a performance challenge which highlighted skills such as



problem solving, critical, lateral, technical and creative thinking. Many weeks of preparation resulted in over twenty fun filled performances over four days.

Students in Grades 5 through 8 from both the withdrawal and congregated Gifted programs participated in our 3rd Annual TCDSB Gifted Math Challenge, an individual competition of problem solving. Results will be posted soon.

LD Programs

Teachers of the LD ISP classes participated in a professional development session on June 6. The guest speaker, Dr. Pat Bucci from York Catholic District School Board discussed best practices in using standardized assessment tools as a pre and post assessment and aligning results with individual student goals within the LD/ ISP program and IEP.

Social Work

In conjunction with the Angel Foundation for Learning and members of the Leon family, Social Workers selected several TCDSB students from a large number of applicants to receive the Tom Leon Family Bursary. This bursary for post-secondary education is awarded annually to two graduating female students and two graduating male students who require financial assistance in order to pursue studies at a post-secondary institution. Each award is designated for the cost of tuition in the amount of up to \$5,000. Criteria for the award includes contributions to the school and/or community that reflect Catholic values, financial need and personal challenges and obstacles.

The Angel Foundation also provides an annual Exceptional Student Bursary. The successful applicant for this bursary is a graduating student that is identified as exceptional. The student has been accepted into a college, university or community-based program. There is evidence of financial need and/or personal challenges.