



SEVEN OAKS
SCHOOL DIVISION
community begins here

Community

B E G I N S H E R E

ISSUE NO. 7

April 2005



Focus on École Leila North Community School

École Leila North Community School's mission statement "Building an Inclusive Community." Students, staff and community working together to create a positive environment that provides a variety of opportunities so that all students may participate at some level in Middle Years learning experience of their interest, choice and/or ability in an effort to provide a meaningful education.

Respect for Cultural Roots

While the school is home to both English and French Immersion programming, the Leila North student population is very multicultural. The Leila North staff is very conscious of this fact and look for innovative ways to help students explore different cultures.

"Staff at Leila North felt that the standard 'folklorama' type event didn't give students a 'deep' understanding of the diverse cultures we are currently dealing with in our school system," says Ashok

Athavale, a guidance counselor who also leads the school in activities designed to raise cultural awareness. "We decided we needed to go out into the community to hear and dialogue with representatives from some of the ethnic, religious and community leaders."

Students have had such unique opportunities as meeting with Buddhist monks visiting from Tibet, seeing a pow-wow held in the school gym, visiting with Inuit throat singers/educators and listening to representatives from Uganda speak about child soldiers and land mines.

When students see real people and activities that represent other cultures in person, it has a powerful impact on them.

For example, Athavale recalls, "After students listened to the monks and heard about their plight in Tibet, the students decided to visit the monks' display downtown and donate the money they had raised for grade 8 farewell."



Respect for Individuals

Lessons in respect don't just apply to culture. Leila North students also learn to respect others as individuals.

One of the more unusual – and popular – ways Leila North teaches about respect for individuals is through the use of I-Movies; digital movies developed by the students using the school's MAC computer suites.

The school has assisted Leila North students – as well as outside schools – in developing I-Movie projects on many issues. Students drive everything from the development of script and storyboards to the actual shooting of the video and editing on the school computers.

Leila North is also home to one of the few Autism programs at the Middle Years level in Winnipeg. The Autism program hosts students from all over Winnipeg. Although the program has its own independent classroom, its students are an integral part of the daily life at Leila North.

Together with other Leila North students, the students in the Autism program run the canteen and manage the recycling program. The students also participate in all school activities, from student-leds and assemblies to the Division's annual Track and Field Day. The respect and caring everyone has for these students is a result of their working together with others daily.

"The rest of the general population is extremely respectful of our kids," says Kim Corlett, a full-time teacher in the Autism classroom. "And they do care for them in ways that sometimes we don't take time to appreciate. There is just a sense of nurturing that exists."

Respect for Learning

Another key focus at Leila North is on students taking responsibility for their own learning.

One way this responsibility is encouraged is through the use of portfolios; a collection of work that demonstrates strengths, weaknesses, growth and progress.

At Leila North, a student portfolio is more than a collection of a student's work. The portfolio enables students to chart their own progress against academic goals – and behavioural goals – that the students set for themselves early in the year. Within portfolio assessment, students participate in all phases of assessment and evaluation.

They learn the importance of setting individual goals, identifying strategies that will assist them in achieving their goals as well as ways to evaluate their own accomplishments.

"Through student-led conferences, students play a leadership role by providing evidence that demonstrates growth and progress," explains Verland Hicks, Principal at Leila North. "Parents and teachers also play a key role in guiding the children as goals are revisited and revised."

The result is that students begin to take responsibility for their own learning. It also encourages open lines of communication among students, parents and teachers.

Responsibility Through Leadership

Students also learn responsibility through the many leadership opportunities available at Leila North. A good example is the school's Phys-Ed Leadership Program where Grade Six, Seven and Eight students give up both class time as well as their own time to help others.

While that help includes things such as score-keeping and refereeing, it also involves things such as learning how to use adaptive equipment to help Special Needs students during phys-ed classes. The P.E.L. students also volunteer at the Christmas Cheer Board, Winnipeg's Children's Festival and various Seven Oaks Divisional events.

"It's great to see our former students coming back to coach, volunteer and student teach. They are continuing to take on leadership roles," says Sandee Deck, a Phys-Ed instructor at Leila North.

Reason and Reasons

Ultimately, what Leila North students develop is their reasoning skills – their sense of how to do things. But just as importantly, they begin to consider the reasons behind the choices they make. That's what helps them make better choices for themselves, both today and for the rest of their lives.



"My favourite part of Leila North is..."

"My favourite part of Leila North is the energy of all the students and teachers! - Kristen

"I like to play all the intramurals they have....sports is like a box of chocolates to me, I love them! - Tyler

"My favourite part of Leila North is how well we all learn together and all the fun activities we can do." - Dionne

"Ce que J'aime le plus au sujet de l'École Leila North sont les personnes et les professeurs ici...parce qu'ils sont tous gentils. Aussi ils m'aident si j'ai besoin de l'aide supplémentaire." - Callie