



DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Learning and Living in Faith

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees

From: Tracy Barill, Director of Education

Date: April 26, 2021

Subject: **Catholic Education and Children's Mental Health Week – Nurturing Hope; Cultivating Gratitude (May 3 – 7, 2021)**

Origin: Jim Wilson, Superintendent of Education

Recommendation

Moved by , seconded by

"THAT the Durham Catholic District School Board receive and file as information the Catholic Education and Children's Mental Health Week report dated April 26, 2021."

Rationale

Catholic Education & Children's Mental Health Week – Nurturing Hope; Cultivating Gratitude

Each year, the Catholic community of Ontario engages in a week-long celebration of the unique identity and distinctive contributions of Catholic education during Catholic Education Week. During the week of May 3 to 7, the Durham Catholic District School Board will celebrate two very important weeks: Catholic Education Week and Children's Mental Health Week.

In this year of Love, the theme for the combined week at DCDSB is **Nurturing Hope; Cultivating Gratitude**. This theme is a merging of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) theme of 'Nurturing Hope' with our board's selected Children's Mental Health Week theme of 'Cultivating Gratitude'.

The theme of Nurturing Hope set out by OCSTA is inspired by:

- The ongoing realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a strong desire by the OCSTA planning committee, along with those consulted, and supported by feedback from the survey, for continuity with the theme of Catholic Education Week 2020, **Igniting Hope**.
- The special Year of Laudato Si' which will run through May 24, 2021, announced by Pope Francis on the fifth anniversary of his papal encyclical, *Care for Our Common Home*.
- An intentional reflection from the Truth & Reconciliation Commission on Indigenous spirituality.

Gratitude is the virtue that makes us aware and appreciate the gifts we receive each day. To express thankfulness is a simple way to share our faith as it fills our hearts with a readiness to cherish all that we have. Even in challenging times, if we look around, we can find something or someone to appreciate. This doesn't cancel out what's hard in our lives, but it does invite a sense of balance and reminds us of what we have. Practicing gratitude can boost our physical and mental health. In this week, we will actively acknowledge and appreciate the things, both big and small that God has blessed us with.

Ultimately, the challenges to personal and spiritual well-being posed by the uncertainty and physical isolation of the current global crisis makes the timing and the concerns of Children's Mental Health Week, all the more relevant which is why DCDSB will honour these two weeks together.

The five sub-themes for this year's DCDSB Catholic Education and Children's Mental Health Week mirror the sub themes set out by OCTSA.

Day 1 (Monday, May 3rd) – Preparing the Earth

Day 2 (Tuesday, May 4th) – Sowing Seeds of Gratitude

Day 3 (Wednesday, May 5th) – Cultivating Relationships

Day 4 (Thursday, May 6th) – Harvesting New Fruit

Day 5 (Friday, May 7th) – Marveling in Wonder

Catholic Education Week is marked by the following special activities for all of our Catholic Education Community:

Tuesday, May 4th – Distinguished Catholic Educator and Leader Award (Media Release & YouTube Premiere Event)

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Re: Catholic Education and Children's Mental Health Week – Nurturing Hope; Cultivating Gratitude (May 3 – 7, 2021)

Wednesday, May 5th – Catholic Education Week Mass at 11 a.m. EST (Live Event)

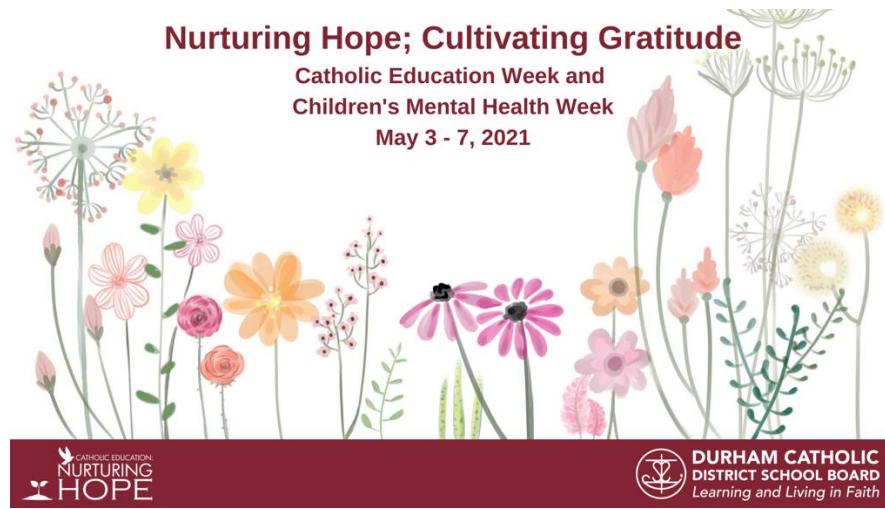
Thursday, May 6th – Wear Green Day & Distinguished Catholic Alumni Awards (Media Release)

On Wednesday, May 5, his Eminence Cardinal Thomas Collins will join thousands of students across the province in the celebration of a special Catholic Education Week mass that will be live streamed at 11:00 a.m. All DCDSB schools are invited to participate. The link to the live stream mass will be shared as it becomes available from the Archdiocese.

On Thursday, May 6, all DCDSB staff, students and families are encouraged to wear green. On this day, our gratitude theme will focus on the earth and the opportunity to be stewards of the environment. The colour green symbolizes the earth and is also associated with mental health awareness.

DCDSB is inviting families to participate in our “With Gratitude” initiative and our At-Home Activities. Families can download a postcard and either print it off or send it digitally to praise or thank a friend or colleague or member of our local community for something they’ve done or something they appreciate about them. Members of our DCDSB community are invited to join us to share uplifting messages of hope and gratitude with everyone around us – spreading joy, love and happiness. Families can access the postcard and view the At- Home activities on the [board’s website](#).

All are invited to participate in any of our activities as we celebrate Catholic Education Week & Children's Mental Health Week 2021.



TB/JW/Ij