



Durham Catholic District School Board

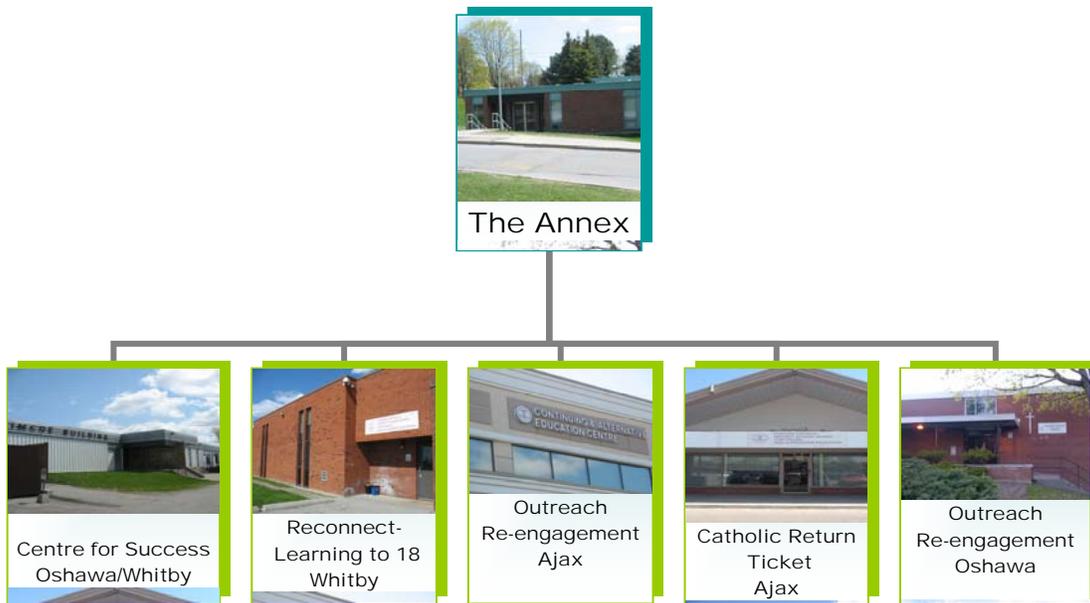


Father Donald MacLellan Catholic Secondary School

Motto: "Growing Together in Peace"

In the Beginning

Much like its namesake, Father Donald MacLellan Catholic Secondary School had humble beginnings. From visioning, and its temporary location at the Annex attached to Monsignor Paul Dwyer Catholic High School, Father Donald MacLellan is now comprised of five sites throughout the Durham Region.



Formation of the Centre for Success began in 2007 under the direction of Superintendent Caroline Anko and Lead Principal for Student Success, Shelley Roy, through initiatives created under the Ministry of Education’s Lighthouse Projects. The mandate of the Lighthouse Projects was to create innovative local programs to help students who were struggling in a regular classroom, those who have left high school and want to return, and those who need extra support and attention to stay in school.

Beginning in February 2007, with 15 students and one teacher, the first Centre for Success classroom was located on the Durham College Oshawa Campus in the now demolished “K Wing” of the Simcoe Building. The Centre for Success offers at-risk secondary students a one-semester placement wherein they have an opportunity to participate in a Durham College Dual Credit course while completing Ontario

Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) credit requirements. Since its inception, Centre for Success has grown to include classrooms at both Durham College Oshawa and Whitby campuses, three full-time teachers and approximately 90 students annually. To date, more than 350 students have entered the program, the majority of whom have achieved their OSSD and have entered post-secondary college programs.

In addition to the Centre for Success, September 2007 saw the formation of both the Outreach/Re-engagement and Catholic Return Ticket programs. Outreach/Re-engagement, as the name suggests, seeks to find and support those students who have left school prematurely, enabling them to complete their OSSD requirements. The program began with three teachers and 45 students, with a vice-principal joining midway through the year. To accommodate the needs of the students, the teachers met them at The Annex, local libraries and coffee shops to deliver outreach academic programs.

At that time, Catholic Return Ticket operated from a classroom located at St. Gertrude Continuing Education Facility in Oshawa. Staff included a vice-principal and two full-time teachers. Catholic Return Ticket continues to serve suspended and expelled students who have been removed from mainstream schools. Staff at this location work with students in both an academic and non-academic role, using restorative practices to provide students with skills and strategies required to re-enter mainstream schools. With continuous intake, enrolment fluctuated, but began with approximately 14 students.

With the growth in the student population, acquiring autonomous locations for these programs became a focus. Spring 2008 saw the relocation of Catholic Return Ticket to its current site at 250 Bayly Street in Ajax. Those students in the Outreach/Re-engagement Program now reconnected to the pursuit of their secondary education were relocated in September 2008 to 1500 Hopkins Street in Whitby, the current location of the Reconnect – Learning to 18 program. Students at the Reconnect – Learning to 18 site are enrolled in either part- or full-time studies, or are earning credits through co-op placements.

Outreach/Reengagement Programs continue at both sites in Oshawa (692 King Street) and Ajax (314 Harwood Road).

The 2008–2009 school year not only saw a change in locations, but also these programs now fell within the portfolio of Continuing and Alternative Education, under Superintendent of Education Chris Hurst and Robert Fitzgibbon, Principal. Growth was met with many successes, and graduation rates continued to climb. In only three years, student enrolment had swelled to 250 students.

In September 2009, Superintendent Anne O'Brien assumed the portfolio. With the demands of five independent sites and a steadily increasing student population, Continuing and Alternative Education was reorganized into two independent portfolios in June 2010. Tom Haslam was named Principal of Alternative Education. The restructuring of the alternative sites led naturally to the formation of one secondary school that would support students and allow them to continue their education. Such a school would require a name reflecting the work carried on within. Naming the school after the well-known and respected Father Don MacLellan was an ideal choice.

The name "Father Donald MacLellan Catholic Secondary School" received Board approval in June 2010 and received an official blessing on May 31, 2012. The logo reflects Father Don's message of being at peace with each other and ourselves, hence the motto "Growing Together in Peace." In a school setting where students often arrive frightened, shaken and fragile, where fear and anxiety grip many of their young lives, there couldn't be a more fitting name for an Alternative Education school and the eighth high school within the Durham Catholic District School Board.

Father Don's 350 currently enrolled students are supported by approximately 30 staff members, including teachers, educational assistants, child and youth counsellors, social workers and administration.

Our Patron

Born in 1937 in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Father Donald MacLellan professed his vows as a Redemptorist in 1962 and was ordained a priest in 1965, at the age of 28. He travelled throughout North America, giving retreats for his Redemptorist order of priests, and worked throughout eastern Canada and Ontario in parish ministry, as prison chaplain and in high school chaplaincy.

Durham Catholic District School Board was blessed to have such a man serve for many years at Msgr. John Pereyema Catholic Secondary School in Oshawa, building connections and relationships with staff, students, parents and community members. He was also an integral figure at Monsignor Paul Dwyer Catholic High School, where he ran a series of teen retreats and celebrated both Mass and his devout love of Jesus Christ with warmth, humour and his familiar boisterous laugh.

Father Don was known to thousands of Durham residents as a man with a booming voice and a heart as loving and generous as one could find. He would tell story after story to those willing to listen. He made friends of all ages. During his chaplaincy work he would spend many hours trying to bring comfort and peace to those who were troubled by sharing and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to bring hope.

Principals

Shelley Roy, Lead Principal, Student Success (2007–2008)

Robert Fitzgibbon, Principal of Continuing and Alternative Education (2008–2010)

Tom Haslam, Principal of Alternative Education (2010–2011)

Tom Haslam, Principal of Father Donald MacLellan C.S.S. (2011–present)

Contributors:

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