



Durham Catholic District School Board



Good Shepherd Catholic School



In the Beginning

Community. The defining character of Good Shepherd Catholic School is that of community. Growing out of Immaculate Conception Catholic School in 1999, and intimately associated with the small-town character of Port Perry, Good Shepherd has always placed a high value on its connection and relationship with the community. This is evident not only in the feeling one gets upon arrival, but concretely, in its traditions and activities. Frequently, when one asks, “How long has this been done?” The answer is, “Since we opened.”

When Good Shepherd was opened in 1999 by the first principal, Brenda O’Donoghue, the first tradition– the Thanksgiving Feast – was transferred from Immaculate Conception. All students, staff, Catholic Women’s League (CWL) members, special guests, the parish priest, and children and staff from the attached daycare sit down to

enjoy Thanksgiving together. Originally, the food was cooked by volunteers from the parent council. As work patterns have shifted over the years, leaving fewer parents at home to provide this service, the school has moved towards a catered meal. In keeping with the community focus, however, the caterer is also a parent from the school. This event has occurred each year since opening.

Other yearly traditions include the Terry Fox Run, Primary Christmas Concert, Winter Carnival, Fun Fair and Talent Show. This year each was announced, with pride, as the “12th annual.” While these may be common to many schools, they are treasured events that bring students, staff and parents together. Parents often assist in leading the choir and take the lead in organizing the Fun Fair. The parish priest is usually in attendance at these events as well, helping to make the parish link concrete.



2010–2011 Winter Carnival – Elly, Shianne and Gaenor

Good Shepherd also boasts a Student Council composed of four executive members – president, vice-president, social convenor and treasurer. Active in the school since early

in its history, these students plan the spirit days for the year and also raise funds for charitable works. For the past four years, this has meant donations to Chalice, an organization that helps children in the Third World, and for Operation Scugog, a local charity that supports families in our community.

Artwork in the school also bears the hallmark of community connections. Visitors are first greeted by the sight of a special carving by a local artist – Connelly – that sits proudly in the front entrance. Artists' prints donated by Bagwating First Nation adorn the library. By far the largest instalment, however, is the stained glass mosaic flanked by the trophy cases in the front foyer. In the 2003–2004 academic year, local artist Bonnie Thompson worked with the children in the school to create this mosaic – all children had a hand in its creation. It contains images of importance to the children – of nature, faith, school and community. Directly beneath the mosaic is a dated block that marks the location of the time capsule created by the first group of Good Shepherd students. Directly behind the mosaic is a board bearing the signatures of the first students and staff of Good Shepherd. A photograph of this board hangs proudly on the wall opposite the mosaic.

By tradition, students participate in the local Legion poster contest each year. Students have also taken part in the local art association contest, providing art in several media. This year, the school submitted artwork related to wax – wax crayon and Ukrainian Easter eggs made with the wax resist method. Our second principal, Joanne Binns, brought her own artistic talents to the school through the creation of a watercolour of the school that now adorns the school thank-you cards. The fourth principal, David Malleau, taught students in grades 5 to 8 the technique of decorating Ukrainian Easter eggs.

Sports are highly valued in Port Perry and there is never a shortage of athletes to try out for all sports. A visitor to the school would count 51 pennants adorning the wall above the windows surrounding the outside of the library, representing the school's victories in our DDECCA pool and at the Tournament of Champions. Junior Boys have won their local pool in volleyball from 2005 to 2008 and again in 2010–2011, soccer in 2002 to 2004, and basketball from 2008 to 2011. The Junior Girls won volleyball in 2004–2005, soccer in 1999–2000 and basketball in 2003–2004. The Junior Co-ed team took tchoukball from 2008 to 2011 and flag football in 2007–2008. The Senior Boys won volleyball in 2001 to 2003, 2005–2006, 2008–2009, and 2010–2011. They won basketball from 2001 to 2004 and 2006 to 2011, winning the Tournament of Champions in 2003–2004. They won soccer from 2001 to 2004. Our Senior Girls dominated volleyball from 2005 to 2009, taking the Tournament of Champions each year. Soccer was also won in 2000–2001. The Senior Co-ed team won tchoukball from 2009 to 2012, and soccer in 2008–2009 and 2011–2012. The school track and field team won each

year from 1999 to 2005. In 2011–2012, Good Shepherd worked with the three other Northern Schools to bring soccer back as an intramural sport and to form a Northern League for basketball and volleyball, coming together as a larger community to give the students from Holy Family, Beaverton, the chance to compete in tournament play. Each school created a co-ed team of students from grades 4 to 8 so that students could get extra practice and skill development.



2007 Tchoukball team with Mr. Burke, coach

Over the years, many other athletic pursuits were offered, depending upon the talents and skills of available staff. Good Shepherd students have gone bowling, engaged in square dancing, curled, enjoyed the great outdoors through the outdoors club, gone snowshoeing, joined an electives program, gone swimming and skating. Regardless of the year, however, Good Shepherd is proud to have always fielded a team for all intermural sports.

Four years ago, Good Shepherd joined EcoSchools, earning three Gold awards and one Silver award along the way. This was a natural fit for the school, as there had been a number of tree plantings over the years, reflective of a respect for the importance of the outdoors, and a pride in the appearance of the school. In keeping with the community focus, all the trees were planted with the assistance of local landscapers and with parent involvement. The tradition continues as Good Shepherd seeks to plant two more trees using the proceeds from the Green Team's rain barrel sales.



Watering newly planted trees – Mrs. Elliott and the Grade 1 class

A perquisite of small-town life is that the local parish priest has only two elementary schools in his fold. This, and Father Peter's long tenure, has helped to ensure a strong connection between his two schools and the parish church. Attending daytime Masses together at least three times a year, frequently with members of the CWL in attendance, helps to foster a sense of connection with the larger community. The importance of this connection was a core value for Good Shepherd's third principal, Mary Lou Elliott, who worked to increase involvement from many groups in the school. This effort can still be

seen when Good Shepherd welcomes a volunteer from Community Care once a week to read to Kindergarten students, organize the library, and distribute milk. The strong connection to the CWL through participation in its public speaking competition, and through its support of busing to masses, is also part of this legacy.

Good Shepherd looks to the future with a strong investment in technology paid for through community dances, with SmartBoards in all but two classrooms. As the school continues to upgrade, it does so through community support obtained from the Fun Fair and golf tournament – both events involving the wider community, and with support from local businesses and Knights of Columbus members. With ongoing support from the community, the school continues to move forward.

Principals

Brenda O'Donoghue (1998-2006)

Joanne Binns (2006-2008)

Mary Lou Elliott (2008-2011)

David Malleau (2011-present)

Contributor:

David Malleau