



Durham Catholic District School Board



Holy Family Catholic School

Motto: "Learning for Life"



In the Beginning

No one knows the mind of God, but surely Holy Family Catholic School was created in response to the prayers of a number of people and to their dedicated faith in God and service to Catholic education. The hard work of all those who in any way contributed to the establishment of Holy Family Catholic School must be recognized with gratitude and thanksgiving. The blessing of the first Catholic school in the Township of Brock was truly to become an historic event.

In the 1980s, the Bible Study group – Maxine Smith, Nora Christian, Sue Canning, Loretta Kearsley, Mary Boehm, Anne Waggoner and Pat Baldwin – began to pray each week for a Catholic elementary school in Beaverton. In the spring of 1988, Pat Baldwin heard that the Durham Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board had a site on a future residential area where a school could be built. She phoned the Board to find out if there was anything that could be done to facilitate the building of the school. The Board requested a letter giving information about the parish, such as number of baptized babies. With Father Frank Skumavc's co-operation, the required information was obtained and a letter was sent to the Board.

The next step was the zoning of Thorah Island for separate school taxes. The required number of signatures was collected and notices were posted in Beaverton so that a meeting could be held to establish the zone. The zone was established in June 1988. A meeting was then held to determine the number and

names of potential supporting parents and children. In attendance were Brenda Wilson, Jean Niccoli, Anne Waggoner, Tom Adams, Terry McGovern, Mary Halligan and Pat Baldwin. Most of the children of these parents attended Foley Separate School in Brechin, which was the most southern Catholic school in Simcoe County. Much credit must be given to several parents in the early 1980s who strongly believed in Catholic education. The door was opened for the children of north Durham to attend the Catholic school in Brechin.

Tom Adams, who was running for school trustee in the fall of 1988, used the establishment of the school as his platform for election. After the election, he gathered a nucleus of interested parents to work on the project. This included himself, Sheila Adams, Terry and Elinor McGovern, Anne Waggoner and Pat Baldwin. A meeting was held in the church basement to begin the process of obtaining signatures of parents committed to sending their children to a Catholic school, should one be built in Beaverton. In February 1989, a group (Della Hanchar, Elinor McGovern, Sue Canning, Debbie Fiume, Sheila Adams, Anne Waggoner, Karen Enns, Joe Canning, Paul Nealon, Cindy Beman, Diane Wolfe, Jean Niccoli and Pat Baldwin) went around collecting these signatures.

Terry McGovern and Pat Baldwin prepared a presentation for the school board. They later met with Kathleen LeFort, the local Catholic trustee, to work out the final details before the presentation. Terry McGovern delivered the presentation to the Board on June 19, 1989.

Once approved, a committee headed by Michael Scanlon was established. A delegation of parents attended the meeting of the Board of Trustees on February 19, 1990, where they made their presentation on establishing a Catholic school in Brock Township. A special meeting was held on March 19, 1990, and a motion was made and accepted to set up a temporary school facility in Brock Township for September of that year. The location was to be the site of St. Joseph's Parish. Permission was given by Beaverton Holdings Limited (Seeburn Metals) to rent a portion of their land in order to set up four portables in addition to a play area. The name of the school was decided as a result of a survey that was completed by members of St. Joseph's Parish on a Sunday in April. The final selection was approved by the Board at a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 22, 1990. The new school would be named Holy Family Catholic School.

Holy Family Catholic School was to be established on a temporary site in Brock Township. An ad placed in the local newspaper dated May 23, 1990, invited parents to complete an application for registration for Junior Kindergarten to

Grade 5, but some new families moved into the area and advocated for the need to have Grade 6 added. A classroom was added each year, bringing the school up to Grade 8. The first principal was Jeananne Ralph. Jean Niccoli was hired as the secretary and Gerry Kavanagh was the custodian. The next step was the selection of the teaching staff: Sandra Shields, Junior/Senior Kindergarten), Joan Bowie from Nova Scotia (Grade 1), Donna McCarron from Nova Scotia (Grade 2/3), Peter Hanlon from Newfoundland (grades 4, 5 and 6 and physical education), and Peggy McFadden from New Brunswick to teach French to students in all grades.

Holy Family's teachers

 <p>Jeananne Ralph comes from Oshawa where she was a vice-principal and consultant for the Durham Separate School Board. Presently, she is the principal of Holy Family Catholic School.</p>	 <p>Coming from Nova Scotia, Joan Bowie teaches grade one and music at Holy Family Catholic School.</p>	 <p>Peter Hendley teaches grade 4, 5, and 6 at Holy Family Catholic School. His speciality is physical education.</p>	 <p>Peggy McFadden teaches French to all grades at Holy Family Catholic School. She comes from Newfoundland.</p>	 <p>Teaching junior kindergarten at Holy Family Catholic School is Miss Shields.</p>
		 <p>Donna McCarron teaches grades two and three as well as grades four, five, and six art at Holy Family Catholic School. She comes to the area from Nova Scotia.</p>		

**Photos by
Gail Scruton**

It was a real miracle that Holy Family Catholic School became a reality. It was a miracle in the form of dedication and hard work from Director of Education Dr. Earl Lagroix, Grant Andrews, Conrad Ethier, Kathleen LeFort, Harald Niessner, Gerry O'Neill, Roy Maeder and Leo Doyle. It was a miracle in the form of the workers who came to prepare the church hall, in the form of all the parishioners and parents who prayed so hard for the establishment of Holy Family Catholic School and, last but not least, in the form of Father Frank Skumavc. Without his dedication, prayers and support of Catholic education, Holy Family would never have come to be.

Life at Holy Family became very busy. Portables arrived and were cleaned by staff and parents in August 1990. Work started on the basement of the church for

the offices and washrooms. Amid much hard work and long hours, the school opened on September 4, 1990, with an enrolment of 88 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6.



With a dynamic principal and a great staff, Holy Family Catholic School made its beginning. The basement of the church was home to the principal's office, the secretary's office, program support, washrooms for both boys and girls, a library, a Grade 3 classroom, a meeting area and the staff room. The first school Mass was held on September 6, 1990.

It was a difficult task to establish the school colours, but after much discussion among the students, they chose brown for St. Joseph, blue for Mary and white for Jesus. A mascot was needed to prepare for the students' first trip to the Beaverton Fall Fair. The students voted for the panther, then came up with a cheer to sing as they marched to the fairgrounds:

Our population may be small
But we can win against you all

Our colours are brown, blue and white
We will show you all our might

Holy Family is our school
From now on we will always rule

GO PANTHERS!

Sister Pat Flynn came into the Holy Family Catholic School community for the first time and helped with the hymns for the blessing of the school, which was held on Thursday, October 25, at the Beaverton Community Centre. The blessing followed a Mass to dedicate the new school, at which Bishop Robert Clune presided. After arriving at the arena, the students, staff and special guests were treated to a hot turkey lunch. The school community remembers with gratitude

the Knights of Columbus, the parish's Catholic Women's League (CWL), the parents and staff for preparing a wonderful lunch to celebrate the dedication.

Holy Family school blessed

by Gail Scruton

The present site of the Holy Family Catholic School in Beaverton is the result of hard work and dedication by a group of concerned parents.

When it was learned that the Durham Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board had an option to purchase a site on a future residential area for a school, back in 1988, Pat Baldwin was instrumental in providing the Board with the necessary information. In the

fall of that year, Tom Adams ran for school trustee, having as the main thrust in his campaign a Catholic school in Brock.

After the elections, Mr. Adams formed a committee of parents whose purpose was to gather signatures to present to the Separate School Board of Education. This task was completed through the winter and spring of 1989. A delegation headed up by Terry McGovern gave its presentation to the Board in Oshawa.

Once approved, a committee headed by Michael Scanlon established a Catholic elementary school in Brock Township. On Sept. 4, 1990 the Holy Family Catholic School opened its doors to its first students. The school is located behind St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church on Simcoe Street East. The school is a junior kindergarten to grade 6, and has a student population of eight-five. The principal is Jeananne Ralph.



Stephanie Halligan and Joshua Holy Family picture at a ble School held on Oct. 25.

The first year at Holy Family Catholic School included many special people and memories. Dr. Earl Lagroix visited all the classrooms and talked to the children in November. Miss Pat Hay came into the life of Holy Family Catholic School, bringing her love of music and song. The first Christmas concert was a beautiful live Nativity that took place in a barn in Cannington belonging to St. Joseph's parishioners Betty and Robert McMahon. Students took part in all kinds of school activities including soccer, CWL public speaking, Jump Rope for Heart, and First Holy Communion. The children of Holy Family participated in the Santa Claus parades in Beaverton, Cannington and Sunderland. Pat Hay wrote the school song. At the year-end assembly in June 1991, the song was officially sung for the first time.

Life at Holy Family Catholic School continued. Even though the students and staff were in portables and in the church basement, the students were happy. When special Sunday parish activities were to take place, the basement was cleared out to make room for the parishioners and the event. Playtime on the hill was enjoyed by all. In the winter there was much fun sledding down the hill, skating at the Beaverton Arena and going on ski trips to Mount St. Louis. At times in the spring, frogs would make their way to the basement. The students' pockets would sometimes be crawling with tiny garter snakes. The numerous floods in the basement, where the office and washrooms were housed, were unforgettable. The church bats, which made their appearance now and again, always added some extra excitement.

In the spring of 1992, students and staff received some bad news. Principal Jeananne Ralph had fallen ill and would be off work for some time. Senior teacher Peggy McFadden held down the fort until Jeananne was well enough to

come back. She decided to move to a school that was closer to Oshawa, but not before the school's first three students, Brock Purvis, Carolyn White and Thea de Groot, graduated from Grade 8. Holy Family said goodbye to these graduates on June 24, 1993. It was with much sadness that the Holy Family Catholic School community said goodbye to Jeananne. There was a wonderful Mass and a party on the front lawn of St. Joseph's Church to wish her all the best in the years to come. A beautiful quilt containing a square from each child in the school was presented to her with a beautiful framed picture of the Holy Family. Jeananne Ralph became the principal at St. Leo Catholic School in Brooklin.



Holy Family Catholic School said "Goodbye" to its first graduates on Thurs., June 24: Brock Purvis, Thea de Groot, and Carolyn White. Photographed with them are teacher Peter Gallagher and principal Jeananne Ralph. Thea de Groot was presented with the Science Award, the Top Academic Award, the English Award, and the Math Award. Brock Purvis received the E.J. Finan Best Effort Award. And Carolyn White received the Service Award.

Louise Middleton photo

Holy Family's 1st grads

Thea de Groot was Holy Family Catholic School's very first valedictorian as the three-year-old school held its first graduation ceremony on Thurs., June 24.

Louise Middleton photo



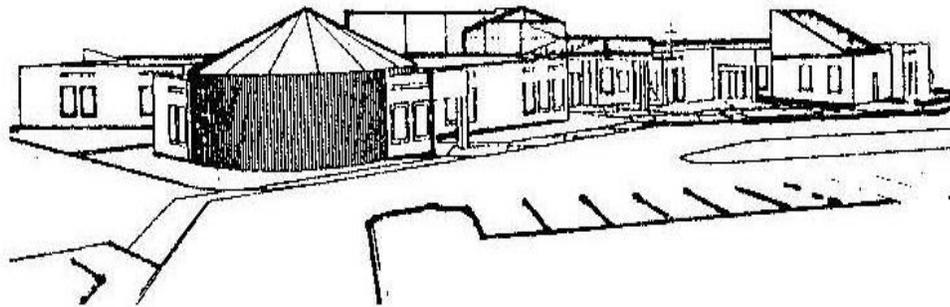
In early 1993, the Ministry of Education and Training approved the allocation of funds for a building site and the construction of a Catholic school for the Township of Brock. Enrolment at Holy Family Catholic School had increased annually and an anticipated 140 students would begin the 1993–1994 year. At that time, the lease at the temporary site was extended for another two years and a new principal took the helm. Frank Zochodne brought with him experience as a principal and a love of music. He helped build Holy Family Catholic School's music program by teaching guitar to the students; he himself played the guitar and keyboard at school Masses and on special occasions.

Meanwhile, on September 16, 1994, the Durham Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board reached an agreement to purchase a site for a new school, to be located on the north side of Simcoe Street within walking distance of St. Joseph's Church. Board staff had been actively seeking a suitable school

site. Local Board trustee Kathleen LeFort responded enthusiastically to the new site, noting that she was very pleased for the community.

Architect David Mills of Mills and Associates Ltd. had been working on plans for the new school. On July 13, 1994, the Board received approval for the new school from the Ministry of Education and Training. The contract for the new school was awarded to Bradscott Construction Ltd. On June 15, 1995, the Board was finally able to purchase the site for the permanent Holy Family Catholic School. Without question, this had been a long process. The projected occupancy date was set for September 1996.

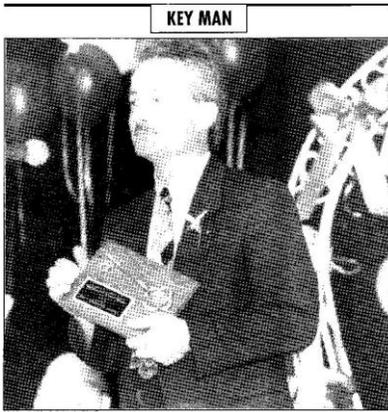
The building was to be constructed on a site only a stone's throw away from the present location, but on the opposite side of Simcoe Street. Construction began in October of 1995 and was expected to be completed in July or August 1996. Holy Family Catholic School's new facility would be a single-storey brick building with a gym, a library and a technology wing.



Again, staff worked very hard to get the new school ready for the first day of school in September. Even though the gym had not yet been completed, when the bell rang on that first day of school, staff and students filed into their brand new building.

Everyone was so excited to move into a beautiful new school. As the school year began, enrolment was 140 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8. It took years of hard work but it was all worth it. This was a great moment for Brock Township. It had its first Catholic elementary school! Frank Zochodne, Jean Niccoli and Gerry Kavanaugh worked together to help create the look of the new Holy Family Catholic School.

The Blessing and Official opening of the new building was celebrated on Thursday, May 1, 1997. There would also be a new logo and prayer for Holy Family.



Holy Family Catholic School principal Frank Zochodne holds ones of the ceremonial keys for the Beaverton school during his address at the blessing and official opening last Thursday evening.

It's official for Holy Family

It took years of hard work, but those who spoke at last week's official opening of Holy Family Catholic School said it was worth it.

School board officials, politicians and church representatives were all on hand for the ceremony which also included musical performances from the school's choir.

"This is a great moment for Brock Township," Mayor Keith Shier said. "You've built the very best for your children here."

Most Rev. J.S. Knight who performed the

official blessing, told the crowd that he had toured the Beaverton school Thursday and spent time with some of the students.

"They impressed on me that schools exist not for themselves alone, but for those who pass through them," he said.

Pointing to a group of students he added, "They are the reason we are here tonight."

The school building opened last September before which classes were held in a church basement and portable classrooms.

After five years as principal— from September 1993 to June 1998 – Frank Zochodne said his goodbyes to the students and staff of Holy Family Catholic School to move to a new school in Oshawa.

In September 1998, Brian Miettinen would become the third principal at Holy Family. He, too, brought the gift of music to Holy Family and played the guitar at many events.

Planning began for the celebration of Holy Family Catholic School's 10 years of education. The anniversary was celebrated on May 12 and began with Mass for the students, with Father Wilfred Lenius as presider. There was a tree planting ceremony at the school. The Sky Hawks arrived in their aircraft and parachuted into the schoolyard. A barbecue lunch was served and students were given a special dog tag with the new logo, a drawing by Karen Enss of Holy Family. In the evening, the celebration continued with another Mass, with our two former principals, Jeananne Ralph and Frank Zochodne, in attendance. The evening ended with a dance at the school for the adults.



After two and half years at Holy Family, Brian Miettinen was transferred to St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic School in December 2000. A new principal, Margaret Geer, took the helm on January 1, 2001. She was instrumental in reaching out to the larger community; as a result, the school became involved in community events such as the Catholic Women's League oral arts, Legion and Lion's oral arts, Remembrance Day at the Cenotaph and trips to Lakeview Manor to interact with the seniors.

Adults get ready for back to school too!



Adults too have been busy preparing for the start of August and September in the fall. At Holy Family Catholic School in Beaverton coordinator Gerry Kavanagh (right) says it's his busiest time of the year. "I clean the ceilings to walls to floors...and everything else in between," he says. Meanwhile, at left, principal Margaret Geer (standing) and secretary Ann Mical look over the student list for the year. Both ladies are busy talking to parents and teachers preparing for the new school year.



WENDY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Holy Family Catholic School's numbers had grown to over 150 students. Principal Marg Geer left Holy Family after five and a half years for her hometown, Port Perry, and became the new principal at Immaculate Conception Catholic School.

A new principal, Dave Laskey, arrived at Holy Family Catholic School. He brought with him the knowledge of technology and Holy Family Catholic School received its first SmartBoard. Mr. Laskey transferred to St. Hedwig's Catholic School in Oshawa in 2009. In September of that year, Liam O'Brien became the sixth principal to walk through the doors of Holy Family Catholic School. His vision for the school was to make it truly Catholic from the moment people walked through the front doors. In collaboration with Jim Brown, a retired Director of Education, the front windows of the gym stage, which visitors see as they

enter the front doors, were transformed to feature The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). Mr. O' Brien left Holy Family Catholic School at the end of the 2010–2011 school year to go to Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic Secondary School. The school's seventh principal, Teresa Maloney, came from the Ottawa Catholic School Board. She took the helm of Holy Family Catholic School in September 2011 with seven years' experience as a principal. The school secretary, Jean Niccoli, is the only original staff member.

With declining enrolment over the past 10 years, Holy Family Catholic School currently has 66 students enrolled. Yet the impossible became possible in September 1990. Through the last 23 years, the school has seen many students, teachers, custodians, educational assistants and principals come through its doors. It has been a very active school, with blessing of the school at the temporary site and then at the permanent site, sacramental celebrations at St. Joseph's Parish, winning sports teams, singing contests, oral arts competitions, talent shows, fundraising dinners, 10th anniversary celebration, Christmas concerts, a wonderful celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation with His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins on April 29, 2012, and so much more.

Since the inception of Holy Family Catholic School, staff and students have been mentored by five wonderful priests: Father Francis Skumavc, Father Bernard Canning, Father Charles Faleiro, Father Wilfrid Lenius and Father Oswin Fernandes. Holy Family Catholic School has been a school full of blessings and some sorrows, but it continues to be strong and thrive because of the dedication and commitment of so many individuals in the past and present and moves towards the future with a firm belief in Catholic education.

There is a saying that "it takes a village to raise a child." In this instance, it took a village to create the dream.



School Prayer

Jesus,
bless our family,
all its members and friends,
with your many gifts of love.

Mary,
we need your help each day,
to keep us safe from harm,
to heal the hurts we cause,
to begin together afresh.

Saint Joseph,
help us to be kind and patient,
with each other's burdens and cares,
and not to miss the wonderful gifts

that together we share.

Holy Family,
Bless our family,
Bless us everyone.
Amen.

School Hymn

We are proud to be – Holy Family
Loud we sing your praise.
Joined in Faith are we – Holy Family
Joyful cheers we raise.

Alma Mater we – pledge our fealty,
Grant to every child –
Peace in our dear homeland,
Love that will abide.

CHORUS

Grateful are we –
for the wisdom you have taught,
Faith, hope and love
Of each we do impart,

Dear school we love,
May you always be
True to the name of
Holy Family

Sing in one accord, joyful in the Lord –
Holy Family.
Knowing we are blest, in our daily quest –
Family unity.

To our school we say, we will live each day –
Loyal to all you claim –
Love, Peace and Devotion
Holy Family's aim.

CHORUS

*Composed by Mary Pat Hay
January 1991*

Principals

Jeananne Ralph (1990–1993)
Frank Zochodne (1993–1998)
Brian Miettinen (1998–2000)
Margaret Geer (2001–2005)
David Laskey (2005–2009)
Liam O'Brien (2009–2011)
Teresa Sansom (2011–present)

Contributors:

Jean Niccoli, Secretary

Trudy Langenberg, Teacher