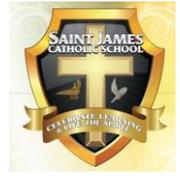




Durham Catholic District School Board



St. James Catholic School

Motto: "Celebrate Learning and Live the Spirit"



In the Beginning

When St. Bernadette Catholic School, one of the only Catholic schools in the Ajax area, became overcrowded, the School Board decided that another Catholic school would be needed in the growing community of south Ajax.

The St. James Catholic School site was purchased on March 30, 1973. At that time, the Superintendent of Business, Grant Andrews, was the principal of St. Bernadette Catholic School. He felt strongly that the community would be better served by expanding St. Bernadette Catholic School on its own site.

It was not until November 1982 that the Board of Trustees formally requested a capital allocation for the site to be developed. Two subsequent requests were made in November 1983 and October 1984. Finally, the allocation was announced in April 1985 and construction began in the fall of 1985. St. James Catholic School formally opened in September 1986.

On November 14, 1986, Bishop Clune heralded new beginnings for St. James Catholic School staff and students and the south Ajax community. The new school in St. Bernadette's Parish opened with an enrolment of 574 students and 32 staff to serve the area bounded by Findley Avenue, Pickering Beach Road and Dreyer Drive. The opening of the new school eliminated 12 portables at St. Bernadette Catholic School.



The official opening took place on Friday, November 14, 1986. Bishop Robert Clune was assisted by Father O’Leary, pastor of St. Bernadette Catholic Church, and Father Cahill, his associate pastor. Bishop Clune spoke to all those present on that day and extended greetings to Sally Longo, Chair of the Board; Susan Morrison, the representative from the Ministry of Education; George Ash, the MPP for the Ajax area; Mr. McLean, Mayor of the Town of Ajax; Dr. Earl Legroix, Director of Education; and Gerry Noonan, the principal of St. James Catholic School. Also present was Michael Moher, Superintendent of Education for the Ajax schools.

At the opening ceremony, the school keys were presented to Mr. Legroix and Mr. Noonan by the builder, Mr. R. Aquino, and the architect, Bruno Appollonio.

St. James Catholic School is located near Lake Ontario at the corner of Harwood Avenue and Clover Ridge Drive. The school has a modern design featuring 18 classrooms, a gymnasium with a stage, a skylight library and a spacious foyer known to us as the Peace Garden. Having designed the school to be a “happy place” for children and teachers, Bruno Apollonio was granted an Ontario Clay Masonry Design Award of Merit.

On June 27, 1988, the school was honoured by a visit from the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Lincoln Alexander.

St. James Catholic School sponsored the 944th metre of the 1997 Special Olympic Torch Run. The school community continues to be extensively involved with the Ajax community.

The school also sponsors and raises money for many charities, such as ShareLife and the St. Vincent de Paul food drive. Many activities within the school allow students the opportunity to give back.

Trees have been planted in the schoolyard for the Eco club and also by the Lakeside path. Every year at Christmas, the students have the opportunity to choose an angel from the school Christmas tree to donate a gift to a boy or girl who is less fortunate.

Student Council elections have brought great leadership to St. James Catholic School. The Student Council leads the school in many activities and helps many charities. Principals play an important role in leading the school to great accomplishments, such as being recognized in 2011 as a School of Distinction for Academic Excellence in the province.



The choir: L to R – Mary Fitzsimmons, Janice Oldman; Standing behind Janice Oldman is Emily DeMelo. Standing next to Gary Noonan are Maggie Miller, Carly DiLuciano, Emily Frasier, Kaitlyn McGillen, Jenna MacGregor, Darcy Mulgrew.

There are many great stories from St. James Catholic School. One of our proudest moments was when the school was awarded and certified as an Eco Gold school. This certification has been maintained for three years. We see struggles as an opportunity to

learn and celebrate our great accomplishments. St. James Catholic School is a place that everyone wants to come back to. The school celebrated its 25th anniversary on November 14, 2011 and is still going strong.

Our Patron Saint

The Grade 7 and 8 students from St. Bernadette Catholic School whose families would be attending the new school were given the honour and responsibility of naming it. The school was named in honour of St. James the Less, an Apostle and cousin of Jesus who held a distinguished position in the early Christian community of Jerusalem. He is the author of an epistle in the New Testament.

James became the first Bishop of Jerusalem and presided over the Church there while the other Apostles went forth preaching the Gospel in other communities. He is mentioned in the Gospel According to Matthew: "Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: Simon, Andrew, his brother, James and John, his brother Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the publican; James the son of Alphaeus." (Mt. 10:2-3)

School Prayer

St. James,
help our school to be a more loving Community
To show friendship as Jesus did.
Help us to live the way of the Lord;
To understand the power of God;
To be kind to others in a peaceful way;
And help us to be better Christians in our world.
Pray that those who are challenged
Receive courage and strength;
And others the insight to recognize that challenge.
St. James,
We ask also for your prayers for our parish,
Our family, our friends, our homes,
Our school and our staff.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

St. James, pray for us.

Principals

Gerry Noonan (1986–1990)

Wilf Clavette (1990–1991)

Larry Corrigan (1991–1996)

Dave Hodkinson (1996–2000)

Liz Spratt (2000–2003)
Brian Miettinen (2003–2005)
Donna Modeste (2005–2009)
Paul Podesta (2009–present)

Contributors:

Paul Podesta, Principal

Mary Fitzsimmons, Educational Assistant

Paula Canapini, Teacher, and the students of her Grade 8 class