



Durham Catholic District School Board

## ***St. Monica Catholic School***



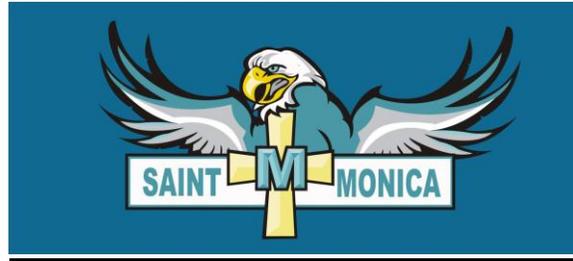
### **In the Beginning**

St. Monica Catholic School, located at the corner of Altona Rd. and Sheppard Ave./Twyn Rivers Dr., was built to address the needs of the growing community in West Pickering. It opened in 1987 at capacity, and an addition was built in 2003. This added a new staff room and a wing that presently holds the primary division; the office is where the previous staff room was located. Due to a growing community, a new Catholic school, St. Elizabeth Seton, opened in Northwest Pickering in 1995, and the boundaries of our school community were changed.

Enrolment has ranged from a high of 750+ students to where it stands now, at 371 students. Over 70 percent of our students are bused to school, due to our close proximity to the main railroad line and the large catchment area, which extends from Hwy 2 in the south into the Concessions beyond Taunton Road in the north.

Our school parish is Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, but many in our catchment area are registered parishioners at St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church.

The school will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2013.



### **Parent Involvement**

St. Monica has always had an open door policy towards the parent community. Hundreds of parents have volunteered over the years, especially in the Kindergarten classes, under the direction of Irene McCready, Jasmine Fredricks and Liz Keith.

The Parent Council has been very active over the years, assisting with school policies, religious events and school-leaving ceremonies, as well as huge fundraising ventures. The annual Spring Fun Fair was a big success for many years. St. Monica parents also ran community Bingo nights and held the first Krispy Kreme donut fundraiser in Canada, selling approximately 5,000 dozen! The dance-a-thons have been well organized and are extremely popular. In 2001, a 'Kiss n' Ride' program was implemented by a group of concerned parents and it is still running successfully.

Every year, the parents are recognized for all their efforts at a Parent Volunteer Tea, which is always well received. The annual Mother's Day Tea and Father's Day barbecues are a big hit every year as well.

Over the past 24 years, St. Monica has enjoyed many guest speakers for parents and students. Author Eric Wilson, City TV's Marilyn Smith, anti-bullying presentations and Boys Adrift are just a few of the memorable ones.



### **Drama/The Arts**

Theatre productions have been a big part of this school. The students have entertained with many talent shows, Folk Dance Jamborees and skipping presentations. Our school has entered (and won) the Durham Region Choir Festival many times. The choirs have also performed at Regional Council meetings upon request.

In the past, the school has put on productions of *Grease*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, as well as *The Nifty Fifties*. In 2000, the *Millennium Production* had every student in the school participating, as did our *Disney Showcase* in 2005.

In 2011, St. Monica was excited to offer instrumental music to our Grade 7 and 8 students, and they were thrilled to perform at the Showcase of the Arts in May 2012.

Reading for the Love of It, an hour where everyone in the school reads alone or in small groups, has been enjoyed here for over 20 years, beginning in the early

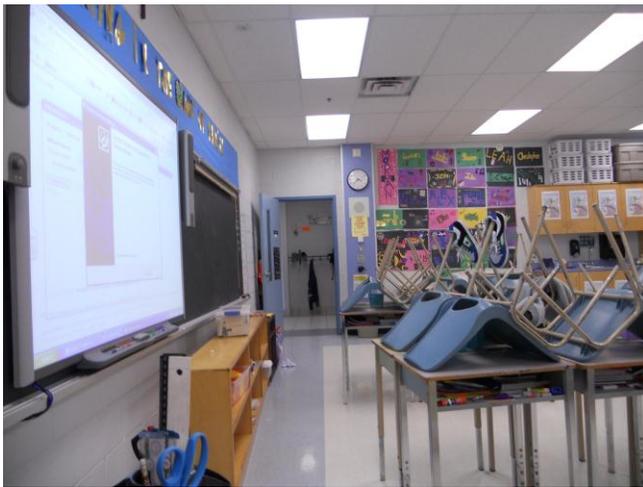
1990s under the direction of our beloved librarian Jackie Johnston. School Book Fairs are held at least twice a year and are very well received.



*The Writing Club*

### **Program Support**

The Program Support department has always been a strong team at our school, under the leadership of a few very competent teachers. Over the years team has worked out of two portables, a port-a-pac room, the Health room, the girls' changeroom, the supply room, the French office and two different classrooms! The students have enjoyed many excursions, shopping trips, swimming, a special needs sewing club and life skills classes. Trips to the corner store and BBQs at the local park have been organized and enjoyed by the students and their committed educational assistants. St. Monica students have been involved in Fitness Friends since its very first year.



*A typical classroom*

## **Parish Involvement**

When it was first built, St. Monica was extremely lucky to be under the guardianship of our beloved Father Jack Culnan at Holy Redeemer Church. Through the years, the school and church have worked together to form a great bond. Starting in 1988, the students would act out the nativity scene every Christmas. Masses have been celebrated at the church and many times in the school gym over the years. Our school graduation/leaving ceremonies were celebrated at Holy Redeemer Church every June until 2005.

Many teachers have worked collaboratively with the church to enhance their classroom programs. Mike Hyland was known throughout the Pickering area for his class portrayal of The Washing of the Feet. Mary Ann Joseph's class always put together Passover Seder suppers, and every year Jerry Georgiadis's classes enjoy his Christmas Around the World unit.

The Knights of Columbus are known at St. Monica for their involvement at our School Kickoff Family Barbeque night and are a great help with pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. The annual K of C Free Throw Competition is an event enjoyed by all students in grades 4 to 8 every year.

## **Walking in the Light of Christ**

The Rosary Apostolates arrive on a Wednesday morning every month to visit our classrooms and have always done a fantastic job of keeping the children involved. These volunteers have made their way to St. Monica for many, many years.

The St. Monica community has always been very generous towards our chosen charitable organizations. The students have participated in Jump Rope for Heart and Hoops for Heart since 1995. In 2007, they raised a whopping \$13,119. The total amount brought in over the years is \$120,949.60.

Our annual Terry Fox Walk has also been a popular fundraiser in the neighbourhood since 1997. The community has raised a total of \$51,587 for this cause.

Other charitable organizations we have supported numerous times are Sleeping Children Around the World, Free the Children – Adopt a Village Program, Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child, Denise House Women's Shelter, Cornerstone Community Centre, St. Vincent Food Bank, Cure Foundation, Rose of Durham, and families in our own neighbourhood at Christmas.

## **A Citizenship Celebration at St. Monica**

Mrs. Blanche Soans and her family were a few of the 31 people in the community sworn in as Canadian citizens at St. Monica Catholic School in November 1994. A number of trustees, principals of schools in Durham Region, and superintendents attended the celebration. Mrs. Soans was an English as a Second Language teacher at St. Monica at the time; as part of her role to promote "multiculturalism," she invited Judge Barosa to hold the ceremony and celebration at the school. Liz Jarrell, the principal, supported the entire event. Mrs. Soans still teaches at St. Monica today.

## **Our Patron Saint**

St. Monica was born in Algeria in 331 AD. She married a man who was generous but had a violent temper. They had three children: Augustine, Navigius and Perpetua. In time, she converted her husband and his mother to the Christian faith in the year 370; he died the next year. Navigius and Perpetua entered religious life, but Augustine rejected Christianity. Still, Monica prayed for 17 years for his conversion. He was baptized by St. Ambrose in 387 and went on to be one of the Fathers of the Church. His writings are still read and studied today, and have greatly influenced the Church through the centuries. St. Monica died in 387. Her feast day is August 27; she is the patron of wives and abuse victims.

## **School Prayer**

St. Monica,  
Help our school to become 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,  
and to be kind to others in a peaceful way.  
Pray that those who are challenged  
receive courage and strength,  
And others the insight to recognize that challenge.  
St. Monica, we ask for your prayers for our families,  
Our friends, our homes, our school and our Staff.  
Amen.

St. Monica, pray for us.

**Principals**

Alan Oerton (1987–1988)

Tim O’Connell (1989–1992)

Liz Jarrell (1992–1997)

Jamie Kettrick (1997–2001)

Catherine Hermans (2001–2006)

Michelle Langtaine (2006–2009)

Mike O’Neill (2009–present)

*Contributors:*

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