

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Scent Sensitivity Awareness Campaign
- Connor Steele - student speaks out about barriers for people with disabilities
- Challenge (In)Equity Conference

Dufferin-Peel C.D.S.B. Trustees

Anthony da Silva
Brampton Wards 1, 3 & 4

Linda Zanella
Brampton Wards 2, 5 & 6

Joyce Anderson
Brampton Wards 7-10

Frank Di Cosola
Caledon/Dufferin

Mario Pascucci
Mississauga Wards 1 & 3

Sharon Hobin
Mississauga Wards 2 & 8

Anna Abbruscato (Vice-Chair)
Mississauga Ward 4

Thomas Thomas
Mississauga Ward 5

Luz del Rosario
Mississauga Wards 6 & 11

Bruno Iannicca (Chair)
Mississauga Ward 7

Esther O'Toole
Mississauga Wards 9 & 10

Dufferin-Peel to launch scent sensitivity awareness campaign

By Brian Heimbecker, Worker Co-chair, Joint Health and Safety Committee - Secondary

In June 2007, the board agreed with a recommendation from the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC Secondary) that requested the creation of a scent sensitivity awareness campaign. The board then determined that the responsibility for this campaign fell under the jurisdiction of the ACCESS Dufferin-Peel Committee. It was at the September meeting of ACCESS Dufferin-Peel that the Scent Sensitivity Awareness Campaign Workgroup was created. The workgroup has met several times, to bring forth an awareness campaign that should be ready for the 2008-2009 school year. Many organizations have taken the path of creating a No-Scents policy. The problem with instituting a policy such as one for regulating the "personal choice" of wearing a scent is that it would require some sort of enforcement mechanism. A school board would have to contend with enforcement of a policy among employees and students/parents for which they serve. An awareness campaign is

See Scent on Page 2

Man of Steele

By Chris D'souza, Equity & Diversity Officer

In November, a tour de force descended upon Dufferin-Peel and began changing the lives of Catholic educators in our midst. Connor Steele, a Grade 12 student from Bradford District High School, conducted his first presentation to over 70 staff from our board, as part the Diversity Workshop series. Connor, who has spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy and a host of other exceptionalities, is confined to a wheelchair. During the workshop he outlined that daily challenges he faces from students and teachers as well. The crux of his message was that the attitudinal barriers were far greater to surmount than the physical ones. With tools like Kurzweil and Dragon NaturallySpeaking, Connor is able to be engaged in all levels of the school curriculum, and has one the highest averages in his school. But changing people's perceptions of his abilities is not so easy. He recounted how he auditioned for a role in the school play and was granted one. The drama teacher then requested that Connor create a monologue about life in a wheelchair, at which point Connor rolled



See Steele on Page 2

Scent continued from Page 1

definitely a better way to go because it involves what we as a Catholic school board are all about; the education of youth, which should include the development of the social skills to interact with others.

The Scent Sensitivity Awareness Campaign for the board will be a multifaceted approach, which will centre on a message that informs of the existence and prevalence of certain sensitivities to scents that may be present in our schools. Our goal is to empower those who are on all sides of this issue; those sensitive to scents, those who might feel alienated or offended by being centred out because of their use of scented products, and those in management roles that must intercede in circumstances that involve health and safety.

We are planning a poster campaign, as well as one that may involve the creation of video presentations to get our message across. Students will also be introduced to the topic of scent sensitivities by seeing the inclusion of a related newspaper article in a new literacy resource guide that is being prepared for Dufferin-Peel students. We also plan to include information about the campaign in the student agendas or day-planners that are distributed in early September and a resource document is in the works for board personnel. This document will include information about scent sensitivities, as well as providing guide materials and frequently asked questions, which are intended to help us navigate through potentially difficult social situations.

Steele continued from Page 1

away in a huff. He wanted to be an actor and not a student in a wheelchair.

Connor so impressed the Dufferin-Peel audience that he has since presented to students across our board. On February 15, he was the keynote at the 3rd Annual Mississauga South Diversity Conference, where close to 900 Grade 7 students gave him a standing ovation. He is also scheduled to be the keynote at Dufferin-Peel’s upcoming Challenge (In)Equity Conference on April 19 at St. Marguerite d’Youville Secondary School.

Connor’s mom, Linda, recently called me and exclaimed that this new career has given meaning to Connor’s life, to which I replied, ”Connor’s life had been steeped in meaning long before these presentations. He is now giving meaning to the people he presents to.”

Connor was recently accepted at the University of Ottawa, which has best support system for students with disabilities in the province. I have no doubt that Connor will become a professor and continue breaking down attitudinal barriers faced by people with disabilities.

Challenge (In)Equity Conference

Date: Saturday, April 19, 2008
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
(roundtable discussion to follow)
Location: St. Marguerite d’Youville S.S.
10815 Dixie Road, Brampton
Cost: \$35 (includes lunch)

This half-day conference for educators engaged in diversity and equity related issues, will explore practical strategies to “centre” marginalized students. Keynote speakers include Dr. Grace-Edward Galabuzi, author of Canada’s Economic Apartheid and Connor Steele, a Grade 12 student, who will discuss discrimination that exists for people with disabilities.

To register, contact Chris D’souza at 416-807-0998 or email chris.d’souza@dpcdsb.org.

For more information about ACCESS Dufferin-Peel, contact Chris D’souza, Accessibility Coordinator at 905-890-0708 ext. 24405 or visit www.dpcdsb.org.