The Pearson News
FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL & CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
November 2012
FREE

Lakeside Academy Students Recruited for Renowned Montréal Julliard Choir

by Alycia Ambrozia

High school students Brianna Percell and Ezra Lewis are looking forward to a lot of rehearsals with the Montreal Julliard Gospel Choir.

The Lakeside Academy teens are the newest members of the world-renowned choir and directed by Dr. Trevor Payne.

The girls said they didn’t even know they were auditioning when they rehearsed with the Montreal Julliard Gospel Choir for an Oct. 23 fundraising gala with the Lakeside school’s All Star Band and Choir.

That very night, Dr Payne asked them to become part of the choir that has performed for such heads of state as Nelson Mandela and Queen Elizabeth II, and with such performers as Ray Charles and Celine Dion.

“We were surprised,” 14-year-old Ezra said of the invitation.

“And really exciting,” Brianna added – a 16, 16.

The girls are hoping that they will have learned enough in time to take part in the Montreal Julliard Gospel Choir’s Dec. 2 engangement at Place des Arts.

“We’ll be rehearsing every Sunday,” Brianna said.

Both girls credited Joann Blon- din, their music teacher at Lake- side Academy in Lachine, for their success.

Brianna said that although she had been a part of church choir from the ages of seven to nine, she had stopped singing altogether by the time she got to high school.

“And one day, I was in the com- puter lab, singing along to a song, when Ms. Blondin heard me,” she said. “She asked the class who it was that was singing but I didn’t want to answer.”

“But when she said it was really good, then I told her it was me.”

That’s when she joined the school choir.

Brianna said that she recently auditioned for the Quebec version of the singing competition The Voice but has yet to hear back from them.

“It doesn’t matter now that I’m with the Julliard Gospel Choir,” she said.

Ezra said she has been singing since she could remember, start- ing off with Calypso music and then into other styles, but she too had stopped by the time she got to high school – until she met up with the music teacher, a musica- lian in her own right.

“She was shy,” she said. “But then the choir became part of my life.”

For her part, Blondin said she was very proud of the two girls – just as she is of the music depart- ment at the school.

“When I first joined here three years ago, the only students that were a loser if you were part of the choir or band,” she said. “But with the introduction of our principal, Michelle Harper, and my col- leagues, we’ve been able to turn that around.”

So much so that the school’s All Star Band has won several awards and even performed at the Mon- treal Jazz Festival last summer.

Both Ezra and Brianna said their fellow Steen Day, noting that both of them believe in giving back; this is because of the music department.

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For her part, Brianna said she was pleased to have been chosen by her peers.

“I look forward to the next council meeting,” she said.

For more information on the planning of the Central Students Committee and the first to include this commissioner at our meetings.

What a wise decision that turned out to be as the students were very impressed with their well-considered input on our pol- icies. It seemed natural to increase this committee to a number of people. This is where real teamwork takes place. The student commission was added as part of their well-considered input on our policies.

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Both Ezra and Brianna said their fellow commissioner, Sam Newell, is truly appreciated.

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Pearson School of Culinary Arts: Gold Medal Plates!

by Alycia Ambroziaik

For a couple of students and a cooking teacher at the Pearson School of Culinary Arts, the Silver Medal they’ve won is just one of their many accomplishments. “I’ve hired many people from Pearson – they’re well-trained,” said Park, one of eight local chefs invited to take part in the competition which, besides raising funds for Olympic athletes – more than $56 million has been raised since the Gold Medal Plates competition began in 2004 – gives chefs across Canada the chance to show off their talents. The top winners across the country – ten in all – will compete in a national contest next February in Kelowna, B.C.

For Park, who was also accompanied by his sous chef, Olivier Vigneault, the only good thing about winning silver is that it qualifies him to take part in next year’s competition. “I come from an Asian culture where it’s first-place or nothing,” he said, adding that he already has next year’s menu in mind. “I know exactly what the judges want.”

His Silver medal entry at the competition, a dish called lipadak O-Nigiri, consisted of a combination of different rices and quinoa mixed with Japanese vinegar topped with torched Quebec Acai; fish lacquered with maple syrup – and that was topped with a mixture of tofu and coldsmith mix with black Spanish caviar and finished with shreds of daikon kimchi (fermented white radish) and crispy nori (edible seaweed), along with lementil capers and homemade soy sauce.

Morales, who is in the professional cooking course at the Pearson School of Culinary Arts, said she had never before taken part in anything like the Gold Medal Plates competition. “It was great – more fun than stressful,” she said.

For teacher Nancy Gagnon, the evening, which included music by Sam Roberts and The Great Big Sea – could not have been better. “We served eight VIP plates to the judges and then pumped out 350 plates to Olympians and guests in one-and-a-half hours,” she said.

And when Chef Antonio Park was awarded the silver medal, we all were proud and thrilled that we had the opportunity to take part in this memorable event,” she added. Park also has next year’s menu in mind. “There’s no doubt we’ll be there,” she added.

The LBPSB Career and Education Fair - a Success

by Alycia Ambroziaik

At one point in most young people’s lives, they have to think about what career would suit them – and it’s often not an easy decision. For a high-school student, the decision is made easier, to some extent, by the LBPSB Career and Education Fair held at Pierrefonds Comprehensive High.

The theme of the day was A Glimpse Into Your Future and that’s exactly what the day was designed to do; representatives from more than 70 organizations – Cygaps, Universities, Vocational, Adult Centres, as well as members from the business and sports communities – were on hand with information about possible career choices, all while exploring the educational pathways required to achieve those goals. Guidance Counselor Sheila Soutjom noted that the fair was not only aimed at students who plan to go onto university. “In today’s changing job market – with so much emphasis on the world of technology and the need for skilled trades people – students have the opportunity to learn about the value of these interesting careers,” she said.

Secondary students from Grade 11 and Grade 9 POP (Personal Orientation Program), as well as students from the Adult Centre, were invited to the event, which was also open to the public.

Scene from the LBPSB Career Fair

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by Alycia Ambroziaik

For a couple of students and a cooking teacher at the Pearson School of Culinary Arts, the Silver Medal their team won at the recent Gold Medal Plates competition in Montreal may have just as well been gold.

‘It was very exciting, a different kind of dynamic – I enjoyed it a lot more than anything I’ve done so far in my cooking career,’ said Adam Rolli who, along with student Stephanie Morales and professional cooking teacher Nancy Gagnon, were invited to be part of Chef Antonio Park’s team at the Montreal edition of the Gold Medal Plates 2012 held earlier this month at the Montreal Science Centre.

Park, formerly of Restaurant Kainan and now owner of Restaurant Park in Westmount, has been a long-time supporter of the culinary school through the hiring of students as interns and bringing a guest chef in the school’s Cuisine de Marche Program.

Reported in Montreal Gazette (November 15, 2012) and Global News (November 15, 2012)
On Trial at Thorndale Elementary

by Mara Frost, Grade 5 French and Grade 6 English Teacher, Thorndale

Grade six students at Thorndale were in for a real treat when Lawyer Mr. Zeppilli came to their class to facilitate a mock court trial.

The trial started when the students were in a large, well-lit classroom that was set up to look like a real courtroom. The students were divided into two teams: the prosecution and the defence. They were given a scenario to act out, which was based on a real-life case that had occurred in Quebec's history.

The students were given the roles of the judge, the jury, the prosecution, the defence, and the witnesses. They had to prepare their arguments and evidence before the trial began.

The trial lasted for several hours, and the students were very engaged. They gave thoughtful and well-reasoned arguments, and the judge was impressed with their performance.

At the end of the trial, the judge announced the verdict, which was in favour of the prosecution. The students were relieved and happy with the outcome.

The experience was a valuable one for the students, as they had the opportunity to learn about the legal system and the importance of due process. They also gained a better understanding of the responsibilities of lawyers and judges.

The experience was a success, and the students were eager to learn more about the legal system in the future.

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New LBPSB-Based Centre of Excellence for Mental Health Website an Important Resource

by Alycia Ambrozik

A grade four teacher in Chauteauguay notices that one of his students appears to suffer from anxiety; a social work technician in Pointe-Claire is worried about one of her students who may be experiencing stress; a principal in Gaspé worries about a student whom the head of the school has had several difficulties.

In the Hudson area, a group of resource teachers have expressed the need for professional development as to strategies that promote resilience and healthy living in youth.

These are just some of the real situations educators face in classrooms across the province. But help is available, thanks to a newly-launched website by the Centre of Excellence for Mental Health (CEMH), which was created last year to serve as a provincial resource to all English school boards across Quebec.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Commission, one in three people will experience mental illness in their lifetime – and only one in five people will receive treatment. The CEMH is designed to promote mental health in the workplace by providing information, resources and tools for employers, employees and stakeholders.

People who experience mental health challenges are able to effectively manage their condition and live life to the fullest. The CEMH website is an important resource for schools and families, as well as for employers and the community at large.

The website is user-friendly and easy to navigate. It contains information on mental health and mental illness, as well as resources for parents, educators and employers.

The site also includes a section for youth, which provides information on mental health, as well as resources and tools to help youth manage their own mental health challenges.

Life can sometimes be a drag – and for educators, life can be even tougher. The Centre of Excellence for Mental Health (CEMH) is here to help.

The CEMH is a collaborative initiative of the Quebec Ministry of Education and the Quebec Government. It is a national centre of excellence for mental health, and is focused on promoting mental health and well-being in the workplace.

The site includes information on mental health and mental illness, as well as resources for parents, educators and employers.

A new section on the website is dedicated to providing information and resources for youth and young adults. This section includes information on mental health, as well as resources to help youth manage their own mental health challenges.

The website is driven by the needs of the people it serves, and it is continually being updated with new information and resources.

The Centre of Excellence for Mental Health (CEMH) is a national centre of excellence for mental health, and is focused on promoting mental health and well-being in the workplace.

a new resource for everyone involved in mental health issues.
**Dorset Remembers**

by Ann Teller

We'd like to share Remembrance Day assembly on Friday, November 9th. Our guest, former World War II WREN, Mrs. Helen Newton described her time in service to our students. Each class created a poster of Remembrance and Peace. The message was clear—we will always remember and honour the day and our veterans.

**Thorndale’s Special Week Of Remembrance**

by Linda Choiniere

CASCA (Community and Spiritual Care Anc); VISIONS 2000; Lakeside Academy; Lakeside Academy's Community Service Department has just recently hosted its 4th Annual Hema-Quebec Blood Drive. Lakeside students recognize and appreciate the needs of Hema-Quebec, where 1000 donations must be collected daily. In order to maintain the blood supply required by the Quebec, great efforts must be made to recruit donors and encourage the generosity of all who are in a position to share ‘the gift of life’. In response to this demand, our students welcome the opportunity to take on this initiative every year.

**Lakeside Hosts Hema-Quebec Blood Drive**

by Victoria Pinnell

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**Stuffy’s Come Alive at Dorset!**

by Ann Teller

We had our monthly Celebra-
tion of Excellence assembly to recognize students and share tal-ents.

We congratulate Mrs. Harwood and Mrs. Lafourcade on their 25 years of excellent service and they will be Ritet at our school board tonight. Kindergarten cele-
brates the season of Hibernation and Migration and their stuffies (only when at home will sleep) tonight. The Teddybear sleeper is an annual Kindergarten affair at Dorset.

The kids bring their stuffies animals to school to “show off” to their fellow classmate. But in the night they settle in as these ‘good little’ toys. We think it’s quite touching how the kids settle in the night. party and make sure they are in bed. We hope the kids in the next day that they are surprised by the shenanigans and will not have to clean up! We videotape the “party” and show to the kids some days later, to get them ready for the magical belief of Christmas. We hope they too will be prepared to show it to the kids sometime that night, but in the night they settle in as these ‘good little’ toys.

**Margaret Manson News**

by Phyllis Orofino

We needed no time in getting re-
ceptive of the Broad-
way production of “The Wizard of Oz”. Seven-day, grade 5 and 6 students learned the songs and getting ready to audition for roles in the production. A few of the students were quite challenging, however, the stu-
dents sound great. Watch future newsletters for more details about our progress and our show dates! Here is what else is brewing in our music class.

Kindergarten are learning to name and play our percussion instruments. We have learned some of the instruments are “frustrates”, others are “trampes” or “secrets”. We will soon begin to play the tyl-
ophones.

Cycle 2. Grade 3 are progressing quite rapidly on the re-
corder. The grade 4s are learning to play the recorder we have been playing short, well

Cycle 3. We have begun our percussion ensembles. Some of the students include guides that our students (or I should say their parents) have kindly brought to school. We also have included the piano and the drum set. Our first musical pieces consist of cre-
ating music by the students. It truly is a collaborative effort demonstrated through the sharing of ideas and by implementing them through trial and error. On November 14th and 16th, the students are involved in the art of creating a soundtrack for film. With the help of a cultural advisor provided by the Quebec government through a program called “Culture in the Schools”, an on-site workshop about film and then the students will realize their own soundtrack (special effects, music, etc.) to accompany an animated film.
Lindsay Place Totem Pole Project

by Alycia Ambrozik

Students at St. John Fisher Sr. elementary school in Pointe Claire will soon be getting a lot of new sports equipment, thanks to a more than $10,000 donation from the Permacon company cycling team and the Grand Défi Pierre Lavoie. “It’s a jaw-dropping amount,” St. John Fisher Sr. principal Tony Di Vittori said, adding that exactly what kind of equipment the student school will purchase hasn’t yet been decided. “We haven’t settled down yet on the amount – we’ll meet with the physical education teacher to decide what we’ll get.”

Di Vittori said the $10,655 donation came through the five-member cycling team from the Permacon Co. that took part in the Grand Défi Pierre Lavoie, an annual cycling event that began in 1990 as a one-man fundraising project in the Saguenay region after two of Lavoie’s children died of lactic acidosis, an illness which is caused when lactic acid builds up in the bloodstream faster than it can be removed.

Di Vittori explained that each year, one of the cycling team members at the Permacon company – which deals in paving and decorative concrete products for masonry and landscaping – can choose a school of his or her choice and whatever the team raises over $10,000 goes to that school. The first $10,000 goes towards research into lactic acidosis.

And, as it happens, one of the members of the Permacon team was Gary Bechle whose son, Jacob, attended St. John Fisher El- ementary Sr.

“And that’s how we came to get such a great donation,” said Di Vittori.

Belisle said he was happy the Permacon team could raise the funds.

“I know the school will put it to good use,” he said.

Di Vittori said the Deh, which has grown into a province-wide event, also has a Get Up and Move! challenge in which students and their families accumulate energy points by doing physical exercises. And more recently, the organization added a Sharpen Your Minds challenge in which students accumulate energy credits for every 15 minutes of brain exercises, such as reading, homework and even some computer games.

“We’ve participated in the Get Up and Move! challenge for the past two years and will be doing it again in May,” Di Vittori said.

“And for the first time, we are doing the Sharpen Your Minds challenge throughout the month of November.”

Permacon Makes Large Donation to St. John Fisher Sr.

Mme Coiteux, Principal, St. Charles School

This year, St. Charles is proud to have a recent graduate place 2nd in the prestigious 2012 Pfizer Canada Young Achievers. Aidan Matthews (2012 graduate) was recognized for his community involvement both in and out of school and his academic achievements. A heartfelt congratulations to Aidan Matthews for placing 2nd in his age category, what an accomplishment! The Young Achiever event is spearheaded by The Chronicle and Cités Nouvelles in collaboration with many corporate sponsors including Place Canada. The program was conceived as a way to celebrate outstanding young people (ages 10 to 17) for their achievements in and around the West Island – whether it’s in the classroom, within their community, on the athletic field or simply lending a hand when needed. St. Charles is proud to include, amongst its alumni, 3 Young Achievers in the last 2 years. We are proud of all our students (current and alumni) as you “reach for the stars” and continue to achieve great things.

St. Charles Elementary’s Young Achievers

Aidan Matthews (1st from right standing) took part in the St. Charles Grade 6 students’ “Used Book Sale” during the 2011-12 school year.

Beechwood Collects Snowsuits for “Share the Warmth”

by Ariella A. and Jasmine B., the Grade 5 Enviro Club

The Grade 5 students of the Enviro Club at Beechwood Elementary School have decided to collect snowsuits to donate to ‘Share the Warmth’, an organization that collects snowsuits and gives them to people who can’t afford them. Many children have to wear snowsuits that are too small, or ripped with the stuffing poking out. Just imagine if winter was coming and you didn’t have a nice warm snowsuit. We feel this is a huge problem. It would be perfect if you can bring in old snowsuits that have been gently used before November 10th.

Movember at Westpark

Westpark School raises funds for a number of worthy causes. Last year our male teachers and caretaker started a new project to raise awareness and funds for research into prostate cancer. Our school community thanks Steve Santella, Marc Wettering, Serge Bouchard and Steven Scheer for this initiative and their good humor as they grow the moustaches. On November 30 we will hold a special Movember Dres Down day. Donations will be collected at school and at the Movember website. (http://a1a.movember.com) Search: Westpark
A madcap world of whimsy is sure to enchant on Dec. 13, 14 and 15 as Oompa-Loompas, children inflating into blueberries and a chocolate waterfall take over the stage at the John Rennie High School Actors’ Studio presentation of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

The chooey-gooey family classic based on the 1964 book by Roald Dahl will come to life as a cast of more than 65 characters – all students from grades 9 to 11 – bringing all the classic elements and songs that generations of children and their parents have come to enjoy.

In the book, a young lad named Charlie Bucket is among five winners of golden tickets that allow them to enter into the weird factory of the even weirder Willy Wonka. But not everything is as sweet as it first seems as Wonka puts them through very unusual tests of character.

Director James Colley’s passion for his job was obvious last week during a rehearsal that included the boat scene with Oompa-Loompas, and the always entertaining “greedy girl turns into a floating blueberry” scene. “The talent we have here is incredible – the characters are coming through clearly,” Colley, head of the John Rennie’s renowned Actors’ Studio, said while reminding the students – who have been rehearsing every school day as well as Saturdays – to remain in character at all times.

“You’re not watching the play, you’re in it,” he pointed out.

Colley also praised the student-led production team as well as parent volunteers who are working on everything from costumes to producing realistic chocolate syrup for the waterfall.

“For example, the stage will have real chocolate waterfall and don’t be surprised when a cast member blows up into a blueberry,” Colley said.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory will be presented Dec. 13 and 14 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 15 at 3 p.m. at the Louise Chalmers Theatre, John Rennie High School, 501 St. Jean Blvd., in Pointe-Claire.

Tickets can be purchased at the door or online at http://www.jrhactorsstudio.com.

The cost is $12 for adults, $6 for students and seniors.