

ECSSA News

Edmonton Catholic Support Staff Association

November 2008



Message from the President

The months of October and November were very busy months for Union Activities.

Danny Burrell and I attended a Liaison meeting along with Paul Gagne and Charolette Player, on October 2nd. We discussed several items of concern that members had brought forward. Our next meeting will be the third week of November. Our General Meeting on October 22 was attended by 75 members and since quorum was reached we were able to discuss and vote on several items that were brought forward, including voting for a new secretary. Lise Viel will be the Executive Secretary until the end of June, 2009. Thank you to those members who attended. I hope that you brought back news to the other members at your site. Every site has a site contact; who is the contact at your site?

Danny Burrell and I also attended the CEP National Convention in Montreal from October 25-30th. It was my first convention so I was very interested in finding out what it was all about. There were over 1000 delegates from across Canada. Being a part of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union opens doors to all the different activities and concerns of the difference aspects of members in our union. We had two special guests. On Tuesday we were visited by Gilles Duceppe of the Bloc Quebecois and on Wednesday the special guest was Jack Layton of the NDP Party. We also supported our fellow CEP Union members of Petro Canada Montreal who have been locked out since November 2007. Over 800 delegates were transported by school buses to the Petro Canada site, where a rally was held, in the pouring rain, as a show of strength and support. Overall the convention was quite an interesting and informative event. A great learning experience for this new president.

On November 2nd I was invited to speak on behalf of the support staff at a celebration for the 120th anniversary of the district, the blessing of the retirement plaques and of course Catholic Education Sunday. The following is an excerpt from my address:

"I am truly honoured and humbled to be here today to represent the support staff employees in celebrating this occasion, the 120th anniversary of Edmonton Catholic Schools. Today we also honour those retired employees who have served our district. The people whose names are on these plaques represent the values our district stands for in Catholic Education.

This day, Catholic Education Sunday is a time to reflect on what we as employees of Edmonton Catholic Schools represent. We contribute to the values of Catholic Education in our day to day relationships with our fellow colleagues and in those that we touch every day. I thank those whose dedication we were blessed with for so many years and those many more that will represent the best of what our Catholic School District values in a support staff employee."

The afternoon was a history lesson with archive items displayed from old books to uniforms and pictures.

Our regular Executive and Board of Directors meetings were held on November 4th and 5th, respectively and on November 6th I attended the celebration of the New Contract employees. On November 13 to 15th Lise Viel and I attended the CEP Fall School in Red Deer. We took part in the Collective Bargaining sessions, preparing ourselves for our upcoming negotiations in the spring.

I speak from the heart when I say that I am honoured to represent the support staff of our district. Thank you for this opportunity.

Cheryl Andrews, President

One of the concerns brought forward at the General Meeting was Computer Training. Below is a list of available courses and contact information.

Microsoft Office Training

Introductory training in basic district (Office) software.

1. File Management
2. Excel
3. Webmail
4. Intro to MyECSD Portal
5. Intro to Office2007

Audience: All ECS Staff

If you are interested in any of the training please email Terry Station stationt@ecsd.net indicating the course or courses you are interested in, your name and site.

Please continue to check the Staff Development Calendar on MyECSD:

<https://myecsd.net/departments/hrs/Pages/Default.aspx> for future dates and other available courses.

Please continue to check the above website for upcoming sessions.

At the general meeting a great discussion ensued regarding the very difficult and increasingly demanding job facing the Head Secretaries at our schools. We have contacted Human Resources and have had in-depth meetings with them regarding this very serious issue. Look for upcoming information regarding the ongoing work that needs to be done to resolve this situation.

ECSSA Library

Many resources are available to ECSSA members. Go to our website, www.ecssa.ca, and click on the "Professional Development and Wellness Library" link. There is a catalogue of the hundreds of books, magazines and media resources covering subjects from anger management, body image, business communication, classroom management, conflict,

Caring Report

Thank you!

ECSSA would like to thank the wise and proactive thinking principals who have invited us out to discuss the ECSSA Collective Agreement with their staff as part of the school's PD. We would also like to thank our members at these sites for their initiative in suggesting this to their principals.

We extend our prayers and sympathies to: Helena Kraus of St. Monica on the loss of her mother, Donna Stelte of St. Benedict on the passing of her grandmother-in-law, Yvonne Huber of Archbishop Joseph MacNeil on the loss of her brother, Kim Elvidge of St. Justin on the passing of her father, Irene Weleschuk of St. Lucy on the loss of her father, Esther Gerguson of Alternative Education Centre on the loss of her brother, Chris Gagnon of St. Joseph High School on the loss of her mother and Lisa Didedricks of Archbishop O'Brien on the loss of her mother-in-law,.

Flowers and wishes for a speedy recovery were sent to: Vanessa Vandrkooi of Austin O'Brien, Esther Ferguson of Alternative Education Centre and Nancy McNally of Blessed Kateri.

Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta

Our provincial government has struck a new committee to study the future of special education in Alberta, to quote their website, *"Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta is a new initiative of Alberta Education. The project will create a new special education framework that includes vision, principles, policy, accountability and funding. We invite all interested Albertans to share their views as together we set the direction for special education."*

This project is in great importance to all ECSSA members. It could greatly affect the number of SNTA's there will be in classrooms. We encourage everyone to use the online consultation (survey) to let our government know what we believe is important for the future of special education and education.

Please go to the website <http://www.education.alberta.ca/department/ipr/settingthedirection.aspx> and complete the online consultation.

Education Bursary

ECSSA is proud to offer to our members support for their ongoing professional development.

An Education Bursary may be given to members under the following guidelines:

To qualify:

The applicant must have been a member of the Local (paying dues) for over 12 months.

Approval must be obtained from the Education Bursary Officer **prior** to commencement of course.

Course should be career related.

An applicant must give a full description of the course, describing the benefits to his/her career.

After the completion of course, the **original receipt** must be provided for reimbursement.

Due to the number of people who attend, District sponsored PD activities and the Alberta Special Education Conference will not be considered.

The Local shall pay to a maximum of \$300.00 per member every two years.

Policy #4 ECSSA Policies and Procedures.

To apply, complete the form available on our website.

AS MY GRANDMOTHER SAYS,
"THE PURPOSE OF AN EDUCATION IS TO REPLACE AN EMPTY MIND WITH AN OPEN MIND."

Willie Adams
Winner of CEP's Peace Prize

ECSSA Report

It was suggested at the general meeting that the ECSSA Board of Directors, Executive and Employer Liaison let all members know what is happening. We will try to include a report in the newsletters to update you.

Last month ECSSA dealt with on your behalf:

Many calls and meetings with members and HR about medical leaves. Investigated and assisted a member with a harassment complaint. Filed a grievance re: transfer. Met with Manager Employee Relations about grievance. Many phone calls re: grievance. Grievance resolved. Worked with one member on a reassignment issue. Met with Staffing Officer re: reassignment. Met with a member re: reassignment. Met with Manager Employee Relations re: reassignment. Met with National Representative re: reassignment, leaves, concerns with ASEBP. Met with members from a site re: breaks and employee relations. Met with Elk Island CEP and discussed common concerns. Met with Manager Employee Relations re: work site conflicts. Calls and emails re: Job Bulletin. Worked with a member on a family bereavement leave. Prepared for and attended the General Meeting, published newsletter and Fast Fact sheet, attended the CEP National Convention. Presented at a school PD about collective agreement and concerns. Many calls and emails re: breaks, staffing bulletin, leaves and other general concerns or information were answered.

New member packages were sent out to welcome our new support staff, prayers and flowers were sent out to our members dealing with loss or illness, the ECSSA library was accessed by our member who were interested in more information on a great variety of sources, early planning was done for our banquet in May and the Education Bursary was available to members pursuing professional development.

Members of our Board of Directors are attending a workshop on Social Justice sponsored by the Alberta Federation of Labour and a committee concerning Occupational Health and Safety with our school board.

Please remember that ECSSA is you. If you would like us to be involved in any other areas or need help in any way please contact us. If you have an interest in helping out your other support staff members in any way please contact us as we are always interested in welcoming new members onto our Board of Directors.

MMMMM Cookies

To enter this month's contest, please email us your name, site, and the answer to this question: What is one of the dates and locations of ECSSA's Round Table meetings being held this month?

Send answer to ecssa@shaw.ca. Individual entries only. Winners will be decided by a random draw.

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Support Staff

The glue that holds it all together!!