

Good News Newsletter

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

2009/2010

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Why a good news letter? What is it?

The Good News Letter is a publication from the YMCA Academy. Last year, the Art of Living class decided that too often the news focuses on the negative aspects of our society. They decided to do

something about it and to write their own Good News Newsletter to highlight all of the positive things that happen at our school. It was a hit, and we are happy now to present the second edition. It

has become a sort of school newspaper, with submissions from many students and staff. We hope that you enjoy it, and we welcome any articles for future editions.

Mixed Media and Self Expression

The grade 11 media arts class has some good news!! We have created an image to represent what is going on in Thailand. The coup in Thailand 2006, the rebellions (on the left) are fighting to get their old government back and to restore order in the country. The military (on the right) are fighting to keep the current government. This was good news because the students of the grade 11 media arts class got to show how they feel about a global issue and



this is good news is that we (grade 11 media arts class) gained experience with different forms of media arts and how we can use them in the best way. Overall we think that this was good because we

that they are concerned about things happening in places other than just here. This project also gave us a chance to show other people what is going on in Thailand and that what is happening is wrong and should be fixed. Another reason that

had a chance to show how we feel and got to teach other people something about this current issue and we were able to learn about new and old forms of media arts.

Good News Art

Jennifer McLaren
experimenting with
photography



Title: Untitled
Artist: Jennifer McLaren
Date: April 20, 2010
**Mediums: Acrylic paint
on Canvas**

The students in art classes this year, spent a great deal of time and effort on their works. All of the staff and fellow students are very impressed as to what was accomplished. Well done everyone!

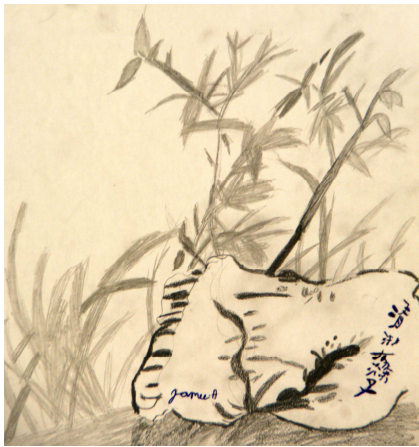


This painting is about the diversities that one can find in art throughout its history. The bountiful spectrums of design and colourful infusions, the powerful meanings behind simple lines compared to those bursting with shapes and figures, the way that Da Vinci was an inventor as well as an artist, yet Picasso was a tortured child prodigy. The way that I have chosen to convey this theme, is through the contrast between day and night, land and space, I'm saying that no matter how different something

or someone is compared to something or someone else, it or they still possess the power to be beautiful in *their own way*. I used watered down acrylic paint and sponge-tip paint applicators to soften the base of the painting, and then later used thick undiluted acrylic paint and sand to add a bolder side to the presentation of the image. I very much enjoyed using the sand and beads to make a more realistic looking piece of land and making a little UFO to give the quality of my scene a little twist. Every single colour

you see on this painting, I blended myself. I actually had a lot of fun making the colours because even when I made a mistake, it still turned out to be a cool looking colour. As I sat and created this painting, I could feel the passion and creativity pulsing like blood through my hands as if my hands were intertwined with the very core of my heart.

By: Jennifer McLaren



Title: **Spring in China (left)**
 Artist: Jamee Anderson
 Mediums: Pencil on paper

I took a picture of Asian art from an art text book. I looked at the drawing to see where there were dark and light areas. While I was drawing the same drawing, I saw Asian writing so I put it in my sketch. It makes me feel like am in China. I like the writing, the shading on the rock, and my use of lines as well.

Jamee Anderson and
 Sasha Klotz working
 on their collages



Collage (unfinished) (left)
 Jamee Anderson
 Magazine and newsprint on wood

This process includes layering newspaper clippings on top of magazine clippings with glue. Paint will be added in the next stage. I am starting to see a theme coming together.

Through out the year, the art classes have had many special guests to teach them new skills and techniques that they can apply to their works. The collage workshop is just one example



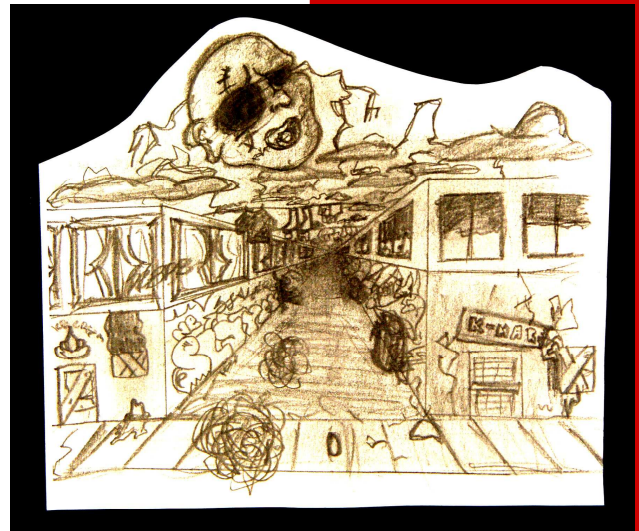
Landscape (fields) (left)
 Noah Bailey
 Pencil and pencil crayon on paper

A self-created image. I drew it then coloured it in. I like how I added perspective to the scene to make it more realistic. I like the colours I used

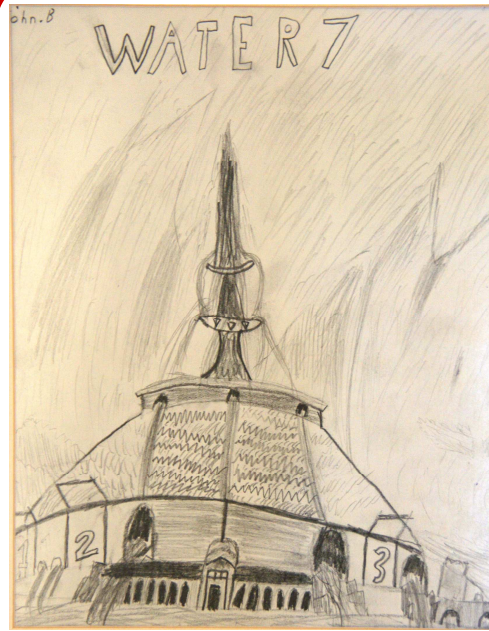


Landscape (urban) (right)
 Noah Bailey
 Pencil on paper

I drew it. I like the shading I used and I like how I use perspective once again.



John Barron working on his collage

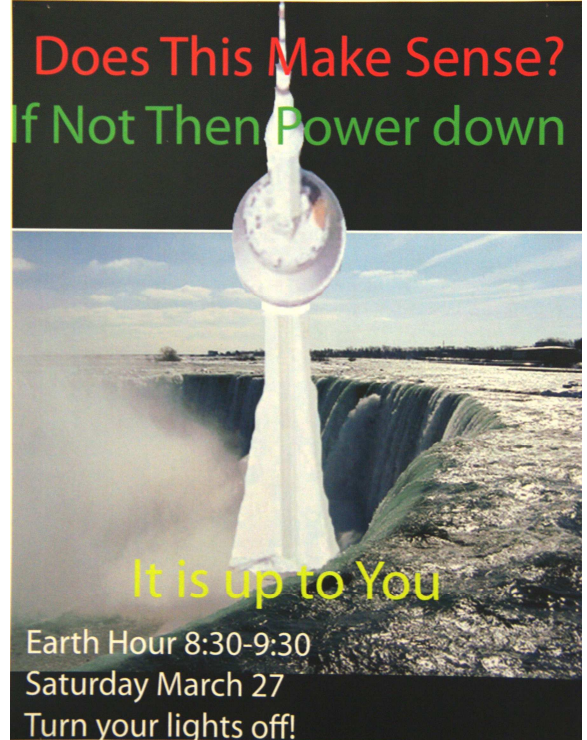


Water 7 (left)
John Barron
Pencil on paper

I used cross hatching, shading and other types of line to create this sketch. I was inspired by the Anime One piece. I'm proud that I could recreate the town in One Piece in perspective and detail.

Earth Hour poster (right)
John Barron
Photoshop

I took a picture of the CN Tower and put it over one of Niagara Falls in Photoshop. I'm proud about how I made the CN Tower look like it was going over the water all.



Dirt poster (left)
Theo Silverman
Dirt, string, sand, rocks, paper and marker

I glued the dirt down, mixed in sand, glued the rocks and made letters out of the string and glued them down. I'm proud of how the dirt spread across the paper.



Tessellation
Theo Silverman
Paper and glue

I cut a corner from the left side of a piece of paper and glued it to the other side, then cut off the bottom and put it on the top. I made more copies of that and glued it on a black piece of paper. I am proud of how effective the pattern turned out.



Poetry & Writing

Hello, my name is Mackenzie. I am a West Highland White Terrier. Before the hurricane hit a year ago, I was a happy dog with a great family. My master Fred was a mechanic and loved me a lot. We used to live in a small house outside the downtown core of Toronto, Canada. We loved each other, and found our life quiet, but happy. That was until the hurricane hit. Now I live on the streets, scavenging for food, trying to find my way home. I don't know where my master is.

I was out one night getting food behind a restaurant; it usually had the best food. Tonight's special was chicken scraps. Normally it's tasteless salad, so I was glad for the chicken. I was minding my own business when an employee came out of the restaurant and started to yell at me. He went back inside and got a rolling pin and started chasing me. I ran for my life, but the employee was really fast and soon I was dodging his rolling pin. When a pack of dogs bit the employee and he went down, I was amazed these strangers had helped me. The leader of the group said, "We saw that you were in trouble and needed help and that's why we came. My name is Shadow. These are my friends Fluffy, Angus and Candy."

"Hello, my name is Mackenzie. I am lost and I've been trying to find my way home."

"Well you can stay as long as you want. We live in a small abandoned house near here," said Shadow.

"Thank you so much. I haven't stayed inside for awhile."

"OK. Let's head on home," Shadow said. When I got to their house I was amazed how much warmer it was in there compared to where I usually slept.

The next day we went out to look for food. I recognized the street; it was Yonge and Dundas. "Shadow, it's really busy around here. Why don't we go to a side street or something?"

"Sorry, Mackenzie. The best food is where people are." I looked around; there were thousands of people moving about. A band was playing and the noise was almost unbearable. I noticed that there was construction going on, so I couldn't really hear Shadow talking to me. He almost yelled, "Ready?"

"Yes," Angus said.

"OK. Operation 'steal as much food as you can' is on."

I was so confused. Were they going to steal from people? I watched for a minute as Candy took some food off a table near the band. Shadow said, "Why aren't you looking for something to take?" I was reluctant to steal anything, but Shadow started to say if you don't steal anything then you can't eat. If you don't eat, you're going to die! Die, I can't die. If I die, I won't find my master, and that's the whole reason I keep living. I went to a table and took a chicken leg. I thought that I got away but the guy selling them saw me. I started to run through the crowd. Shadow and the others followed. I crossed the road and headed down the sidewalk. There was an entertainer near the mall and I had to dodge him. With all the commotion I ended up at the turnstile at the front of the mall. I didn't want to go inside, but I didn't have a choice because the man that I stole the chicken from was still chasing me.

When I got inside, Shadow and the others were close behind. We ran down the escalators and a guy that looked like a policeman started running after us yelling, "Stop!" The other guy lost us in the crowd, but the policeman was still on to us. We ran through Sears and Fluffy jumped onto one of the beds and started to drag the blanket around. "Hey, it's dark in here," Fluffy said. I said, "Then take it off." Soon the blanket got caught on a low shelf and tripped the policeman. Fluffy got away and we started running for the

Museum

A haiku by Jessie MacLaverty

Ancient artifacts
Each one telling a story
You just need to hear

Walk in Someone Else's Shoes

By: David Ostos

I'm so sick of people criticizing others for what they have done, when they should be trying to understand each other, and if they don't, they should walk in each other's shoes, see how each other's lives their lives and what each of them have done in their lives to survive day after day after day.

Continued...

Sears exit. We found ourselves on the main drag of the mall.

“Guys, we need to get out of here,” I said. Angus agreed. We ran to the door and outside. We ended up farther down Yonge St. I said, “There’s a few police after us I think. Yeah, they’re definitely after us.” We started to run further south. Soon the animal rescuers came to try to catch us. They started to yell my name. “Mackenzie, Mackenzie!” one of them shouted.

“I saw a picture of myself all over the telephone poles. I think my master’s still looking for me. Maybe these people will lead me to him.”

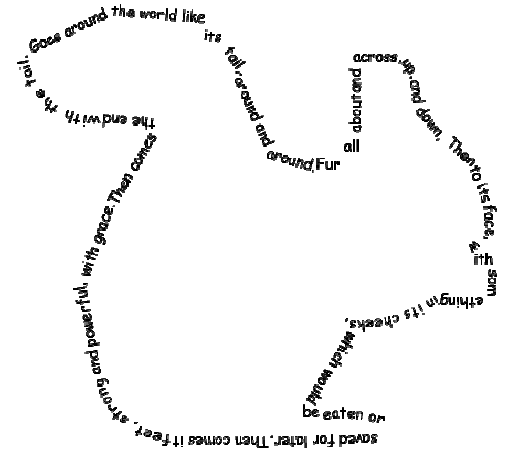
“I hope you’re right,” Angus said.

“You guys run. I’ll try and let them catch only me.” Shadow and the others ran off. I got caught but I was happy because they said that I was going home.

The next day Fred came to the pound and picked me up. I was so happy I licked his face and barked in happiness. Fred said, “Alright, alright, we’re going home Mackenzie, we’re going home.” When we got home I got into bed and had a good night’s sleep. I was happy that we were finally reunited.

Mackenzie’s Adventures

By John Barron



Poem by: Alex Shynkareno

Class Projects

The Academy Fashion Class Gets Bootie-licious

By Jaimie Morgan-Lynette

During the month of March, the YMCA Academy Fashion class worked together to make 20 pairs of felt booties for the 42 Charles Street child care centre. The project was an initiative of my grade 12 Fashion class (me and my teacher Michelle), our volunteer Peggy Manis, Alexi and Raquel of the dance class, Academy students Katryna, Alex S, and Jessie and Academy accountant Kamini. I’m currently working in the child care centre as a co-op student, so the project was a great opportunity for me to continue bonding with the preschoolers I work with each day.

When we completed the project, we invited the children up to the 5th to try on their new booties and have a parade around the school. It was a great end to a fun and educational project.



YMCA Academy and Evergreen Get Back to Nature (in the City!)

By Melissa O'Leary and Zareh Demirdji— and students

For about two weeks in June, about twenty YMCA Academy students and staff made a daily trek to Evergreen's Brickworks. As part of a culminating project, four classes and two teachers participated in this cross curricular project. Zareh's Grade 9 Science and Grade 11 Biology, and Melissa's Grade 9 Geography and Grade 12 Environment class all worked together to create a Barefoot Path in the Children's Playground. There were some trials and tribulations, and a lot of rain which caused some flooding, but our team effort made for a rich learning experience – and fun time – for all of us.

For the first time at the Academy, a Grade 9 Geography student arrived at school with a pick-axe. As much as it was a strange sight, it speaks volumes about the student's dedication to the Barefoot Path. Working on this project was an amazing learning experience for all of us. Rain or shine, the students were always happy to be getting out of the classroom and doing "real" work where they felt like they were contributing in a meaningful way.

Not only did we enjoy our time at Brickworks, but our daily pilgrimage down the Rosedale ravine from Yonge and Bloor become a lovely time for us to chat and get to know each other in a way that is difficult to do at school. All of us learned so much about project planning and the need for flexibility – the great thing about this project is that the teachers were as actively engaged in learning about how to create the path as our students. In fact, some of our students had expertise in different areas, so they were often our leaders. We'd like to thank Morgan, Becky, Heidi, Ferruccio and everyone who helped us out (and fed us delicious trail mix to keep our energy up!) along the way. We are already looking forward to our next project with Evergreen!



We asked some of the students for their input and experiences during the project, and here's some of their responses:

Jamie T. (Grade 9)

"Building a bare foot path is our goal, this might sound easy but it's not. To build a bare foot path you need a certain area with many different types of materials and plants. This is pretty hard to do in a downtown environment surrounded by an old brick manufacturing plant. So instead we had to import all the materials to give the same effect. To give the sensations of different materials we dug out a path to put in rocks, grass, mulch, and other objects on hand. Luckily Evergreen (the company managing the project) picked an area that sits on an old quarry, therefore we had an abundance of different materials to use. With all these materials laid out on the path, the idea is to give yourself the sensation on your feet of walking through the given theme. Although we just started doing this project yesterday the idea has been in motion for many months in hopes to bring a new greener approach to parks in the Greater Toronto Area. The area lies conveniently in the Don Valley park system just off of Pottery Road and Bayveiw. The bare foot path is opening soon and for more information visit: <http://ebw.evergreen.ca/>

Avi K. (Grade 11)

I really enjoyed this project it was hands down one of my favourite projects a have done in a school setting. The openness of the people at Evergreen and their welcoming attitude created a really inviting place to work and grow. I feel that I took quite a leadership role with the Brickworks projects and tried to set the physical pace. I enjoyed the actual physical labour part of the project more than the design and planning. This is because I usually just jump right in and skip the planning stage I just plan and adjust as I go along. So to wrap it up I really liked this project and would jump at the chance to do it again.



Theo S. (Grade 9)

The grade 9's, 10's, and 12's of The YMCA Academy will be working at the Evergreen Brickworks for the next week and a half on a barefoot trail. The barefoot trail has a path leading to a beaver dam. Around the beaver dam there is a moat, the moat is covered with rocks and bricks so you can walk on it. We have already finished the beaver dam and half of the path. The barefoot path is meant for children to play on. They assume that once they finish they will have about 2000 to 3000 people coming through on a farmers market day and about 300 children playing on the barefoot path. The barefoot path should be done by June 11th.



John B. (Grade 9)



The grade 9s and the grade 12 environment class are constructing a bare foot path for the Evergreen Brickworks. We are there to create, design and lay all the materials we need to make this path. The teachers started the planning for the project around 2 months before starting work. Three weeks ago we went down to check the site out and have a tour. The tour went well. On Monday March 31st we started drawing a lay out of what materials we need and where everything is going to go and be like. Today June the 2nd we are in the middle of making the path and just laid the bricks. Yesterday we had to take all the mulch off the ground to make it the edges of the path. Turned out our path was way too big and soon we are going to have to put the extra mulch back. The reason for this path is so that kids can have fun stepping over all kinds of materials. This Project is for our science and geography marks.

Alex C. (Grade 10)

The YMCA Academy grade 9s and grade 12s have gone to the Brickworks to build things to help improve the Brickworks site. There are two things happening there one is building a trench and putting a bridge over it and building a barefoot path. At the Brickworks three other people and I are making a trench so that the water will not flood around the fake beaver dam that is made for children to go through. Since it is around a place for kids, we have to make a bridge around the fake beaver dam so it is safe. We dug the trench with shovels and a pick axe. We are making the bridge out of brick and lime stone, also in some parts crushed brick. We are also putting mud in between the cracks of the lime stone. They planned on making the trench and bridge the night before, when it rained. That is what I am doing at the Brickworks.



Sarah B. (Grade 12)

The Academy's partnership with Evergreen at Brickworks is a fantastic combination of learning and the environment for students. The barefoot path is an inspiring project inducing creativity and thoughtfulness in students, teaching them the importance of planning ahead and working together.

Peacemakers at The YMCA Academy

By Melissa O'Leary, YMCA Academy Teacher

During Peace Week, students at The YMCA Academy proved that everyone can contribute to peace in their own way. The students were involved in activities at the school and in the Peace Medallion Celebration at Metro Central. Not only did many students volunteer on the evening of the celebration, but they also worked collaboratively to produce a video that was premiered at the awards and a "Good News Newsletter" which together highlight many of the Academy's contributions towards peace.

During the registration process at the awards ceremony, students were greeters, registered attendees, and handed out the Peace Medallion programs and Good News Newsletters. Ah, and they may have enjoyed a few slices of pizza and other snacks along the way – thanks to the committee! Must keep that blood sugar up, you know.

With Jim Milligan as our very distinguished Master of Ceremonies, Jordan introduced the video segment of the evening about halfway through the program. Some of the highlights included: fashion class students making clothing donations to the June Callwood Centre; an all school tree planting trip to Evergreen at Downsview Park; and, a dance class with Wilson, our visitor from Columbia. The video also featured Academy student Noah playing the guitar and sharing how art and music reflect peace for him.

One of the key highlights of the video was the audience participation Yoga. Simon addressed the camera directly and invited the audience to stand up and join the class in a Yoga break (filmed outside on a glorious fall day). Although perhaps a bit unsure at first, Simon's video persona soon had the audience convinced and the entire room was on their feet and following the students on the video (who were also present in the audience, following themselves!). The moves were meant to energize the audience and included such favourites as the Lion (stick your tongue out and roar), and the Ahh-Shake (shake it like a Polaroid picture). Looking slightly dishevelled, but no less distinguished, the audience certainly seemed energized. Mission accomplished.

The students also wrote and edited a Good News Newsletter – Volume 1, Edition 1. It featured articles about the tree planting field trip, free hugs day at 42 Charles St., our visit from Wilson, a new baby arrival for Academy alumni, recipes, fashion, art, comics, poems, "scrapbooking your goals", a positive word search, a sports section, and of course, the serious newspaper staples – horoscopes and suduko (easy enough for even this suduko newbie to complete). Please feel free to contact the YMCA Academy if you would like a copy. Keep an eye out for Edition 2 - coming soon to a YMCA near you!

A big thanks again to all of the students and staff who worked so hard, and dedicated their own time to help out at the Peace Medallion Ceremony, to make the Good News Newsletter and Peace Week video a reality, and for all the other things that you do everyday to bring peace to the world, and into each of our worlds.

GOOD NEWS

Strong Kids Walk

by the Living and Working with Children Class

Each year, YMCA Childcare Centres across the GTA participate in the Strong Kids Walk to help raise money for the Strong Kids Campaign. This year, Academy students helped out on the day to lend support and some extra hands.

Ishmael, Noah, Simon and Roshan, along with their teacher Melissa all showed up to help walk the kids around the block. Chris W. was also present as part of his Coop through the Academy. We walked down Charles Street East to Church Street, then turned West onto Bloor and then back down Yonge Street, and back onto Charles. The kids has made special Strong Kids hats, and the extra hands were appreciated to help keep the hats on heads.

After the walk, the 42 Charles Street Childcare Centre hosted a celebration in the back playground. Healthy snacks and drinks were followed by play time and crafts. Katie Hammond, Childcare Supervisor said "Thank you so much, we needed all the hands we could get that day, and the Academy students are such a great help!"

Academy students also received a special treat, as the older kids downstairs gave an impromptu concert. Using the sandbox as a stage, they sang the Canada for Haiti Song "When I Get Older," followed by "Tonight's Gonna be a Good Night." Very impressively, they knew all of the words for both, and even threw in a few dance moves. The Academy students left that day feeling happy, energized, and with a few extra songs in their head.

The students in the Living and Working with children class would all like to say a big thank you to Katie and all of the staff in the childcare centre for including us in this special day. All of us learned so much through you and the kids. We are fortunate to have so many programs in one building, and we all benefit from working together.



Field Trips

Environmental Stewardship at Downsview Park

On May 14, 2010, YMCA Academy students spent a beautiful Friday at Downsview Park as part of our environmental stewardship commitment to Evergreen. It was a day filled with fun, sun and plenty of digging!

Downsview Park is an old military base and Evergreen has been working on building a “Canada Forest” on the land. When we arrived at the park, Colin Lacey gave us a tour of the site and explained how Evergreen is rehabilitating the area, and bringing native species and wetlands back to the area. He also told us that Downsview gets its name from being the highest point in Toronto – from the park, you can just see the top of the CN Tower.

Academy students spent the day working in the native species nursery, which is where the young trees are planted. The students were divided into two groups – some did planting, and some laid mulch for a new seedling area. We were also fortunate enough to visit the greenhouses where many different types of vegetables, herbs and other local plants are grown. We even got to taste a few!



After a morning of hard work, we stopped for a lunch, where the teachers pretended to work at a sub shop and made fully loaded sandwiches for any students that were hungry. After all of the hard work, there was plenty of fuel required! It was a warm day and everyone pitched in to do their share for the rest of the afternoon. As David said, “It needs to get done, so I’ll do it.”

Academy students have shown an outstanding commitment to our stewardship partnership with Evergreen, and we already have our dates set for next year. A committed environmentalist at our school, Jessie spoke for many when he said, “Go planet earth! The earth can’t repair itself without our help.” And, help they did. Well done to all!

Academy Students Become Refugees

On Friday May 10 at about 3:00 in the afternoon, approximately 20 Academy students became refugees. Classes including Grade 9 Geography, The Environment and Resource Management, Leadership and Peer Support and Health Care attended Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctor’s Without Borders) “A Refugee Camp in the Heart of the City” Exhibit. Picture the scene...

After a long walk in the heat from 42 Charles Street East to Christy Pitts (at Bloor and Christie), they sat outside of a refugee camp, waiting to be granted access. Sitting on the grass outside of the fence,



they became restless as they were forced to wait, and told that the line was too long, that there were too many people, and that many other people were waiting as well. Patience grew thin, as the afternoon sun caused some to seek shelter in the shade. After a waiting period, the young refugees were finally told that they could proceed to the front gate. At the front gate, the guard told them that the camp was too full, and that he could not let them in. Student Roshan loudly objected and yelled "but my wife and children are in there... you gotta let me in, man...I have to find them!" The guard was a hard egg to crack, and could not be swayed by Roshan's insistent pleas to be reunited with his family. Finally, it Alex's quick thinking and the bribe of an iPod that allowed the students to gain access to the Refugee Camp.



After the students were granted access, our guide, a MSF worker from Czech Republic guided us around the simulated refugee camp. Students were invited to pretend that they are among the millions of people fleeing persecution or violence in countries all over the world. The exhibit was made up of materials used by MSF in its emergency medical work around the world, including emergency refugee housing, a food distribution tent, water pump, health clinic, vaccination tent, therapeutic feeding center, and a cholera treatment center. One of the most moving moments occurred when we saw malnutrition bands that are used to check to see how malnourished children are in some of the camps. The small loop that is used on forearms was about the size of most of our thumbs.



MSF helped us to experience a brief glimpse into the life of a refugee and those that help them. Living in a country where clean water, health care and education are taken for granted, this experience also helped us to pause for a moment and to be grateful for all that we have.

School Trip to Centre Island

On a sunny June day (add date), the whole school went to Centre Island to celebrate the end of a fantastic school year and to celebrate the arrival of summer. After meeting at the school and taking the subway to the ferry dock, we enjoyed a lovely boat ride across the Toronto Harbour. Once there, we had our own picnic area reserved and were able to unload and chill. The students participated in a frenzied scavenger hunt, with the winner getting some old chocolates from a teacher's bag – it's not about the prize! After a potluck style picnic lunch, the rest of the day was spent playing soccer, Frisbee, bacci, baseball, and for some, reading and relaxing. It was a nice one day retreat from the hustle and bustle of downtown, and to appreciate each other's company outside of the classroom. The proof is in the pictures!



Around the School

What our students are saying:

“My favourite part of this school year was making ice cream in science class.”

“Because the Academy is a smaller school its a lot more caring, they aren’t just your teacher, they actually care for you and you can see and feel it, I’ve been to 4-5 different schools, even other alternative school its nothing like the YMCA Academy, its on a totally different level.”

“I like how we’re not just active in the school, there are people on the other floors that are active that we know, and they visit the school.”

“My first year of high school was confusing for me at first. I got a late slip, couldn’t get into my locker. It’s been a good experience getting to know other people.”

The YMCA Academy Breakfast Club Program

Of the many wonderful things that happen at The YMCA Academy on a regular basis there has been a recent development that has left all of us, staff and students, happy and NOURISHED!

In December of 2009, for the first time, we were able to establish The YMCA Academy’s Breakfast Club Program. The Club is the result of the efforts of several of The Academy’s staff and some very generous donations. We are endlessly grateful to our wonderful donors who have made this program possible: Sinking Ship Entertainment, Dale Jeffries, Breakfast for Learning and My Market Bakery.

We know that when people are well-nourished, they perform better in school and we work to ensure that students have access to the healthy breakfasts and snacks they need to succeed. It is our goal to provide a variety of healthy foods found in Canada’s Food Guide so they are ready to learn! The menu varies from day to day and includes a selection of bakery bread, fresh fruit, cheddar cheese, cream cheese, butter and jam as well as yogurt and oatmeal.

The fresh bread is picked up every morning from My Market Bakery in Kensington Market, the owner Ping always has a special selection for us – Olive Focaccia, Cheese Banquettes, Multigrain Twist and she sometimes includes a bag of delicious pastry treats. It is not uncommon to see a student in the hall with a crisp apple in one hand and a toasted whole grain bagel with jam in the other.

The Club is lucky to have a dedicated volunteer Chris Watson who arrives early every morning to help put out our breakfast spread!

The nutritional benefits are just one advantage of the program. There is also something very special about what can happen when people gather around food: the conversations that ensue, the jokes, the sharing of information and helpful tips, it is the sense of community that comes with sharing a meal.

We are very pleased about the launch of this important program!

Bon Appétit!



GOOD NEWS

Living and Working with Children

This term, we have had a very successful and fun class in Living and Working with Children. We usually go down to the childcare centre two times a week, and spend the other days in the classroom. It has been absolutely an amazing experience to see the big kids (Academy students) go from being a bit unsure and scared of the kids in childcare, to being totally comfortable. They have come so far, and get loads of loud voices saying hello when they come in, and lots of hugs and good-byes when they leave. I myself enjoy the time with the little ones, but I also get a huge kick out of seeing six foot teenagers sitting on kid-sized couches, reading books, playing air band and helping at lunch time. As one of the students says, it's like I can picture my students at that age again – and we all need that in our lives!

“Hello I am Noah and I am in the Living and Working with Children class (Grade 11). It is a fairly fun class due to the split in time in the daycare and the time spent upstairs. The time in the daycare is obviously more fun, but the time upstairs is for paper work. When I first joined the class, it was quite intimidating with all the talk of pregnancy and child care, and it was even more so intimidating going to the daycare for the first time. I stepped in there and the first thing I heard was a child crying. At that moment I wanted to leave. But once I stayed and hung out with the little guys they turned out to be fun. Now I love going down there and my fear of children is heavily dimmed. There is one boy named “Jack” and he has taken a shining to me as of today when I spent some time with him downstairs. As of now he is the first but I know there will be more little friends to come. I learned not to get the kids hyped up before they have to sleep.”

Noah Bailey

“My experience has been very enjoyable in class and downstairs. At first I was nervous then I got used to them and they got used to me. I feel good now and I look forward to seeing the kids. I've learned to be patient and that every kid is different in their own special way.”

Ishmael Jean-Tobias

“Going downstairs and working with the children is a great experience. I get to see how childcare workers interact with kids. I also see how I might have been as a child since I can't remember. It's almost like going into a time machine and watching yourself play. If you allow yourself to be in that mind state. It's fun experimenting with the kids by making certain noises or doing certain things to see their reaction. It's a great way to learn a bit about yourself, and to see if you can handle the challenge of working with kids.”

Roshan Hamid

“My experience with the YMCA children has been more than positive. They are full of life and always ready to play. It's nice, after having gone down enough, the kids recognize you, they know our names. It's like making new friends, we get to know their likes and dislikes. For the children it is also positive, as we provide a type of medium ground between them and the care-givers.”

Simon Morin



Astronomy Club

The YMCA Astronomy Club Takes Off

Greetings, Earthlings. For the first time in human history, the YMCA Academy has an astronomy club. It is one of the most popular clubs that has ever been run at the school, with upwards of 6 members. Many of the students keep coming back, week after week, for an hour every Tuesday. When asked, "Why do you keep coming back?" one student answered, "For snacks!!" Other students say, "I keep coming back to learn new things about the universe and to talk with friends," and "I keep coming back to learn more about space and the stars." We hope that all members live long and prosper.

We do many cool things. Once we went up to the roof of the building to do some observing at night. We saw the moon rising behind a crane in the east (we do live downtown, after all). We also saw many people through their living room windows watching TV. It was almost all we could see because there is too much light pollution downtown to see much in the sky. We are thinking about a couple of things: going to an observatory outside of the city as well as bringing some telescopes to the beaches to observe over the lake. One of our loyal members may soon be living on the 42nd floor of an apartment building. Imagine the view!

We recently had a guest, Cathy McWatters, give a workshop on making cosmic ray detectors. Muons are particles that are constantly streaming through our bodies from space, left over from Big Bang radiation. Using dry ice, flashlights, Ferrero Rocher chocolate boxes, isopropyl alcohol, cotton pads, black paper and tape, we were able to see this radiation in a mini-white storm of swirls. One just went through my head. There goes one through your head. Don't worry, you'll get used to it.

"One of the coolest things I have learned in the club is that there is too much knowledge about space to learn," says one student. "I have a telescope and I do my own observing to learn outside of school. Something I find really interesting is that space is bent, not flat, and that any object that has mass bends space." "I never knew about most constellations, but being in the club, I learned about the zodiac, Orion, Ursa Major and Minor and Cephus," notes another student. Students in the club think that astronomy is important because many things used to rely on it, like navigation and astrology (a person's zodiac sign).

The club would like to put out a call for new members with whom we can share our knowledge and our passion for the stars. We come in peace! Clear skies.





“Live long and prosper!”



YMCA Academy Student the Recipient of a CIBC Youthvision Scholarship

By Alexi Manis

Ten years ago, CIBC, in partnership with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Canada and the YMCA, created the CIBC Youthvision™ Scholarship Program to address the academic and financial needs of students, and to encourage them to pursue post-secondary education. This unique program includes a post-secondary scholarship as well as summer internships starting in grade 10 until the completion of university or college. Recipients are also paired with mentors throughout the program who provide support and guidance as they strive to reach their full potential.

This past year, the staff at the YMCA Academy chose to nominate Raquel Simpson, a current grade 10 student, for the scholarship. The nomination was a success.

Raquel is a dynamic, energetic young woman who challenges herself constantly and challenges all around her to treat people with respect. She sets her standards high for academic and extra-curricular achievements and others follow her lead. She won the biology award in grade 9 science. She developed a passion for reading after many years of disinterest in books and literature. She assumed a leadership role in a number of school initiatives over the past two years including fundraising for an exchange to Inuvik, hosting her dance troupe at our annual fashion show and designing a lobby display to celebrate the annual YMCA Strong Kids Campaign which won an honourable mention award. She is also a dedicated member of the East Scarborough Boys and Girls club and is currently facilitating and implementing a project entitled “Young Women in Motion” where she helps to program and educate young women around issues of health, body image and self-esteem.



Congratulations, Raquel, and continue to do the good work that you do!

Congratulations, Graduates!

We are proud of the members of the 2010 graduating class and would like to wish them luck in their future endeavours beyond The YMCA Academy.



Best wishes to the following students in their post-secondary studies:

Jamie Holmes - Fanshawe College – General Arts
 Jaimie Morgan-Lynette – George Brown College– Early Childhood Assistant
 Taavo Nisbet – George Brown College - Culinary Arts
 Margot Prout – Georgian College – Hospitality Administration (Hotel & Resort)
 Chris Watson – Centennial College – Early Childhood Assistant

Please keep in touch and feel free to stop by The Academy when you are in the neighbourhood.

Good News Update from Colombia-Medellín

By Wilson Obregon-Mosquera, Colombia-Medellín, 2009, volunteer of YMCA-Medellín



"Everything concerning our YMCA-Medellín is always full of good news," say many of the young that it approached her to share and learn from our experiences. But as good news to tell our YMCA, from the art field has been developing some new bands, this time it's the fair sex who carries the baton of music and who represents his greatest expression, this group consists of girls where skill is predominant in the know how to sing or 'rhyme', ie, Hip Hop. As this is the first female rap group conformed in our YMCA and the first of which was right in our city.

But this does not end our good news, she also adds, participation in the health area of the YMCA in a health event Latin-American, where we were cordially invited to show the importance of the elderly and how to create links relationship with young people that surround them in other words what we called "meeting of generations." There it is actually done is to share knowledge between older and younger through workshops such as music and dance among others.

Still, the good news does not end here. A few days ago we had a visit from the Great YMCA of Toronto, three of its members who knew first hand the processes being developed at the Y in Medellín, and who left with a pleased smile on his lips so there observed.

In those same days, in other areas of work of the organization celebrated the graduation of some volunteers where they acquired a degree or range for the work performed in the year, there i was present as one of the volunteers to receive such mention This is for my third degree. Continuing with the good news, there's the high school to be a preparation before entering college, "PREUNYCOM 13" was well received in Canada was represented by how this program, and with it comes also the invitation to participate in a global educational event is scheduled for 2012 where we also cordially invited. The process to which I belong and where my knowledge compensates for those young people who need it most similar to the Academy of the YMCA of Toronto, because it is in itself of the same-to provide knowledge and keep it-it made me remember with great emotion many young people with whom I shared an unforgettable experience as well as all the staff that supports me, people like: Tracey Addison, Alexi Manis, Melissa O'Leary, Darcie Brown, Michelle Johnson and Kaili

Glennon, for each of them my very best wishes, as each of her students for making me feel like a member of the Academy at the Y this short poem to them with affection:

YOU ARE...

*You're, as the light that illuminates my path
As the road to my destiny
As the light in the darkness
As the spring which I must take
Essential as air to breathe
As the silence in a great torment
As the gentle caress that touches my skin rough and
cold
As the dawn of the day to day
As the sun lights up my life
You're more than my life.... You are... Everything I love
most in this life*

For all of them, thank you so much for thinking of me for the realization of this writing.



Academy Volunteer Honoured With Award

Academy volunteer Peggy Manis has recently been honoured with a YMCA volunteer award, celebrating her many contributions to our school. She began volunteering at the Academy in fall 2008, when she was phasing out of paid employment and wanting new challenges. “I like to be busy!” she says. The Academy was an attractive option, since her daughter Alexi teaches the Grade 11 fashion class, and she had a professional background in instruction — plus experience in creative arts, and a passion for knitting, sewing and all other aspects of fashion.

Since then, she has become deeply involved. Along with assisting students in both the grade 11 and grade 12 classes with their assignments, Peggy has donated materials and books, supported the Academy’s first-ever fashion show in spring 2008, taught students to crochet and helped plan a 2009 crochet project to benefit cancer patients, taken students on field trips (e.g. the Bata Show Museum), and in early 2010 led students through a project in which they made 15 pairs of slippers for the 42 Charles St. child care centre.

She is also helping staff design the overall fashion program, and by spring 2010 was researching and developing a resource binder for use with the grade 11 curriculum.



Peggy has finally fully retired from paid employment and, despite other interests of her own, is thinking of adding to her commitment to the Academy. The motivation is the impact she sees it have on the students. “I was at the latest graduation ceremony, when students spoke about what they had learned, and how the Academy had changed their lives. It is so very

How Snow and Play Redefined and Reinvigorated our Nation

By Zee

What does it mean to be Canadian? On the surface this seems like a simple and innocent question. Upon closer scrutiny, however, the once seemingly superficial and innocent inquiry begins to look a bit more convoluted. How exactly does one define what it means to be part of a Country that is so multi-culturally and multi-ethnically diverse?

If you were to ask the international community what it means to be Canadian, you would probably hear the so often used cliché descriptors such as polite, quiet, beer drinking, hockey and maple syrup loving as well as a slue of other stereotypical responses. But are the aforementioned adjectives all there are to being Canadian? Having immigrated to this wonderful and beautiful country nearly 25 years ago at the young and impressionable age of four, the likelihood of being assimilated into the Canadian cultural melting pot should have been an almost certain inevitability.

The key phrase here is should have. Unlike its neighbour to the south, however, Canada is not a melting pot where assimilation is the norm or a mandatory and inevitable outcome. Instead, Canada is a mosaic, painted with a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic brush. As a result, I did not become assimilated into a melting pot, but was able to encouragingly discover and celebrate my ethnic and cultural heritage.

As I became older and more mature, my frontal cortex afforded me the endowment of higher reasoning and critical thought. Although I had always enjoyed living in Canada and being a Canadian, it wasn't until the arrival of my higher thinking abilities that I was truly able to appreciate how much I whole heartedly loved Canada and being a Canadian.

In hindsight, I did grow up to be a quiet (for the most part), polite, maple syrup loving (especially with breakfast sausages) hockey fanatic.

I realise, however, that this is beside the point. Despite fulfilling the abovementioned global clichés, I feel that although it may make me seem like a true Canadian to an outside observer, it is not what defines what it means to truly be a Canadian.

To me, more important than being quiet and polite, and yes, even more important than loving hockey, being Canadian means being compassionate, kind hearted, empathetic and accepting. Being Canadian means being loving, respecting and accepting of everyone, no matter their race, ethnicity, gender, colour, age or religious creed, and doing so with a glowing heart.

These sentiments of what it means to be a Canadian were recently ignited not only within my heart, but within the hearts of the entire nation. With the hosting of the twenty first winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, British Columbia, something magnificent took place. In recent years I was beginning to feel that there was a countrywide deficit in national pride among both young and old. I was beginning to feel that this country was bereft of any national pride and identity.

But with the lighting of the Olympic flame, there was a simultaneous ignition of the Canadian spirit. Our faintly glowing hearts once again became brightly glowing hearts as we watched history being made on numerous occasions. From Alexander Bilodeau winning our first gold medal on home soil, our woman's and men's hockey teams both winning gold in our "true" national sport, to Canada as a whole winning the most gold medals by a host country, the Vancouver 2010 winter Olympic Games was the desperately required stimulus, the desperate kick in the butt Canada needed to remember all the things that make our country so glorious.

The Vancouver 2010 winter Olympic Games showed the world what it means to be a Canadian. It lifted the fog that had covered our land and allowed the world to see past the clichés and see Canada and Canadians for who we truly are: compassionate, kind hearted, empathetic and accepting people. Thanks to the Vancouver 2010 winter Olympic Games, the international community got to see the best part of Canada, its people.

As a nation we are young; a mere 143 years old this July. Relative to other nations we are still infants. Yet Despite our 'youth' we have come a long way in such short a time frame. We have become a nation admired by many countries around the world. We have become a country to be proud of. So what does it mean to be Canadian? Perhaps on even further examination it isn't such a difficult question after all. Being Canadian is being compassionate, kind hearted, empathetic and accepting. Being Canadian is being able to be yourself. Being Canadian is a privilege. Being Canadian is an honour.



Check out the new
YMCA Academy
 website at
www.ymcaacademy.org

YMCA Academy Graduation Caps Off Successful School Year

On June 22nd, ten YMCA Academy students received their high school diplomas, in front of an audience of fellow YMCA Academy students, staff, family and friends, as well as former Head of School Jim Milligan, and Dias guests Gordon Chong (Vice Chair, Board of Directors), Melanie Laflamme (Acting Senior VP Organizational Development), Medhat Mahdy (President and CEO of YMCA GTA), and Judy McLeod (Chief Operating Officer). Roshan Hamid, Jordan Hudson, Jaimie Morgan-Lynette, Taavo Nisbet, Matt Piazza, Margot Prout, Verma Ramkhalawan and Chris Watson were present to receive their diplomas, and while Jamie Holmes and Colin Folk were unable to attend, they were also recognized as honoured graduates.

The evening was an inspiring and joyful celebration of our graduates' educational journeys. A highlight of the evening was hearing the graduating students reflect on their time at the Academy, and thank those who provided support during the past several years.

The YMCA Academy Values Awards were also presented on the evening of graduation. Congratulations to David Ostos, recipient of the Respect Award, Raquel Simpson, recipient of the Responsibility Award, Taavo Nisbet, recipient of the Inclusiveness Award, Jamie Anderson, recipient of the Caring Award, Jamie Tice, recipient of the Health Award, and Jordan Hudson, recipient of the Honesty Award. Taavo Nisbet was also awarded the Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award for his outstanding volunteer work.

Congratulations to all our graduating students– we wish you the best of luck in the future!
Please see page 16 for information about where our graduates are heading next year.

