

December 14, 2006 Public Board Meeting

Student Trustee Report

At this time, Student Trustee K. Hart made the following remarks.

“Good evening, Mr. Chair, Mr. Director, Trustees, Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen.

As you know, the holidays are fast approaching, and York Region Students are enthusiastically looking forward to their upcoming break. Most student groups will be put on hold until mid-January, including the York Region Presidents’ Council, but are charging full-steam ahead until the winter break.

The York Region Presidents’ Council (YRPC) has been very active over the past month. For our new trustees, the York Region Presidents’ Council is a student-run group aimed at student councils. They meet twice a month to network with other schools, share successful practices, and undertake new initiatives.

One of these initiatives was an inter-school awareness campaign that some of our returning trustees may remember. In October Jeff and I reported to the board about an awareness campaign surrounding the current genocide in Darfur. After much discussion, we have decided to hold this during the month of February. Jeff and I are absolutely thrilled with this, and we look forward to reporting back on the outcome of this initiative.

The York Region Presidents’ Council also hosts an annual leadership conference, which is organized by our executive members. This conference has become quite renowned in York Region, and competition is high for the 100 available delegate spots. This year, the conference will be held at Camp Trillium, near Hamilton, from April 26th to April 29th. A large part of the conference is its theme; this theme will influence everything from the conference’s name to the names of each delegate group. After a vote by the general assembly, this year’s theme was chosen to be ‘Board Games’. We also received several suggestions for the name of the conference and have tentatively decided on ‘START’. The name of the conference is typically an acronym, and has yet to be fully decided on. For example, last year’s conference entitled ‘REMIX’ represented ‘Realizing Every Man’s Individual Excellence’. Jeff and I will report back to the board and clarify the name as the conference date approaches.

Also relating to the conference, the due date for Skillbuilder and Security applications was this past week. York Region Presidents’ Council Executive Members will be sifting through applications and organizing interviews over the next two months, and our conference team will be finalized by mid-February.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is a sub-committee of the board, which deals with matters relating to special education. Both Jeff and I are very interested in special education and have been members of this committee

since our inauguration. Jeff, in particular, gave a very moving speech about his own experiences with special education during our annual holiday dinner on December 7th. As we move into the New Year, we will be greeted with a new chair, our new trustees, and many new board members. Jeff and I will be attending a SEAC orientation session to acquaint ourselves with the new members, so we may 'hit the ground running' in the New Year.

As you know, the holiday season is quickly approaching, and York Region students are getting into the holiday spirit. Across the region, assemblies and concerts are regular occurrences. In fact, my own school, Richmond Hill High School, will be hosting its annual Holiday Serenade tonight.

But most notably, there are many activities designed not only to boost their own spirit, but the spirit of other less fortunate people in the community. The following is only a small snapshot of the many student-led activities going on in York Region schools around this time of year.

Westmount Collegiate Institute is hosting a door-decorating contest for homeroom classes. They have also put up a 'mitten tree' in the front foyer where they will be accepting winter clothing donations. Finally, students can send 'candy grams', which the student council will be delivering while singing carols. All the proceeds from candy gram sales will be going to Free the Children.

Langstaff Secondary School entered a school float in the annual Richmond Hill Santa Claus Parade. They are also holding a door decorating contest and have adorned their front foyer to greet visitors and students alike with some holiday cheer. Some of the many diverse holiday celebrations represented include Kwanzaa, Diwali, Chanukah and Christmas.

Markville Secondary School, instead of a door decorating contest, is hosting a gingerbread house contest. Each homeroom receives a gingerbread house kit which they can then assemble, decorate and eat. Their Student Council Treasurer will also be donning a red suit next week, so students can have their picture taken with Santa during their lunches.

Woodbridge College recently held a holiday assembly, featuring short holiday-themed videos created by their senior film class.

Finally, Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School will be selling African Jewelry over the next two weeks, with all proceeds going towards the Hopes and Dreams Team.

On this festive note, Jeff and I would like to wish you all a safe and happy holiday and we look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Thank you."