



Archbishop MacDonald High School

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February 2017

Parent Newsletter

*The LORD is good to all, and His compassion is over all that He has made.
(Psalm 145.9)*



February Events

Feb. 1	PD Day- No School for Students
Feb. 2	First Day of Semester 2 Classes
Feb 3-4	David Adomako-Ansah High School Basketball Tournament
Feb. 7	FAITH DEVELOPMENT DAY- NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS
Feb. 9	Charity Hockey Game: Teachers & Students
Feb. 10-11	Hosting Junior High Basketball Tournament
Feb. 10-11	Marmot Basin Ski Trip
Feb. 14	Gr. 12 Grad Assembly
Feb. 20	FAMILY DAY- NO SCHOOL
Feb. 24	Music Dinner & Dance 7 pm
Feb. 28	Shrove Tuesday Open House 7pm

**** "Lake Louise Parent Meeting is Tuesday, Feb 21, 7:00 pm in the school multipurpose room. Even if you attended the Marmot Basin Parent Meeting you must attend this meeting for your son/daughter to attend the Lake Louise April 7-9 Spring Ski Trip****

Message from MAC's Student Services Department

Welcome parents and students to second semester. We hope everyone is excited about new courses and challenges ahead.

Student Services assists MAC's students in working towards leading a balanced lifestyle. Wellness is achieved when we live harmoniously within our academic, emotional, physical and social selves.

One area that we will be concentrating on is coping with pressure and stress in students' lives and ways to reduce anxiety.

Here are some ways that you can help your teen become less anxious and work towards achieving balance:

- 1. Assessment:** Have your teen's general health checked by your family doctor. Untreated allergies, anemia, or other problems make it harder for anxious people to cope. The doctor can also determine whether panic attacks or obsessive compulsive disorder, which need very specific treatment, are present. For some kinds of anxiety, medication may be suggested, but in most cases treatment includes learning new coping skills.
- 2. Look after the basics:** No one copes well when they are tired or hungry. Anxious people often forget to eat, don't feel hungry, and don't get enough sleep. Help your teen establish healthy routines and offer frequent, nutritious snacks. Eating together as a family is a great way to communicate and connect with each other.
- 3. Establish routines:** Routines reduce anxiety. But anxiety tends to disrupt routines. Creating regular patterns so life is more predictable is important. Assist your teen in planning their own routine. Making a personalized schedule gives a sense of order. Structure and organization reduces anxiety and stress.
- 4. Bedtime routines** are especially important. Students should stop studying at least an hour before bedtime. Everyone needs a little time to unwind before getting the necessary uninterrupted sleep. Try having a warm bath or reading a book prior to going to sleep, and put your cell away and on airplane mode.
- 5. Plan time for homework and exam preparation:** This needs to be a regular part of the schedule, as anxious students tend to procrastinate. Because anxious teens become overwhelmed, breaking the subjects up into small chunks and setting a specific time to do school work, and rewarding yourself for each bit done, are tools that are beneficial.

6. Firm, consistent parenting: Anxious teens feel calmer when life is predictable, when they know what is expected of them, and what the consequences will be.

7. Relationships and social Interaction: Students need downtime that doesn't include technology. Teens benefit greatly by spending face-to-face time with their friends. Learning to laugh and have positive social relationships is key to success and helps to keep a healthy perspective on all aspects of life. Parents spending time building a positive relationship with their teens is paramount to social development.

8. Taking risks: Anxious children need to venture out of their comfort zone and try something new like joining a club or team, participating in class discussions, talking to a new friend, and encouraging themselves through positive "self-talk" instead of imagining the worst. This helps students gain a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem.

9. Physical exercise: This is helpful not only in relieving stress, but also in triggering a physical "relaxation response". Anxious children often feel "tired all the time" because they are always exhausting themselves with worry, so they don't feel like exercising. But exercise will improve energy and reduce worry. Try to find something fun to do together rather than making this a chore. Even going for a walk is beneficial.

10. Tools to relax: There are many tools for relaxation. If you are interested, please check out various websites including www.anxietybc.com or downloading an app like 'Mindshift' or 'CALM.'

Both Mrs. Laplante and Mrs. Reeves are available in MAC's Student Resource Centre to discuss maintaining a healthy life balance and various coping skills students can use. Student Services, and MAC's Peer Support team, are also offering many sessions and lunchtime activities in the second semester on wellness and mental health. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Student Services.

Grad 2017 Picture Retake Information

Grad retakes and handshake photos will be on March 14 and 15, 2017. **Information and details will be given at our Feb. 14 Grad assembly to all the Grade 12's.** Retakes will be by appointment only and will come with a \$25 sitting fee.



Archbishop MacDonald Blood Donations

February is a fresh start with the beginning of a new term for students, it is also when valentine's day occurs and feeling of appreciation for others occurs. It also happens to be the month when the next round of blood donation buses takes flight. **Buses arranged are on Feb 15@11:45, Feb 16@ 11:30, and Feb 17 @ 10:05 & 12:15.**

If you have a 17-year-old who is eligible to donate blood, talk to them about it. Encourage this altruistic act with your teenager, have them sign up for a bus at school by contacting Mrs. Andison via email christine.andison@ecsd.net or in person in room 207, or better yet make an appointment as a family at a clinic near you.

To check eligibility to donate go to <https://blood.ca/en/blood/eligibility-check> or call 1-888-2DONATE to talk to a nursing professional, or go to www.blood.ca for more information.

If they are not eligible, think about donating on their behalf by booking an appointment. Every donation counts and can save a life.

If you haven't signed up as an Archbishop MacDonald supporter go to <https://blood.ca/en/blood/how-do-i-join-team>

click on "register as a member online" our partner ID# is **ARCH0011331** (4 letters 6 numbers) and fill in your information. Any donation you do from this point on will count to our blood donor challenge. On behalf of the students of MAC and the lives of others you may help...

ARCHBISHOP MACDONALD'S MUSIC DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

DINNER

▶ **AND**

DANCE

**MAC JAZZ
BAND**

&

**MAC HONOUR
BAND**



FRIDAY FEBRUARY 24

DINNER TICKETS **\$35** DANCE TICKETS **\$10**

DOORS OPEN AT **6:30 PM** EVENT AT **7:00 PM**



February 2017

"...be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you."
~Ephesians 4:32~

This scripture is taken from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. This letter speaks deeply to us all being members of the Body of Christ. Two very important aspects of this scripture are that we belong to Christ, and therefore should love like Jesus did, and that we need to live in harmony in order for the Body to remain healthy.

These words are perfect for us to reflect upon as we enter the month of February. There are so many opportunities for us to have discussions about kindness, compassion, love, and forgiveness. The week of February 12-18 marks Random Acts of Kindness Week. February 14, the feast of St. Valentine, is a special day for our students to share good wishes with each other. February 22 is Pink Shirt Day, and our day is focused on taking a stand against bullying by promoting empathy.

One of our fundamental commitments as a Catholic educational community is ongoing faith formation for our students and staff alike. On February 6, all our grade 8 students will gather together as a community of young believers for our second annual Father Michael 'Catfish' Mireau Youth Faith Day. The students will be engaged by the presentations of internationally renowned youth evangelizer Jesse Manibusan and Edmonton Catholic Schools' own nationally celebrated teacher, Carla Cuglietta, who will share her personal story of making a difference. They will also have the wonderful opportunity to participate in the Eucharist with Bishop Bittman. The theme, *Serve Like a Superhero*, highlights for them that our youth, who are our future, will change the world!

Our entire staff will gather on February 7 for our 20th annual Faith Development Day. We will listen to the wisdom of David Wells, an internationally celebrated Catholic educator, who will help us to further unfold our theme for the year, *We are Called...To Be Leaders of Hope And Mercy*. Archbishop Smith and Bishop Motiuk will lead us in a Eucharistic Celebration as well. Jesus is truly at the centre of this day, and it is so special for all of us.

There are many ongoing opportunities for our staff to engage in faith formation to build their knowledge and skills specifically for enhancing the classroom experience. As an example, teachers can attend PD sessions which explore meaningful and authentic ways that Indigenous Spirituality can be incorporated into the current religious education curriculum. This is one of the mandates from *Calls to Action* of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: to increase

awareness of Indigenous culture and practices. The facilitators share lesson plans that can be used with students to meet curriculum outcomes, as well as authentic experiences of Indigenous spiritual practices.

Starting in mid-January Alberta Education began mailing Accountability Pillar surveys to parents of all students enrolled in Alberta schools. By completing this survey, you are giving your school, Edmonton Catholic Schools, and the provincial government important information to gauge the quality of education your child is receiving and to ensure they are being prepared for success. The Accountability Pillar:

- Gives school boards a consistent way to measure their success and assess progress using a broad spectrum of measures
- Helps identify areas that need improvement and set priorities for the future
- Provides schools and school districts with a wide range of data showing how they are performing
- Focuses on more than student achievement, resulting in a more complete approach to accountability and system improvement

Please complete and return the survey by February 24. We all have a part to play in the important work of educating the next generation of Albertans.

Our professional development work with communities of practice continues to grow as our teacher cohorts gathered for the third time in January. Our eight community of practice cohorts focus on promising practices in the areas of literacy and numeracy across the content areas for students from pre-K to grade 12. Teachers will spend approximately 30 hours over the course of the year learning from and with each other in a specific area of literacy or numeracy. This will increase their ability to build strong foundational skills for all students. Key highlights of the recent sessions include the sharing of specific practices and learning stories with colleagues, as well as celebration of recent successes in moving student learning forward through targeted instruction.

This past month we hosted a parent evening that focused on supporting children with diverse learning needs in our District. It was terrific to see so many parents participate in sessions hosted by our Inclusive Team on topics including: supporting positive mental health, strategies for struggling readers, how to teach skills to your child with autism, positive behavior supports, speech and language, and assistive technology to support learning. A great evening of learning and dialogue was shared in by all. [Resources and links](#) to the visiting organizations that also shared their expertise at this session are posted in the *Parent Resources* section of our District website.

Ever our shepherd and teacher, Pope Francis has also shared wisdom with us that reflects our opening scripture for this month. "Let us learn to live with kindness, to love everyone, even when they do not love us." (*Twitter*, May 9/15)

Have a fabulous February!

Sincerely,

Joan Carr
Superintendent

February 2017

Dear Friends,

The church recently concluded the season of Christmas. I pray that Christmas was a time to celebrate the birth of the Lord with your family and friends.

As the church enters the liturgical season of Ordinary Time, marked by the use of green vestments and decorations, we enter into a period that has hope and growth as its primary focus. This liturgical season offers each of us an opportunity to reflect on the mystery of Christ, in reality the Life of Christ as we witness in the Gospels. Ordinary Time is a time of conversion, a conversion of heart and mind that continues to transform us as disciples of Jesus Christ.

As I visit each of our Catholic Schools, I see in our young people a true sense of hope and growth that only God can offer. This hope bodes well for them and the lives that God invites each one of them to lead. May God continue to bless each of you.

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton

Amoris Laetitia - Chapter Five: “Love Made Fruitful”

In chapter five the Holy Father speaks in both a spiritual and psychological tone about welcoming new life, about the waiting, expectant time of pregnancy, about the love of a mother and a father.

The Pope states: “For ‘children are a gift. Each one is unique and irreplaceable... We love our children because they are children, not because they are beautiful, or look or think as we do, or embody our dreams. We love them because they are children’” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 170).

“Mothers are the strongest antidote to the spread of self-centred individualism... It is they who testify to the beauty of life”. Certainly, “a society without mothers would be dehumanized, for mothers are always, even in the worst of times, witnesses to tenderness, dedication and moral strength. ... Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the faith itself would lose a good part of its simple and profound warmth... Dear mothers: thank you! Thank you for what you are in your family and for what you give to the Church and the world” (AL, 174).

We often hear that ours is ‘a society without fathers’. In Western culture, the father figure is said to be symbolically absent, missing or vanished. Manhood itself seems to be called into question” (AL, 176).

God sets the father in the family so that by the gifts of his masculinity he can be “close to his wife and share everything, joy and sorrow, hope and hardship. And to be close to his children as they grow – when they play and when they work, when they are carefree and when they are distressed, when they are talkative and when they are silent, when they are daring and when they are afraid, when they stray and when they get back on the right path”. ... It is not good for children to lack a father and to grow up before they are ready (AL, 177).

Pope Francis also speaks of the expanded fruitfulness of adoption, inviting families to promote a “culture of encounter.”

Adoption is a very generous way to become parents. I encourage those who cannot have children to expand their marital love to embrace those who lack a proper family situation. They will never regret having been generous. Adopting a child is an act of love, offering the gift of a family to someone who has none (AL, 179).

He also speaks of family life in a broad sense, which includes aunts and uncles, cousins, relatives of relatives, and friends. Beyond the so-called “nuclear” family, the Holy Father sees the family as a network of many relationships. “The nuclear family needs to interact with the wider family made up of parents, aunts and uncles, cousins and even neighbours. This greater family may have members who require assistance, or at least companionship and affection, or consolation amid suffering” (*AL*, 187).

For him, the spirituality of marriage has a deeply social character. And within this social dimension Pope Francis emphasizes the specific relationship between youth and the elderly, as well as the relationship between siblings as a training ground for relating with others.

We must reawaken the collective sense of gratitude, of appreciation, of hospitality, which makes the elderly feel like the living part of the community. Our elderly are men and women, fathers and mothers, who came before us on our own road, in our own house, in our daily battle for a worthy life. Indeed, “how I would like a Church that challenges the throw-away culture by the overflowing joy of a new embrace between young and old” (AL, 191).

Father Julian Bilyj