Vanier Catholic Secondary

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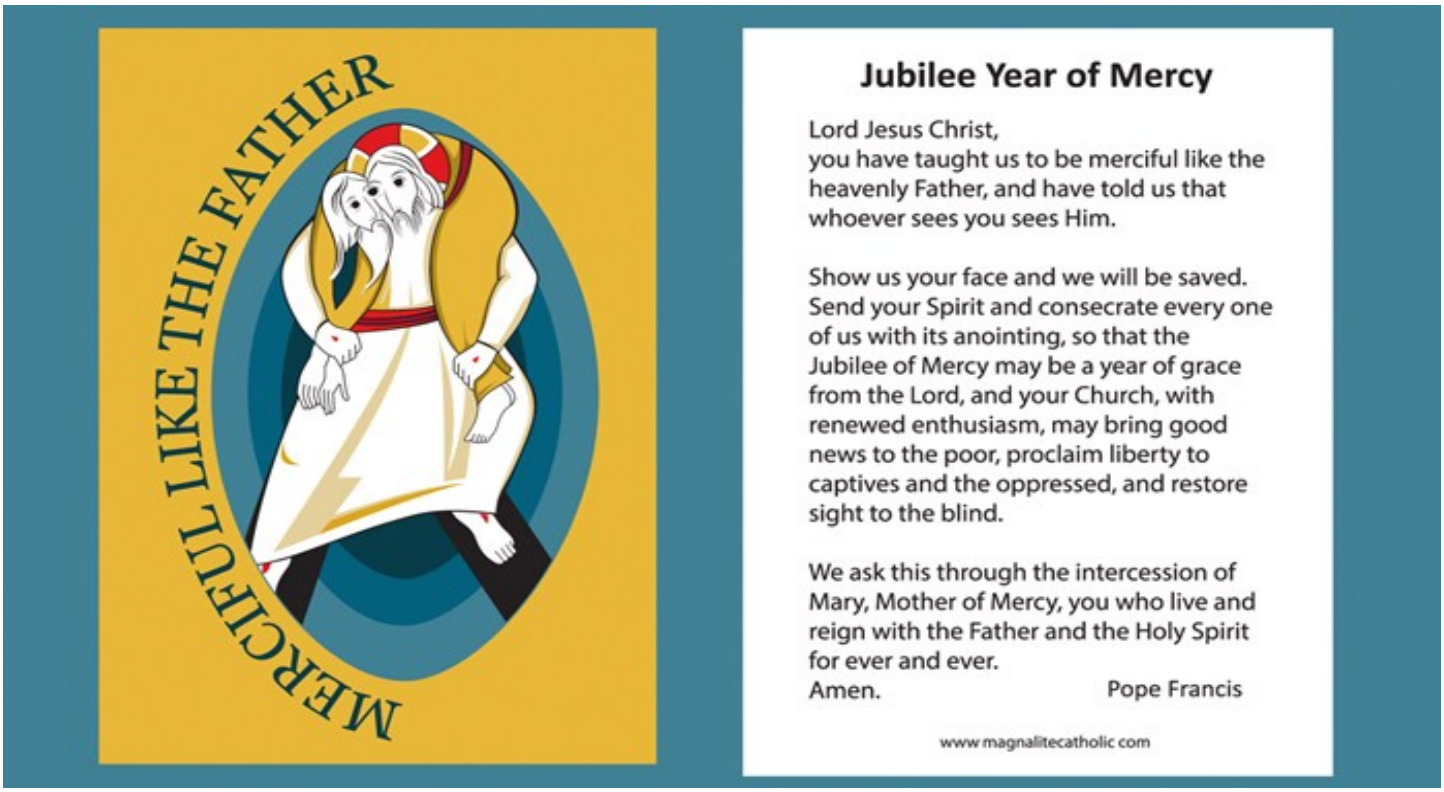
www.vcss.ca
Ryan Sikkes, Principal Jeanette Gallant, Vice-Principal

February 2016



Principal's message

We have enjoyed a smooth transition into the Semester 2 and the last half of the year. There's no opportunity to sit back and relax, however, as we are already starting to plan for the following school year and begin the course selection process with students!

Staffing

There have been a number of changes in our staff since our last newsletter:

- Bill Willoughby and JD Caudle have started their parental leaves
- Jody Peters (Vanier alumnus class of 2004) took over Mr. Caudle's classes for the month of January. We thank Mr. Peters and wish him and his band Speed Control all the best during their spring concert touring season.
- Leanne Patey has joined our staff to teach English 10 and 11 this semester – she hails from Newfoundland and has a great deal of experience teaching senior English Language Arts.
- Erik Gray has also joined our staff this semester to teach ELL, Communications 11/12 and PE 8 & 9. Erik is also an alumnus of Vanier Catholic Secondary – I taught him Chemistry back in 2004 and he graduated in 2006! It's wonderful to have former students join us as staff members!
- Maria Trainor has returned from her leave and will teach Religion 8 through 11 this semester.
- Sylvie Ouimet has returned from her leave and will resume teaching French 8 through 12. Thank you to Shannon Donald who has covered Mme. Ouimet's leave for this school year.
- Adrian Robinson has left his Educational Assistant position to take a teaching position at Holy Family Elementary – good luck, Adrian!

Principal's message, continued.

- Paula Stoker and Liam Campbell have joined our staff as Educational Assistants for this semester.
- Julia Boye will commence her maternity leave just before Spring Break and we are pleased to have Darren Susin cover for her for the remainder of this school year.
- Our day custodian Blondine Aitchison retired in January and we are pleased to welcome back Peter Van Klaveren to that position.

I must make special mention of Denise Chisholm's recent decision to retire from teaching to return to post-secondary studies as she contemplates a new career path. We are all so proud of Ms. Chisholm for taking this courageous path to follow her passion of assisting individuals with end-of-life care and supporting their families. Ms. Chisholm taught in Yukon Public Schools for 22 years and her departure from our staff will most certainly leave a void in the school that will be difficult to fill. Good luck, Denise – we will miss you!

Course Selection

It's that time of year already! Course selection sheets will be distributed to students later this month. We ask that all students discuss their options with their parents/guardians and mark their preferred options on their course selection form. Shortly before Spring Break, students will input their selections into our scheduling software and we can begin building a timetable.

This process of thinking carefully about what courses to take next year is important as student preferences play a strong role in the development of the school's timetable. However, it is important to note that nothing is "written in stone" through the course selection process and students may adjust their timetable in September if their wishes change.

We will be reminding all Grade 9 and 10 students about the graduation requirements on February 17 during the afternoon and will host a special information session for parents that same evening at 7:00 pm. All parents/ guardians of Grade 9 students are especially encouraged to attend that evening session to learn about the graduation requirements.

Goal Setting

We began our semester with a short assembly where we talked about setting goals for Semester 2. We know that goals are more likely to be met if they are 1) SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Action-Oriented, Realistic and Timebound), 2) are written down, and 3) are shared with others.

We encourage you to discuss your child's goals for this semester with them – these discussions can be quite fruitful and productive in the course selection process, as well.

GPA

You will notice, again, that academic honour stamps (Principal's List, Honour Roll, and Special Merit) are not included on this report card. Our report card software has not yet been configured to calculate the GPAs properly. We do expect to resolve this issue in February as some software consultants will be in town and we are hoping they will help us with this issue!

If they can't, we'll bust out the abacus and start calculating the GPAs by hand like we've been doing for the last two years! We will send letters home indicating academic honours as soon as we are able to compile the lists of those who achieve them.

New Bishop

By the time you receive this newsletter, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Whitehorse will have had our new Bishop, Hector Vila, installed in an ordination mass hosted at Vanier Catholic Secondary. Bishop Hector is originally from Peru and has spent the last decade working at a seminary in Ontario. We are looking forward to introducing Bishop Hector to our school community and helping him come to know the good work that is done at Vanier Catholic Secondary!

COP Award

Many of you may have seen the news coverage of me being awarded a Canada's Outstanding Principal award for 2016. I was honoured and humbled to be nominated by our school council and to have been selected as the Yukon recipient. This award has very much affirmed my decision to return as principal back in 2013 – a decision I have never regretted!

I really do feel, however, that the source of the "glow of success" that has been cast upon me comes from our school's amazing staff of teachers, educational assistants, remedial tutors, office assistants and custodians who work tirelessly each and every day to meet the needs of your children. It is an honour for me to walk along beside them and support them in their work.

I am fortunate that the award comes with a trip to Toronto to meet the other 39 recipients, learn about their school communities, and brag to them about how great mine is! Thank you to school council, staff, students and families for your support, without which I would not enjoy working this school community as much as I do.

Sincerely,
Ryan Sikkes

Dates to note

February-June

The official 2015-2016 School Calendar can be accessed online at the Yukon Education

Thursday, February 4—Report Cards Issued
February 13-14—Basketball Tournament
Tuesday, February 16—Shrove Tuesday Pancake Breakfast
Wednesday, February 17—Ash Wednesday
Thursday, February 25—Vandezvous
Friday, February 26—Heritage Day (No school)
Friday, March 4—Locker cleanout—last day of school before Spring Break
Monday, March 21—School resumes from Spring Break
Friday, March 25—Good Friday (No School)
Monday, March 28—Easter Monday (No School)
April 4-8—Review Week
Friday, April 8—End of Term lll
Wednesday April 13—23—Rotary Music Festival
Friday, April 15—27 Dominican Republic Trip
Friday, April 22—Earth Day
Monday, May 2-6—Community Service Week
Friday, May 6—Vanier Day
Tuesday, May 10—Fair Trade Day
Friday, May 13-23—French Students at Vanier
Monday, May 23—Victoria Day (No School)
Friday, May 27-28—Grad 2016
Wednesday, May 8-14 Review Week
Wednesday, June 15-20 School Exams
Friday, June 17—Last day of school
Wednesday, June 22-29—BCPEs

School Council Corner

The next regular council meeting will be ***Monday***, February 16 in the VCSS Library.

The members of our current council are:

Edith Elder; Chair
Michael Lauer, Vice-Chair
Dianne Tait
Maureen Long
Shanon Cooper

Contact information for council members is posted in the front of the school and online at www.vcss.ca

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Congratulations to Ryan Sikkes who received Canada's Outstanding Principals' Award. It was bestowed on 40 principals across Canada and is a fitting recognition of Mr. Sikkes' vision for the school. A parent summed it up succinctly when she said: "There is a friendly, supportive, positive and uplifting atmosphere in the school — a good place for our children."

Mr. Sikkes values partnerships and builds positive relationships with students, parents and staff. He shows genuine respect for everyone at Vanier. He has a passion for learning and takes the time to keep abreast of the latest research in educational practices. He assesses everything in light of how it affects students.

He clearly understands the dual role of a Catholic school: to promote sound religious education that prepares students to make independent moral choices as they move into adulthood and to help students get in touch with their unique spirituality and do what they can to create a better world for all. Because of Mr. Sikkes' ongoing efforts Vanier now has a chapel — a quiet and peaceful place for prayer, reflection and sharing. This goes hand-in-hand with Vanier's outstanding focus on social justice principles and activities.

A colleague describes Mr. Sikkes as a person guided by ethical values in all situations. Vanier and our Whitehorse community are blessed to have such a dedicated school administrator. Mr. Sikkes, Vanier School Council salutes you and thanks you for your dedication to our students.

Écoles résidentielles/Residential Schools

"La classe de Sciences Humaines 10 à l'école Vanier a eu le plaisir d'accueillir Joanne Henry, directrice de la société CAIRS, Committee on Abuse in Residential Schools dans le cadre de l'unité d'étude sur les écoles résidentielles autochtones. Mme Henry a partagé avec les élèves son expérience ainsi que celle de maintes autres survivants dans les écoles résidentielles. Nous sommes très reconnaissants qu'elle soit venue parmi nous afin qu'on puisse mieux comprendre ce qui s'est passé dans les pensionnats et aussi être mieux conscientisés sur les répercussions intergénérationelles qu'ont eu les écoles résidentielles. Merci Joanne d'avoir partagé avec nous. "

Free peer 1 on 1 tutoring available to all Vanier students

Tutoring must happen in the school before or after school or at lunch time.

New matches are being made for Term 3

Fill in the tutor form or speak with Ms. Bergsma

or email barb.bergsma@yesnet.yk.ca

For the latest news, school information and homework assignments, visit our informative school website:

www.vcss.ca

Social Justice News

Emma and Ainslie dropped off a box of warmth and some cash to the Outreach Van. We are still accepting donations so keep'em coming!

Upcoming special days:

February is **Black History Month**

February 13 **– Soup Kitchen – Sacred Heart**

March 8: **International Women's Day 2016**

A dedicated group of Social Justice Club members have been helping out at the Whitehorse Food Bank after school on Thursdays. Drop by a meeting on Tuesday to find out how you can become part of this amazing work!

Wendy, Hannah and Macy sort veggies into healthy snack packs.

Hanging out in Room 1

In a recent brainstorming session during one of our lunchtime meetings, SJ members expressed a desire to get to know the students in Room 1 a little better. Last week, we went for a visit and ate, read books, did puzzles and played games together and we are all keen to do it again in a month. There is always room for more people to join us so drop by and find out when our next Room 1 Hangout is taking place.

Pass on Your Warmth

Do you have clean mitts, hats and socks that you are no longer using? Despite our recent Maui-like temperatures, Whitehorse still has a few months of winter left and there are many people in our city who spend much of their time on the street. The Outreach Van travels the city each night and distributes warm food and clothing. They can always use more donations. Drop items off at the Vanier Learning Commons and help warm someone up!

Vanier Learning Commons News

Along with your report card, this mailing may contain an OVERDUE NOTICE for a textbook or library book that you have kept to yourself a little too long. Help us out by bringing it back so that someone else can borrow it.

Here are the best books of 2015 as voted on by readers….

and the best part is that these titles are available at the

Vanier Learning Commons!!

READING is a beautiful thing.

Today. Every Day. Read for twenty minutes!

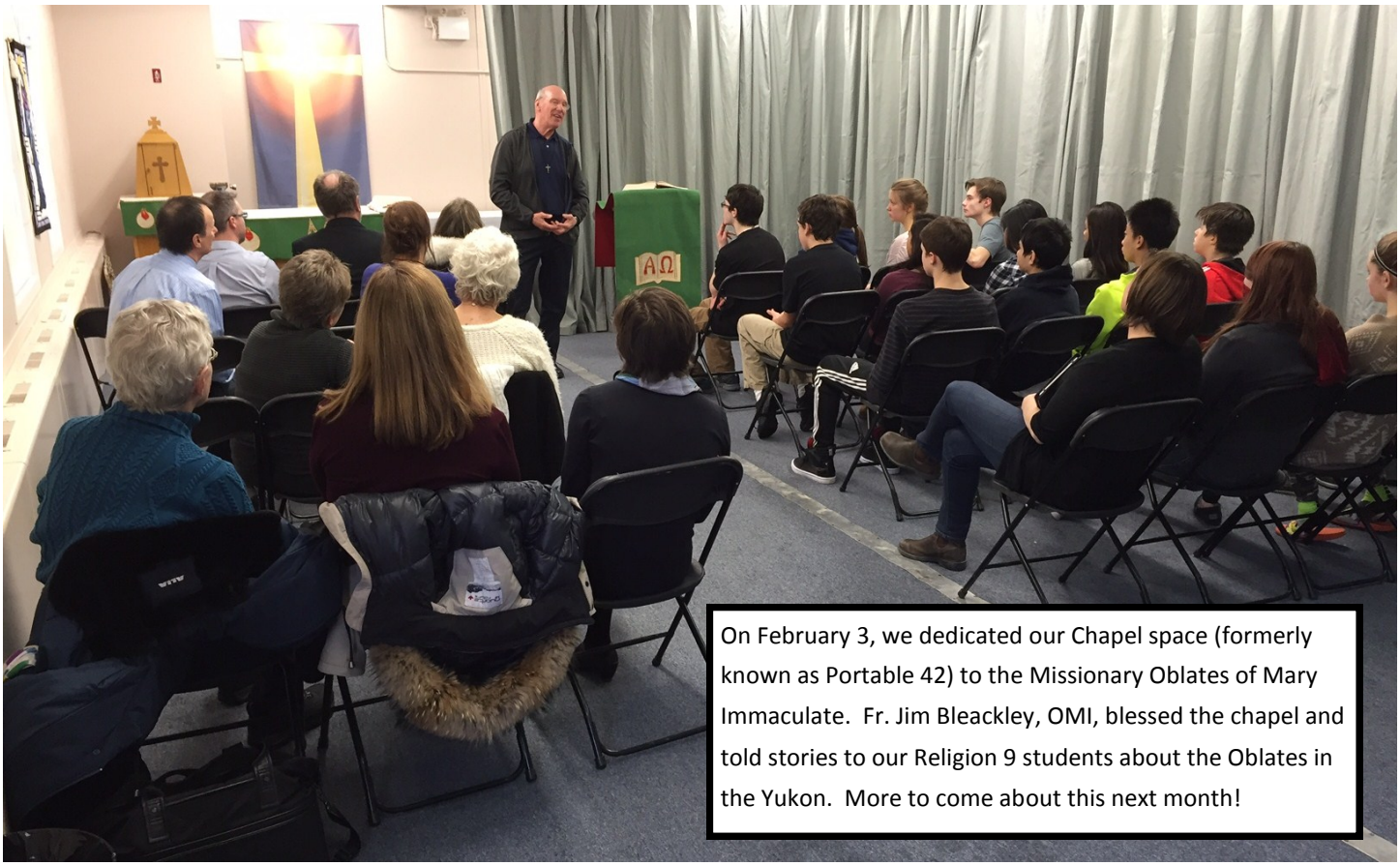
Young Adult Fiction

Young Adult Fantasy

Middle Grade & Children's

Picture Books

All the brights places / F RIO **Queen of Shadows** / F MAA **Magnus Chase** / F Rio **The Day the Crayons Came Home** FDAY



On February 3, we dedicated our Chapel space (formerly known as Portable 42) to the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Fr. Jim Bleackley, OMI, blessed the chapel and told stories to our Religion 9 students about the Oblates in the Yukon. More to come about this next month!