

2014 Winter Term/Director's Update

Dear Parents,

With our Winter Term now well underway, we hope you enjoyed a wonderful holiday season and that 2014 proves to be a fantastic year for you and your family. As we shiver through one of the most bone-chilling Januarys in recent memory, we hope you're staying warm and comfortable as Old Man Winter continues to exercise his arctic grip! I'm sure by now you're probably a little tired of hearing about the dreaded polar vortex, wind chill temperatures and salt shortages! As glad as we are to put the ice storm damage and power outages behind us... the excitement of upcoming winter themed activities including next month's **Winter Olympics in Sochi** and our own **Dearcroft/West Wind Winter Olympics** will be great fun. Our Senior Elementary and Jr. High classes are also looking forward to their much-anticipated **Winter Trip to Ottawa, Feb 10th – 13th**.

In the meantime, at school we've also been making the most of winter, staying active and getting outside whenever we can. Our Elementary and Jr. High students are enjoying their Phys. Ed. Classes at the arena, **skating** and playing **shinny hockey** at **CanLan Ice Sports**. Many thanks to those of you who have been helping us with the driving and joining us on the ice, in addition to tightening skates! Another Winter Term activity we've been enjoying is **Chess Club**. The dynamic duo of **Mr. Gunn** and Mrs. Rymes husband, **Andrew** have been doing a great job of teaching chess to an eager group of young enthusiasts! A very special thanks to both Mr. Gunn and Mr. Rymes for their energy and commitment. Looking ahead to next month, we will once again be hosting the ever popular **Scientists In School** program on Feb. 5th & 6th. In a similar program being offered over lunch break, a number of students have also registered for the **Bricks 4 Kidz**. This lego robotics themed program designed by architects and engineers, re-enforces principles learned in Science and Technology and is a fun, hands on way to create dynamic mechanical working models.

Please note, this **Saturday, January 25th** we will be hosting our annual **Winter Open House between 10 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.** If you know any families who would be interested in our program, please encourage them to attend this opportunity to tour our classrooms and meet our teachers. We greatly appreciate the assistance you provide us in this respect and are always grateful for the students who join us as a result of your referrals and word of mouth.

Special Announcement!

In a related development, we are very pleased and excited to announce that we have purchased the property adjacent to the east side of our campus! Approximately 1.5 acres, this land is largely beside our traffic circle and runs parallel to our Jr. High buildings and back playground. It is accessed by a driveway between our campus gates and the neighboring red brick home that fronts on Lakeshore. Although we have no immediate plans for use of the property, we are investigating how we can make use of the land to augment our existing space and we now have the room to further build our campus sustainably and in keeping with the natural beauty and heritage of the site. At one time our home at the centre of the Dearcroft property was part of a 40-acre working farm. Next door, the coach house that once stood on the empty property was

part of an active stable for horses used on the Kings Highway #2 (Lakeshore Rd) coach line between Toronto and Hamilton. Although it's unlikely we'll be offering riding lessons in the future, we are excited by the direct access to Lawson Park and the potential this additional space offers our campus as our school grows into the needs of its next 50 years! As Oakville's third oldest independent school and our community's original Montessori school we are approaching our 47th year of operation. As we continue to grow and evolve, we look forward to offering the best possible setting for our students and staff. We'll be sure to update you of related developments. As mentioned above, regarding this weekend's Open House...please be sure to invite friends and families to contact us and learn more about our Pre-School – Grade 8 programs for 3-14 year olds.

Montessori Model United Nations Update:

In early April, many of our Grade 6 and all of our Jr. High students will be in **New York City** to participate in the exciting **2014 International Montessori Model United Nations Conference**. This remarkable experience culminates in voting on final resolutions in the General Assembly Chamber where the global heads of state meet during UN summits. One of only two MUN models with direct access to the UN buildings, the Montessori Model UN is a world class experience for students. In keeping with this global focus of study, we were honored last week to host a special guest, **Art De Fehr**, an **Order Of Canada** winner and one of Canada's most respected business leaders and philanthropists. As CEO of Palliser Furniture, based in Winnipeg and with many years of experience working with the UN and advising Canada's diplomatic/foreign service community, Mr. De Fehr is also an expert advisor in the area of immigration policy (at the provincial and federal level). He has travelled to over 130 countries and worked in many African and Asian nations coordinating refugee camps and the evacuation of displaced refugees, child soldiers and war orphans. The grandfather of Dearcroft/West Wind students **Leo and Colette Nussbaum**, Mr. De Fehr's modest and humorous speaking style captivated our students and staff as well as a number of parent visitors during his lecture in our Jr. High classroom. Having marched with **Martin Luther King** in the 1960's and worked closely with former UN leader and close friend **Kofi Annan** as well as past U.S presidents **Jimmy Carter** and **Bill Clinton**, Mr. De Fehr's knowledge of world affairs and UN Policy was deeply insightful. Special thanks to Leo and his mother **Shanti** for arranging this truly wonderful visit and the lasting impression it left!

Please **circle your calendars** for a future MMUN date open to our entire school community. We hope you'll join us on **Thursday, March 27th** to enjoy a MMUN fundraiser dinner highlighting Asian culture and cuisine. **South Korea** and **Romania** are the countries our students will be representing in New York this spring. Previous countries our student delegates have represented include **Egypt** (2011) and **Italy** (2008).

As we look forward to the excitement of the Winter Olympics, our MMUN activities and the ongoing evolution of our school community, we are thankful for the generous spirit, enthusiastic support and remarkable contributions of everyone who calls Dearcroft/West Wind home!

Gordon Phippen