



TOUCHSTONE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Greetings from Touchstone

Touchstone Community School
Newsletter
Volume 1, Issue 2

Welcome to our final newsletter for the 2007-2008 academic year. This issue is full of good news and highlights and includes contributions from many members of our school community.

In this issue, you will read about exciting staff developments, news from our French Program, an update from our 2008 graduating class, a special celebration of TCS parental involvement, and, of course, the extraordinary writing and artwork of our students.

As we conclude another school year, this newsletter aims to provide all readers with a snippet of the many components that make our school a place of learning, growth, creativity and, above all, community.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and that the summer ahead is happy, healthy and relaxing for you and your family! See you in the fall!

- Claire Hanlon TCS Parent

Important Dates

June

- ☺ June 9: No School
- ☺ June 12: Executive Meeting
- ☺ June 16: Progress Reports
- ☺ June 17: Parent-Teacher Conferences (optional)
- ☺ June 18: Last Day (11am dismissal)
- ☺ June 18: Graduation 11:00am

TCS Teachers are Going to England!

At this month's Parent Meeting, there was a **big** announcement! With great excitement, it was announced that in October of this year, the full time teachers of TCS will be taking the professional development trip of a lifetime to England!

With the generous financial backing of a private Foundation, our hard-working and well deserving teaching staff will be taking a trip that will include visits to a groundbreaking English school, exploration of London's historic sites, a journey into the English countryside, and the opportunity to learn about Art, History, Education, European culture and English customs through hands-on exploration.

To say that the teachers are excited about this news would be an enormous understatement! This trip will bring even more enthusiasm and knowledge into our children's classrooms, and will ultimately be one more way in which Touchstone goes above and beyond delivering well-rounded curriculum and experiences to the students.

It goes without saying that the teachers at Touchstone are in a class of their own.

Their education, experience, commitment, passion and enthusiasm are evident to anyone visiting the school.



The love, support, and dedication they give to the students, and the patience, professionalism and dedication they show to all families is immeasurable.

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The Foundation recognized this dedication and wanted our teachers to experience a learning opportunity unlike any they may ever have again. Ultimately, this trip is a gift to the teachers that give so much of themselves every day, and to the students who will benefit directly from the knowledge that is brought back into the classrooms. This news, simply put, celebrates what it means to be part of a true community!

Message from Ms. Tasha

It is exciting to walk through the classrooms at Touchstone and see the wonderful and dynamic activities our teachers plan for our students.

Our students perform chemistry experiments, study lobster habitats, pan for "gold", create topographical maps, work with electrodes, write their own French plays, design masks, learn about the life and artistic techniques of Van Gogh, compose their own music, discover the world of beekeeping, dissect pig hearts, play Ultimate Frisbee, and study the works of Shakespeare, Beethoven, and the Smashing Pumpkins!

These activities capture students' interest and keep the love of learning alive. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing a child's eyes light up when he or she discovers something new.

We at Touchstone believe that *all children* are gifted in some way, and when they are exposed to a full spectrum of subjects, their gifts become clear to them and others.

- Ms. Tasha Principal



Tasha vanderLinde

Class of 2008 Graduate Update

by Leslie Magee (TCS Parent & Past Field Trip Coordinator)

The time is drawing near for the children in the Purple Class to graduate, and as I was organizing the final field trip of the year I thought it would be interesting to see how many field trips they had been on.

Most of these students have been at the school for seven years and in that time it turns out that they have been on 64 field trips! So you must be asking yourself "What could you possibly do to fill 64 field trips?!?"

I thought I would take this opportunity to highlight a few of the really fun, interesting, and wacky ones to show you how many great things our city and province have to offer and to reinforce

just how much hands-on-learning these 2008 graduating students have had during their time at Touchstone.

- Visits to Ducks Unlimited to do the Scats and Tracks Mystery tour and the Wetland Critter Dipping program
- Visits from various health professionals to learn about different parts of the body including teeth, eyes, heart, digestive track, ears, nose and throat, back and more
- A trip to the University of New Brunswick Geology Department to do a study of rocks
- Visits to Rothesay High School to do science labs with the grade 11 students and learn about magnetism, sound and optics

- A visit to the Glenn Carpenter Interpretive Centre at the Crane Mountain landfill to learn about environmentally friendly waste management including recycling, composting and reusing
- Tours of the New Brunswick Legislature and the Beaverbrook Art Gallery
- A visit to a hog farm to learn about feed production, vaccinations, ultrasounds, and bacteria control to maintain a healthy hog population
- A visit to the Mactaquac Dam
- A visit to an Anglican Church, a Mosque and a Synagogue

Éducation physique at Touchstone

What changes will be happening to our French program in the fall?

I am pleased to announce that physical education will be instructed in French next year in addition to regular French classes. The French language will follow Touchstone students from the soccer field, to the school yard, onto the yoga mat and into the French classroom. Students will be able to make visually clear connections between actions, rules and instructions they are learning in Éducation physique through oral, written and comprehension exercises in French.

What are you most excited about with regards to these changes?

Besides the obvious benefits of having the extra instruction time in French, I am most excited about taking on Ms. Rebecca's fantastic curriculum and adding to it a variety of meditative activities, such as Tai

Chi, yoga and meditative movement exercises. Not only will the children be learning French vocabulary that relates to their environment and life experience, but they will be able to put the words and verbs they are learning into actions as they tumble, pass the ball and stretch.

Why do you think these changes are important?

As a Canadian Francophone and a teacher, it is a great gift to have any opportunity to share my culture and language with children and adults. What's most important in FSL learning is positive reinforcement. Students who succeed in my classroom are encouraged constantly at school and at home, have a positive attitude towards learning languages and cultures, take risks and are fearless. Éducation physique may give the chance to those FSL students who are normally critical

An Interview with Mlle. Stéfanie

of themselves to shine and experiment more with the language in a "classroom free" environment. French will not just be a subject in school, it will be a tool to use in order to communicate. By providing our kids with the extra time to express themselves in French through the games and the sports they already know, they may be more apt to use French vocabulary and verbs more frequently in and outside of school, in different contexts.

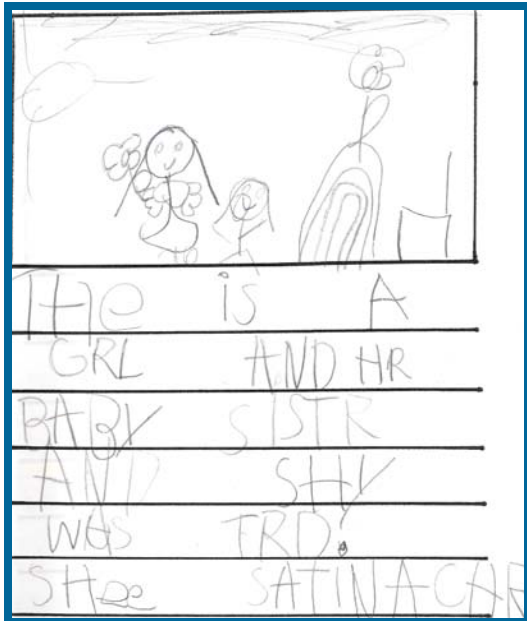
Anything else you would like to add?

I would like to applaud the parents for allowing the school to provide this opportunity for our students to experience. I am anxious to get out of my heels and into my running shoes!

On y va! ("Let's go")

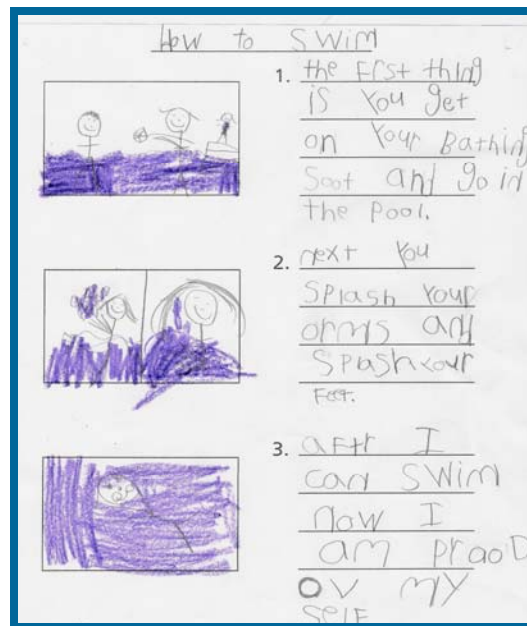
The Girl

by Alexis (age 5)



How to Swim

by Miriam (age 6)



Why People Should Believe In Fairies

by Mira (age 8)

I think people should believe in fairies because... If the tooth fairies are real there must be more out there. Also if you believe in them strongly perhaps you can play together and even eat together!! You could even create a new type of fairy and be king or queen of the type you created. But the best way to believe in fairies is to be yourself. Maybe you can not make heads or tails of what I am saying but soon you will!

Impasto Style by Becca (age 7)



Shakespeare's Life

by Andrew T. (age 11)



Shakespeare wanted to do many things in his life. Shakespeare wanted to be a playwright when he was a kid. But when he was 19 his dream hadn't come true because he had a family with Ann Hathaway. He then had to take care of his kids.

William Shakespeare went to England to become a playwright but he had to leave his family behind

because it wasn't safe for them in England. In 1592 he became a famous playwright at the Globe Theater. He wrote about English kings from the past. William Shakespeare was so famous there are still kids performing his plays today. In fact, Touchstone performed 3 of his plays on May 16, 2008.

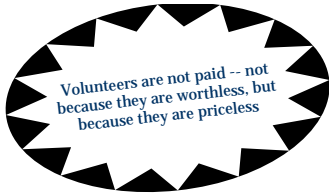


68A Hampton Road
Rothsay, New Brunswick
E2E 5L5

Phone: 506-847-2673
Fax: 506-634-7222

www.touchstonecommunityschool.ca

Please email any comments or ideas to
touchstone@touchstonecommunityschool.com



Celebrating Parental Involvement at Touchstone

At the Parent Meeting in May, it was mentioned that our sense of community is alive and well at Touchstone and that in fact, 'Community' (literally) is our middle name! Nowhere is that more evident than when you look at the parental involvement that occurs every day at TCS. From our weekly snack and hot lunch program, Wednesday afternoon teaching, field trips and skating days, to committee work, fundraising and special events, Touchstone parents are truly committed to being involved and making a difference for all of our students. Here are just a few photos and comments that demonstrate the many different ways parents add to our school community!

Pre-K to Grade
5 are in the
following order

- Red
- Blue
- Green
- Orange
- Purple

I really love being able to work on committees for my daughter's school. I can't always be there to help out during the school days, but I still feel as though I am really involved in the decisions that are made. I also feel as though I really understand what is happening at the school.

- Parent



Moms, babies & Super-Sandi creating another healthy and delicious hot lunch for all TCS students

Teaching on Wednesday afternoons is so much fun! It is a nice opportunity to get to know my child's classmates, and to get a much bigger appreciation of what the teacher actually does each and every day in the class. It's fun to see the children so excited when I arrive and I like that they all know me by name!

- Parent



Mom and daughter creating bug stories with the Blue Class



The Red Class loved visiting this TCS Dad at work

Going along on field trips with the school is definitely one of my favourite ways of being involved at Touchstone. Seeing the hands-on-learning that goes on, and the excitement of the students from the minute they board the bus until they arrive back at the school is fun to be a part of.

- Parent



Learning about SCUBA diving with some help from a TCS Dad

Surprisingly, I really love being involved in the classroom on occasional Wednesday afternoons. I say surprising because this is the part I most feared when we began at TCS. After a while you get to know your child's class very well and you can predict what will really excite and engage them. Thinking up really creative and interesting activities for them to do is fun. Some of the kids in the class get really excited that you are coming in, and your own child is VERY happy that his/her parent is taking the time to spend with them and their friends. I truly believe that by becoming involved in the school, your child gains an appreciation for the fact that learning is important to the whole family. They also seem to immerse themselves more fully and take more pride in their accomplishments if they know how important it is to their parents, friends' parents, etc. For us, school is not just a 'place to go' every day while we're at work, it is the hub of most of our household conversations!!

- Parent