

## ***Principal's Report***

**Andy Huisman**

***“The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young – let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance – for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”***

**Proverbs 1:1 – 7**

Isn't it truly amazing that when you open your Bible, God leads you to a certain text or a passage? Another month has passed since the last Beacon was published and a lot of things have taken place at DCS. As I stroll the halls and look at the artwork I stand amazed at the talents our students have. I walk through the classrooms and hear the sounds of learning taking place. I accept the challenge that the grade four's make to see if they can beat me at multiplication flashcards. I walk through the gym at lunch and see many students partaking in sporting activities with a spirit of camaraderie. I sit on the bench at

the front and have conversations with the younger students who always have something exciting to share. I listen at lunchtime as high school students are practicing the songs they plan to sing at the upcoming Christmas concert. I see teachers eagerly working with their students, showing them the beauty of God's creation and His dominion over it. I show the school to visitors who always remark that there are obviously many excellent things happening at our school. I see numerous parents helping out at school, either in the library, classrooms, coaching one of the sports teams, or even working with the high school

students as they get ready for the dinner theatre production. I see students taking responsibility for what happens in their school. I see many parents again show up at Parent-Teacher interviews to meet with the staff and discuss the progress of their children. God has truly blessed us as a community, and that blessing is very much evident in the everyday happenings at DCS. *But*, do we have the sense that we have arrived? Is this all there is to having a school such as DCS? Can we now sit back and be satisfied with the fruits of our labour?

What struck me when I opened to Proverbs 1 is that the chapter is

divided into two parts. The first part (verses 1-7) states the Purpose and the Theme of Proverbs – the call to meditate on the wisdom of the proverbs. Those verses, especially verse 7, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline*”, have often been used in connection with the purpose and value of education. There is a tremendous amount of wisdom in those few short verses, and we would do well to meditate on them. The rest of the chapter deals with “Exhortations to Embrace Wisdom” which includes warnings against enticement and warnings against rejecting wisdom.

The warnings against enticement and rejecting wisdom are something that we constantly have to take to heart. There are many excellent programs taking place at DCS as the students are engaged in the subject matter taught

from the Biblical perspective. However, at no time can we (and I include parents, students, teachers and all who are involved in DCS) relax and feel like we have arrived. There is extreme danger in that sense of arrival. Proverbs 1:32 mentions the word ‘complacency’. What is complacency? It is that sense of self-satisfaction, the attitude that ‘good enough’ is acceptable. Complacency is a sense that we no longer have to push forward, but rather we are content with our current level of effort. How many times haven’t you told your child to ‘try harder’? If they have the ability to do better, they often will, but when we start to accept mediocrity and praise them for it, or make excuses for it, we will start to see mediocre work more often. Is the student’s goal to do the best that they can, or is the goal simply to get a pass? Mediocrity leads to complacency. If less is expected, less will be given. It is time to break that cycle if it

is already happening, or it is time to be aware of the danger of mediocrity and complacency.

This is not an issue that is easily fixed but there are things that we all can do to make changes. As a parent, how do we deal with this issue? We need to talk with our children and share with them the responsibility that they have to use their talents to the fullest. We need to ask “*What did you learn in school today?*” Never take “*nothing*” for an answer. It is impossible to spend a large part of your day at school and learn “*nothing*”. Use the newsletter as a jumping off point for the conversation. Stay in tune with what is going on in your child’s school life. If there is a topic in the newsletter that you could offer your expertise on, phone the school and offer to help. If you notice that your child has a major project to hand in, ask to see it first and offer your opinion. If you

notice that your child has a test on Thursday, talk about the subject with them on Wednesday.

Compliment the good work or offer suggestions for improvement. If you noticed that your child did an incredible amount of work on a certain project, let the teacher know. If you have questions about the school work, phone the teacher. The teachers communicate a tremendous amount of information through the weekly newsletter, take advantage of the information.

Education is a journey that we are all on. Parents, children and teachers together are guided by God through this life with the sole purpose of praising Him. A devotional that I came across dealt with the issue of mediocrity and on living life in moderation. We often hear that doing things in moderation is good, but think about it. Is moderation always the best? The devotional takes a well

known verse "*well done my good and faithful servant*" and, to make a point, changes it to "*moderately done, my moderate and faithful servant.*" Do we really want to be moderate servants? Should we not strive to do the best with what we have been blessed with?

The mission statement of the school states, "*For living a life of Christian Discipleship in contemporary society.*" That is a huge task, and not one that we can say we do of our own strength. This can only be accomplished through God's grace and love for us. When you start to look at that statement, you can see that it is talking about the intersections of faith and life. Many of those intersections are highly evident in the examples that I gave at the beginning of this article. Sometimes, we may think that these intersections have to be huge. But in reality, they are not always. Let us celebrate the positives and work at

improving what needs improving.

## **Other News**

### **DCS Website**

The new website is now up and running. Not only is it easier to manage but the address is much easier than the old one. The new address is [www.dufferinchristian.ca](http://www.dufferinchristian.ca).

As you browse through the site you will notice some new features. As you hold your cursor over the left sidebar menu items, sub-menus will appear. For example, over the home page, you will have several sub-menus that talk about the mission statement and purpose of education. As well, the right side bar on the home page contains upcoming events. If you click on an event, a new box opens up that contains more detailed information on that event. If you browse through the faculty page, you will notice links to emails and websites for each staff member. By clicking on

the web link beside a staff member's name, you will open a new page that contains information specifically for that staff member. For example, check out Mrs. DeWit's web link. At this point not all staff members have created their own pages, but given time, more and more will be available. There is also a page each for the school newsletter and the Beacon. On those pages you will be able to access the latest newsletters and Beacons. (just click on the link for whichever item you need). Other features include information specifically for students, a photo gallery, a library page that will provide updated information on new books in the library, links to other sites and more. Take a few moments and check it out.

## **Christmas Concert**



The students of DCS are busy practicing

for the upcoming concert. It will be held at the Canadian Reformed Church of Carman-West on **Friday, December the 12<sup>th</sup>**. The theme of the concert is "**Shine Jesus Shine**". This is promising to be an excellent evening filled with praise to God. The concert participants include students from all grades K-12. There will also be ample opportunity for the audience to participate in this evening of fellowship.

## **Parent-Teacher Interviews**

On behalf of the staff, I would like to extend our appreciation to the many parents who turned out for these interviews. This was your opportunity to meet with the teachers and to visit the rooms that your children spend a fair bit of time in daily. These interviews are an excellent way of maintaining a connection with the school. However, they are not the only way of

staying in touch. Feel free to stop by anytime, or to make a phone call, or write an e-mail. By maintaining that contact, the unity between the home and school is strengthened.

## **DCS Library**



Currently the library has many excellent books that are well worth reading. But in order to make the books more accessible to students there is a need to 'level' the books. There is a small group of people dedicated to 'leveling' the books. Each book is examined and is leveled according to a set of standards. This leveling will help in choosing books that are at an appropriate level for your child to read. However, the task of leveling is labour intensive and the old saying 'many hands make light work' proves true. If you are able to spend time and assist in leveling a few books, please contact Joyce

Beichter. Your help would be greatly appreciated!

## ***Band Concert***



Yes, there is a band concert being planned. This year, DCS has two bands, a Junior Band of 54 students, and a Senior Band of 39 students. Due to the large amount of students in the Band program, they will be holding their own evening rather than join in with the Christmas concert. Date to be announced. The concert will feature selections by each band, selections performed by both

bands together, solo and small ensembles, as well as a few other surprises.

I will end this contribution with one more observance of what goes on at school during the day. This past week one elementary student came by my office with a number of crazy carpets. This is what he said, "Mr. Huisman, I brought these crazy carpets to school for kids to use so they can slide down the snowhills, which is better than students pushing each other off of the snowhills. Do you think that would be a good idea?" I love it

when students see a problem and offer solutions! He and a few of his friends even offered to 'hang-out' by the snowhill during recess to help the younger ones have fun and to make sure that the crazy carpets came back inside. When the week-end came, he took the crazy carpets home for the week-end. On Monday, he was back in my office with 5 brand-new crazy carpets that his parents said could stay at school. Thank you!

Enjoy your coffee and have a blessed day of rest!

## **Treasurer's Report**

*Dolf Feddes*

I missed out on the last Beacon so here is a bit of a late reminder of the new tuition rates:

<b>Cat</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Fee per month</b>
A	Parents who have children attending DCS	\$330
B	Members who have children in Kindergarten only or with children who have attended DCS	\$220
C	Retired people and married people	\$120
D	Single young people	\$60

These rates went into effect November 1. The board is very thankful for the solid financial position of the school so we can keep the tuition fees affordable for most members. Of course there are many factors that come into play when making the budget but there is one that I want to highlight. **Over the last number of years there has been a substantial increase in the number of members and donators paying the full amount and making more timely payments.** As board we have taken a more pro-active approach by adopting the arrears policy and structure how we deal with late payments. As long as this is done in a spirit of love and mutual understanding it will strengthen the school community and make the financial planning a lot easier. **If more members live up to their commitments it will lead to lower school dues for everyone.** The board is very much humbled by the commitment and dedication of many members and wants to thank all of you for your continuing support of Christian education of our children and grandchildren.

## ***PHE, Graduation Portfolio and DCHS Curriculum***

***By Mrs. M. Vandenbos***

What do Physical and Health Education (PHE), Graduation Portfolio and the curriculum at Dufferin Christian High School have to do with each other? To answer this question I would like to draw your attention to our Mission Statement: “The parents of Dufferin Christian School envision DCS as a place where students and teachers are engaged in the study of various subjects and enlightened by the Word of God, as confessed in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort, for living a life of Christian discipleship in contemporary society.”

Next I would like to look at the rationale for the Physical and Health Education DCS curriculum. Here it says, “The Starting point for a Physical Education curriculum is the belief that we are called to honour God with our bodies. That means that the main aim of physical education is to help students develop motor proficiencies, health fitness, and develop and maintain acceptable motor proficiencies, health fitness, and physical skills in a variety of activities. The discipline of physical education contributes content that offers possibilities of bodily development and renewal as well as means by which to maintain a physical fitness that can aid responsible service before the Lord. This is particularly important since human beings are a unity and their physical health affects

their emotional, mental, and spiritual state. Students must become sensitive to the potential of their bodies: how they function, and how they should care for them.”

When we realize that total fitness encompasses six areas: spiritual, intellectual, nutritional, mental, physical and social, we now can start to see why PHE includes not only the physical aspect, but much more. As temples in God’s Kingdom we are builders in His Kingdom. Just as a building is not complete until all aspects of it are done, so His Kingdom is not complete until His plan of salvation is done. When we see ourselves and our children as building blocks in His Kingdom and the school’s mission to help prepare students for living a life of Christian discipleship in contemporary society, it may be easier to understand why the PHE curriculum includes things like looking at our talents, characteristics, and skills which make us unique. Once students start to get a glimpse of themselves in this way, hopefully they will understand better how to choose careers which can help them to be more mature builders in God’s Kingdom.

Which then also leads us to the reason for the Dufferin Christian High School Graduation Portfolio credit. The rationale of this portfolio begins with the question, “How can we assist our students to discover and nurture their talents so that they might use them to the service of God and their neighbour?” This leads us back to our mission statement. Further the rationale continues: “A high school discipleship portfolio is a physical or electronic collection of material that demonstrates a student’s exploration and reflection of God-given talents that can be used in service to God and neighbour. This portfolio process, then, is designed to help students first of all to discover their talents and then secondarily to nurture them. “The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:7-12)

Hopefully this has helped to explain why there is much more to a PHE credit than the physical fitness aspect, and why we find part of the Graduation Portfolio requirements in this course as well. The idea of the Graduation Portfolio is to integrate from all areas of life a working document to help students see their growth as builders in God’s Kingdom.

# *Student Engagement*

By Nick Gunnink

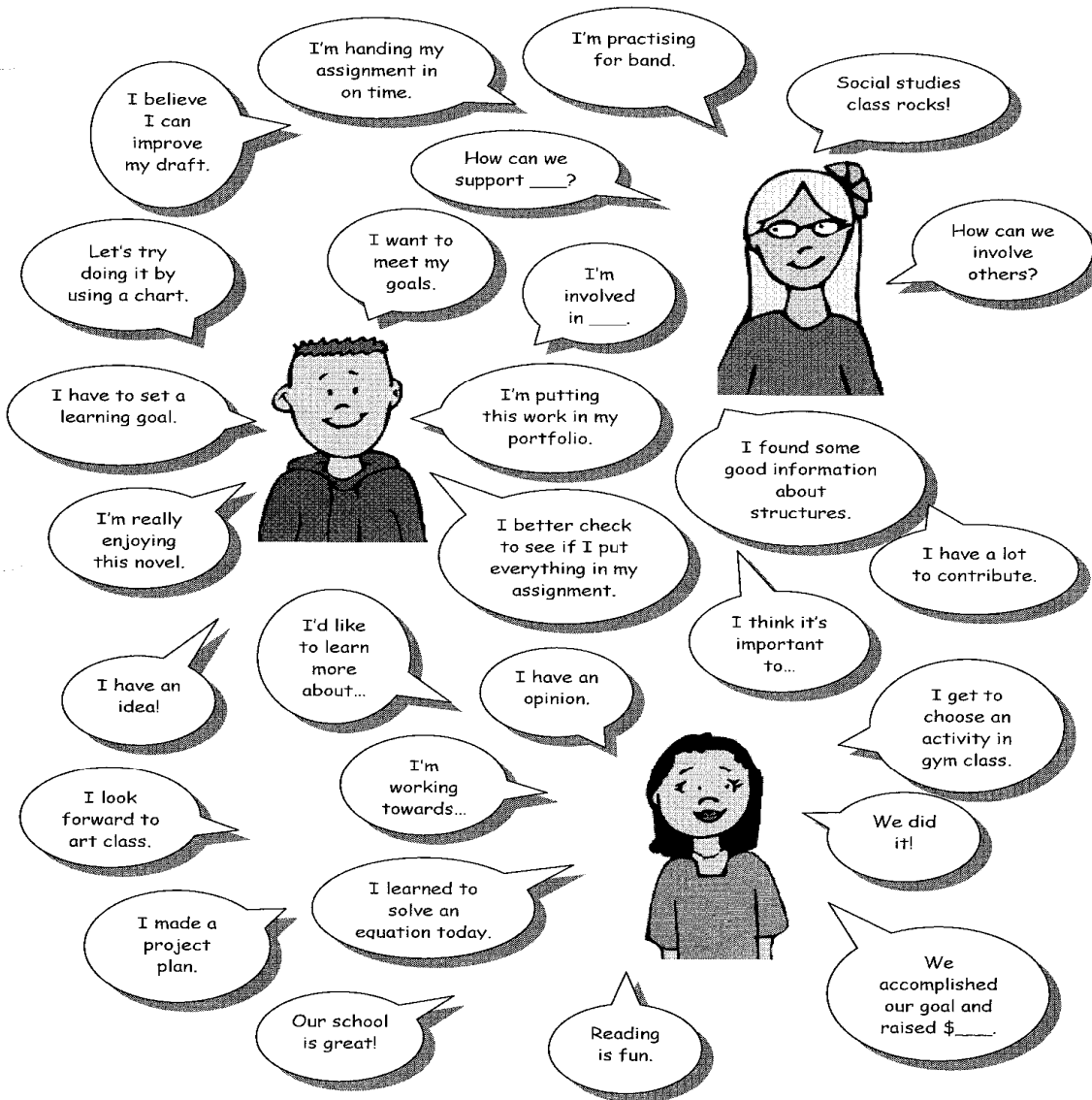
On one occasion I attended a presentation where the speaker challenged those in attendance to listen to their cows! His refrain throughout the presentation was, “What are your cows telling you?” His intent was to get farmers to recognize things they could improve on just by observing the behaviour of their animals.

Can you guess where I’m going with this? Your children are far more valuable than cows but I can use the same strategy as a farmer to improve my delivery of the curriculum. I can’t change the curriculum and I can’t change the students, but I can meddle with the delivery of the goods. Glassy eyed stares send me a message. Snickering with classmates or passing notes sends me a message. Sloppily done work sends me a message. Missing school sends me a message. These behaviours send me messages which tend to influence my planning for the delivery of the curriculum.

One of the messages I receive is that the students are not interested in their learning. They are disengaged and may be so for a variety of reasons. There are a number of ways I can address disengagement. I can treat the symptoms and discipline the snickerers, have the sloppy work redone, and arrange make up work for missed days. While these measures are necessary at times, I also need to consider what I can do as a teacher to improve student engagement.

One of the buzz concepts in the Ministry of Education now is ‘student engagement’. As of this November it is a formal part of the Middle Years report cards in Prairie Rose School Division. (Elements of what is being assessed already appear on our report card.) The following “talking heads” illustration gives you a

sense of how the Ministry defines student engagement. While I think that the focus on the individual is rather pronounced, as teachers and parents we would be happy to hear students talking as the illustration suggests.



In order to improve student engagement the teacher can do a number of things. I find that planning for different learning experiences really helps. Rather than only reading from a textbook and answering questions, I sometimes deliver

the curriculum through dialogue with my class. I'll share a playground scenario in order to demonstrate the ideas of nationalism, imperialism, and the arms race. Another technique I find works well is to know where the students "come from". What are their interests? Do they have jobs and responsibilities? What do the breadwinners in their family do? I have been able to tap into this information in order to make a point in Bible class or I have used the information to make a math lesson about estimating come alive.

Student engagement is not only the responsibility of the teacher. You have known all along that parents can contribute to student engagement in very meaningful ways. This takes effort on (y)our part. As a parent I know I have to make an effort to involve myself in my child's learning. Some mornings I ask what he expects to learn about in a given day. If he has no answer, I may ask him to remember a new word he might pick up during the day. As parents we will take time to listen to him when something reminds him of what he learned in science class. We show interest in the sheets that come fluttering out of the knapsack every now and then. As a teacher, I have benefited when students bring resources from home. I appreciate the parental involvement in what happens in the classroom, but it also sends the message to the student that learning is important. And when students understand that learning is important, student engagement is also enhanced.

As I observe various things happening in my room, I have to be careful not just to react to what is going on. I also need to ask why it's going on. "Why does so and so come to me with internet downloads every other day while so and so can't be bothered that punctuation comes at the end of sentences?" Indeed, what are your cows telling you!

***You are all cordially invited to the DCS Christmas Concert  
"Shine Jesus Shine"***

**Friday, December 12, 2008**

**Time: 7:30 p.m.**

**Carman West Church**

# New To DCS Library

*Come and check out our new books for November...*

## **Fiction**

Encyclopedia Brown Lends a Hand  
Red Rock Mysteries Hidden Riches #13  
Legends in Sports Michael Jordan  
Little House Mary Ingalls On Her Own  
Red Rock Mysteries Hollywood Holdup #12  
Tunnels of Tyranny  
Jungle Doctor's Crooked Dealings  
Red Rock Mysteries Instant Menace #9  
Starlight Animal Rescue #1 Runaway  
Starlight Animal Rescue #2 Mad Dog

Sobol, Donald  
Jenkins, Jerry B.  
Christopher, Matt  
Willard Kimmel, Elizabeth  
Jenkins, Jerry B.  
Bishop, Mary Harelkin  
White, Paul  
Jenkins, Jerry B.  
Mackall, Dandi Daley  
Mackall, Dandi Daley

## **High School Fiction**

The Author's Blood  
Red Rock Mysteries Escaping Darkness #10  
The Minions of Time The Wormling #4  
Fated Genes  
The Boy in the Striped Pajamas  
Word of Honor #3  
Dawn's Light #4

Jenkins, Jerry B.  
Jenkins, Jerry B.  
Jenkins, Jerry B.  
Kraus, Harry MD  
Boyne, John  
Blackstock, Terri  
Blackstock, Terri

## **Primary**

It's Raining, It's Pouring  
Late for School  
Fanny

Eagle, Kin  
Calmenson, Stephanie  
Hobbie, Holly

## **Junior Resource**

Marco Polo  
Balls! Round 2  
Mighty Machines: Ambulances  
Mighty Machines: Big Rigs

Demi  
Rosen, Michael J.  
Manolis, Kay  
Manolis, Kay

Mighty Machines: Police Cars  
Amazing Animals: Anacondas  
Amazing Animals: Dolphins  
Amazing Animals: Orangutans  
Amazing Animals: Penguins  
Amazing Animals: Polar Bears  
Amazing Animals: Tigers  
You Wouldn't Want to be in the Forbidden City  
Dickens, His Work and His World  
Our Farm  
What are Goods & Services?  
What is Scarcity of Resources?  
What are Taxes?  
What is Trade?  
My Favourite Writer: Megan McDonald  
My Favourite Writer: Robert Munsch  
My Favourite Writer: Beatrix Potter  
Welcome to Saudi Arabia  
  
Dragons of the Deep

Manolis, Kay  
DeMedeiros, James  
DeMedeiros, James  
DeMedeiros, Michael  
Whitfield, Dave  
DeMedeiros, Michael  
Watson, Galadriel  
Morley, Jacqueline  
Rosen, Michael  
Rosen, Michael  
Andrews, Carolyn  
Cohn, Jessica  
Bedesky, Baron  
Andrews, Carolyn  
Tomljanovic, Tatiana  
Kissock, Heather  
Hurtig, Jennifer  
Cane, Graeme / Balcavage,  
Dynise  
Wieland, Carl

## High School Resource

Protecting Earth's Rain Forests  
Protecting Earth's Land  
Protecting Earth's Air Quality  
Protecting Earth's Water Supply  
Earth-Friendly Waste Management  
Earth-Friendly Energy  
Understanding Global Warming  
Heritage of Evidence in the British Museum  
Universe by Design  
The Cave Book  
The Fossil Book  
Footprints in the Ash (Mt. St. Helenes)

Welsbacher, Anne  
Rapp, Valerie  
Rapp, Valerie  
Fridell, Ron  
Wilcox, Charlotte  
Fridell, Ron  
Johnson, Rebecca L.  
Masters, Peter  
Faulkner, Dr. Danny  
Silvestru, Emil  
Parker, Gary & Mary  
Morris, John/Austin, Steven A.

## Grade 12 Poetry

### ***Graduation, By Janae Hillmer***

We spent thirteen fun-filled years together  
    Splashing in puddles and swinging on swings.  
Fun times we've had, no matter what the weather.  
We grew up and learned to spread out our wings.  
    Remember the days, the moments we shared,  
    Deep and dark secrets, never to be revealed.  
Now, we must part ways, and 'though I am scared,  
    This chapter of my life is ready to be sealed.  
    Plans come together. We're moving ahead  
    To jobs and schooling of every sort,  
    Moving on just like we all have said.  
Our family and friends are here for support.  
    With cap and gown and diploma in hand  
We'll walk down the aisle to take our last stand.

### ***Ryan Vandebos***

The radio player's a friend to all.  
The peaceful waves are sent to everyone.  
Throughout the world it sends out its own call  
    Bringing tranquility to everyone.  
We shall open our ears to a new song  
Shutting out bothersome advertisements  
And while the host works many days long  
From many listeners come complements.

A sparkling love song for one person,  
    A country disaster for another,  
Along comes a voice of relaxation –  
    A job for one, a career for others.

To bring joyfulness and laughter to all,  
    Full of vocalists and madrigal.

