

THE MANITOBA

Teacher

SEPTEMBER 2016 VOLUME 95 NUMBER 1 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



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P.4 *From the President*

P.5 *Inside MTS*

P.6 *Amber Trails Community School*

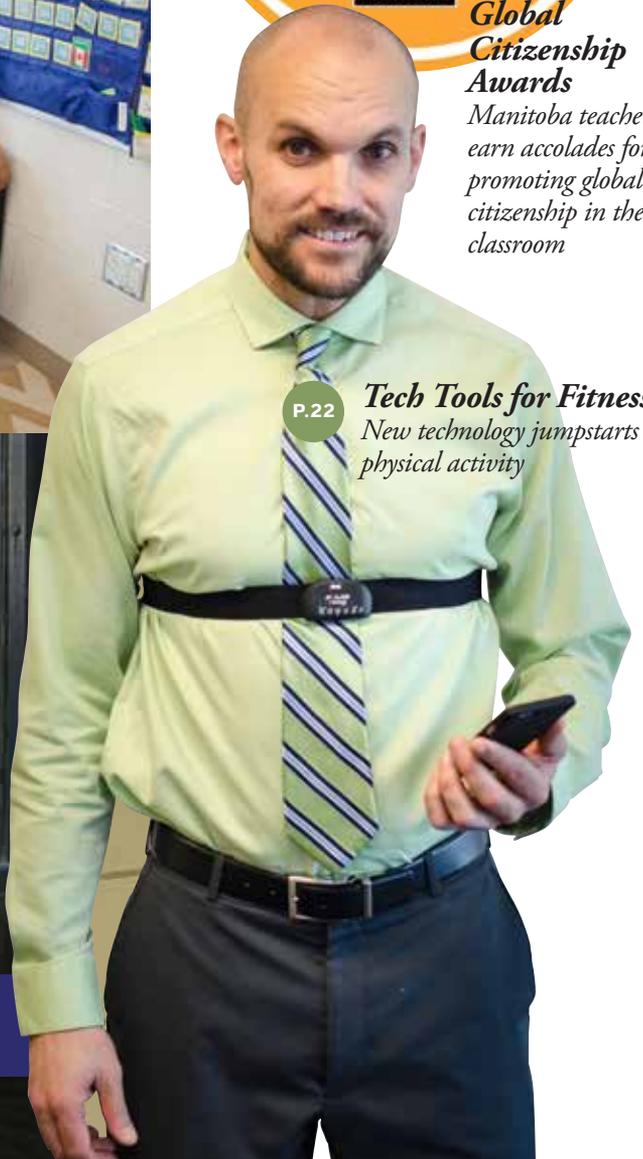
Gold LEED school creates a new culture



Global Citizenship Awards

Manitoba teachers earn accolades for promoting global citizenship in the classroom

P.22 *Tech Tools for Fitness*
New technology jumpstarts physical activity



P.10 *Restoring the Sacred at Maples Collegiate*
Program uses mentors to welcome Indigenous youth to Winnipeg



FROM THE PRESIDENT

NORM GOULD

Union members, and teachers are no exception, are sometimes berated for a supposed singular focus on salaries and time-off and other benefits for which they negotiate.

Of course, it's not true, but it is about the only thing that seems to make the news.

If the media were interested in another aspect of the story, they would have been enlightened by following around the hundreds of teachers who went out this summer to publicly show their support for ideas and to help others.

They weren't looking for publicity or to get paid; they just felt it was the right thing to do.

Early in the summer it was the Winnipeg Pride Parade. Hundreds of teachers were there, many with their families and students. And many wore MTS t-shirts declaring they were proud Manitoba teachers. It was indeed a proud moment for me, not just as president but as a colleague.

Three more pride parades followed, in Steinbach, Portage la Prairie and Brandon. Again, dozens upon dozens of teachers marched in support of justice, inclusion and equality. Again, our members weren't there to benefit themselves, but to hopefully make life easier for their students and others who face bullying and bigotry because they are looked on as being different. We made clear: We are with you.

And while those were high-profile events, there were even more teachers reaching out to kids in other ways this summer.

There were those at the Teddy Bears Picnic in Assiniboine Park. In the MTS tent there, music teachers entertained kids and their bears with interactive stories and other members handed out free books. A few weeks later, more teachers were at the Winnipeg Folk Festival where they were entertaining and reading to kids.

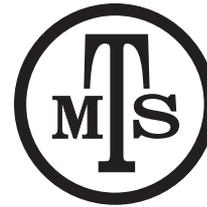
MTS members were also highly visible at The Forks during Aboriginal Day Live. Teachers were clad in other Society-created t-shirts promoting Orange Shirt Day on Sept. 30 honouring residential school survivors. The teachers handed out 400 orange Frisbees. Again, it was to emphasize all our commitment to Aboriginal education and equality.

Beyond that, with no fanfare, individual teachers and groups of teachers were volunteering at a variety of events in their home communities. In fact, it would probably be difficult to find an event in which there wasn't at least one teacher involved. Next summer will see many teachers involved in the Canada Summer Games in Winnipeg, of which MTS is an official supporter.

It is incredibly heartening to see how so many teachers carry and advance their commitments beyond their classrooms, even when the school doors are closed. And, they have fun doing it.

It would be easy to think nobody notices, but they do. The thousands of people who saw what teachers were doing this summer could not go away thinking that teachers are only concerned with issues that directly benefit us.

If you want to see some of the joyous faces from the various events in which MTS was involved, we have a slideshow on our new website, www.mbteach.org. And if you weren't there, there is always next year.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

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INSIDE MTS

MTS DEDICATED TO YOUR WELL-BEING

BOBBI TAILLEFER, GENERAL SECRETARY

Welcome back to school and to work! All of us at the MTS hope that you had a great holiday period – enjoying all the good things in life and sharing them with friends and family. It is great to see that members are taking care of their well-being by traveling, by going to the cottage, by taking stay-cations and by resting and relaxing before they begin the school year marathon. Your wellness is important for your students, for your family and, obviously, for you and it is something that no one else can do for you. Your Society, however, is assisting you as best we can in the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society believes your wellness is essential. We provide many supports to help you sustain your mental and physical health throughout the year. As a member, you receive our newest magazine, *Balance*, which is focused solely on your wellness. You will find articles that are profession specific, such as how to care for your voice over the course of your career so that you will still have it at the end of your career.

You will also find helpful hints on how to get to sleep, which is something I need as I still have the "Sunday night can't get to sleep because I am excited for the week to start syndrome" which results in endless tossing and turning. There are also articles on nutritional advice, including some which will be handy for those living in areas of the province where obtaining fresh foods and a variety of foods poses a challenge. All of this information is provided to help members with diverse needs have additional tools and resources at their fingertips so they can maintain a healthy lifestyle throughout the year.

As well as providing support for your mental and physical well-being, we at MTS are also concerned with your professional well-being. The staff at The Manitoba Teachers' Society has been busy this summer providing workshops, conferences and seminars for MTS members and we want to thank all of you who attended our summer PD offerings.

This upcoming year, the Professional and French Language Services Department has a long list of phenomenal professional development activities

that can be found on our new snazzy website at www.mbteach.org. The PD offerings are varied – from a conference (FAB 5) dedicated to those in the first 5 years of teaching offered in Brandon and Winnipeg, to a seminar on Change Leadership and to workshops on How to do Teacher evaluations and How to support EAL students to name but a few.

While you are looking at the new MTS PD offerings please do enjoy navigating our new website – I believe it is visually appealing and easy to navigate. You will find all the information you are seeking on our site as it contains all of the latest MTS information.

So now, you have all that you need to start a great school year – tools for your continued good health and opportunities for continued professional good health! Have a great school year and avail yourself of all of the services that we provide to support you.

Looking forward to meeting you as we go through the school year together!

project overseas

A Gift to the Globe

Project Overseas is accepting applications from Manitoba educators wanting to assist colleagues in developing countries in the summer of 2017.

Application deadline is Monday, October 31, 2016

This year, MTS, in conjunction with The Canadian Teachers' Federation, will be sponsoring five teachers. Criteria include membership in MTS, an appropriate teacher's certificate, five full years teaching experience in Canada, Canadian citizenship and excellent health.

For more information and application forms, contact Nancy Kerr at:

The Manitoba Teachers' Society
191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2
204-831-3086, 1-866-494-5747 ext. 216
or email nkerr@mbteach.org

STORIES BY JUDY OWEN

State-of-the-art

In any language

It's the first thing you see when you walk into Amber Trails Community School.

Straight ahead, the white wall outside the Winnipeg school's office features a message that emphasizes it is indeed a community school.

"The Languages We Speak" is printed in blue-and-gold capital letters, with the names of 23 languages highlighted in letters and script. There's Tagalog, Kiswahili and Polski, Español, Anishinaabe, Português, Deutsch and Français.

"We all know that language is culture, and when people lose their language, they lose their culture," says principal Lorelei Bunkowsky.

"The idea of honouring kids' first languages is a really key piece here. This is a school where we want to see that kids' first languages are honoured and that we encourage them to continue to speak their languages.

"Of course, the instruction is in English, but you would never hear a teacher here say, 'Don't speak your language.' We want to see the kids hold onto that."

Eighty-five per cent of the population at the new kindergarten to Grade 8 school is either Punjabi or Filipino. There are also many newcomers to Canada, and 10 per cent of students (all Aboriginal) are in the care of the province, she says.

When the energy-efficient, LEED-certified school opened in the Seven Oaks School Division on Jan. 5, 2015, staff was hired with its diverse student body in mind.

Some teachers and educational assistants speak and read Punjabi and Tagalog, while some textbooks are in English and Punjabi, others in English and Hindi, Bunkowsky says.

"We had a marvelous opportunity here in creating a new school culture. As we started to do all of the interviewing for this school, we talked to people about the values and the beliefs that would be the underpinnings of what the school's about."

Bunkowsky has been an educator for 24 years, bringing her experiences to the new school. She was the principal at Arthur E. Wright Community School and has also worked in the Winnipeg School Division.

Amber Trails has a Cultural Night for students and families, where there was Ukrainian dancing and Portuguese

food. It celebrated Christmas, recognizing many students are Catholic. It also celebrated Diwali, a Hindu festival of lights.

"It is important to be intentional, not to only focus on a small few," she says. "There's room for everyone here."

The diversity is also reflected in the school's décor.

The large common area in front of the office has round, ottoman-like stools that look like drums with colourful, printed material wrapped around them.

The two-storey area with its wall of windows is even a daily meeting place for community residents such as a Punjabi grandpa visiting time. The men used to meet on a nearby hill, but asked the school if they could get a permit to meet inside during cooler weather. They now gather every evening at 5 p.m. on the drum stools to chat among themselves and with staff or students who pass by.

"Sometimes there will be 10 of them, sometimes there will be 50," Bunkowsky says. "I know them all now. It's just a part of the fabric."

The group was even asked to tend the school's vegetable garden in the summer, as many used to be farmers in India. It's part of the school's farming project headed by teacher Simon Hon.

"We are doing some urban farming, where we are going to sell shares in our farm and grow vegetables. If you invest in the share, then you take a share of the crop," Bunkowsky explains, adding she's been told it's the largest farm plot in the city.

Walking paths in the neighbourhood lead to the school, which also has Maples Day Care attached to it.

Those trails are travelled often by residents who use the facility every day for activities such as English classes for adults, pre-school programming, open gym twice a week, games in the Filipino basketball league and even a newcomer women's support group.

It's a working environment Bunkowsky says is fulfilling on professional and personal levels.

"It's been the greatest privilege of my life," she says, her voice breaking with emotion. "I couldn't be prouder of everyone here."



Shiny & new

It's a shiny new building that ticks off all the boxes for what a new school should be except for one – it's already over capacity.

Built for 600 students, Amber Trails Community School completed its first full year of operation in June with 669 young learners in its classrooms.

Principal Lorelei Bunkowsky expects that number to climb to 750 in September.

"When you drive here, you can completely see why," she says of the reason for the high enrolment at the kindergarten to Grade 8 school that opened on Jan. 5, 2015.

Apartment blocks, condominiums and new houses sprawl around the school, with a 600-home development under construction behind the nearby Walmart on McPhillips Avenue, she notes.

The school's design should be able to absorb the extra bodies.

Two science labs and an art room were already being used as classrooms, while four multi-purpose spaces (just a bit smaller than a regular classroom) are being converted to the same, she says.

"There's a hope that maybe there could be an addition put on the school or that there could be a new

school built in the neighbourhood to accommodate the numbers."

What she doesn't want to see is portable classrooms on the grounds because she believes they disconnect those students and staff from the general school population.

She's not really surprised about the overcrowding in a new school, explaining the entire request, design and building process can take up to six years and it's hard to predict enrolment.

Despite being over capacity, Bunkowsky appreciates her new surroundings, especially when she recalls a trip she took to Uganda in the summer of 2013 to visit a sister school.

That nursery to Grade 9 school had 1,700 students with only 26 teachers.

"I saw classrooms of our size with 200 kindergartens, 200 Grade 1s in that size, and benches and bodies packed," she says. "And children still learned, and children still went to school."

"So I always remember that when I think about what we call overcrowding."

"This is a beautiful facility. I know that even with 750 kids, glorious things will happen here."



Gold LEED rating

Students at Amber Trails Community School don't need to watch video or read books to learn about the environment, sustainability and energy efficiency – it's all around them.

The school has a gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating, an international mark for excellence in green building.

"It's so important to have that opportunity to connect the students with their sense of place, and to help them understand that the land that it's sitting on, and the earth that we're on, doesn't just exist as a support for a building, but that there's an interaction," says Jeff Anderson, one of the school's vice-principals.

"And being able to see that gives them a greater appreciation for the value."

The school opened in the Seven Oaks School Division in January 2015. Its features include:

- a geothermal system
- radiant heat flooring
- rain water that's captured and used for toilets
- windows in every classroom and common areas
- a lighting system that dims when there's enough natural light

Those features have become part of the curriculum, says vice-principal Fortunato Lim.

This past January, Lim and three teachers took educational leaves of absence to create what's described as a "living document" about the school.

Using the LEED document, they did a tour of the school with the custodian to educate themselves about the building's design, materials used and features. Next, they looked at curriculum outcomes to see how they could fit that into the features of the building. They then created documents about the information and shared them with teachers in April, who offered feedback and came up with lesson ideas they also shared.

"Then those teachers created their own lessons and added to this document that we have," Lim says. "It's basically a living document that teachers use."

One lesson has to do with water. The school's computer can track the use of water. Teachers would graph how much water a traditional school would use, and then how much their school saves on water from flushing its toilets that use rainwater, he explains.

Students can even look through a door's window into a mechanical room and see clear pipes with rainwater flowing from the ceiling through the floor. In part of the school's floor, there's a glass section that reveals some geothermal components.

Teacher Preet Toor was part of the group that created the living document and says it's a valuable educational tool.

Her Grade 3 and 4 students were doing a section on rocks and minerals and keyed on the school's exterior.

"We learned that the limestone we see on the exterior part of our building

is from Manitoba, from millions of years ago, and you can see fossils in it," she says.

"We talked about that and the kids did some art with that. We went outside, they did some rubbing of the fossils. We built in an ELA connection and said, 'Come up with a story about where you think this fossil came from.' Then we actually learned about the history of it in Manitoba."

Students are even incorporating the facts they're learning into their lives outside the school.

"I use less water and use less light," says Melissa Chaves, who's in Grade 8 for the 2016-17 school year.

She and fellow Grade 8 student Simeran Gill highlight all the school's windows as a great feature.

Like most schools, the hallways have cubby holes or lockers, but they're not floor to ceiling. They go about halfway and the upper portion is a window looking into each classroom, which allows light to flow into the hallways.

"We're really lucky to have a really nice school," Gill says. "It's eco-friendly."

Her appreciation is echoed by staff. "I love the natural light. I think that's the biggest thing for me," Toor says. "I don't feel as tired."

"I love the fact that there's windows in every classroom. It gives the kids and myself more of a connection to nature. Not all classrooms (in other schools) have windows."

Please visit our website later this Fall for more workshops coming in 2017.



Public Workshops Coming to Winnipeg this Fall/Winter:

BRIEF FOCUSED COUNSELLING SKILLS—Strategies from Leading Frameworks	October 18-19, 2016
AUTISM—Strategies for Self-Regulation, Learning and Challenging Behaviours	November 2-3, 2016
ANXIETY—Practical Intervention Strategies	November 24, 2016
BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER—Understanding and Supporting	November 25, 2016
DE-ESCALATING POTENTIALLY VIOLENT SITUATIONS™	December 6, 2016
UNDERSTANDING MENTAL ILLNESS IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH	December 13, 2016
MOTIVATING CHANGE—Strategies for Approaching Resistance	December 14-15, 2016
TRAUMA—Strategies for Resolving the Impact of Post Traumatic Stress	February 23-24, 2017
SELF-INJURY BEHAVIOUR IN YOUTH—Issues and Strategies	February 27-28, 2017
WALKING THROUGH GRIEF—Helping Others Deal with Loss	March 14-15, 2017
VIOLENCE THREAT ASSESSMENT—Planning and Response	March 20, 2017
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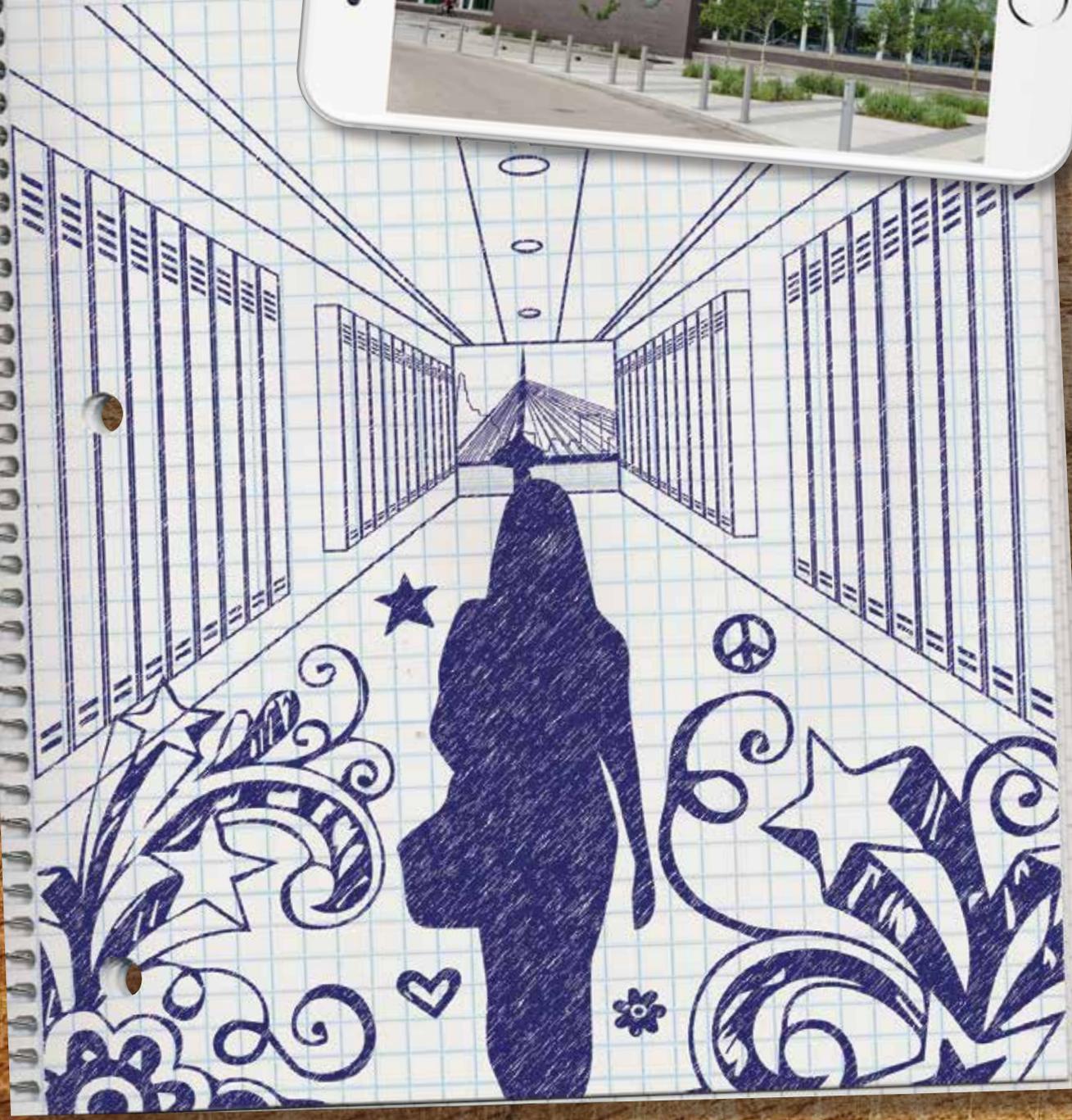
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Restoring the Sacred

BY DONNA MAXWELL

The first day at a new school is always tough but imagine if that new school is hundreds of kilometres away from your family and friends and there are more kids wandering the halls than there are people in your entire home community.

Pressure? That's an understatement.

Mallory Douglas knows how it feels. The 16-year-old moved from Poplar River First Nation – located on the east side of Lake Winnipeg about 400 km north of Winnipeg – to Manitoba's capital city last year to start school at Maples Collegiate.

She'd only been to Winnipeg a couple of times previously to shop and suddenly found herself living with relatives she didn't really know and going to a school where she knew no one.

"I felt sad and I felt like I shouldn't have come because I had to leave my family. I was scared, I was nervous to be in the big city by myself," Douglas said.

"My first day of school was terrifying I guess, 'cause like, with me being native and coming from an isolated area, it's like coming here and people always staring, and always looking at me, it was scary. Being in a big school full of people I don't even know."

Poplar River has a population of 1,200 so being thrust into the hallways and classrooms of Maples Collegiate, with a population about the same or more, was hard for Douglas.

She was shy and scared and had real concerns about being kidnapped or taken. And her fears were more than just the result of an overactive teenage imagination. Aboriginal women are prey in Winnipeg and other large cities across the country and their plight is headline news.

What's not in the headlines are programs like Restoring the Sacred.

It's run by Ka Ni Kanichihk, which means

'those who lead' in Cree. It uses mentors to welcome Indigenous youth aged 14-21 to the big city and help them discover their culture, education and employment opportunities in a safe and caring environment.

Dodie Jordaan is an associate executive director who said the five-year-old program is youth centred and aims to develop happy, healthy and motivated youth, but it also takes direct aim at protecting kids from exploitation.

"It's an initiative of Tracia's Trust, which is an initiative of the provincial government, it's the prevention of sexual exploitation and we know that youth who come from (First Nations) communities are targeted and are very vulnerable."

"The recruiters, when you're talking about sexual exploitation or even gang recruitment, they're really good. And they are close to the

same age and they start to hang out with them as friends, and 'you wanna get your nails done', and 'you need a new phone', and it starts off in this way.

"We know a lot of our youth who have come in the past from the First Nations communities have been targeted, so this program really is providing them safe alternatives."

"My first day of school was terrifying I guess, 'cause like, with me being native and coming from an isolated area, it's like coming here and people always staring, and always looking at me, it was scary. Being in a big school full of people I don't even know."

- Mallory Douglas





Teens who come into Winnipeg from First Nation communities, usually come because their home community doesn't have high school, stay with host families, who may or may not be known to the teen. Some may be relatives but are distant and are often strangers to the youth.

The teens arrive at a school where they know no one, so Restoring the Sacred offers them mentors and friendship to help them transition into a world they don't know.

Jordaan said they focus on education because the goal is to keep the kids in school and succeed during their time in the city. The other focus, she said, is on cultural reclamation and empowerment. She said many of the youth don't have an awareness of their own culture so they offer reclamation activities and understanding of where they come from and where they're going.

There are about 20-25 mentors who work with the youth and Jordaan said they do everything from teach their young charges to take a city bus to hang out with them at movies and other social outings.

Students can take part in Restore the Sacred for one year and sometimes two. Their school year is divided into 10-week sessions where they focus on leadership programs. A recent one taught broadcasting and communications and had the students going to APTN and learning how to use

cameras and other equipment and how to do makeup for TV.

Another had the students learning about culinary arts and how to make healthy food choices.

Recruiting and training mentors is paramount to the program's success.

"The biggest piece is that it's a mentorship program so we recruit and train volunteer mentors in the community who work one-on-one with the youth. They start to show them how to get on the bus, and they take them to the movies and they start to create a friendship with them," Jordaan said.

"A lot of the youth are also afraid to come to the city now. They know that Indigenous people, significantly women and girls, are going missing and murdered, and so there's a fear coming to the city now. Even families are terrified to send their kids. So there is this sense of fear, just to coming here and being Indigenous.

"The mentors work with the youth to provide them with that sense of knowledge of the surroundings and where to go and all the great wonderful things to being in the city and that mentorship relationship is really significant."

Douglas said Restoring the Sacred has been a tremendous help to her and she's met other youth in the program whom she feels comfortable with now.

"It helped me understand that there's people here for you, to help you, to get to know the city, take you around and help you overcome your fear of living in Winnipeg," she said.

Jordaan said every student gets something different from the program. She said there was a young boy who joined and he was so painfully shy he would wear a hooded sweater everyday and have the hood up over his head. And he never spoke.

An exchange through YMCA Winnipeg and Toronto introduced him to new people who were able to bring him out of his shell. She said the transformation was impressive.

"During that time his hood came off and the other youth were sort of doting on him and wanting to make him laugh and he really opened up in a short amount of time that he's been in this program. I'd say in the last year he communicates more, he talks, I never see him with that black hood anymore, and I mean he wore it every single time he came into this program and wore it the whole time," she said.

"It really gives them an opportunity to open up and feel safe which is pretty significant."

Restoring the Sacred can accommodate 20 students per year. For more information go to kanikanichhk.ca

October 19–20, 2016

Wednesday 5:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



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BY JENNIFER MCFEE

GLOBAL ISSUES TEACHERS



It's a small world after all, especially when education initiatives begin to bridge the gap between communities and cultures around the globe.

Three Manitoba teachers are earning accolades for their efforts to promote global citizenship in the classroom and beyond.

Each year, the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation honours teachers with the Global Citizenship Award for Educators. Three new recipients received the award this past June: Rob Jantz of Gimli High School, Cathy Chalmers of Stonewall Collegiate Institute and Kara Wickstrom-Street of Miles Macdonell Collegiate.

For Jantz, the award represents the hard work of the school community with a particular focus on fair trade and social justice.

"We've been involved with fair trade since 2007. Over the years, we've taken different initiatives to promote fair trade in our school and community, making a commitment to get people to think about what kind of world we are paying for," he says. "If we want something a little different, maybe we can try to work on people's mindset around paying more."

In addition, Jantz travels with a group of students to El Salvador every couple years to build houses with Habitat for Humanity.

"It's part of fair trade but it's also about getting people to be exposed to a hands-on experience that can deepen their commitment to creating change," says Jantz, an assistant principal who also

teaches English, history and social justice.

"It's one thing to sit in a classroom and talk about global issues. It's another experience altogether to be in that environment where these truths hit you in a subtle and unexpected way. It develops your ability to absorb the moment and the gravity of whatever you're around and then incorporate it into your thinking and acting."

The students who participate in the El Salvador trip come back ready to be leaders and to challenge ways of thinking, he adds.

Closer to home, Jantz runs a weekly social justice club at the school to tackle topics such as LGBTTTQ issues, poverty and women's issues.

"In the past, the group has pushed the division to adopt policy practice. There's now divisional changes that have come about from their efforts," he says.

"So it's a group that has a lot of agency in terms of what they believe they can impact. The students really grasp onto the idea that they don't need to wait for anyone to create change because they have a voice and it's important.

"If you can get to the point where you're facilitating and you're letting students lead, then you're creating something more than what you could do on your own. The whole idea is that you're leaving something behind."

Similarly at Stonewall Collegiate Institute, Cathy Chalmers has fostered a focus on fair trade.



In June 2015, the Interlake institution received designation from the Canadian Fair Trade Network as Canada's second fair trade school — and the first in Manitoba.

“The level of awareness and knowledge has definitely increased. It is a grassroots movement, so we've always approached it with the view that fair trade is a choice. We're trying to create awareness and create more informed consumers,” says Chalmers, a business and technology teacher.

“We want consumers to realize that there are people who are being unfairly paid for the work that they do. This certification does provide a guarantee that people are being paid fairly.”

Creating a ripple effect of change, local students are busy spreading the knowledge that they have gained about fair trade.

“We had a student make a presentation to a Grade 4 class at another school about the possibility of becoming a fair trade designated school. And we have students from across Canada who have been emailing us for advice,” she says.

“We've also made a presentation to town council, and we're hoping that the Town of Stonewall will want to work on becoming a fair trade designated town. So there's always more to work on.”

When it comes to fair trade, Chalmers remains optimistic about the future of the initiative.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL, ESPECIALLY WHEN EDUCATION INITIATIVES BEGIN TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND CULTURES AROUND THE GLOBE.

“It's really exciting because there's a whole momentum that's been building in Manitoba, and now Winnipeg is working towards becoming a designated fair trade city,” she says.

“With having the schools becoming more aware of it and setting goals that the schools can attain, it gets the students more involved.”

At Miles Macdonell High School, Wickstrom-Street is part of a student group focused on education for sustainable development. She also teaches a Global Issues course that requires students to complete Take Action projects in lieu of exams.

This past school year, one group raised awareness about homelessness while also collecting money for Siloam Mission, where they planned to volunteer.

Another group focused on teen mental health issues, inspiring the student population by placing hundreds of sticky notes with positive messages around the school early in the morning. They recorded some of the reactions for a video that they planned to post on YouTube to show that even the smallest kind action can improve someone's day.

As a result of Earth Day activities, they decided to give reusable water bottles to the new Grade 9 and 10 students starting at the school this fall. They also plan to have reusable bottles available for sale for Grade 11 and 12 students.

“It's not just the students in these courses. We've expanded it so that the whole student body has some input, and that's been really neat to see,” says Wickstrom-Street, a social sciences teacher.

“They can see that their actions do make a difference. At the same time, they realize that it's sometimes more difficult to do things than they think or sometimes they don't really know how to go about it.”

To address some of the challenges, Wickstrom-Street created a booklet to provide information to other teachers about initiating and assessing action projects. As well, she was instrumental in creating a project template for other Global Issues teachers.



New website online; app cancelled

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

MTS is implementing some major changes to the way it communicates with members.

The most notable is the new website that went online at the beginning of September. At the same time, the Society will discontinue creating the tablet version of *The Manitoba Teacher*.

Both decisions were taken because of the changes in the way members have been accessing information from the Society.

Our tracking has shown that, after rapid growth a few years ago, fewer and fewer members are using tablets to access our website and fewer than 700 of 15,000 members use our app for *The Teacher* to download each issue.

The same data showed the redesign of the website was overdue.

For the past eight months, the communications and publications department has been redesigning and restructuring the MTS website.

The eight-month project was initiated after it became clear that the way in which members were accessing the site was changing more rapidly than the website.

For example, only a few years ago about 90 per cent of website visitors did so using a desktop computer. Last year that number had dropped to 70 per cent and this past year it was 66 per cent. At the same time, those using smartphones to visit increased almost 50 per cent.

It became apparent we needed a website that reflected that change to make it easier for you to navigate and read on all devices or what is called responsive design. Our new site will render differently depending on the size of the device used.

As well, there have been some changes to the location of information on the website. We have tried to ensure links to the most-accessed material is easily found on the home page. The most viewed material is our contacts, discounts, collective agreements, *The Manitoba Teacher* and MTS workshops.

In tracking the usage of the website we found that some information was taking up space, had long past its best-before date and was being accessed by, well, one or two users a year. We have rid the website of such clutter. Embarrassingly, some of the kids



shown in the rotating images on our previous home page have graduated high school and university. Time for a change, indeed.

We have also added some features such as a monthly question highlighting a classroom scenario in which you can answer how you would handle various situations. Written by the MTS staff officers, it will show how many people picked what answer and offer the opinion of a specialist in the field.

The website will also be adding more slideshows and video of MTS and other education events as well as highlighting some of the top stories from *The Manitoba Teacher*.

While the basic work has been completed, the overall redesign is a work in progress as we add new features and fine tune the navigation, much of which will be determined by responses from members.

This is the second major redesign of the site since it was created more than 12 years ago. Our tracking shows that usage continues to increase every year. The site now logs more than 320,000 page views a year from some 90,000 users. In the past year alone usage has increased 10 per cent.

Unfortunately, the same can't be said for the tablet version of *The Manitoba Teacher*. Usage of the app has dropped enough that it makes it impractical to continue allotting resources to the project. It's not a unique situation.

Numerous tablet magazines have encountered the same problem after the early explosion in the use of tablets. Digital

Marketing Magazine has reported that tablet sales are down eight to 10 per cent in the past year. Much of the drop has been attributed to the increased use of larger-screen smartphones, a trend that figured into our strategy around *The Teacher* and website.

On the upside we have found that members generally are pleased with the newsmagazine-style, print version of *The Teacher* which we implemented at the same time as the tablet app.

As MediaDailyNews summed up: "magazine publishers have made comparably little progress in convincing their readers to consume their publications on the tablet."

And this from FreeportPress: "Consumers have spoken. They purchased tablets in wild numbers, enough so that we'd expect to see digital magazine consumption soar. It hasn't. Print is still the preferred channel for magazines. And the drop in tablet sales only strengthens the case for print."

For members who still want to read *The Teacher* online, we will continue to provide it in a PDF format on the website and are examining other online tools that would make the publication easier to read online.

As for the whole website, we would like to hear from you.

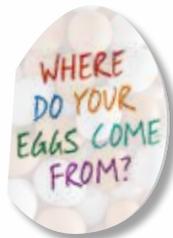
In clicking around if you do find things that don't work as well as they should or have ideas that could help us improve the site or just want to make a comment, send us an email to our site designer, Rose Pallone: rpallone@mbteach.org.

Education Resources Available

Egg Cookery



From Hen to Home



Order online: eggs.mb.ca and click 'About Eggs'

All resources are free.



NEEDS needing help

BY MATEA TUHTAR

Immigrant and refugee children and youth often experience many scary and foreign changes upon their arrival in Winnipeg, but going to school doesn't have to be one of them.

At least not if the NEEDS Inc. – and its hope for teacher volunteers -- has anything to do about it.

"Some of these kids have never been able to go to school and many have spent years without adequate education...there can be a lot of challenges," says Matt Fast, Outreach and Mentorship program manager at the NEEDS Center in Winnipeg.

NEEDS stands for Newcomer Employment and Education Development Services and provides accessible services and support to immigrant and refugee children and youth, and their families. Some of these services include an Introduction to Canadian Education course, an after school program that focuses on homework help, and a mentorship program that pairs kids with volunteers from the community.

The majority of the kids coming into Winnipeg lately are from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Eritrea, Iraq and Syria. But no matter where they're from they find a community at NEEDS.

"There's a lot of children and youth we develop strong relationships with. Many of our past participants are employees here as well. That's something I find personally rewarding – to see these kids grow and mature and now they're your colleagues. And they want to be in this type of work to give back."

Whether it's helping with the after-school program or becoming a mentor, Fast says teachers can be a vital asset to NEEDS as volunteers.

"Teachers have that experience in guiding, teaching and mentoring kids. And many teachers have seen for themselves the challenges that newcomers face in schools. So for them to become more involved personally with these kids can help to inform them in their own work, and maybe help them build strategies in their school."

Fast hears great responses from volunteers he deals with, many of whom stay in touch with the kids they've met and welcome them as part of their families.

"Many of them tell us how life changing it is for them and how much they learned. As a greater community when we have better understanding the more likely we are to build better communities. It's a really practical way to build peace."

If teachers are interested in volunteering with NEEDS they can contact Matt Fast at matt@needsinc.ca, or at 204-940-1265.

You can find more information on NEEDS programming by reading our article: Refugees: Learning About Language in the March 2016 issue of The Manitoba Teacher, which is located in the MTS Library section of our website www.mbteach.org.

SEE US, HEAR US!

REFUGEES, IMMIGRANTS AND
NEWCOMERS IN MANITOBA SCHOOLS

The Social Justice Coalition, a group of individuals and organizations interested in promoting a sustained conversation about education for democracy, is hosting a forum for educators focussed on the newcomer, refugee and immigrant students and families. On October 27th and 28th, the Coalition, in cooperation with organizations and schools, will gather educators in the heart of Winnipeg's most diverse neighbourhood for See Us, Hear Us! Refugees, Immigrants and Newcomers in Manitoba Schools. Participants will visit the agencies that provide support to immigrant and refugee families, hear from schools that have embraced all of their students and talk with refugee and immigrant youth who are transitioning to life in Winnipeg. Staff and volunteers at NEEDS, IRCOM, Welcome Place and Peaceful Village will bring this transition into sharp focus for interested educators. The number of participants is limited and the cost to participate is \$25. Registration and information is available at www.mbteach.org.



Orange Shirt Day Join the 'Wave of orange' September 30

"I always feel so proud to wear my MTS orange shirt," says Society President Norm Gould. "I'd love to see a wave of orange sweep across Manitoba as every public school marks Orange Shirt Day on September 30."

Gould says it's important we all recognize the harm residential schools inflicted on children's sense of self-esteem and well being and on Indigenous people in general. "We can never forget the shameful legacy of residential schools. There's no bigger truth than the words on our shirts, 'Every Child Matters.'"

Only four years old, Orange Shirt Day is held every September 30th. This year, The Manitoba Teachers' Society - together with Manitoba's education partners and many Indigenous organizations - will be honouring residential school survivors by hosting an advance media event at McMaster House on Thursday, September 15th.

"We want to bring this Orange Shirt Day to the attention of more Manitobans," says Gould "We've already had a powerful presence promoting it to the thousands of people who attended Aboriginal Day Live."

You can order your MTS orange shirt at mts.unionproud.com. If your association or organization would like to bulk order (over 50 pieces) email mike@unionproud.com.

Posters outlining the 94 Calls to Action of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be sent to Manitoba schools in English and French. Watch for lesson plans and other resources on mbteach.org.

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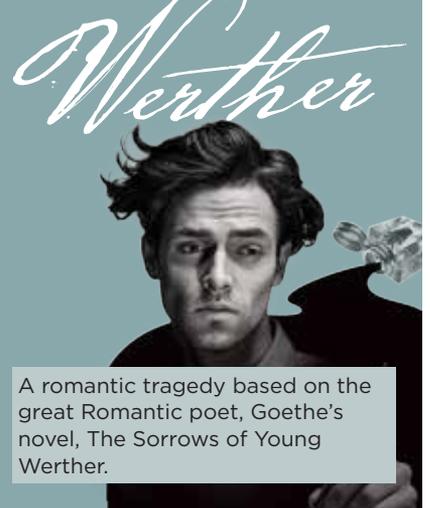


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7:30 pm



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Thursday, April 27, 2017
7:30 pm



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BY JENNIFER MCFEE

Head Games

Clinic looks at concussions & students

When children suffer concussions, it can be more than a blow to the head, but to their academic life.

But there's a new program called Return-to-Learn to help get them back in class.

Neurosurgeon Dr. Michael Ellis points to plenty of research that defines when it's safe for a child to return to sports after a concussion.

However, limited research exists about the impact of concussions on school experiences and academic outcomes.

The Pan Am Concussion Program hopes to address this knowledge gap through its ongoing research.

As medical director of the program, Ellis heads the initiative along with a team of

experts, including Dr. Lesley Ritchie and Dr. Kelly Russell.

"We've been doing a lot of research looking at the effects of concussions on school performance and health-related quality of life," Ellis says.

"Then we're trying to create focus groups with parents and with patients to try to identify what kind of accommodations can be most helpful in that environment."

The provincially-funded Pan Am Concussion Program is one of the only centres in Canada with an evidence-based Return-To-Learn initiative that is developed with input from the students themselves. It serves patients aged 19 and under who either have acute concussion or have had symptoms

for a prolonged period.

So far, the research team has completed two studies that indicate the majority of students felt accommodated when they returned to the classroom after a concussion.

"But for some weird reason, it seems that the kids continue to endorse more difficulty with certain subjects," Ellis says. "Math, science and gym seem to be the ones that are most difficult."

Based on the results of these studies, the experts created the Return-to-Learn Program to gradually reintroduce students to school and sports activities. Patients at the Pan Am Concussion Clinic receive a package with information about concussions and the possible impacts on academic performance.

The package also contains a letter indicating that the child has had a concussion and shouldn't participate in gym class or school sports until they've been medically cleared by the clinic.

"It also comes with a form that makes suggestions about what type of academic accommodations can be implemented to allow the kids to have a gradual and successful return to the classroom," Ellis says.

"Some of those things are individualized depending on the patient's symptoms, such as not allowing a kid to spend a lot of time on a computer or allowing a kid that has a lot of problems with sound to skip out of drama or shop class. It also provides some accommodations based on the severity of their injury, such as whether they can do half days or whether they can tolerate full days."

In most cases, the children are first evaluated through the Children's Hospital or a family doctor before they come to the Pan Am Concussion Program.

"Most of the time, those children will be instructed to take a period of time off of school. On average, they probably miss one or two days. Then by the time that we see them, we try to reintegrate them back into school fairly quickly," Ellis says.

"The vast majority of kids are successful at doing that, but about 10 per cent of kids have considerable difficulty getting back to full-time school activities. They just need a bit more help."

Ellis and his team are also trying to increase awareness about the signs and symptoms of concussion.

"It's not uncommon for us to have kids who have sustained a head injury with mild symptoms to not recognize that as a concussion and continue to play. Some of those kids will experience worsening of those symptoms or they'll experience another head injury that makes things a lot worse," he says.

"We're trying to find ways to bring this information to kids, but there continues to be a knowledge gap. There's also the aspect that kids are not reporting the concussions that they do recognize."

Although symptoms vary from person to person, the most common indications of concussion include headaches, dizziness and sensitivity to light and sound. Other patients might feel irritable, sad or foggy, which they might not necessarily attribute to a head injury.

"A lot of these symptoms are non-specific," Ellis says. "They can be symptoms of other conditions that kids live with."

The good news is that most concussions get better on their own within two to three

weeks with appropriate levels of physical and cognitive rest.

"For patients that have symptoms that persist beyond a month, we define that as post-concussion syndrome. Those patients are often managed in a multidisciplinary fashion," Ellis says.

"We might try to initiate rehabilitative strategies that target individual symptoms. We do have some tools that we can use to try to treat certain aspects of concussion but, thankfully, the vast majority of patients don't need those interventions."

Despite ongoing research efforts, there is still much headway to be made.

"It's not uncommon for us to have kids who have sustained a head injury with mild symptoms to not recognize that as a concussion and continue to play. Some of those kids will experience worsening of those symptoms or they'll experience another head injury that makes things a lot worse."

- Dr. Michael Ellis

"We're still at our infancy of understanding what happens to the brain when somebody sustains a concussion, which is basically a form of traumatic brain injury where abnormal forces are transmitted to the brain that typically result in temporary changes in neurological functioning," Ellis says.

"Most of the kids can make a fairly smooth transition to full activity. I think a lot of the information that can help with that transition is fairly well communicated through the Return-To-Learn program."

For teachers who suspect a student might be suffering from a concussion, Ellis offers expert advice.

"If you do suspect a concussion, it's important to have children and adolescents evaluated promptly by a team of physicians and experts that have training in traumatic brain injury," he says.

"We think that if someone's sustained a concussion and they're having persistent symptoms that they are at an elevated risk of cumulative injury. This can either lead to more severe symptoms or, in rare cases, to more catastrophic brain injuries that can be fatal. So it's very important that any child that has symptoms of a concussion or is suspected to have sustained a concussion be evaluated by a physician."

Dr. Kelly Russell, who collaborates with Ellis on concussion-related research, also offers advice for educators.

"I think one of the most important things for teachers is to realize that not all concussions are the same. Just because one child had a particular experience doesn't mean that the next one is going to have a similar experience," says Russell, an assistant professor in the department of pediatrics and child health at the University of Manitoba and a research scientist at the Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba.

"We recognize that teachers don't have a ton of extra time to do individual learning plans. However, with information that comes from the clinic, they have the ability to figure out what kind of symptoms the child has and what are some of the opportunities to modify the work environment to reflect the symptoms that are particularly bothering them."

For example, for children with headaches as the predominant symptom, the teacher might allow them to take extra breaks or study in the library rather than the classroom.

Most importantly, Russell stresses the need for a team approach for helping the child, which can be achieved through the Return-To-Learn program.

"It opens up the communication between the physician, the parents, the child, the teacher and the administrators," she says.

"We want to get kids back to school and sport and their regular life as soon as possible. It's healthy for them. If you're not in school, if you're not playing your sports, if you're not hanging out with your friends, there are a lot of potentially negative psychological effects from that too."

Some kids might even downplay their symptoms to go back to their regular school and sports activities sooner than they should.

"It's important to have that trust relationship between the students and the parents and the teachers," Russell says.

"For the most part, these kids look totally fine. It's an invisible injury and it's hard to sometimes appreciate the problems some of the kids have. It's a really individualized experience."

TECHNOLOGICAL
TOOLS ON THE

PATH TO FITNESS

BY JENNIFER MCFEE

In the St. James-Assiniboia School Division, high school students have incorporated the Fitbit Flex, worn as a bracelet around the wrist for step-based tracking that teachers can monitor.



Students may now be one step closer to leading a healthy lifestyle thanks to new technology that gives them a jumpstart on physical activity.

Considered a modern-day accelerometer, Fitbit – like other fitness trackers -- is a technological tool that records data about your activities, such as the number of steps you take, the distance you travel and the calories you burn.

In the St. James-Assiniboia School Division, high school students have incorporated the Fitbit Flex, worn as a bracelet around the wrist for step-based tracking that teachers can monitor.

J.J. Ross, the school division's co-ordinator of physical education and health education, says the Fitbit is more like a Wii remote than an old-fashioned pedometer.

"One thing it can do compared to a pedometer is it can track active minutes. So when you're walking, it calls it a 'step,' but when you're running, it calls it an 'active minute.' It can distinguish the difference.

"One thing it can do compared to a pedometer is it can track active minutes. So when you're walking, it calls it a 'step,' but when you're running, it calls it an 'active minute.' It can distinguish the difference. Old pedometers couldn't distinguish between what type of movement it was, so they were just all steps,"

- J.J. Ross

Old pedometers couldn't distinguish between what type of movement it was, so they were just all steps," he says.

"The Fitbit can also monitor how restless you are in your sleep. If you move around, it calls it a 'restless moment' and if you get up, it calls it an 'awake moment.' It's interesting to see. That's not something the teacher gets information about, but that's another thing the student can use as a motivator."

However, it's not the tracker itself that provides motivation, Ross says. Instead, surveys indicate that students are most motivated by the social interaction generated by the software.

"In the app, there's a messaging system that allows students to cheer each other on through a simple little button that you hit to cheer," Ross explains.

"You get notifications that one of your friends in your group of Fitbiters noticed that you hit your daily step goal

and they can cheer you. The social aspect is really big."

Students also receive notifications from Fitbit that can act as motivators, such as encouragement to reach daily step goals. After the students reach these goals, Fitbit sends them a badge and message of congratulations.

"That's more feedback a person can get," Ross says. "It's amazing how motivated some people are by that."

Another new technological tool involves a program called Polar. Through this system, students strap a heart-rate monitor below their chest. Using Blue Tooth technology, teachers can receive heart-rate displays in real time for up to 40 students on their iPad or mobile device.

"You can challenge students to reach certain zones of their heart rate depending on what type of activity that they're doing. We're just scratching the surface of that. It's pretty cool," Ross says.

"Our curriculum says moderate to vigorous activity is needed for overall health. You can customize things



for each student. They can also have a little more autonomy to choose an activity and find out whether it does meet the guidelines."

For teachers, the benefits of these technological trackers vary depending on the effort invested in the process.

"Different people have had different amounts of success. Like anything else, it generally comes down to how much the teacher invests. For some people who like it and endorse it, it works well. And for some that don't, it doesn't work well. It's just another tool," Ross says.

"You're trying to expose students to as many different avenues as possible and hopefully they gravitate to one. The ultimate goal is that once they leave Grade 12, hopefully they can find something that they like as a lifelong activity. This is just another tool in the chest to try to motivate and encourage people to live healthy and active lives."

PORTFOLIO



If only there was a BREXITGATE

The wordsmiths of the world jumped on the British vote to exit the European Union, or, Brexit as it became known.

Not satisfied with that one off portmanteau, journalists had fun combining two words into a new one. Hence:

- Here's my plan for **ProgrExit**
- **Quebexit**: Canada's separation anxiety
- The U.K.'s **Brextremely** stupid move
- Marine Le Pen Prepares for a "**Frexit**"

It follows the decades-old style that whenever a scandal arises, we must attach the word "gate" to it in honour of the 1972 political break-in at the Watergate Hotel in Washington. That scandal was known as Watergate.

However, there was one recent scandal - the discovery of lead in water in Flint, Michigan - which never got the added word. Too bad, it would have completed the circle as Watergate.



Summer of the PokéTrump

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON



TRIUMPH
FOR PRESIDENT!



Well, that summer was interesting. And some things that made it so engrossing – or just gross – continue on.

Like the Republican presidential campaign in the U.S., which has combined all the subtleties of demolition derbies and monster truck jams into one bizarre, can't-stop-looking spectacle.

There has never been a candidate who apparently believes incivility is the road to electoral success. Well, it is the path less taken. He's like Conan O'Brien's Triumph the Insult Comic Dog come to life.

Actually that 10-year-old dog puppet may have set the stage for the current reality show. Triumph is, after all, an anagram for Hi Trump.

And the Donald lived up to his anagrammatical doppelganger this





Eats, shoots and leaves, indeed.

Did Donald Trump encourage gun owners to assassinate Hillary Clinton?

It seemed clear he did in a speech back in August, but less-publicized defense of his speech was that people listening didn't understand there was a comma in his sentence.

"By the way," he said, "and if she gets to pick—if she gets to pick her judges, nothing you can do, folks, although the Second Amendment people, maybe there is, I don't know."

It seemed clear he was suggesting "Second Amendment people", or gun owners could shoot her.

However, one defence was that there was a comma between Amendment and people, a reference to those in the audience, not gun owners.

Right.

FOR YOUR SCHOOL CALENDAR

The group End Times Prophecies has changed the date for the end of the world from last July 29 to this coming Oct. 31. The group's YouTube video, viewed 6.5 million times, says "The Earth will crack and shatter and split open."

It doesn't explain why we are all still here when the same thing was supposed to happen just after the Republican National Convention. Or maybe it did, metaphorically speaking.

summer, insulting women, a disabled reporter, former U.S. presidents, the parents of a marine killed in combat, a former prisoner of war, the mother of a crying baby and . . . Well, the list is just too long; itself the only thing on earth longer than a U.S. presidential campaign.

Fortunately, there were diversions to help avert our gaze from the dumpster fire to the south.

In Manitoba, we had Steinbach's valiant attempt to host the largest pride parade in Canada. While coming up a bit short, it did set a parade record for having the fewest local politicians waving from car windows: zero.

Then there was the Zika Olympics in Brazil where announcers challenged for gold in the 1950 Freestyle Sexism competition.

After just the first four days, leading was swimming commentator Dan Hicks. After Katinka Hosszu set a world record in the 400m individual medley, the camera swung to her husband and coach who Hicks gleefully pointed out: "and there's the man responsible."

The NBC cycling crew was closing

in by referring to the men's cycling team as the "men's cycling team," and the women's cycling team as the "girls' cycling team."

In the bronze medal position was the Chicago Tribune which highlighted Shooter Corey Cogdell's third place finish by focusing on the fact her husband is a football player with the Chicago Bears.

But while the Olympics were big, there was one athletic event that topped it this summer and has some educators worried about its continuation in schools this September. There are no performance-enhancing drugs involved, but the game—Pokémon Go—itself has proven to be more than somewhat addictive.

Anyone who visited places such as The Forks or Assiniboine Park over the summer has seen the hundreds of people, often in packs, shuffling along, eyes downcast to their phone screens. For the media and those old enough to use their phones to talk to people, it all had a Walking Dead vibe.

The CBC framed a story about the game around some geezer on a park bench criticizing the players because they weren't looking at the park but at their "dumb phones." Of course, they wouldn't likely be out walking around the parks if it wasn't for

the game. It was possibly the worst thing to happen to society since those crazy kids and their rock 'n' roll music. And keep off my lawn! Authorities in Iran would agree. They've banned the game.

If Pokémon Go manages to last into the fall or the first freeze, there will no doubt be more stories about the havoc it is creating in schools. Some schools are locations for the characters game players have to capture.

Not everyone's afraid, however.

Rebecca Randall, vice president of education programs and partnerships at Common Sense Education, an organization that follows edtech trends and reviews classroom apps, told edscoop.com it opens an educational opportunity.

"I don't think there's inherent learning value to the game itself, but it presents tons of learning opportunities that I think teachers can maximize in the classroom to really engage students."

So, no need to fear the walking dead. They even learn as they go since the game does provide some history on the locations where characters are found. I discovered that after dozens of people started showing up in the driveway of my 150-year-old home, smartphones in hand.

It turned out the house is a PokéStop.

No problem.

As long as they don't play their devil music too loud and stay off the lawn.



QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?
I'D LOVE TO HELP.
REACH ME AT RJOB@MBTEACH.ORG

REFRESH

BY RAMAN JOB, PUBLIC RELATIONS FACILITATOR

Four ways to freshen up your social media game

How did you share your summer vacation? Sure there were the late-night talks on the deck, blissful conversations over great food and catching up with friends at the lake.

But did you squeeze all the juice you could out of your summer social media? Ok, maybe that wasn't your goal. If you resolved to stay on a strict social media fast, props to you. But if you're like most people you took a ton of pics with your smartphone (admit it) then shared them to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Thing is, each of the Big Three keeps evolving – pushing you to get more creative when you share. So if your summer social game got a bit tired, it's time to step it up with some new features and apps this fall.

1) Make friends with your camera

Your mobile camera is increasingly the business end of your phone. If you're still not much for taking snapshots, you'll chafe when someone mentions that. But it's true.

And the better you know your way around your camera, the more you'll enjoy it. You can easily find primers for any model of smartphone on YouTube. Better yet, have your friends help you with their tips and tricks. Remember to take tons of pictures and experiment. Pixels are cheap.

2) Whet your editing appetite

Instagram has turned many of us into wannabe photographers. Even Facebook lets you add text, stickers and doodles to your pics. Twitter now has searchable sticker hashtags. But there are many other cool ways to edit your photos and apply text so they really pop. Use trusted workhorses like Snapseed, VSCO Cam, Camera +, and Over. Download Canva to apply text to your photos in every possible social format. Check out PicMonkey's brand new mobile app! Ambitious? Try Enlight. And for super stunning art effects, run your favourites through the

new Prisma app everyone was playing with this summer.

3) Tell your own story - much better

When you post that series of pics of your adventures at Falcon Lake or in Europe, what are you doing? You're telling your own story. You're trying to convey what you felt, saw, and learned – plus those intangibles too sweet for words. The newest IG feature, Instagram stories, lets you take great vertical pics and video clips – apply text, your own drawings and stickers – then stack them into entertaining little stories. While your IG posts are more like pictures in a museum, your stories give followers a more fun and informal look at your day – and they disappear after 24 hours. Silly play? More like serious fun.

4) Get comfortable and go live

You know that Facebook Live feature you've haven't dared try yet? Be brave and dip your toes into livestreaming this fall. Look, there will always be a place for static FB pictures and updates, but with so much of online communication moving to video and livestreaming, you'll be way ahead of the curve if you start livestreaming now. And Facebook Live (as opposed to Periscope) gives you the advantage of an audience you already know – your friends, family or page likers. They'd love to see you and the family streaming from the Forks, the festival or the big game.



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