

School Pages: Learning Centre

Learning, Inside and Out

The pace has been hectic and eclectic at the Eastern Townships Learning Centre (ETLC) this term, as the students have been engaged in meaningful learning initiatives both in, and outside of, the classroom.

Hooked on School Days

First off, the ETLC is proud to join the efforts of the Estrie region by participating in the Hooked on School Days from February 15 to February 19, 2010. These days represent a specific time of the year to reinforce the importance of obtaining a formal education. The Hooked on School Days are an opportunity to create bonds that will support the success of our young people and is exactly what the ETLC is all about.

We believe that this event is a great opportunity to tell our youth that we are supporting them in their efforts. We invite all members of the ETLC community to contribute to the success of this week and to become a part of the "hooked on school" celebration. During this exciting fun-filled week our school,

spearheaded by Principal Velma Sutherland, we will be organizing numerous activities including Go Fish (artistic interpretation of Hooked on School Days), "All the Places You Will Go" Assembly, Beach "gym" Volleyball (staff vs. students), cooking (sushi, etc), the student survey Tell Them From Me (a chance for students to share anonymously both their life and school experiences), Freedom Writers activities, Movie Afternoon (Freedom Writers), and finishing with Friday's Ski Day/Educational Gym.

The students in Mr. Maingot's language arts class, working in concert with the Hooked on School Days initiative, collaborated on their response to what school means to them...

Schools are more than buildings, desks, and books.

Here at the Learning Centre we get the chance to try new things, go out on many activities, and be with our friends.

Our classes are smaller and we get to learn at our rates. We each have a laptop to use for a greater advantage to learn. We can develop not only written, but also our verbal skills as we interact with teachers and others.

School breaks up our boredom and will help us get a good job. We feel really good when we learn something and "get it". Here we learn many things including getting along with others. Some students don't usually think of school as their most favourite place to be, but it could be worse. Contributed by Group 8, ETLC

ETLC Staff Member Carries the Olympic Torch

While the Hooked on School week is being met with much anticipation and hearty enthusiasm, the onset of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games has also



COURTESY

Broomball at Jouvence, just one of many Winter Carnival activities enjoyed by teachers and students alike during the ETLC Outdoor Education Schoolwide Winter Carnival Outing

gotten the attention of the student body and staff alike. Leading the way has been Darlene Kerr, our Social Aide Technician extraordinaire. Mrs. Kerr recently ran with the Olympic torch and was interviewed by the students in Mrs. Crook's class. What follows is a brief summary of their interview with Mrs. Kerr in their own words:

Mrs. Kerr is a regular student SAT. She helps students realize their dreams. She recently had a small dream of her own come true. On December 6th 2009 at 9:15am Mrs. Kerr ran the Olympic torch through Magog. How did she get to that point? A year and half earlier she saw an ad on her television about the Olympic torch run that would cross Canada. She saw the ad and in her head she told herself "I want to do that". After she saw the ad, she went online and applied to be a runner in the Olympic Torch Relay.

She got repeated emails from the people in charge of the torch run asking the standard questions and they also asked her "why?" Mrs. Kerr answered by simply saying "I have a great respect for the athletes because of all they give up to work for what they do in the Olympics." She was aware of the hard work the athletes did to get where they are today in the Olympics. "She cried tears of joy when she got the email saying that she had been chosen for the torch relay through Magog.

The morning of December 6th, 2009, Mrs. Kerr was up and ready by 4:30 in the morning. She had to be at the meeting point for all the runners in Sherbrooke by 5:00 AM. "Running with the torch was my small way of telling the athletes in the Olympics 'way to go!'" She shared in our interview. She felt lucky that she was chosen to run with

the torch through any town. She had friends, family and co-workers that were very supportive of her running with the torch. She was able to buy the torch and she was able to share the experience with the students of the Eastern Townships Learning Centre.

Shortly after the torch relay she was invited by Lennoxville Elementary and Sawyerville Elementary to speak to the students about her experience and about how it felt to be a part of something so big. She asked Mr. Maingot's language arts class, who had made Olympic i-Movies for their multi-media projects, to help her with her presentation at the Elementary Schools. Two students, Angel Bennett and Patrick Poitras, and Mr. Maingot accompanied her and took part in her presentations. They were happy to help her. She had one message that she shares with the students of the Learning Centre every chance she gets and she was able to share it with two Elementary Schools. The message is this "If you believe, you can get there." Mrs. Kerr said, "I hope this message catches." She is a strong believer in school sports and being able to share her experience with so many people is going to be something she will never forget.

ETLC Special Olympics and Power Lifting Update

With the Olympics in mind it is important to mention that the ETLC is now a part of the Quebec Special Olympics School based program. We have had some of our athletes such as Jessica Howie already compete through community organizations. We will have our first ETLC Special Olympics activity day on March 11th. We will also be registered to begin with for power lifting and rhythmic gymnastics. Teacher, Mat

Court, started a Power Lifting club this year and many of our students will get to compete next month in a local competition. We are only beginning this partnership with the Special Olympics and are looking for great things to come!

ETLC Outdoor Education: Look to the Mountain Program

The ETLC also started a pilot program in September called Look to the Mountain.

Created by teacher Tania Portelli, this program is not only a first for the ETLC, but the entire Eastern Townships School Board. The program is designed to introduce outdoor education (a major component of experiential education) to students who don't always thrive in the traditional 'bricks and mortars' standard educational setting. Ms. Portelli is now on leave, but her efforts and dreams are now being realized. The ETSB was fortunate to be able to bring in Craig Russell, an experienced outdoor educator who also happens to be a Forestry Engineer, to come to our assistance. Here's a program update from Mr. Russell:

I am pleased to state that the Look to the Mountain program at the Learning Centre has set in motion programs that will excite students' learning. We have been acquiring a number of resources that will improve the learning experience. We have purchased backpacks, cross country skis, snowshoes, skates and mountain bikes from Sports Trans-Action in Sherbrooke. This equipment is complimented by our recent shipment of global position systems (GPS) receivers and a donation of three canoes, including a canoe built for 17 passengers.

Students will have the opportunity to use this equipment during an educational winter camping trip at Parkside Ranch at the end of February. They will be able to experience several learning activities ranging from snowshoeing, geocaching, trust games, and outdoor cooking, just to name a few. I believe that the time spent at Parkside will truly engage students and leave students with lifelong positive memories! Students have a lot to LOOK UP TO, in Look to the Mountain!

ETLC Winter Carnival Highlights

This year we celebrated the ETLC Winter Carnival at Jouvence, in Orford. It was a great outdoor experience that was enjoyed by all staff and students. Activities such as broomball, skating, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and sliding were part of the program. We also got to enjoy an amazing buffet lunch. The whole day was a great success and we are looking forward to doing it again next year as part of our focus on outdoor experiential education!

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ETLC school page (cont'd)

ETLC Hits the Slopes

The ETLC has been running a ski program for several years. This year we have learned from Alexander Galt's Educational Gym Project and have created our own version. On the days that some of our students go to Montjoye to ski or snowboard, the rest of the school's students are presented with other choices for physical activity such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice hockey, curling, skating, and even bowling.

Math and Reading Academy at the ETLC

Further supporting the laptop initiative, the Learning Centre has identified a program that would ideally suit the school's unique and varied group of learners. This

program, The Reading Academy and Math Academy, was introduced in January and the student educational gains have been extremely positive. Both Academy's interfaces work well with today's computer savvy student body and each student has a program designed to their own specific needs. This server based program works well as a complement to the students' regular school programs, providing each of them with a solid and engaging addition to their language arts and math courses, and best of all, they can log on at home for extra "homework".

ETLC Final Words of Wisdom

We seek to provide our students with op-

tions for their futures along with a belief in themselves. We endeavour to try to direct them to find purpose, to give them the courage to search for meaning. In the words of Canadian Poet Shane Koyczan, taken from his brilliant poem entitled "We Are More."

We are more than what we say or do

We live to get past what we go through and learn who we are

We are students

Students who study the studiousness of studying

so we know what as well as why

We don't have all the answers

but we try

and the effort is what makes us more

We don't all know what it is in life we're

looking for

so keep exploring

go far and wide

or go inside but go deep

go deep

Here at the ETLC we are trying to provide as many opportunities for students to get "hooked on school" that we can feasibly undertake. If you have any ideas or helpful donations such as "outdoor ed" equipment then please give us a call because it will make a world of difference for our students. Never forget that..."It takes a whole community to raise a child!"



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