



# Paw Prints

## Unionville Public School



March 2008

**Principal:** Dr. Debbie Donsky  
**Trustee:** E. Richardson 905 940 9818

**Vice Principal:** Ms. Carol Takagi  
**Superintendent:** R. Lambert 905 940 7800

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- Wednesday March 5—Report Cards go home
- Thursday March 6—last day of school prior to March Break
- Friday March 7 until Friday March 14 inclusive—March Break
- Monday March 17—Return to school
- Tuesday March 18—School Council, 7:30 pm in the library
- Friday March 21—Good Friday, no school
- Monday March 24—Easter Monday, no school
- Thursday March 27—Concert Band at ArtsLink, PM
- Friday March 28—First Annual Unionville Dance-a-Thon! Get your pledges in!

## From Your Administrative Team

New legislation has come forward this academic year regarding Safe Schools. The Ministry of Education has ensured that schools take a restorative approach rather than a punitive approach to discipline in the school. ([www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/publications.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/publications.html)).

*Restorative Practice is "a response to wrongdoing that focuses on a healing process for those affected by inappropriate behaviour and on the opportunity for the individual to fully understand the impact of his or her actions. Restorative practices in schools include peer mediation, healing circles, and group conferencing.*

**(Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action, June 2006, Ministry of Education of Ontario).**

The focus in our school is student achievement but in order for this to happen, students must know and feel that they are learning in a safe environment.

The report by the *Safe Schools Action Team* for the Ministry of Education states:

- *Every student is entitled to learn to the best of his or her ability*
- *Every student is entitled to a safe and caring learning environment*
- *Safety is a precondition for learning*

- *Safe schools are the responsibility of a community partnership among government ministries, administrators, teachers, trustees, support staff, students, parents, police and community partners*

(From **Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action**, June 2006, Ministry of Education of Ontario).

Partnerships between home and school are essential to understand the extent to which situations may occur.

There are different forms of bullying such as physical, social and cyber-bullying. There are other forms which stem from discrimination related to age, race, sexual orientation, gender, faith, disability and ethnicity. Open dialogue and shared understandings will help us to move forward and give students the language and strategies they need to respond to bullying.

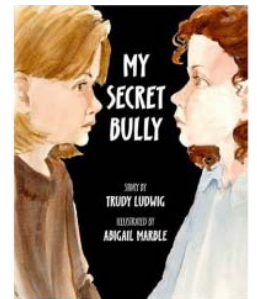
On Friday, when I got home, I found out that my daughter had taken the afternoon off. She has been a victim to social bullying from her "best friend" for the past few weeks and it has escalated to the point where she felt ill.

I was aware of the situation and

had contacted her teacher prior to this event. Together we decided how we would confront the situation. I have also informed the school principal of this issue.

Rachel and I role-played how she will handle this in the future.

She wrote out all the things that have been



bothering her. We read a book, *My Secret Bully*, by Trudy Ludwig. It really helped her to understand that this situation was not her fault, that she is not the only one that this has happened to and most importantly, how she can gain back some of her personal power.

Bullying does not go away. We need to actively support our children in understanding what it is and how to prevent it.

Restorative approaches, safe reporting, prevention, empathy training and open communication are all necessary components to a safe school.

# Linking Homework to Assessment

Student Trustee Serdetchnaia presented A recent study called “*Homework Realities: A Canadian Study of Parental Opinions and Attitudes*” by Drs. Linda Cameron and Lee Bartel of OISE at the most recent Board meeting.

*The researchers found growing concern on the part of parents about the amount and degree of difficulty of their children’s homework and the impact it is having on family life.*

(From *Leading Edge*, the weekly communication from Bill Hogarth to system leaders in the York Region District School Board).

When thinking about the role of homework at Unionville, we should be considering how the homework aligns with instruction in the classroom and whether or not the homework is meaningful. Some questions you may be asking are:

1. Are the timelines for homework completion reasonable?
2. How much homework is my child doing each night?
3. Can my child complete the homework independently or does it require my support?
4. How much support is reasonable?
5. Is the purpose of the homework communicated clearly?
6. Is the homework commented on by

the classroom teacher?

Talk to your child’s teacher. If the homework is causing stress at home, it is important to monitor this at home and send a note to the classroom teacher if it becomes overwhelming. Communication between home and school is essential as we work towards student achievement and parent engagement.

Research on homework shows:

- Less homework should be assigned to younger students than to older stu-

**Teachers should not abandon homework. Instead, they should improve its instructional quality.**

(From “*The Case For and Against Homework*”, Robert J. Marzano and Debra J. Pickering, *Educational Leadership*, 2007: 67/6, pp. 74-79)

dents.

- Parent involvement in homework should be kept to a minimum.
- The purpose of homework should be identified and articulated.
- If homework is assigned, it should be commented on.

Classroom practice and homework should:

- Establish and communicate a home-

work policy.

- Design homework assignments that clearly articulates the purpose and outcome.
- Vary the approaches to providing feedback.

(From ***Classroom Instruction that Works*** Robert J. Marzano, Debra, J. Pickering, Jane E. Pollock, MCREL, 2001.)

Homework offers opportunity to develop independent work habits in your child. Sitting down to go over what has been assigned, using the agenda as a way to record homework and keep a record of work completed as well as communication between school and home is also helpful. One of the most helpful things a parent can do in managing homework at home is to sit with your child and help your child understand what is a priority and how s/he will manage the homework in addition to other responsibilities.

Making a schedule and sticking to it can show a child how to manage time in an effective way. When there is a plan in place, less stress will be present in relation to homework completion.

Most importantly, keep in touch with your child’s teacher. The only way our teachers can respond to these issues is if they know about them.

## NOTICE TO PARENTS!

Last week a serious act of vandalism occurred in our music program. One of our trombones was returned to the school extensively damaged and deliberately done so. It was damaged beyond repair. To replace this instrument will cost \$2000.00. Mr. Stokes has instituted music monitors who check the instruments upon return but we ask that if your child has signed out an instrument that you please ensure that it in good condition upon arrival and departure from your home. Please work with us to ensure that our students continue to thrive in our music program.



# It's time for the 1st Annual Unionville Public School Dance-A-Thon!

Friday March 28, 2008

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to dance a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ minutes to help raise funds for my school!

|                      |                      |                     |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Kindergarten (JK/SK) | Primary (Grades 1-3) | Junior (Grades 4-6) | Intermediate (Grades 7 &8) |
| 30 minutes           | 30minutes            | 40 minutes          | 55 minutes                 |

Dear Potential Sponsor,

I am participating in the UPS Dance-A-Thon. All proceeds will help fund technology and music enhancement, new library books, and playground structure maintenance and repair. You can sponsor me for any amount, anything is appreciated. Contributions of \$20 and over are tax deductible. Please make cheques payable to Unionville Public School Advisory Council.

Thank you!

| Name, Address, City, and Postal Code of Sponsor |  | Pledge amount |
|---|--|---------------|
| 1   |  |               |
| 2   |  |               |
| 3   |  |               |
| 4   |  |               |
| 5   |  |               |
| 6   |  |               |
| 7   |  |               |
| 8   |  |               |
| 9   |  |               |
| 10  |  |               |

Participants:

To reach our goal of \$10 000.00, we challenge each participant to raise \$25 in sponsorship. Please return this form with your pledges to your teacher by March 25, 2008.

## Contact Us:

300 Main Street  
Unionville, Ontario  
L3R 2H2

Phone: (905) 477-1824

Fax: (905) 477- 5745

unionville.ps@yrdsb.edu.on.ca

<http://www.unionville.ps.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/>



## Second Term Report Cards

Second Term report cards will be arriving home with your child(ren) on Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Parents who wish to make arrangements with the teacher to discuss their child's progress may do so by contacting the teacher directly after the spring break. Teachers may be contacting you to discuss your child's progress as well. If your child is absent on

March 5<sup>th</sup>, his/her report card will be sent home after the break.

| Ontario            |                    | PROVINCIAL REPORT CARD |                    | Date               |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Name               | Teacher            | Year                   | Address            | Total Time Absent  | Home School Code   |
| Address            | Address            | Address                | Address            | Address            | Address            |
| Province           | Province           | Province               | Province           | Province           | Province           |
| Language           | Language           | Language               | Language           | Language           | Language           |
| Subjects           | Subjects           | Subjects               | Subjects           | Subjects           | Subjects           |
| English            | English            | English                | English            | English            | English            |
| Mathematics        | Mathematics        | Mathematics            | Mathematics        | Mathematics        | Mathematics        |
| Science            | Science            | Science                | Science            | Science            | Science            |
| History            | History            | History                | History            | History            | History            |
| Art                | Art                | Art                    | Art                | Art                | Art                |
| Music              | Music              | Music                  | Music              | Music              | Music              |
| Physical Education | Physical Education | Physical Education     | Physical Education | Physical Education | Physical Education |
| Other              | Other              | Other                  | Other              | Other              | Other              |
| Comments           | Comments           | Comments               | Comments           | Comments           | Comments           |
| Signature          | Signature          | Signature              | Signature          | Signature          | Signature          |

## Primary Class Size Reduction

The Board is currently in year three of a four-year Ministry-mandated requirement to reduce primary class size. This process has allowed us to make great gains in creating primary classes that maximize teacher time with students in support of their learning.

We are working with our Superintendent and Board staff to plan for the upcoming school year. Each school board in the province will have to meet Ministry expectations. On a board-wide basis, 90% of primary classes must have 20 or fewer students, and only 10% may have up to 23.

As we proceed through the planning process, we will be sure to keep you informed as to how our school will be meeting with Ministry requirements. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school.

## Moving/Address Changes/Emergency Contact #'s

Please inform the school office if your child(ren) will not be returning to Unionville P.S. in September 2008. It is essential that we receive this information as early as possible to assist us in our planning for the 2008-09 school year.

In addition, if there are changes to any of your contact information, please be sure to advise the school. Thank you for your assistance in these matters.

## Weather Reminder

With the coming of cold weather, we wish to remind parents that:

- Students need to come to school dressed to play outside during recesses (hats, scarf, gloves/ mittens, boots, etc.). It is advisable for children to bring extra pants and socks in case they get wet. Being physically active during winter is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.
- The school administration keeps a close eye on weather conditions, including wind chill. When conditions necessitate, students will remain inside for recess. When

conditions allow, reduced outdoor recesses may take place.

- If a student is well enough to attend school, then he/she will be expected to go outside for recess.

We would ask parents to be sensitive to the demands placed on our secretaries and not call the school to inquire about indoor recess, but rather that parents send their children dressed for outdoor winter play.

Indoor shoes are needed to help keep the school clean and students are required to wear shoes indoors in case of a fire alarm.