



Unionville Public School



October 2008

Principal: Dr. Debbie Donsky
Trustee: E. Richardson(905) 940-9818

Vice Principal: Ms. Carol Takagi
Superintendent: R. Lambert (905) 940-7800

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Tuesday October 7, 6:30-8:00—Curriculum Night
- Wednesday October 8—Area Cross Country Meet
- **Monday October 13—Thanksgiving Day, no school**
- Friday October 10—Student Vote led by Mr. Farber's class
- Friday October 10—iWalk to School Day
- **Friday October 24—PA Day, no school**
- Wednesday October 29—Annual Dance-a-thon for all students from Kindergarten to Grade 6
- Friday October 31—Intermediate Dance
- Monday November 3—Primary Prologue Performance, pm
- Thursday November 6—2nd immunization for HPV (Grade 8 girls)
- Thursday November 7 and Friday November 8—Student Bus Safety

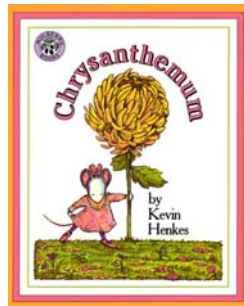


From Your Administrative Team

This first month of school has been incredibly busy. There have been many changes in the school and changes in your children—getting bigger, learning more, moving to a new grade and a new teacher. September is a time of new beginnings and many transitions. For some of our students, it is their first time in school and for others, it may be a new teacher, a new division or just different expectations.

With each change, as parents we make decisions to handle these transitions in a particular way and sometimes, we just handle them without making a decision to do it in any particular way at all and just react with our emotions!

My own son, Max, began SK this year. Last year he had the world's best Kindergarten teacher. If any of you have read the book, *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes (and I highly recommend it), his teacher was like Mrs. Delphinium Twinkle. He loved every moment at school. He is a little boy who felt like he could do anything and that everything he did do was perfect



because it was his.

She was creative, inspiring, loving, caring, patient and brilliant. She was also an occasional teacher and was unable to come back for SK.

We prepared Max for the inevitable change. We told him that his teacher from JK will always be special and we are so grateful that she was his teacher even if it was only for one year. We thought everything would be fine because we were even headed, positive and supportive.

The first day of school Max came home and cried. He actually sobbed in my arms telling me that he did not want to go back to kindergarten and wanted to find his teacher from last year and if he couldn't then he was going to Middle School because that is where his reading buddy Jacob went and he at least needed him. He said that last year "he did everything right" and this year he "doesn't feel any love".

All rationality goes out the window when you have your child in distress in your arms losing his belief in himself as a learner.

In my head I was thinking horrible thoughts and was so upset that this teacher could do this to my child. I spoke to her about him (rationally) and I told her about my son. I told her how he will disengage if she

doesn't see him for what he brings to the classroom. He will not work hard to please her as my daughter would. He will simply give up on his own learning. She promised to give him more praise and I explained to her, that I was not seeking that but rather just asking her to see what was special about him. Isn't that all we want?

Still, Max did not like school. I emailed his teacher from last year. I told her about how sad he was and how painful it was for me to watch this.

Then she told me, "as a friend", you have to be positive. Each time you ask about school, don't say, "What happened today?" or "Was it better today?" Instead, ask him to tell you the funniest thing that happened. Ask him to tell you the best thing he learned. Ask him to tell you what made him feel good about today.

It does not matter what my role is and the reassurance I try to give to each of you. When it is my child, I need someone else to help me see what I am doing and the non-verbal or even verbal messages I am giving to my son.

Max is doing better at school. His teacher this year isn't Mrs. Twinkle but she is someone who will teach him something about himself. She most certainly has taught me something.

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Terry Fox Walk/Run

Thank you to our families for their generous donations to support cancer research through the Terry Fox Foundation. We have raised over \$3200.00 and money is still coming into the school.

Although our walk was cancelled last week due to the weather, we had an absolutely beautiful day walking and running around Toogood Pond to honour and celebrate the life of this Canadian hero.

A special thank you to Robyn Noble and Aimee Goldman for organizing this event. It was a great success!



Artist in Residence



This drawing is done by Sammy Georgakopoulos, grade 7. Sammy continues to refine his incredible talent in the arts.

Autism Awareness Month

October is Autism Awareness Month. For many reasons, not the least is the fact that we have three Autism Spectrum Disorder Classrooms at our school as well as a number of other children who fall within the spectrum in our classrooms, we would like to highlight this very important month.

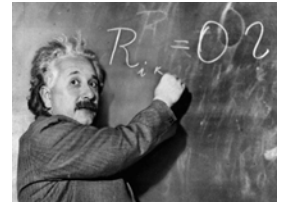
When **speaking** of ASDs, most people are referring to **three of the PDDs that are most common**:

- **Autistic Disorder** (also called autism, classic autism and AD)
- **PDD-NOS** (Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified)
- **Asperger's Disorder** (also called AS, Asperger's Syndrome and Asperger Syndrome)

Autism Spectrum Disorder affects: Communication; Social understanding; Behaviour, activities & interests.

They may have difficulty socializing because they cannot read non-verbal cues as other children can. Their understanding is literal and therefore may not understand the humour in jokes. Children with Autism are always honest and forthcoming with their perceptions of events and people.

Our students with Autism Spectrum Disorder can show incredible talents and interests that will take them beyond which many other children are capable. Their ability to focus on a task when others would lose interest sets them apart. Some speculate that Albert Einstein had high-functioning autism disorder.



So many people are afraid of the unknown. The children at our school and in our community with Autism need to be not only living in our community and learning in our school but need to be a **part** of the community and school.

These students require different learning interventions to meet their unique learning styles including the use of computers to help facilitate their knowledge and the arts to further develop their talents.

When these children are integrated into the regular stream classroom, it offers other children the opportunity to grow as communicators and learn from their classmates with Autism. Last year we had Kinark join us to facilitate learning around children with Autism. We will continue to work in this area as a way to advocate for our students both with Autism and otherwise to better understand the gifts that these children offer us as a school community.

Other helpful sites that can give you more information about autism are:

Autism Ontario <http://www.autismontario.com/>

The Geneva Centre for Autism <http://www.autism.net/index.php>

Kinark <http://www.kinark.on.ca/>

Special Thanks to Tess Georgakopoulos for her contributions to this article.