



Unionville Public School

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October 2009

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

Vice Principal: Ms. Carolyn Brndiar
Superintendent: R. Lambert (905) 940-7800

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **October is Autism Awareness Month**
- Monday October 5th—Terry Fox run (rain date!) Thanks to Mr Leon, Mrs Santos and Mrs McGowen Young for organizing!
- Monday October 5th and Monday October 19th—VIP Program with YR Police and Grade 6 students
- Tuesday October 6th, Curriculum Night, 6:30 pm-8:00 pm
- Wednesday October 7th—Walk to School Day (Thanks to our School Council and Mr Farber for organizing!)
- Friday October 9th—Grade 1s and 1/2 to Safety Village
- Monday October 12th—Thanksgiving, NO SCHOOL
- Tuesday October 13th—Cross Country Areas
- Tuesday October 20th—School Council Meeting, 7:30 pm in the library
- Wednesday October 21st, East Area School Council Forum
- Thursday October 29th—School Photo Day, dress in your best!



From Your Administrative Team

This first month of school has been a whirlwind of activity! We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your patience and understanding during the reorganization.

Many parents have asked if this is going to be a “yearly affair”. In all likelihood it will not be. The reason this happens is a numbers game. Our board has a planning department that makes projections on enrolment. These numbers are determined on patterns established in the school and new developments in the area. Two years ago we were told that we had a shrinking population. This is evident in that a few years ago our intermediate division outnumbered our kindergarten children. This seems to be taking a shift somewhat in that we have almost four JK/SK classes now.

In addition to increased numbers of children enrolling in our kindergarten classrooms, we also have an influx of new families in all grades in the classrooms.

Schools are allotted staffing in January the year prior. Since then, our school has gained almost two full teachers more because of increased enrolment.

So to answer the question, will this be a yearly practice...I certainly hope not as it does create disruption. At the same time, we welcome our new families and are pleased to see more and more families joining our community. It all depends on the enrolment of the school and well it matches what the projections from the planning department.

There are many schools in this province, in particular in the TDSB, that have shrinking populations and are having to surplus teachers. Gratefully, we are not in that position. I worked at a school in North York for a number of years that had a shrinking population and it resulted in a school closure. You can imagine how disruptive that is to a community.

So in the end, I suppose it is a celebration that we are drawing new families to our school.

Children are resilient and are far better with change than adults. Encourage them as they move forward and change, which is inevitable in life, will come easier to them as they meet it with the confidence that you project for them.

I don't know why I am like this, but I am... and that's OK.

My eyes are open. I see you and everything around me. I see so much that my brain has a difficult time processing all the information so I end up blocking things out just to be able to cope; in a way I am blind.

I can hear you and everything around me at the same intensity. I hear the fan on the computer, the humming of the lights, the scratching of a pencil, the tapping of a finger, the sound of footsteps in the hall, and even a whisper at the other end of the room. I sometimes hum, talk to myself, or make other noises just to try to block out the sounds. But the sounds don't go away no matter how hard I try. I sometimes speak loudly, but that's only because I can't hear my own voice. I have “bionic hearing”, but in a way I am deaf because it becomes very difficult to hear and understand voices over the other noises. Sometimes there is so much noise that it causes me to go into overload and it becomes very difficult to cope.

I sometimes want a hug, but I run away or scream in fear knowing that if you give me that hug, my body can feel like it's on fire. I wish you could know what it's like to live in my body for a few minutes. To feel what it's like to have thousands of ants crawling around inside your body, or feel like you're falling, or not being able to judge where your body is in space in relation to other people or objects around you; to have to hit yourself to re-adjust, to take out the fire, or get rid of those horrible ants.

People sometimes think I am strange. Kids don't want to play with me because I am different. Some parents don't want me around their children because they think I am a bad influence, or others even think I could be contagious.

But there is a reason for everything I do.

All of my senses are extremely sensitive; this is called Sensory Integration Dysfunction. But Occupational Therapy helps me to learn how to live with this and cope.

My hearing and the way I process sounds is also different. I have Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD). I have to use a special hearing devise that helps block out the sounds so I can hear voices better.

It's hard for me to balance so I sometimes look like I'm clumsy, and it's very hard for me to ride a bike; that because my Vestibular System (the balance deep inside my ears) is off. I may bump into things, or come really close to people when I'm talking to them, so I have no concept of personal space; this is because my Proprioceptive System (the system inside my body that helps me to understand where my body is in relation to objects or other people) is off. Both of these systems can be helped with Occupational Therapy and I can learn how to overcome these challenges. (continued on page 3)



International Walk to School Day is October 7th!

This is our 7th year participating in IWALK. As part of the curriculum, students from Mr. Farber's class will poll their peers to determine how they usually get to school. On October 7th, classes will be polled again to determine the level of participation. **Check out our UPS stats on the reverse of this page.** Let's try to improve and make UPS one of the Ontario schools that reach **100% participation!**

(Several classes have attained that goal in the last six years!)

Teachers are encouraged to set an example and where possible, walk in some capacity.

If you have any questions about this event please contact:

Connie Prentice (905) 943-7341 or Karen Mitas (905) 940-4748

cprentice@sympatico.ca

smitas@sympatico.ca

Dress for the weather and walk together!

We walk rain or shine!



WHAT'S HAPPENING

THIS YEAR:

If you live close to the school, no special meeting points have been arranged.

If you are usually bused and have not arranged to walk, your bus will drop you off at the **Unionville Public Library** and you will walk supervised the rest of the way to school.

If you go to Blossoms, no special arrangements can be made.

The remainder of the students may meet at **designated meeting points**. Volunteers will then walk with the children as a **Walking School Bus!**

See the reverse of this page for details regarding locations and times to meet our "Walking School Buses!"

INTERESTING FACTS:

- **Less than half** of UPS students regularly walk to school.
- The number of calories burned weekly by walking to school is the equivalent of two hour-long gym classes!
- Sparked by IWALK, **Walking Wednesdays** continue at UPS.
- Walking 10,000 steps every day helps to strengthen and maintain a healthy heart.♥
- International Walk to School Week is celebrated in over 40 countries around the world on six continents!
- IWALK participation avoided a whopping **13 tonnes** of greenhouse gases from entering our atmosphere!

Add to the spirit of the day....

The night before the walk, chalk footprints and walking messages on the sidewalk around your house to inspire UPS walkers.

IWALK - UPS STATISTICS

Your Street		Meeting Place	Meeting Time
1	Loring Cres. Lismer Court Surrey Court Casson Place	Northwest corner of Lismer Court and Loring Cres.	8:20 a.m.
2	Heatherwood Cres. Foxmeadow Lane Waterbridge Lane	Southeast corner of Foxmeadow Lane and Waterbridge Lane	8:25 a.m.
3	Stanford Road Berkeley Court	Corner of Berkeley Court and Stanford Road	8:25 a.m.
4	Ritter Cres. East half of Normandale Road	Corner of the south leg of Ritter and Normandale	8:25 a.m.
5	Delhi Cres. Caledonia Court West half of Normandale Road	Northeast corner of the east leg of Delhi at Normandale	8:20 a.m.
6	Chambery Cres. Harpers Croft Library Lane	Unionville Public Library	8:35 a.m.
7	Woodman's Chart Hedgewood Drive Dalecroft Circle	Corner of Hedgewood and the north leg of Woodman's Chart	8:35 a.m.
8	Longwater Chase and all streets running from it	Southwest corner of the Bridle Trail and Longwater Chase, by the Zasty Market	8:30 a.m.

Year	% of students who walked* on IWALK Day	% of students who walk* regularly	# of classes who reached 100% participation
2003	88%	32%	4 out of 19
2004	No data collected this year		
2005	94%	46%	8 out of 21
2006	95%	46%	8 out of 17
2007	95%	41%	10 out of 19
2008	86%		1 out of 16

*walked or took active transportation (including bike, rollerblades, scooter, skateboard)

Our Trip to Markham Fair

On October 1st all the primary classes went to Markham Fair. It was very cold and damp but we bundled up to stay warm. It was a very exciting day. The air was filled with the smell of candy, popcorn, cotton candy and in place a bit of horse pool!



We saw many wonderful things. There were sword-fighting knights, a queen wearing a cape and a king on his horse. The King showed us some neat horse tricks like the Spanish Walk.

We also visited the animal barns. You could pet a chick, milk a plastic cow and watch puppies play. There was even a loud, crowing rooster! Some of us even rode a mechanical horse.

There was an awesome motor-cross show. They did lots of tricks in the air. One rider rode up a ramp, flew into the air and let go of the motorcycle. Thankfully he landed safely.

Power Stream was there teaching to teach us about safety. We learnt that sometimes power lines break and you need to know what to do. Remember to stay 20m away from the broken wires.

Some students travelled 65 feet into the air in a bucket lift. A few students helped Ms. Dyer get over her fear of heights by taking her up too!

A big thanks to Ms. Myers for organising the trip and to all the other teachers and parents who helped us to be safe and have fun. It was a fabulous day!

By: Gisele, Jonas, Martin and Paige

Phone Calls to the Office

We would like to ask that all social arrangements as well as doctor's appointments are arranged with your children prior to each school day so that students know when they are needed in the office and where they are going after school.

We receive many calls regarding social arrangements each afternoon in the office. Only in an emergency will there be an interruption during instructional time. All other calls will be put through to teachers' voicemails. You may use your child's agenda as a reminder for such arrangements.

Cell Phones

This is a reminder that cell phones are not to be used during the school day. If you refer to your child's agenda you will see in the first section it is indicated that this is our school policy. The Board's section does indicate that a minimum of "no cell phone use during instructional time" is policy but that schools may have further restrictions.

Cell phones are to be kept in student lockers from 9 am until 3:30 pm.

Transportation Changes

In the past, the office has approved students to go on the school bus after school with friends who qualify to take the bus.

Due to transportation policies, in particular safety and tracking of attendance on buses, we are unable to support transportation for students who do not qualify for this service.

We apologize for any inconvenience.

(I don't know why I am like this, but I am... and that's OK. (continued from page 1)

I am autistic. There are a lot of people around like me. Some have Autism Disorder (AD), others have Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD NOS), and then there are others who have Aspergers Syndrome (AS). We all have Autism. It isn't a disease. We are not contagious. Autism is a neurological disorder. We can't control what happens inside our minds or inside our bodies, but we can learn to live with it and have what people might call "normal lives".

We want to learn and have the ability to learn. Our brains are wired different; that is all. This only means that we learn differently and sometimes have trouble communicating and being social. That's all. We can do anything any other child can do, and can do many things even better than they can. In fact we believe that the word disability means a "different ability".

Autism is a puzzle, but a puzzle is made of a lot of pieces that fit together. Once they are put together, the puzzle becomes a beautiful piece of art! We are all beautiful in our own unique way. As we grow, piece by piece we come together. We slowly emerge out of our world and into yours. Sometimes there is a burst of growth that no body can explain! It feels like somebody has pulled us out of a window and we can finally breathe, finally see, finally hear, finally speak, finally be able live, understand and communicate. For some it happens sooner than others.

In fact it is well known that Albert Einstein who had Aspergers Syndrome didn't speak until he was about 4 years old! In addition to Albert Einstein, there are other famous people with Autism traits or Aspergers Syndrome such as Bill Gates, Isaac Newton, Leonardo da Vinci, Vincent Van Gough, Beethoven, Henry Ford, and even Elvis! So you see, it's not a bad thing, only a different thing.

We have dreams like everyone else. All we need is a little compassion, understanding, patience, and acceptance.

Don't be afraid to approach me. It may be difficult for me to start talking to you, but you can help by saying "hi", being a friend and understanding that I am a little different. I may not be able to look at you when I'm talking but that doesn't mean I don't want to be your friend; it means that I can't look at you because I am different. I probably won't understand jokes and take things very literally, but please appreciate that this is a part of being Autistic. One more thing, you may have to talk slower and more quietly so that I can process what you are saying; if you talk too fast it becomes difficult to understand.

Give me time to grow into the person I was meant to be. Give me a chance to make my dreams come true. I don't know why I am like this, but I am... and that's OK.

October is Autism Awareness Month in Canada. Autism is growing at an alarming rate. In fact research shows that within the next ten years, one in every 94 people will be diagnosed with Autism, and 10% of school children will have this diagnosis. No one knows where this neurological disorder comes from; it is a puzzle.

Autism is a very important part of Unionville Public school as we have three classrooms dedicated to the teaching of students on the spectrum and including them in our community. During the month of October, Unionville public school will be helping to increase awareness and understanding of the different types of Autism within the school community. There will be informative presentations happening within the classrooms. Also, please take a look around the school as you enter. Our walls will be covered with informative posters and our display boards will be decorated to celebrate the difference and individuality of Autism. As the month progresses, there will be riveting magic shows taking place, and a display of artwork in our display cabinets, both performed and/or created by two of our students with Aspergers. In addition to all of this, there will be informative presentations happening within the classrooms and to give the students the opportunity to have their questions answered.

Autism is not something to be afraid of, but something that needs to be embraced and understood. There are people all around us, in our schools, in the workforce, and in our vast community with Autism. The more we are aware, the more we understand, the more we can be accepting and inclusive of these individuals to help them become a part of "our world" and stay there. (Special thanks to Tess Georgakopoulos for this article.)

Respect for Others

Yesterday I was watching T.V. and I saw a bullying ad on Family Channel. It reminded me of the bullying presentation at school, and how bad bullying is.

People's feelings get hurt or even worse, physically hurt. The green masked bully that pushed the kid to the ground alarmed me the most.

This has happened to me before and it was scary. Bullying could change and stop if everyone behaved nicely.

Please respect people's feelings and listen if someone is telling you to stop. If we all work together we can stop bullying.

~By Jack Collins - Mr. Farber's Grade 5 class