

# ESPecially Yours

Volume 17, Issue 4

June 2017

## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

The school year is coming to a close and it has been a busy year.

The OCDSB budget finally passed. As a result of money for local priorities received through our contract extension we were able to offset potential cuts to our bargaining unit. However, staffing has been delayed. OAs who are impacted by school closures were notified on Monday, June 19 of their status and will be notified by seniority of their options. Other employees will be notified and be given options once that process is complete. Because we filled many positions as terms in order to reduce the impact of school closures, we do not anticipate that any ESP members will be left without a placement. However, due to enrolment changes, members may have to change location. Please feel free to contact me or Leif at the office (613-729-7211) or by email if you have questions.

We have dealt with many individual member issues over the year, including Return to Work, accommodation, Respectful Workplace, terminations and workplace conflicts. We are still working on our Competition process and an Interim Checklist Report for probationary employees. Our Reduced Lunch Hour Pilot has been extended and details about that should be coming out soon.

OSSTF Presidents have been working with elementary teachers and senior staff on improving wellness in the Board



and encouraging member engagement in the workplace. More on these initiatives should be coming out from the Board.

Member engagement and community involvement continue to be priorities for OSSTF bargaining units. We were part of a very successful member Engagement event at the Rideau Carleton Raceway. For our community involvement this year we presented an award at the Spirit of the Capital, provided support to Kid's Help Phoneline, did a sock drive for the homeless, and provided support to the education program for a local theatre company.

My wish for you all is to have a safe and relaxing summer, spend time with family and friends and come back in the fall refreshed.

*Nancy*

## From Your Chief Negotiator

By the time you are reading this, the Board will hopefully be almost through the annual Spring staffing process of surplus letters and recall for our ESP members working in the schools. What is always a difficult and uncertain period was made even more complicated this year by the loss of positions resulting from the closure of 6 Elementary schools and one Secondary school. Adding to this were a number of staffing cuts to ESP positions that were approved in the Board's 2017-2018 budget.

Thanks to provisions gained by OSSTF in the central Contract Extension Agreement, money from a Local Priorities Fund has been able to offset these additional cuts from the budget, and while this feels quite a bit like we are "buying back" our jobs, it at least looks like nobody will be without a position in the fall.

That being said, there will be people who will have had to move from their current schools to new locations in the Fall. We count on all of our Members to be

understanding and supportive of these folk now and in the new school year when they start at their new schools.

Now take a deep breath, we are almost there....

Whether you are off or working through in a 12 month position, here is a hope for all that you are able to enjoy the long days and nice weather of July and August. Have a safe, fun and happy summer!

*Leif*



### *Spirit of the Capital Youth Awards*

For the past five years, OSSTF District 25 has been proud to sponsor the Academic Perseverance Award at the Spirit of the Capital Youth Awards. This award is presented to a student who has achieved academic success despite hardships and challenges. The Spirit of the Capital Awards are also presented in six other categories. On behalf of OSSTF District 25 Cheryl Cavell and Nancy Akehurst were pleased to present the award to Ryan Coyle and Rebecca Kahindo. The awards evening is a very uplifting and inspirational evening, listening to the stories of award recipients and being entertained by talented youth from Ottawa. It is one of the events that Nancy enjoys most in the year.

## Night at the races



OSSTF Teachers Unit, Student Support Professionals (EAs and ECEs) and ESP sponsored a Night at the Races for members and friends. We arranged for an evening of fun at the Rideau Carleton Raceways, which included a buffet dinner, a \$2 billet for the races, a \$5 billet for the casino, and door prizes provided by Educators Financial Group. Two groups of four members were treated to a ride in the pace car for a race. Although it was a rainy evening, everyone who participated had a great time. Hopefully we can do this again.



# Annual General Meeting - May 17

It has come and gone for another year. This was a special one because it was the first meeting to be held in the new addition. Construction is complete and only finishing details are left.

The positions up for election this year were Chief Negotiator, Education Services Officer, Health and Safety Officer and four executive officers. All positions were filled except for Health and Safety Officer. We have since been able to appoint someone interested in assuming this position

The following members will represent you for 2017-2018

President - Nancy Akehurst  
Vice President - Saul Mogelonsky  
Chief Negotiator - Leif Walther  
Secretary- Margaret Elson  
Treasurer - Kelly Mills  
Education Services Officer - Judy Soifer  
Health and Safety Officer - Lana Lotan  
Executive Officers - John Grochot, Jacquelin Hodgson, Angela Scavone, Melodie Gondek

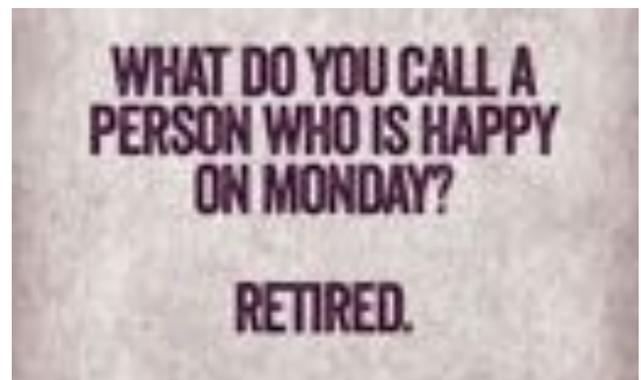
Leaving the ESP Executive this year are Amir Ismail, Executive Officer and Bev Charles, Health and Safety Officer. We thank them for the time and energy they have devoted to serving members.

The following retirees were present to be personally thanked for their years of service and to receive their certificates and gift cards:

Lise Bishop - 18 years!  
Sherrie Boucher - 12 years!  
Lindsay Clark - 21 years!

Additional retirees are:

Sandra Agro	Yasmin Sankar Khan
Caroline Akeson	Susan Lee
Marjorie Ashworth	Suzanne Massey
Helen Bowes	Sandra McCallum
Larry Broome	Lynn McCarville
Lynda Brown	Heather McGregor
Nancy Carson	Valerie McLennan
Helen Cote	Neil Medaglia
Brenda Coulas	Mary Munro
Janet Duckworth	Catherine Seguin
Samira Elmasri	Catherine Spear
Bonnie Kelly	Jean Turpin
Sue Knapp	Pam Wilson



# Health and Safety - Everybody's Business

## 5 Reasons to UNPLUG

Oh, how I love my nightly Pinterest sessions. I look forward to that mindless scrolling and pinning of recipes I'll never make and quotes that inspire. And I love seeing pictures friends have posted and what everybody's doing on Facebook. And, of course, I love the great articles I link to from Twitter. The downside to all this social media wonderfulness, however, is that I often get sucked in for waaaaaay too long, stay up too late, and don't do other things that would make me happier and my life more balanced.

I think we all intuitively know that too much time spent glued to our smart phones, tablets, and computers is not good for us or our kids. What's most frightening to me is that researchers are only just starting to investigate the long-term impact all this online time is having on our kids. So, we don't even know what it's doing to them. Many adults are addicted to our devices, so how can we expect our kids to figure out how to navigate technology wisely if we haven't figured it out ourselves?

I'm not advocating giving up all technology, which is pretty much impossible in this era (plus, I love Pinterest and find mindless scrolling relaxing). But adults are now paying for digital detox (being forced technology-free for a retreat), and I think it's time we all figure out how to unplug more in our day-to-day lives. How can we balance our technology use so that we have happier lives and model good tech habits for our kids? After reading some of the current research on this topic, I've come up with five reasons to make unplugging a priority in our families:

### 1. Unplugging can improve our relationships.

"Researchers from the University of Essex found that people who engaged in personal discussions when a cell phone was nearby – even if neither was actually using it – reported lower relationship quality and less trust for their partner. They also felt their partner was less empathetic to their concerns." (Scientific American) Just having a cell phone sitting on the table negatively impacts the intimacy of a discussion. I think it says to the person you're with, "Whatever random person who tags or texts me while we're together is more



*"I have 173,682 unread emails. You tell me what I have to live for."*

important than you."

A Stanford researcher (Aboujaoude) found in a 2006 study that between 4 and 14% of people surveyed admitted that a "preoccupation with being online was interfering in various ways with their relationships, financial health, and other aspects of real life." What must that number be eight years later with the addition of Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, Blogging, etc.? How much of each day are we NOT paying attention to the important

people in our lives because we're looking at a screen instead of the person in front of us? And what kind of relational role modeling are we providing for our kids? When we're plugged in to technology all the time, we miss out on important connecting time with our family and friends.

### 2. Unplugging helps our kids develop social skills.

A Stanford researcher, Naas, observed that, "It's becoming perfectly okay to use media while we're interacting." His example was that he regularly has to ask college students to stop texting while they're having a meeting with him, their professor! This is just one sad symptom of our ever-devolving social abilities. We're losing our focus on the real, face-to-face relationships that make life meaningful, and we're not modeling for the next generation how to treat live people. We need to turn off and put away our phones when we're interacting with people and show our kids how to act offline.

### 3. Unplugging helps us get more sleep.

"Bedtime technology sessions interfere with our sleep. Regular computer use late at night is associated with sleep disorders and also with symptoms of stress and depression." (NY Times)

Apparently, the artificial light from screens reduces melatonin levels and makes us not sleep as well. I think we just stay on social media too long and it gets late! Many kids and adults are sleep-deprived from too much late night Internet, and it's negatively impacting our health, academics, and work. It's a good idea to charge phones in the kitchen or somewhere NOT near our beds. Get an old-fashioned alarm clock if you need one.

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#### 4. Unplugging makes us safer.

Texting while driving causes 1,600,000 accidents per year, 11 teen deaths EVERY DAY, and is the cause of nearly 25% of all auto accidents (US National Safety Council). Enough said.

#### 5. Unplugging makes us less anxious.

I often have an anxious feeling in the pit of my stomach about needing to get to my unread emails.

How about you? Researchers are finding that “the internal experience today is one of hyper-anxiety,” and there has been a



*“Well that was a total waste. I just had an idea that was too long for Twitter, too short for Google+ and too smart for Facebook.”*

“devaluing of thoughtfulness.”

Many parents already recognize the benefit of unplugging kids and themselves, and I hope there will

be a cultural shift back to living in the moment and focusing on the people we’re with. In the meantime, let’s all make a conscious choice to unplug ourselves and our kids for parts of every day. We need to establish technology-free zones in our families to maintain the emotional and social health of our kids and ourselves. For sure, family times like dinner need to be tech-free. And, an hour or so before bedtime, we need to turn off our screens and power down. I made myself these tech rules a while ago, and they’ve been helpful.

*(from sunshine-parenting.com)*

### Did You Know?

Congratulations to these ESP members who received the Director’s Citation Award this year. The Director’s Citation Award recognizes outstanding and significant staff contributions to the District and its students, over an extended period of time, showing a level of imagination, enthusiasm, and professionalism that constitutes a worthy model for others. The Award was initiated by former Director of Education Stanley J. Berry, in 1985, as a means of celebrating outstanding professional contributions of staff and has been continued

by all directors since that time. It was, and is, intended to be a recognition of staff by their colleagues, honouring those who are in the midst of their careers. You can read more about them in the official program:

[http://www.ocdsb.ca/ab-ocdsb/awards/Award%20docs/Directors%20Citation%20Awards%20Booklet\\_2017.pdf](http://www.ocdsb.ca/ab-ocdsb/awards/Award%20docs/Directors%20Citation%20Awards%20Booklet_2017.pdf)



Laurie Watson - Office Administrator, Sir Wilfred Laurier SS



Christina Gluch - Office Administrator, Blossom Park PS

*(Photography: John MacKinnon)*



**D25**

# Status of Women and Human Rights Committee

## Pride Parade

# August 27, 2017

COME WALK WITH US!

BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY!

We hope to be very close to the OCDSB so walk with everybody!

meet up time: 11:45-12 pm

March starts at 1 pm on Bank and Gladstone!

### Want to be more involved?!!

**Info Table:** (located on Bank Street) we need people to set up, take down and manage the table.

**T-shirts:** a complimentary unisex t-shirt will be given to you. We need to know your size!

**Walkers:** parade ends on Bank St, 2:30pm. People can check out the booths, entertainment and beer gardens (\$\$).

Please **RSVP** with Kelly: [kelly.campeau@ocdsb.ca](mailto:kelly.campeau@ocdsb.ca)



On the lighter side ...

# Wherever Summer Takes You, Enjoy!



**"We're teachers and want to go someplace where we can have fun and not learn anything."**



**"Someplace hot enough to melt fat the moment I step on to the beach."**



*Disclaimer - Although care has been taken in preparing the information contained in this publication, accuracy cannot be guaranteed. The opinions and views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of OSSTF, or District 25.*