



UHS Parent Weekly Bulletin –Vol.24

Friday, February 26, 2021



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 Markham, ON
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Extensions:

Reception - 431
 Attendance - 230
 Guidance - 458

Principal

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 Brian Schouten (interim)
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School Website:

[Click here](#)

Tweets

@UHSupdates

Term 1 - Rotation 2	March 1 - 10	Term 1 - Rotation 2	March 11
In Person 8:30-11:00 AM	Period 2	Online 8:30 - 9:05 AM	Period 1
11:00 - 12:30 PM	Transportation and Lunch	Online 9:10 - 9:45 AM	Period 2
Synchronous Learning 12:30-1:20 PM	Period 1	Online 9:50 - 10:25 AM	Period 3
Synchronous Learning 1:20-2:10 PM	Period 3	Online 10:30 - 11:05 AM	Period 4
Synchronous Learning 2:10—3:00 PM	Period 4	Online Feedback	

1	A	2	B	3	A	4	B	5	A
T1-R2									
8	B	9	A	10	B	11	A&B	12	A
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AM - Whole Class Online Synchronous PM - Feedback 	T1-R3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim Report Distribution Start (12-16) 	

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, March 1	
Tuesday, March 2	
Wednesday, March 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text/Resource Distribution (Cohort A)
Thursday, March 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text/Resource Distribution (Cohort B)
Friday, March 5	

Updates to Health & Safety Measures

Please read below for important information on the following:

- New Screening Guidance
- COVID-19 Symptomatic and Asymptomatic Testing
- Preparing for potential school staff shortages during in-person learning
- GAPPS profile images
- Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) graduation requirement
- Grade 9 Mathematics Assessment Field Test

New Screening Guidance

Earlier today, York Region Public Health released its [new screening guide](#). All students are required to complete the screening guide daily before coming to school. Secondary school students and staff members must provide confirmation of completing the tool prior to entry. The tool for secondary students is [available on the Board's website](#).

COVID-19 Symptomatic and Asymptomatic Testing

In partnership with York Region Health and Ontario Health, two recurring testing sites have been set up at the **unoccupied** sites of George Street Public School in Aurora and George Bailey Public School in Maple. Please see this [message from York Region Public Health](#) for additional details.

Preparing for potential school staff shortages during in-person learning

We continue to work with York Region Public Health to ensure our schools are safe for students and staff. In doing so, there are occasions, where students and staff members are required to self-isolate. These measures require the board to rely on ensuring adequate student supervision for safety. In previous years, where no occasional teacher or other staff member was available, schools combined classes for short periods of time. During the global pandemic, student contacts must be minimized and classes cannot be combined. As such, we may face specific situations where schools are required to close to in-person learning due to self-isolation requirements, even if COVID-19 case counts do not appear significant. We will continue to take all necessary planning and precautions to keep schools open, but may also need to make difficult decisions to close to ensure safety.

In the event of a school closure to in-person learning, all learning will move to virtual according to [provincial requirements for live \(synchronous\) learning](#).

GAPPS Profile Images

With the move to online learning, many students have been choosing to add profile images in their Google Applications for Education (GAPPS) accounts. This is the image that appears along with the student's name in Google Classroom, Google Meet, etc.

It has come to the Board's attention that some individuals are using inappropriate profile images, including images that are racist and discriminatory. We do not tolerate any form of hate or discrimination. These images cause pain and harm and can make other students and staff members feel unsafe, marginalized, and unwelcome in our learning environments. Appropriate actions are being taken to address this issue when inappropriate profile images have been used.

Through the Board's ongoing commitment to dismantling racism and creating welcoming and inclusive learning environments, **all GAPPS profile images will be temporarily removed on Friday, February 26, 2021**. All students' images will appear as an icon showing the first letter of their name. In the coming weeks, all staff and students will [engage in learning](#) in support of our collective responsibility to dismantle hate and racism online. After the learning is completed, your child will regain access to uploading profile images to their YRDSB Google account.

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) graduation requirement

The Ministry of Education has waived the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) graduation requirement for all students graduating during the 2020–2021 school year. This means that a student who is expected to graduate in the 2020-21 school year and has not already successfully completed the literacy test, will not be required to do so in order to graduate. This applies to 2020-21 graduates only.

You may be aware that this school year, the EQAO is field testing a new online assessment for OSSLT. YRDSB will **not** be participating in this field test during the Spring of 2021. The decision to not participate in the field test was made first and foremost to prioritize the well-being of students and support the continuity of learning in response to COVID-19. The current adaptive model of alternating in-class opportunities does not align with EQAO's Field Testing recommendations.

Grade 9 Mathematics Assessment Field Test

EQAO is field testing a new online assessment tool in the 2020-21 school year for Grade 9 Academic and Applied mathematics courses. York Region District School Board has decided that students will not participate in the Grade 9 Mathematics Assessment Field Test.

Our current Adaptive rotation model of alternating in-class opportunities does not align with EQAO's Field Testing recommendation. This decision was made with the well-being of our students in mind.

Staff will continue to support students with an emphasis on student well-being in an inviting and inclusive math learning community.

Thank you for your understanding as we work to support our students. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your school principal.

For more information on what this means for you and your child, please visit www.yrdsb.ca.

Text/Resource Distribution

Distribution of resources will take place in the cafeteria on **Wednesday, March 3 (Cohort A) and Thursday, March 4 (Cohort B)**. A staff marshal will arrive at the classroom door and escort only those students who need to retrieve items to the cafeteria. Marshals will ensure that class cohorts do not mix. To minimize contact exchange, students must bring their own writing utensil to the cafeteria so that they can create a record of the resource assigned to them.

Report It

Our schools should be safe, welcoming and inclusive places for everyone. It is important that students know what to do if they witness or experience inappropriate behaviour or incidents of hate or discrimination.

- There may be situations when you can safely step in and intervene and help.
- Talk to an adult at school, family member or other trusted adult.
- Report the event without the person involved knowing using our online reporting tool, Report It.

Report It lets you share information about inappropriate student behaviour or incidents of hate or discrimination. You can use the online form to report:

- bullying, drugs, cheating, vandalism, harassment, violence or any other inappropriate behaviour
- incidents of discrimination or hate, including anti-Indigenous racism, ableism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism, classism, homophobia, Islamophobia, sexism, transphobia or other forms of hate

You can report events that happen at school, at school-related events, online or off school property if it negatively affects a student or the school climate. You can also choose to make a report anonymously.

Complete reports are shared with the school to investigate and respond. Acts of discrimination, hate and bullying are never acceptable. Using the Report It tool is a way of standing up for each other and for ourselves.

You can find Report It on the homepage of the Board website at www.yrdsb.ca and on the homepage of every school website, or watch this [short video](#) to learn more.

Scholarship News

Continue to check the Guidance Moodle for upcoming scholarship information as well as application and eligibility details.

Please note: Scholarship information is intended for graduating students that plan to attend a post secondary institution in 2021-2022.

Upcoming Scholarship Information:

The Scholarship Report (February - May) - (PDF located on the Guidance Moodle)

University Listing Scholarships - Fall 2021 Entrance - (PDF located on the Guidance Moodle)

College Listing Scholarships - Fall 2021 Entrance - (PDF located on the Guidance Moodle)

[Black Foundation of Community Networks](#) (BFCN) - 2021 Scholarship Directory

A.B.L.E. Scholarship Opportunity: [Application Form](#) & [Candidate Letter Selection Criteria](#); application deadline has been extended to March 22, 2021 at 5:00 pm.; for any questions, students may contact the Scholarship & Awards Committee Chair at ablescholarship@gmail.com.

Canadian Pediatric Stroke and Acquired Brain Injury Survivors Scholarship Application:
www.achievingbeyondbraininjury.com

Scotia Bank/My Blueprint - [Financial Wellness and STEM Scholarship Information](#)

Summer Jobs

Hey students! Looking for a summer job?

Have you considered working for the Ontario Government? Each year the Ontario Public Service targets up to 5,000 summer students to work in locations across Ontario in areas such as:

- Ontario Parks
- Environment
- Science
- Administration
- Business and Finance
- Research and Laboratories
- Communications
- Customer Service

Earn while you learn! All jobs were posted on February 25th. Closing dates will be between March 10 and June 1.

Apply early to have a chance to apply to the job types that interest you.

You can learn more at: ontario.ca/summerstudents.

Wellness Corner: National Eating Disorder Awareness Week

Congratulations Student Wellness Council on a very successful "spread the love" campaign in celebration of Valentine's Day. The Council received over 200 Compliment-Grams!

This week, in support of National Eating Disorder Awareness Week, the Council has been helping to raise awareness about eating disorders: different types, underlying causes, consequences, and resources that students can access for help and support.

Here are some of the most common signs of an eating disorder:

- Eating in secret or leaving meals to go to the bathroom
- Expressing guilt about eating habits
- Constantly talking about weight or losing weight
- Being overly and obsessively focused on eating healthy foods
- Consistently skipping meals
- Exercising excessively
- Frequently checking the mirror or scale
- Using dietary supplements or laxatives

If you suspect your child may have an eating disorder, please contact your primary healthcare practitioner right away.

Anorexia nervosa has the highest mortality of any psychiatric disorder. It has a prevalence of about 0.3% in young women. It is more than twice as common in teenage girls, with an average age of onset of 15 years; 80-90% of patients with anorexia are female. Anorexia is the most common cause of weight loss in young women and of admission to child and adolescent hospital services.

Hoek HW. Incidence, prevalence and mortality of anorexia nervosa and other eating disorders. *Curr Opin Psychiatry* 2006;19:389-94

Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy Launch Event

The York Region District School Board is committed to championing equity and inclusivity. In response to continued evidence of anti-Black racism in Canadian institutions, including in education, the Board has co-developed an [anti-Black racism strategy](#).

The *Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy: Creating anti-racist and Black-affirming learning and working environments* was co-developed by York Region Black community leaders, YRDSB staff and in consultation with students. The launch of the strategy marks a coordinated effort to address anti-Black racism at the Board.

On March 8, 2021 from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m., students, staff and families are invited to the virtual [Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy launch event](#) featuring guest presenter [Robyn Maynard](#).

The program will examine anti-Black racism in educational institutions and unveil the Board's strategy. The strategy is designed to dismantle anti-Black racism in all its forms in our schools and workplaces.

The systemic nature of anti-Black racism requires that school boards act proactively to support equitable access to quality education and opportunities for all students, and to challenge the marginalization of Black students, staff and families.

Please visit www.yrdsb.ca for more details and [to register](#) for the event.

Arts Unionville Musicianship Black History Month Playlist #4

For the 2020-2021 school year, the Arts Unionville 11/12 Musicianship classes have paused our studies of standard repertoire and are concentrating on composers, songwriters, performers & traditions of the African Diaspora. For Black History Month, we have curated four special playlists. This fourth and last playlist includes examples from our listening log, blues/gospel and "jazz giants" seminars: Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Ella Fitzgerald, Mamie Smith, Nina Simone, Duke Ellington and solo piano music and the masterpiece Listen to the Lambs by the Canadian-born composer Nathaniel Dett. Enjoy!

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3x6fokFVMbSCCs4sKlrrPe?si=f_CAzX0ZSICGjCmBZ7iCBQ

COVID-19 Student Self-Assessment and Confirmation

First, click [here for the self-assessment](#).

Second, submit the Confirmation Form: <http://bit.ly/UHSScreen>.

Complete these two steps **EACH DAY** before you arrive at school.



Have your receipt ready to show at the door. The receipt is in your GAPPS email.

Staff will be checking for completed confirmation on your phone or printout each day.

Please note: You must enter through the main doors at Town Centre Blvd or at the cafeteria entrance on Warden.

Message to all UHS students:

Each day, you are required to complete...

a) the **REVISED** Online Self-Assessment: [COVID-19 School and Child-Care Screening Tool](#).

AND

b) the Confirmation [Form](#) for which you will receive an email receipt.

Before you come to school every morning, read the self-assessment tool. If you answer 'yes' to any of the questions, do NOT come to school.

Once you complete the self-assessment, then complete the Confirmation Google Form. It asks you, "Have you completed the self-screening test?" Answer 'yes.' **You will receive a receipt that is sent to your gapps email once you have completed this confirmation form.**

Scroll down to the bottom of the receipt which shows the colour-coded day of the week and have this ready as you approach the entrance.

When you get to the **Town Centre** or **Warden** entrance (**these are the only two entrances**), hold up your phone and have the bottom of your receipt ready to show the staff member at the door. We want to see the colour-coded day at the bottom of your receipt.

If you do not have a phone, you can provide us with a **printout**. Alternatively, you can read a hard copy of the self-assessment that has been posted and give us a **verbal confirmation** that you have completed the screening.

Students may start entering the school at 8:15 a.m.

Thank you for following our daily screening procedure.

Free Triple P Parenting Virtual Sessions

Click the link below to view the current schedule of virtual seminars, groups and sessions you can attend with other parents in Ontario. Click the individual session listing or the 'register' button for more details or any special instructions:

<https://www.triplep-parenting.ca/ont-en/find-help/find-a-session/>

Student Trustee Elections

The Campaign Period: February 22 - March 7, 2021; closes @ 11:59 p.m.

Online Voting: March 8-11, 2021; closes @ 8 p.m.

Election Results Announced: March 12, 2021

For further information and election resources, please visit the [Student Trustee website](#). Questions may be submitted to trustee.services@yrdsb.ca.

Crisis Mental Health Support for Students

For a variety of support services and agencies, please refer to the following list:

- 310-COPE www.yssn.ca: 905-310-COPE (2673) or 1-855-310-COPE (2673) - available 24/7
- www.KidsHelpPhone.ca: 1-800-668-6868, text 686868 - available 24/7
- Mental Health Helpline <https://www.ontario.ca/page/mental-health-services>: 1-866-531-2600 - available 24/7
- York Hills Help Phone Line: 905-503-9561 Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:30-4:00 pm; for children & youth (0-18 years), parents, caregivers or adult supporters. Visit www.yorkhills.ca for more information.
- Markham Stouffville Hospital www.msh.on.ca: 905-472-7000
- Poison Control www.ontariopoisoncentre.ca: 1-800-268-9017
- Lesbian Gay BI Trans Youth Line www.youthline.ca: 1-888-687-9689
- Trans Lifeline www.translifeline.org: 1-877-330-6366
- Black Youth Helpline www.blackyouth.ca: 1-833-294-8650
- York Region Children's Aid Society www.yorkcas.org: 905-895-2318
- York Region Abuse Program www.centralhealthline.ca: 905-895-3646
- Police-Fire-Ambulance 911

The Unionville Howl

An Informative Newsletter



Distant but Together (2020) by Yifei Wang

Although students no longer walk side by side on the way to school, their footsteps are made visible by the first winter snow.

As 2021 has begun, we want to acknowledge the past year by presenting a timeline that highlights some of the important events that have occurred. Through the awareness of the past, we are able to move on and pursue a better future. In this newsletter, we will be talking about environmental issues and community culture. Articles in this newsletter include Modern Art and Social Media, The Ongoing Water Crisis in Indigenous Communities, The Never-Ending Scar which is a personal essay, The year of the Ox, a message from the environmental club and Get to Know Your Teacher. The Unionville Howl team has also started a new section for career interviews. Stories and knowledge from an experienced professional will inform many students of future possibilities. The Unionville Howl team wishes everyone all the best for the year ahead.

BY SYEDA SHANZAY KAMRAN



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THE ONGOING WATER CRISIS IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

By Meerub Rashad & Yifei Wang

Although Canada is one of the world's largest per-capita freshwater reserves, many Indigenous communities have no choice but to consume contaminated water. A 2014 report by the United Nations described the water crisis in the First Nations reserves as "troubling," since more than half of the water system posed medium to high health risks.

Today, 61 Indigenous communities are warned to either boil water before use, not consume it, or avoid it altogether as a result of toxicity levels. The Boil Water Advisory, which makes up the majority of all long-term advisories, instructs communities to boil all water for at least one minute before drinking, brushing their teeth, or cooking, and not use tap water to bathe infants, toddlers, or the elderly. Failing to complete these precautions would result in "flu-like symptoms along with diarrhea and vomiting," according to Dunstan, 53, a member of a community that has been under a Boil Water Advisory for decades.

According to Routledge Taylor and Francis group, there are estimated to be 90 deaths and 90 000 illnesses caused by contaminated drinking water each year in Canada. These numbers are likely inaccurate due to under-reporting. Advisories in Indigenous communities considered, many of these cases come disproportionately from these communities.

The Trudeau government announced in March 2016 that there will be new commitments and funds to end all long-term water advisories by March 2021. Marc Miller, the Indigenous Services Minister, told CBC News that he is still hopeful in regards to meeting the target and that more funds will be spent to make it happen. The pandemic has slowed down construction, but with only half a year left until their target, the government has lifted 88 long-term drinking water advisories and has more than 60 left.

The government's inability to solve this issue is causing many deaths each year. Drinking water has become life-threatening for many Indigenous people. We can help them by sending inquiries to the government using the link below. This is a serious problem, but together we can make a huge difference.

<https://canadians.org/action/first-nations-water>

A TIMELINE OF WORLD EVENTS IN 2020

January

22nd: First case of COVID-19 reported in Canada

26th: Kobe Bryant, Gianna Bryant, and 7 others passed away

February

9th: The South Korean film 'Parasite' received 4 Oscars

March

14th: Schools in Ontario closed due to COVID-19

April

18th -20th: A shooting and attack took place in Nova Scotia, 23 people were killed

May

25th: Black Lives Matter protests began after the death of George Floyd and others

THE PLASTIC PROBLEM

By Cindy Feng & Alex Xia



Photograph by Yifei Wang

Did you know that nearly 90 percent of plastics end up incinerated or in our landfills, lakes, parks, and oceans in Canada? The reality is jarring— to imagine the accumulation of your hefty bags of garbage, combined with all the bags in your neighbourhood, combined with all the bags in the entire country. Almost all of that plastic ends up contaminating ecosystems, killing wildlife, and going back into our stomachs through the food we eat.

The Environmental Council is working on a campaign to reduce single-use plastics in our neighbourhood. Thereby, we hope for you to take two minutes and pledge to take part in reducing single-use plastics! Feel free to fill out our pledge and talk about solutions you can implement with your family to help out the cause!

We are also working on a 20-minute educational presentation surrounding this issue, which will be shared during your online classes. You will learn about various topics, including bioplastic, the impact of plastic, and methods of reduction. Afterwards, there will be an ultra-fun Kahoot that comes with spectacular prizes, so definitely look forward to the presentation coming your way very soon! Finally, if you could please tell your teachers and classmates all about this campaign, we would be able to present in even more classes and make an even more significant impact. Thank you so much and we hope to see you soon!

Find the pledge through:

Environmental Council Google Classroom Code: [7qt3w7g](#)

Link to Google Form: <https://forms.gle/ZaApDUVVV6WBP9YZ8>

June

8th: Three Minnesota police officer were charged with second-degree murder in the death of George Floyd

July

1st: Canada Day

August

4th: Massive explosion in the Beirut Port caused the deaths of 190 people and injured many others

16th: Wildfires from California to Washington State burned millions of acres

28th: Black Panther actor Chadwick Boseman passes away at the age of 43

September

28th: Joyce Echaquan, an Atikamekw woman, died in Quebec after being harassed by two nurses who refused to treat her.

MODERN ART AND SOCIAL MEDIA

By Lois Chan

Generation after generation on this Earth, art has been a relentless presence amongst humanity. It heals, reinvigorates, inspires, and helps us express our truest self and deepest emotions. Has the societal importance of art fluctuated after centuries of its existence? Which spaces does it occupy in this modern age? How is art being wielded and treated by the public?

With the advancement of technology, namely social and entertainment media, art has been readily available to the public on platforms such as Instagram, Tumblr and YouTube. Many pages feature original work created by artists of all ages, at different points of their artistic careers. Whether these are aspiring artists, hobbyists or professionals, art is easily accessible to all who search for it— opposed to the past, when art was mainly found in galleries. However, that is not to say that art galleries are a dying institution— back in 2018, you might've heard of the mass hysteria over Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Mirror exhibit at the Art Gallery of Ontario, which drew in over 165 000 visitors in its 3-month opening (O'Neil, 2018). Here is where technology re-enters the picture: its popularity, for a large part, was thanks to the flurry of mirror selfies that came out of the exhibit's visitation.

While social media has created opportunities for artists to share and advertise their work, it has redefined art as a prop to enhance an Instagram feed, or a background to pose against for a profile picture. While the demand for graffiti, murals and exhibitions is able to grow with this practice, the camera seems to discount the experience that art can provide for its audience (Weingarten, 2018). It serves as a barrier to truly appreciating and contemplating the value of art because once someone snaps a photo, they tend to immediately walk away.

Next time, when coming across the industrious labour of an artist, remember to take a moment to just stop and observe. Art doesn't require us to fall in love with it, but when we attempt to understand and absorb what stands before us, there is an opportunity for enlightenment. Without a screen obstructing the way, we can remember that art is powerful and capable of affecting our life perspective. Art is the beating heart of humanity made tangible.

October

31st: The Quebec City Stabbings took two lives and left 5 others injured.

November

8th: Joe Biden was elected as the President of the United States on November 7, 2020

8th: Kamala Harris made history by being the first female Vice-President in the United States

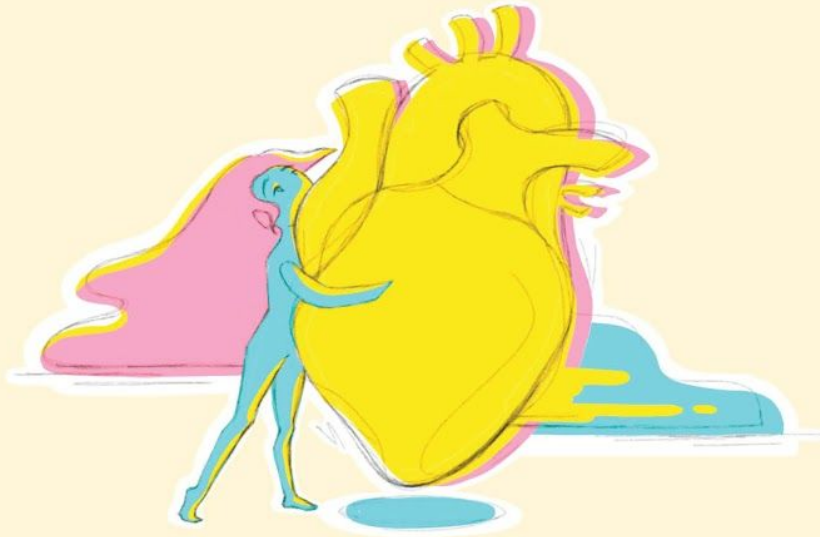
24th: Scotland became the first country to make feminine hygiene products free

December

26th: In Ontario, the COVID cases from January 15 - December 26 were 171,416 cases and 4,377 deaths.

The Never-Ending Scar

By Aieshaa Vykunthan



Remedy With the Heart (2021) by Yifei Wang

At the age of three, my doctors detected a nine-millimetre hole in my heart. This meant that I required open-heart surgery. Although this happened many years ago, it still is a huge part of my life as it continues to impact how I live. From a young age, I was uncomfortable with changing in front of others due to an incident that occurred in the 4th grade. While I was changing in the locker room, a classmate looked at my scar and said, “Ew, do you have two belly buttons?” Others would even ask me to show them as if it was something abnormal that needed to be on display. This continued when my mom bought me a two-piece swimsuit for a swim class. I always felt the need to cover the scar with my hand because I was scared of what someone would say about it.

I hated eating because it always caused me to throw up; a side effect I had to cope with due to all medication after the surgery. My mother became quite worried and decided it was best for me to enroll in a private school. After my mom gave them special instructions, the teachers would force me to eat my whole lunch and wouldn’t let me out for recess until I was finished. It was very frustrating because when everyone came back from a wonderful time in the sun, they made sure to rub it in my face. This made me feel restricted and denied my freedom. At the time, I hated my parents for it, but as time passed by, I came to realize that if my parents hadn’t instructed the teachers to watch my intake, I would have dumped my lunch out. Since I was the first child my parents became ‘helicopter parents’. At the time, it felt suffocating and endless, but they believed that I needed that extra support in order to function. All those sleepless nights my parents had to endure; driving me to the hospital daily, trying to find ways to pay for all the supplies and find a way to pay for private school were ways that my parents felt they could support me so I didn’t feel helpless. My parents sacrificed their enjoyment and education so that I could be healthy.

I have learned many things from my journey whether it was to not take my parents' love and support for granted or to appreciate the things I have. Over the years I also became thankful towards my doctors and all the medical professionals that helped me throughout the years. They taught me how to live a healthy life, which is why it aggravates me to see people take their health for granted. I've come to learn that health is my biggest asset and I must take care of myself, both physically and mentally, in order for everything else to fall into place. To this day, I still have my scars and for a long time, I was ashamed of them. I realize now that they make me unique. I see them as a symbol of my journey. Along the journey of our lives, we all go through various difficulties as well as accomplishments, but in the end, they are what make our lives worth living. No matter what obstacle we face, remember that we will only become stronger by overcoming it.

A CAREER INTERVIEW WITH

Christene Browne

BY SYEDA SHANZAY KAMRAN

Christene Browne is the first black woman to write, produce and direct a feature film in Canada. In 1970, she moved from St. Kitts in the Caribbean to Regent Park Canada with her family. Ms. Browne has been working as a film producer since 1991, which was when she first debuted her work at the Toronto International Film Festival. After that, she opened up her own production company Syncopated Productions Inc. Her work has won several awards and has been screened all around the world.



Take me through your journey from when you first started thinking about being a film producer until now. “I started taking pictures first. I was fifteen when I decided I wanted to buy myself a camera, so I worked at McDonald's long enough to buy my first camera and then I quit. The story that I often tell (which is the truth) is that I was too shy to take pictures outside, so I started taking pictures just in my house. Fast forward some years later, I was 18/19 when I got involved in the Regent Park video workshop, which was where I was living at the time. The workshop was put together to engage youth in the community and as a youth in the community, I got involved in it. Basically, I began to learn my craft there. After the person who ran the workshop went away, me and this other teenager ran the workshop and we continued making documentaries. From there I decided to apply to Ryerson to study film.”

Looking at your work, you've tackled unique topics such as stereotypes, poverty and climate change. How do you decide what to present in your work?

The decisions come from inside me, like whatever burning question I have for myself or whatever story that I feel I need to tell at the time. I follow my instinct and gut feeling. I follow my heart and my passion, wherever they lead me. I tell my students and my kids that that's what they should do.

What obstacles have you faced?

“Well, I didn’t see many people like myself working in film. When Spike Lee’s first film came out, that’s when I started thinking about making films. I wrote him a letter and I said “What you’re doing is what I wanna do,” and actually he wrote me back. I still have the postcard that he sent me, which said: ‘Just keep making films and keep doing what you do’. At the beginning of my career, I took 3 years of that 4 year (film) program and decided that I would go out into the world and try my hand in creating, since I thought that school was too slow for me; I wasn’t progressing enough and getting to where I wanted to creatively be. So I got a job with a small film company. That’s basically where I started learning how to put [ideas] together and whatnot.

Why did you want to become a filmmaker?

The reason why I wanted to become a filmmaker to begin with was that I didn’t see myself on the screen. I remember as a child, watching a number of shows and thinking to myself that maybe I can do better than what I was watching. I wanted to see myself representing my story, stories that represented black people’s perspective and the Caribbean perspective. That’s actually what inspired me and urged me to create. There came a point when I said to myself, there are other stories that are emanating from other parts of me that don’t necessarily have to do with race, class or social issues because those stories also had to be told.”

What advice would you give to someone who wants to be a film producer?

“You have to want to tell stories and you have to be committed to them. You have to know that, sometimes, it takes a long time to get things done. There are a lot of projects that we start and are not able to continue because of [many reasons]. You have to be ready to wear so many hats as a director/producer and know as much about the business as you do the creative. There is a lot of satisfaction in having one idea and turning that idea into an actual product that you can show somebody. You have to have a strong backbone and for an artist, you have to be able to take rejection and criticism. My advice would be to someone who wants to be a film producer, is just do it. The act of saying it out loud is the beginning of something.”

THE YEAR OF THE OX

By Candy Eliza Hua & Madeline Giuliano



Illustration by Lois Chan

Lunar New Year or Spring Festival in many East Asian countries is a festival celebrating the beginning of the year. The event is celebrated by 1.5 billion people around the world, from Asia to Europe and America! Lunar New Year begins on the first month of the lunar calendar. This year, the festival falls on February 12th, 2021. This is the year of the Ox, though the Ox is far from the only animal present in the Lunar Calendar. Lunar New Year is celebrated for 16 days, from New Year’s Eve to the 15th day of the New Year—the lantern festival.

It is often theorized that Lunar New Year began in the Shang Dynasty (1600 - 1046 BC). This is because people often held celebrations and sacrifices for ancestors and gods near the beginning or end of a given year. Most of the traditions we see today are introduced by the Tang and Qing Dynasties. From dumplings, pyrotechnics and dancing, among other things skyrocketed into popularity. Dragon and Lion dances and lantern shows also rose into popularity during this time.

In relation to celebrating New Years Eve, people often put up decorations and wear traditional or red clothing. Fireworks are set off and red envelopes are given to loved ones as a sign of good luck and prosperity. Food is a big part of Lunar New Year, as many dishes hold symbolic significance: dumplings (餃子) represent wealth, noodles (面條) represent longevity, spring rolls (春捲) represent a fresh start, glutinous rice balls (湯圓) represent family reunion, and finally steamed fish (蒸魚) represents wealth.

A message from Mr.Cao

Reconnecting with family is a vital part of Lunar New Year celebrations. It has become so universal to the point where travel during Lunar New Year is often nicknamed 'The world's largest human migration', with up to three billion trips during the season. Chinese New Year is a very special day for my family and me. My family members get together and celebrate over some amazing traditional Chinese food, although this year will look a lot different than the past years. My fondest memory of Chinese New Year growing up has to be cleaning the house with my family in order to start the new year brand new and fresh... and also the red pockets. 2021 is the Year of the Ox. Oxens are reliable, hard workers, honest and do not seek for praise or to be the centre of attention. Let's take on the challenges that this year will put on us with the personality and characteristic traits of an ox by continuing to work hard, to be dependable and honest with integrity and humility. Happy Lunar New Year!

Get to Know Your Teacher: Mrs. Di Francesco

BY CANDY ELIZA HUA

What inspired you to become a teacher?

I was inspired to become a teacher because I like working with young people and I want to inspire the future generation.

What are your hobbies?

Besides teaching, my hobbies are playing tennis, drawing, cooking, and exercising.

If you have a bucket list, what is one thing you want to accomplish?

Learn to speak French and Spanish fluently, become an actress, and write a children's book.

What are your four pet peeves?

My four pet peeves are mean-spirited people, disorganized workspace, people who whine, socks and sandals.

What motto do you live by?

My motto is to be kind and work hard. I got that tattooed on my arm.

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JEAN LUMB FOUNDATION

林黃彩珍

The 24th Annual Jean Lumb Awards

2021

For High School Students of Chinese Heritage

Deadline: May 24, 2021 at 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time

Eight Award Categories

**Two Recipients Per Award Category
(16 awards, each valued at \$1,000)**

The number of awards has been doubled again due to the COVID-19 pandemic

2020 AWARD WINNERS

A. Wang, Pickering H.S., Pickering, ON
B. Huang, Dr. Norman Bethune C.I., Toronto, ON
B. Shen, Unionville H.S., Markham, ON
C. Chong, David Thompson S.S., Vancouver, BC
E. Zhou, Bloor C.I., Toronto, ON
E. Lo, Unionville H.S., Markham, ON
G. Francis, St. Mary's Academy, Winnipeg, MB
G. Gong, Erindale S.S., Missississauga, ON

G. H. Chum, Newmarket H.S., Newmarket, ON
K. Guan, A.Y. Jackson S.S., Toronto, ON
M. Lee, Pierre Elliott Trudeau H.S., Markham, ON
M. Chen, Sir John A. Macdonald C.I., Toronto, ON
N. Chen, St. John Paul II Catholic S.S., Toronto, ON
P. Zhang, New Westminster S.S., New Westminster, BC
S. Ng, Havergal College, Toronto, ON
S. Ren, Markham District H.S., Markham, ON

Academics • Athletics • Arts • Community Services • Defence of Environment
Dignity of Life • Innovation • Leader of Tomorrow

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SPEAKER'S IDOL 2021

CHANGING THE WORLD, ONE SPEECH AT A TIME

Speeches Due:
Friday, March 12, 2021

GRADE 6-12 STUDENTS, HERE IS YOUR CHANCE TO BE HEARD!

Prepare a 3-minute speech sharing your thoughts on how to make positive change while commenting on Holocaust survivor Simon Wiesenthal's quote:

"The history of humankind is the history of crimes and history can repeat. So information is a defense. Through this we can build, we must build, a defense against repetition."



**Nominations
Now Open!**

15th Annual York Region Character Community Awards

Do you know a member of our community who has demonstrated great character?

Why not honor them by submitting a nomination for a Character Award?



Award Categories

- Citizen of Character Award: All Ages
- Business Leader of Character Award
- Non-Profit Leader of Character Award
- School of Character Award: YRDSB
- Community Hero Award
- School of Character Award: YCDSB
- Gianluca Cellucci Memorial Award
- Don Cousens Community Impact Award

The Character Community Awards recognizes individuals, groups, schools and businesses across York Region for demonstrating exemplary character attributes, including:

Optimism
Respect
Integrity
Inclusiveness

Initiative
Responsibility
Compassion
Fairness

Perseverance
Honesty
Courage
Humility



Please click here for the 2021 Nomination Form:

<http://www.charactercommunity.com>

Live each day with ...

Compassion, Courage, Fairness, Honesty, Inclusiveness, Initiative, Integrity, Optimism, Perseverance, Respect, Responsibility and Humility

[Access the nomination form here.](http://www.charactercommunity.com)



Background Information

The Public Property Assessment Network Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 is being awarded through the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) to one recipient in the OPSBA Central East Region for three school years – 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22. Scholarship recipients are students of strong character, who care deeply about their communities and furthering their own learning.

Who Can Apply?

Eligible students must be:

- A Canadian citizen or permanent resident
- In good standing academically and non-academically with your high school
- Attending college, university or an apprenticeship program within Ontario in 2021
- Graduating from a secondary school within one of the eligible school boards or school authorities

Eligible School Boards or Authority:

- Bloorview School Authority
- Campbell Children's School
- Durham District School Board
- Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
- The Protestant Separate School Board of the Town of Penetanguishene
- Simcoe County District School Board
- Toronto District School Board
- Trillium Lakelands District School Board
- York Region District School Board

Who are we looking for?

Selection Criteria will consider, but is not limited to:

- Community involvement such as volunteering, athletics, and extra-curricular activities
- Initiative to solve problems around you with the involvement and support of others
- Social identity, socio-economic status or other factors unique to each student's achievements and the opportunities available to them
- Receipt of other major awards or scholarships

Application Process

Applicants are asked to explain in a **maximum** of 300 words their suitability for the Public Property Assessment Network Scholarship based on the established criteria.

All applications must be accompanied by **two letters of reference**, one of which must be from the current principal on school letterhead. Letters of reference *shall not exceed two pages in length*.

To ensure a fair selection process, any additional materials/letters and/or submissions beyond the word limit will **not be taken into consideration**.

If you are unable to complete this application due to:

- accessibility requirements,
- issues accessing any of the text or documents we have made available, or
- have specific alternative format requests,

then please contact Donna Edwards at the email address below.

Please send your completed package in a single PDF file format, with your name included in the file name and on the cover page, **by May 21, 2021** to:

Donna Edwards
Central East Regional Chair
donna.edwards@ddsb.ca

Key Dates

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| May 21, 2021 | Applications due (5 p.m.) |
| By June 30, 2021 | Scholarship to be awarded at commencement ceremony, where possible, or via mail by June 30, 2021. |
| | Both the student and school will receive notification of the award. |
| By August 1, 2021 | Cheque to be mailed to recipient, following confirmation of acceptance to a college, university or apprenticeship program within Ontario for 2021. |

