

Garden-Avenews

Produced by the Garden Avenue School Advisory Council



Winter 2011

Chair's Message

Welcome to the Winter 2011 edition of *Garden Avenews*!

Garden was an amazing place of activities, clubs, performances, volunteering and sharing this term. Inside this edition of *Garden Avenews* you'll find the stories and photos that chronicle it all. I think you'll be amazed by all the wonderful things happening at our small school! Thank you to everyone who helps to bring our Garden Avenue School to life!

The School Council, in partnership with the staff and teachers plays an important role in bringing these activities to life. In addition to volunteering time, the Parent Council funds significantly augment the school budget for things like school trips, the music

program, arts performances in the school, sports, and numeracy resources. We believe these activities enrich the school experiences of our children and are a key part of what makes Garden Ave. P.S. so special.

Looking ahead, we want to keep these pieces of the Garden experience growing. I'd like to encourage you to get involved and learn about the programs and activities of Council. We are at a bit of a turning point with our Parent Council - many of the families who have been involved in leading these activities and the Council executive have a child who is graduating this year. We will need to fill those shoes! So, I'm asking you to please consider the role you'd like to play at your child's school in the coming year(s).

If you have any questions or concerns that you think should be raised with the School Council, or if you'd like to help out with the Council activities, please send me an email or leave a note in the School Council box in the office.

Looking forward to another great term!

Jenn Sutherland
Chair

Garden Ave. School Advisory Council
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The Gateway Public School Drummers perform for Garden students.

Principal's Message *by Mrs. Martha Peterson*

Well, this year it's been a true Canadian winter and the snow shovel did not get to sit idly by the door! Ms. Green's Grade 5/6 class has been skating on a weekly basis and Ms. Chawla's class went to High Park for breakfast and a day of skating! The students have had great fun in the yard building snowmen, forts and even a whale! Being a snowy winter means a huge thank you to Mr. Morris for all his hard work keeping our walkways clear and our hallway floors shining!

In the winter term our teachers and parent volunteers have offered a variety of clubs to our students. Clubs this term have included Girls Fitness, run by Mrs. Gacich after school, and floor

hockey organized by Ms. Green, Mr. McClure and Mr. Morris. Our Silver Birch Club has continued with the support of Ms. Orner, our teacher librarian. Boys have had an opportunity to join Mr. McClure's Boys Reading Club. Our teachers have also volunteered their lunch hours to run both a Primary and Junior Math Games Club. As well, we have been fortunate to have Matt Price here to run the Junior Scratch Computer Programming Club. It is truly amazing to think of the host of activities which are offered at our school!

Garden is an Eco Gold School and this term we have installed a new bulletin board in the main stairwell to focus on eco-activities and events. The Junior Eco Club

participated in an active Wattwise presentation. EcoSpark, which organizes these presentations, has worked with Grade 5 environment clubs to help them discover more about electricity conservation and to engage in eco-initiatives at their schools. Our Eco Club also attended an Eco Forum at Howard P.S. with Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Gacich, where they had an opportunity to share Garden Avenue initiatives and learn about the activities of other schools from our neighbouring community.

Spikes Volleyball came to Garden and helped our junior students hone their volleyball skills. In early March we had our own resident potter, Paul Stewart, work with

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Garden Avenue Music Notes

by Mrs. Linda Umezawa, Music Teacher

On March 10th just before March Break, students in Rooms 204, 205 and 207 performed at our annual Junior Concert along with students in the Recorder/Orff Ensemble and Junior Choir. They should be very proud of their creative classroom performances that included singing, drama, and student-composed poetry and drumming. Special thanks to all Junior teachers for their inspiring work, as well as to Mack Polak and Mr. Weldon for their support of the Recorder/Orff program and the choir. Also, Mr. Goetz and Ms. Orner did a great job managing the students and

production end of the event. It was so much fun to listen to Mr. McClure and Mrs. Murray as they lent their voices to Room 204's song. Finally, we are so fortunate to have had Russell Wellner provide guitar support to all of the students when they sang the final song, 'The Tree'.

The Junior Choir performed at the TDSB Choral Festival on Thursday, March 31st. This exciting event involved a large number of students in Primary, Junior and Intermediate Choirs singing and sharing their learning with each other.

Also, opera enthusiasts in our community will step out together once again to attend the dress rehearsal for 'Cenerentola', at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts on Tuesday, April 19th. Information about this opera can be found on the website for the Canadian Opera Company at www.coc.ca.

Finally, our last concert for the year will be performed by our kindergarten students on Thursday, May 26th. The year in song is once again, moving along at 'presto' pace - so quickly!

Fundraising Update

by Carole Reynolds, Fundraising Coordinator

Fundraising! We hear about fundraising so often that sometimes I think as parents we tune it out. There are so many good causes that need our help!

Garden, although not a cause in need of help, is definitely in need of fundraising dollars. Did you know that our School Council fundraises almost as much each year as our principal's annual budget?

Money raised through Parent Council events (bake sales, pizza lunches, Fun Fair, Craft Fair, Laughter for the Arts, movie nights, eco-bottle sales, just to name a few) goes 100% to pay for enhancements that add to our children's time at Garden. Enhancements such as grants given to teachers to purchase items for their classrooms, paying for or subsidizing field trips, sports equipment for recess play, pottery workshops, theatre presentations, storytelling evening, the

accompanist for our choir, and more! Teachers and staff are encouraged to request funds from Parent Council for items or activities, and we are very happy to grant these requests, working within the guidelines based on the fundraising surveys completed at the beginning of the school year by our parents.

Parents in our community work tirelessly to raise funds which enhance the school experience for all of our children. However there is always a real need for willing hands to support our fundraising efforts! This term we had two fundraisers – pizza lunches which raised \$3105 (thank you to Lisa Linkovich for organizing!), and our first Garden Movie Night, which raised \$262 for the school.

Our biggest fundraiser of the year is still to come – the **FUN FAIR**. Organizing has been underway for several weeks now, and we are excited about putting on our biggest

and best Fun Fair ever! We hope to raise \$4500 this year – so please help make this goal a reality! Approximately 50 volunteers are needed to help make this huge event run. Can you help?

Think about what fundraising for Garden means to you, and if you can give an hour or two of your time we will find something fun for you to do at the Fun Fair! So mark your calendar for **Saturday, May 28, 10am – 2pm, rain or shine!** Come out to support your school. A detailed summary of the tasks involved is available on our website at <http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/gardenave>.

Please feel free to contact me (carole.reynolds@sutherlandmodels.com) with any questions about fundraising at Garden, suggestions for new fundraisers, or just to chat about how you can help at the Fun Fair.

Principal's Message continued...

every class on a special clay project. He was amazing and we can't wait to see the fired results! Thank you to our Parent Council for affording us these opportunities!

Class trips have been ongoing with Ms. Chawla, Mr. McClure and Ms. Lawson going to the Science Centre. Kindergarten children and our primary students have been to the Little Red Theatre to see a dramatic presentation of *The Snow*

Queen. Ms. Lawson and Ms. Chawla's classes most recently went to the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People to see *Alice in Wonderland*. The underlying themes of the production were perseverance and honesty which align with our Erasing Prejudice for Good focus.

What's better than a celebration! It was such a great treat to have the "Gateway to the World" drummers come to Garden to share their djembe African drumming with us as part of Black History focus in February!

Garden students and Gateway students had an opportunity to drum together at the end of the performance.

On April 1st, the whole school enjoyed the Parent Council funded Dufflebag Theatre presentation of *Rumpelstiltskin*. And we all look forward to Storytelling Night on April 28th.

Thank you to our Parent Council for all your support in helping to enrich our students' school life at Garden!

Introducing...

We are pleased to bring you the second instalment of our new special feature entitled "Introducing...". This term, we have decided to do two profiles—one teacher Mr. Brian McClure, and one parent, Jenn Sutherland. You will recognize these familiar faces, but you may not know much about them. It is our pleasure to introduce them to you!

Mr. Brian McClure

Do you have any brothers or sisters?

One older brother and two older sisters.

Where did you go to school/grow up?

I was born in North Vancouver, B.C., but later moved to Ontario. I attended Mountain View Public School in Collingwood (Grade 3-8).

Favourite childhood book or author?

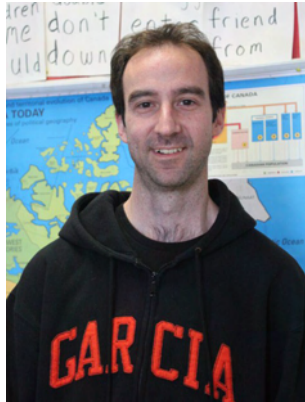
I loved the whole Narnia series by C.S. Lewis, but if I had to pick one it would be *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Best book you've enjoyed with the Boys Reading Club this year?

Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer

Favourite song or music listened to most in 2010?

Two songs I keep replaying a lot are *Tangled up in Blue* by Bob Dylan and *I Wish I Knew Natalie Portman* by K-OS. I'm also a fan



of a local band called Modern Superstitions. I have seen them quite a few times at Parts and Labour, the Horseshoe and the Silver Dollar. Their sound is hard to define which makes them appealing to me.

Do you have any pets?

I have one pet, a cat named Johanna.

What are your favourite spring activities?

Watching the NHL playoffs and running.

How long have you taught at Garden Avenue P.S.?

11 years.

What were your favourite sports/activities when you were a student?

Football, track and field, and school plays.

What is your most outstanding memory at Garden School or best thing about teaching at Garden?

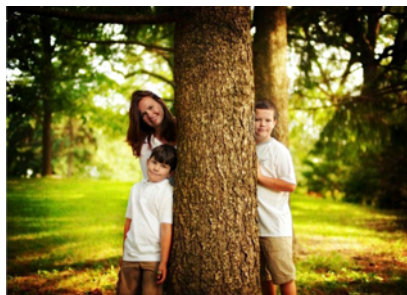
My favourite event was Gardenstock, an outdoor concert. My class did a performance connected to Jack Johnson's *The 3 R's*. The best thing about teaching at Garden is the kids and watching the "lightbulb go off" in their head or the "aha" moment when they have just learned something.

Most surprising thing you learned while running the EcoClub?

People were concerned about the amount of mercury in CFL lightbulbs. What I learned is that when coal-fired plants are firing, they are releasing mercury and lots of other toxic stuff in the air.

This newsletter is produced by members of Garden's School Advisory Council. The School Council is an important forum for involving all members of the school community in matters that affect the education of our children. We meet monthly to plan our fundraising activities, discuss school issues and opportunities, and make spending choices. Our meetings are open, and everyone is welcome and encouraged to join the discussion. Child care is available for the meetings if requested. For more information, please visit the school webpage at <http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/gardenave>.

Jenn Sutherland



How many children do you have?

Two. My son James is now in Grade 6 (and about to graduate!) and my son Andrew is in Grade 4.

What do you do for a living?

I am a Director of Marketing for Hershey Canada.

Do you have any brothers or sisters?

One younger sister.

Where did you grow up and go to elementary school?

I grew up near Jane and Annette St. and attended Humbercrest Public School.

Favourite childhood book or author?

Laura Ingalls, especially *On the Banks of Plum Creek*, and A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*.

Best book you've enjoyed this past year?

Lionel Shriver's *The Post Birthday World*

Favourite song or music listened to most in 2010?

Impossible to name as I love so many different kinds of music! I can say I am really looking forward to hearing James Taylor at the Black Creek Festival this summer.

Do you have any pets?

We have a cat named Willie and a gerbil named Gizmo.

What are your favourite spring activities?

Running and gardening.

What were your favourite sports/activities when you were a student?

Ballet, piano and highland dancing.

How long have you been involved with the Parent Council at Garden Avenue P.S.?

8 years. I started volunteering when my oldest child was in junior kindergarten.

What is your most outstanding memory of or best experience on the Parent Council?

Simply becoming a part of the Garden Community, and getting to know the kids, parents, educators and others who help to make it such an amazing, supportive and special environment. As a working parent, I am not able to spend much time at the playground before or after school. Working with other parents and the staff

advisors has been a great opportunity to meet the people who play a big role in my kids' lives - and feel good about the contributions made to the school.

In particular, I am very proud of our work in fundraising and building the Rock Circle in just two short years. This was a huge accomplishment and really showed the commitment and enthusiasm of Garden parents.

The 50th Anniversary Project is also a very special memory, as we organized an open house, photo display, student time capsules, recognition ceremony and a '50s dance which brought out so many past and current students, staff and supporters to celebrate Garden P.S. Almost every past principal from Garden attended. The memories and stories they, the graduates and others shared really reinforced what a strong connection they had to the school and what a great foundation it gives its students.

Most surprising thing you have learned on the Council?

The importance of parent contributions – be it time, energy, or ideas. There is a real need and role for parents to play in shaping the school.



Urban Communities artwork by Mrs. Baigent's Grade 2/3 Class

Ward 7 Report

by Charene Gillies

What is the Ward 7 Education Council?

Did you know the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is the largest school board in Canada and the 4th largest in North America? The TDSB provides publicly funded education to more than 270,000 students in 558 schools.

The TDSB is divided into 22 wards, all which are represented by elected trustees. Garden Avenue Public School is one of the 20 schools in ward 7. Irene Atkinson is the trustee, recently re-elected in the October municipal elections by public education supporters.

Trustees are responsible for making decisions that impact all TDSB schools across the city. To provide a forum to hear from the parents, teachers and students she represents, Irene holds education council meetings on a bi-monthly basis. Representatives from school councils across the ward are invited to attend the meetings to provide feedback on issues of the day.

The most pressing issues discussed at ward 7 education council meetings this school year have been all day kindergarten and TDSB funding needs.

Full-day Kindergarten

Starting in the fall of 2010, the provincial government began to phase in full-day kindergarten with the intent that all public schools across the province will offer the program by 2015. 71 of the more than 300 TDSB elementary schools introduced full-day kindergarten for this current school year and a further 90 schools will introduce the program in fall 2011. The timing of introduction of the program in Garden Avenue School has not yet been determined however it would not occur before fall 2012 and potentially could occur as late as fall 2014.

Irene's concerns with the full-day kindergarten program are that the province has provided insufficient funding for the program and that there is not enough space in ward 7 schools to accommodate the program. The majority of schools in ward 7, including Garden Avenue School, are currently at or over capacity. Irene anticipates that finding the additional classrooms required to house the program will be problematic and she predicts that to resolve the problem, the TDSB may have to make boundary changes (revise catchment areas) and/or grade reconfigurations (e.g. moving 5/6's out of a K-6 school to create room for the full-day kindergarten requirements).

TDSB Funding Needs

The provincial government's current funding formula does not meet the day-to-day needs of the TDSB. An example she cites frequently - aging schools are falling into disrepair because the funding formula does not adequately cover maintenance and repair needs. Irene believes the TDSB requires \$3 billion to address current maintenance and repair needs. She suggests Garden Avenue Public School, which comparatively speaking is in a good state of repair, requires just under \$2 million of that amount. Funding deficits are also apparent in others areas, from special education needs to adequately providing resources for teachers. Irene strongly believes that we all need to help persuade the provincial government to fund our schools adequately.

Four ward 7 meetings have been held so far in the 2010-11 school year, the fifth being held Thursday April 7, 2011 where the TDSB's Director of Education, Dr. Chris Spence will make a presentation.

Math Games Club



Keep in the Loop

Sign up for our weekly **Garden Avenews Direct** e-newsletter @ <http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/gardenave>

And don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Our Gecko Classroom

by Caterina, Kyle, Angelina, Madison, Emma, Ella and Marina
(Ms. Chawla's Grade 4/5 Class, Room 205)

On Monday, November 8, 2010, two adult leopard geckos arrived in our classroom. We named the male gecko Blizzard. He is gray with a black birthmark. The female gecko is named Izzy and she has a yellow body, a pink tail, and green eyelids. On December 13th, Izzy laid two eggs. We placed them in an incubator. A month later, on January 11, 2011, Izzy laid two more eggs. Another month later, on February 10th, Izzy laid a surprising two more eggs.

On February 13th, the first baby hatched. Her name is Lady Gecko. The next day, another baby gecko hatched on Valentine's Day and we named her Valentine. On March 7th, the third and fourth baby geckos were born. The third baby gecko's name is Tweedle Dee and the fourth baby gecko's name is Tweedle Dum. On March 9th, Izzy laid another two eggs and we think she is gravid with two more eggs! Incubation duration is about 6 to 8 weeks.

One day we weighed Blizzard and Izzy. Izzy weighed 39 grams before feeding. After eating 7 crickets, she weighed 40 grams. Blizzard, on the other hand, didn't eat anything so we just weighed him before and he weighed 57 grams.



Food

Our feeding days for the geckos are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Blizzard enjoys mealworms, Izzy enjoys crickets and the baby geckos eat baby mealworms. Sometimes Izzy also eats the heads of mealworms. With the mealworms and crickets, we put them in a plastic bag and put vitamins on them and shake the vitamins and the mealworms or crickets together then feed it to the geckos. They can also eat their shed skin.



Habitat

Geckos live in desert regions, Northwest Republic of India, South Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and parts of Iran. They can survive in low temperatures, for example, below 10°C.



Photos:

Our gecko station, above.

Izzy and Blizzard, left.

Lady Gecko and Valentine, bottom left.

Gecko Journals, right



Interesting Facts

- ♦ Leopard geckos can lose their tails but they will grow back in a different form and colour.
- ♦ They are insectivores and feed on insects, worms and spiders.
- ♦ The skin on a leopard gecko is durable and provides protection from rough sand and rocky terrain in their natural dry environment.
- ♦ The sex of the geckos can be determined by keeping the eggs in the incubator at a certain temperature. The cooler the temperature, the eggs will hatch into female geckos. The warmer temperature will produce male geckos.

Alice in Wonderland

by Rebecca, Kiva & Sage

Ms. Lawson's and Ms. Chawla's classes went to see an *Alice in Wonderland* production at The Young People's Theatre. The production inspired our class to learn more about the classic story Alice in Wonderland. We watched the movie and read the book. Two kids searched images of Mad Hatter hats. Five kids made the first Mad Hatter hat. Now the kids are all making Mad Hatter hats for the royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton on April 29th. On this day we will also have a tea party in honour of their marriage. We wonder if Prince William will need to borrow a hat?



Sunnyside Garden Daycare News

by Charene Gillies

Greetings from Sunnyside Garden Daycare Centre. With springtime fast approaching we are eagerly anticipating the graduation of our senior preschoolers, many of whom will be moving up to our school age program. It is hard to believe that school will be finished in a few short months and that come July 4th, our summer camp program will be in full swing.

Speaking of our summer camp, we want all parents to know that the Sunnyside Garden Daycare Camp offered to children in our school aged program in July and August often has space available for children not previously enrolled in the daycare. A calendar of activities for our camp program will be available in May. Should you be looking for care over the summer, we may have an option that meets your needs. For further information, please call Judith at 416 533-2008.

On another note, as has been our experience for several years, the number of applications we receive for spots in our preschool program continues to outnumber the spaces we are licensed to provide (our licensed capacity is 37 preschool children aged 31 months to 5 years). It is very difficult for us to have to recommend that parents explore other care options while they wait to find out if space will open for their child in our centre. We wish we could accommodate all families in the neighbourhood that request our services as we know how important it is for parents/guardians who work outside the home to have a safe, caring environment for their children on a daily basis. In order to allow us to provide opportunities to those families who are waiting for spots, if you are considering other options for the fall and will not require Sunnyside Garden Daycare services, please let Judith know as soon as possible. And if your child is leaving Garden Avenue School for any reason (i.e. French



How to Make Mad Hatter Hats

Materials: Cardboard, tape, brown or black material, red ribbon, a plaid or striped patch, bristol board and fabric glue.

Steps:

1. Cut a brim out of cardboard.
2. Cut out another circle smaller than your head (you will add flaps later).
3. Cut flaps around the smaller circle and open up the flaps.
4. Cut out a piece of bristol board that fits around your head. Make sure it also touches the outsides of your flaps.
5. Tape the flaps to the bristol board on the inside if possible. If not, tape on the outside.
6. Cut another circle out of the cardboard that is just a bit bigger than the hole at the top. Tape the circle to the top of the hat.
7. Use fabric glue to glue any fabric on the hat.
8. Now it's time to decorate the hat in your own creative way. Cover any holes with patches. If you like, put a patch at the top of the hat for style.

Immersion Program at Fern etc.), please remember that spaces in our programs are designated for children enrolled in Garden Avenue School only and as such, if you change schools you must also withdraw your child from our program.

Happy spring from all of us at the Sunnyside Garden Daycare Centre and please watch for information about our Family Night to be scheduled in late May/early June where we will be celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Centre.