

EXTRA!! EXTRA!!

The St. Elizabeth TIME

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FOSTERING FUN & FRIENDSHIP

Emma Marer

From October 14th to 15th, the grade 9 students were encouraged to embark on an exciting orientation trip to Camp Muskoka. Every year, the grade 9 Vice Principal Mr. Huang and the teachers carefully organize this adventure to welcome new grade 9 students, encourage them to come and make new friends, strengthen existing friendships, and build teamwork skills.

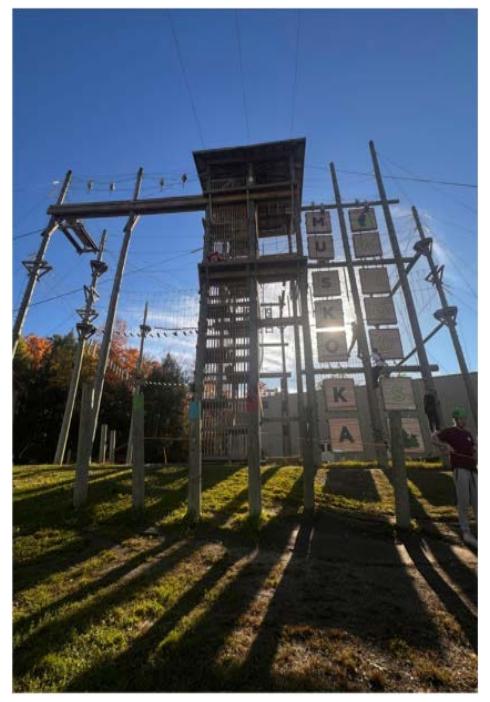
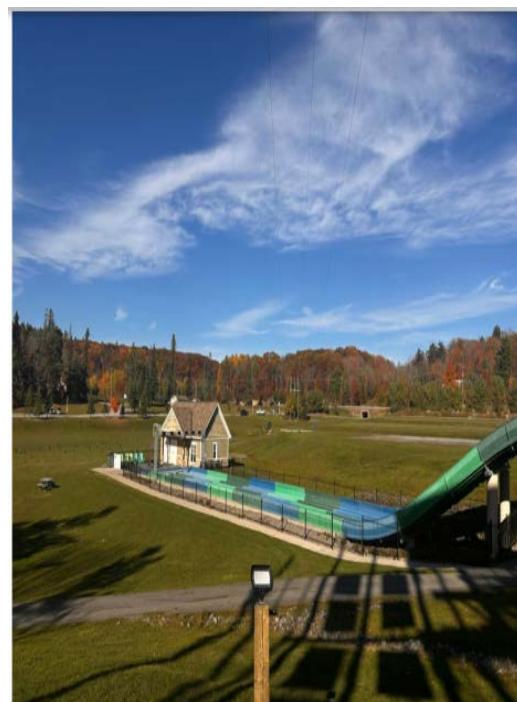
Upon the arrival at Camp Muskoka, students were assigned to different cabins and introduced to their grade 11 leaders, who acted as mentors and guided the students throughout the trip. Over the course of two days, all the students participated in a wide variety of activities designed to challenge them and promote teamwork. These included archery, the Giant Swing, hiking on fun and scenic forest trails, rock climbing on an outdoor climbing wall, and tennis and pickleball matches on the camp courts. There were also many other fun and engaging options available, ensuring every student could find something they enjoyed.

One of the many highlights of the trip was a series of team-building games played in their activity groups. Some games were team-based, such as Tic-Tac-Toe and bottle flipping, while some were individual competitions like stacking cups and games of precision like stacking hangers, where if one hanger falls the rest go down. These activities helped students bond with both their cabinmates and friends and classmates from other groups.

Later in the evening, each cabin had 30 minutes to create and rehearse a short skit, dance, or song for the camp talent show. The only requirement was to

use a single prop provided by the teachers, which sparked some creativity, laughter and great ideas. The talent show was a fantastic way for students to collaborate, showcase each of their talents, and get to know one another better than they did just hours before then.

While the original plan was to reward the one best skit with a pizza lunch, the judges were so impressed with all of the cabins they couldn't choose just one but two cabins were winners of the pizza lunch and both the cabins received pizza. We all had such a great time in Muskoka. I think I can speak for all of us when I say everyone had lots of fun, made many memories and new friendships from the moment we left the school to the moment we came back.





HALLOWEEN



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Monique Maghakian

The St. Elizabeth School community came together on Tuesday, October 23, 2025 to cheer on the Panthers as they kicked off their soccer season. Students were decked out in the school colours of red, white, and black creating a vibrant backdrop for the event. Before the rally began, students enjoyed fun activities, music, face painting that featured designs of a panther paw and a fun dot design, and temporary tattoos of uplifting messages to promote mental health awareness.

Food trucks lined the street, offering everything from funnel cake to snow cones, creating a lively and enthusiastic atmosphere. In the courtyard, the appearance of Pedro the Panther added to the excitement, rallying the crowd and reinforcing the sense of school spirit. Right before the kickoff, the grade eleven and twelve RAP dancers took centre stage with an energetic dance routine to a mash-up of pop hits including Milkshake by Kelis and Nokia by Drake. They earned loud cheers and a standing ovation from the crowd, ultimately setting the tone for the event.

Following this lively performance, the boys varsity soccer team was introduced as each player ran through a tunnel of

Kicking It Off: Panthers Rally for Soccer Season Start



cheering Panthers. Students then followed the players on to the field for the soccer game, where the Panthers beat the Toronto District Catholic School 5-2.

The pep rally not only brought St. Elizabeth together and raised school spirit, but it also inspired change within our community as all proceeds from the buyout were donated towards a good cause. However, this event would not have been possible without Mr. Layne's grade twelve leadership class, who organized and oversaw the event. They worked hard behind the scenes to ensure everything ran smoothly. From planning activities to coordinating performances, they made sure that the Pep Rally was one to remember.

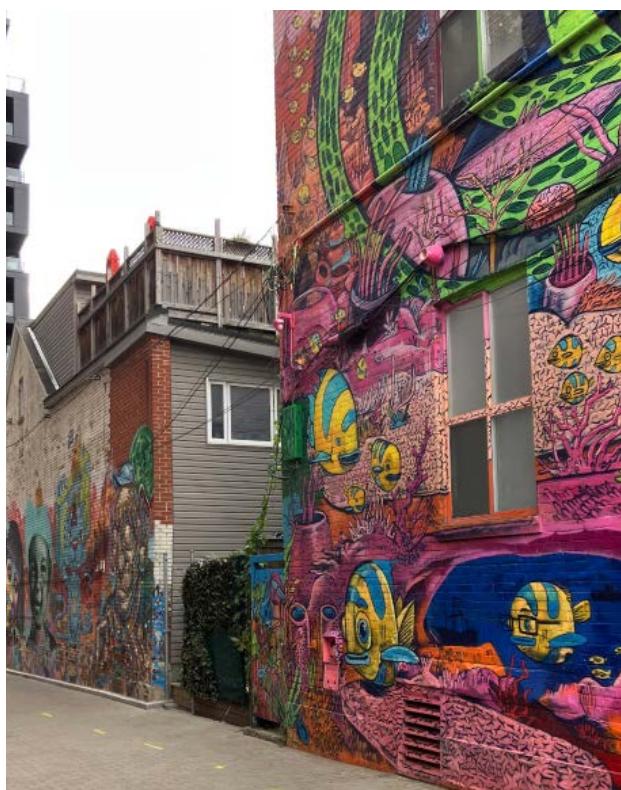


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NEWS

Dressing up for downtown fashion



Isabella Carmen Rivera

St. Elizabeth is a school that encourages creativity through experiential learning, often organizing field trips for the respected courses of the students. On October 23rd, 2025, the Grade 10 Clothing class ventured downtown to Queen Street for a hands-on fashion experience. Guided by Ms. Scodellaro, Ms. Fabris, and the Special Education teachers, students explored Queen Street in self-selected groups, browsing thrift shops, bead stores, record shops, and local eateries.

The trip brought a refreshing burst of inspiration, letting the students explore the city while bringing their learning of fashion from class to real life. By the end of the day, students returned by bus feeling enriched by the experience.





Minds Matter: Jack.org in Action



Sophia Agro &
Yuna Jeong

High school stress isn't loud, but it's everywhere. Many students walk into school every morning carrying more stress than they can handle. Homework, tests, relationships, work, and busy social schedules all pile up, affecting students' well-being. That's where our school's Jack.org chapter comes in! Through our club, we aim to make every student feel seen and supported. We want to create a safe environment where students can unload that weight and take care of themselves.

The St. Elizabeth Jack.org chapter is proud to be part of Canada's largest network of mental health-focused, youth-run Chapters. As a dedicated mental health council, our mission is to create a supportive, inclusive space where students can learn and care for their mental health. Being a chapter of such an organization means taking Jack.org's mission into our own school through meaningful initiatives such as awareness campaigns, events, and community-run workshops. These community initiatives help combat the stigma surrounding mental health within the school community.

Some examples of initiatives the St. Elizabeth Jack.org chapter has incorporated into our school community include therapy dog visits, post-secondary care packages and Library after-dark. Our most popular events are the Therapy Dog visits, in which we bring trained therapy dogs to the school to help students de-stress during tough times. Dur-



ing stressful times in the school week, these dogs allow for a calm and uplifting school atmosphere.

The most recent event our chapter organized was the creation and distribution of Post-Secondary Care Bags. These bags were support bags intended to help graduating students transition into post-secondary life with comfort and encouragement, and they include helpful resources such as squishes, chocolates, stickers, and mental health cards. The care bags included access to an online pamphlet outlining post-secondary opportunities and dates.

Looking ahead, our biggest upcoming event is Library After Dark, which is a late-night study session with snacks, support resources, and activities that create a safe, comfortable space for students before exam season.

Each event has contributed to creating a more connected, understanding, and supportive environment for students. These events help reduce stress at the school by providing students with a much-needed outlet for emotional support and useful resources. Through the given support a sense of community is created as the events work to remind students they aren't alone in their struggles. Activities such as Library After Dark encourage open conversations about mental health and promote self-care through healthy coping strategies.

Overall, the many events the St. Elizabeth Jack.org chapter has created and contributed to work to foster a more supportive, inclusive school environment where students feel seen, appreciated, and connected.

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Savannah Chu Morrison

On October 10, a record-breaking 121 of our fellow Panthers came together to give back to those in need. Our school provided Thanksgiving dinner for 484 people. Every year the Global Culture Club (GCC), moderated by Ms. and Mr. Chu Morrison, runs a Thanksgiving dinner drive for Good Shepherd Ministries, a shelter for the unhoused in downtown Toronto.

The goal of GCC is to collect an abundance of roasted chickens and mashed potatoes that will be served in time for the holiday.

GCC has been running this initiative for over 15 years, but this year was, by far, the most successful donation campaign. The previous record was 90 trays of Thanksgiving dinner to feed 360 people.

The Good Shepherd also accepts donations of baked goods throughout the year. Corliss Lee, the fundraising coordinator at Good Shepherd Ministries, says

that the hardest part of her job is "seeing the level of need continue to grow, especially during challenging economic times. It can be emotionally difficult knowing that we can't help everyone as much as we'd like, but it also motivates us to keep finding new ways to serve."

Ms. Lee suggested some of the ways in which students can help out at Good Shepherd Ministries. She explained, "There are many ways teens can get involved. You can organize a donation drive at your school—collecting new socks and underwear,

non-perishable food or toiletries. Making cookies or sandwiches at home and dropping them off can also help feed hungry people. Even spreading awareness about homelessness and the work we do makes a meaningful difference."

For anyone curious about getting into the help sector Ms. Lee has some advice: "Start by volunteering and getting to know the field. The helping sector is very diverse—beyond social work or community service, there are roles in fundraising, communications, finance, HR, data, and more. Building skills,

networking, and talking with people who work in these areas will help you understand where your strengths fit best and what the most pressing needs are."

Global Culture Club hopes to break this year's incredible record next year. Let's continue our tradition of making a difference in our community. If you would like to help out with this worthy cause, join GCC today.



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NEWS

The Black Coalition Club: Promoting Inclusivity

Sofia Pantarotto

This is an incredible club whose mission is to make sure people feel included and supported by members of their own community. The students felt that since the school is home to many different groups of people, some groups feel like they aren't being heard or respected. The Black Coalition Club is a beautiful opportunity for students to come together and be a meaningful contribution to the school community. Within this club, many students feel represented thanks to the hard work of many groups and individuals. They get together to promote inclusivity and make sure that every student is respected and valued.

The Black Coalition Club is currently working on many projects to bring awareness to several different causes. A very significant and upcoming one is Black History Month. In previous years, there were little to no events to celebrate the history of influential Black Canadians but with this club focused on their preparations, this is about to change. They are hoping to put together an art installation in front of the school to celebrate notable figures, planning activities in the cafeteria and creating something to commemorate black musicians and artists.





Teacher Spill: What They Wish Students Knew

Vinisha Kukkala

Behind every rushed lunch, late night marking session, and carefully planned lessons, teachers carry a simple hope: that students see how deeply they care. Four teachers; Ms. Fabris, Mrs. Buzdon, Mr. Edgecombe, and Mr. Bautista, shared what they wished students truly understood about school, learning, and the people standing at the front of the classroom.

While most students view school life as a structured environment, with teachers as rule enforcers and task assigners, many forget that teachers truly care about the growth of each student and want to see them grow into successful adults. Ms. Fabris mentions that teaching is built on "a commitment to helping them succeed," and the hours spent planning, grading, and giving feedback is rooted in that same commitment. This support isn't always visible to students, but is what holds the classroom experience together.

The teachers mentioned that the most rewarding experiences come when students are able to connect what they have learned in the classroom to the outside world. Mr. Bautista, a science teacher, describes how fulfilling it is to see students connect their learning to understand the world around them. The connections that Mr. Bautista sees develop into meaningful learning that

has the potential to change the way a student learns. He also enjoys watching students reward themselves after they have completed a difficult test or assignment. As he says, "gains in confidence are very prone to snowballing," reflecting how growth begins with small victories.

Teaching goes beyond strictly just academic pursuits. It includes relationships with students and teachers. A great way to create a good relationship with your teacher, according to Ms. Fabris, is through "open communication, respect, and a willingness to engage." Even simple actions, such as asking questions, putting forth effort, or participating, can change the classroom environment. Mrs. Buzdon also adds to Ms. Fabris' point regarding the importance of communications, as she mentions that the most challenging part of asking for assistance is asking for help, but if you take that step, "it will make a world of difference."

Despite this, teachers often feel students misread their intentions. Mr. Bautista believes students underestimate how much teachers care about their success, comparing their level of support to that of parents or guardians. Teachers put in a great deal of effort in terms of giving up their time and their energy, sometimes even crossing their own personal boundaries to help students develop, not just academi-

cally, but as human beings who are learning to navigate their world. Mr. Bautista explains that he does not think the expectations which teachers have of their students are intended to scare them, but rather are meant to prepare students for what comes next.

Some students' misconceptions are a bit more light-hearted in nature. Mrs. Buzdon jokes that teachers do not sleep under their desks, "we do go home", yet it feels otherwise from the long hours. Mr. Edgecombe appreciates many small things such as the greeting of "friendly greetings from around the halls", hearing from a student about an academic achievement, or someone who submits their work on time. Many teachers mention as they reflect on their own learning journeys, they have gained valuable insights that would have helped them in their earlier learning experiences. Ms. Fabris has learned that learning is how "progress matters more than perfection." Mrs. Buzdon emphasizes that grades and learning go hand in hand, "marks can get you into a program, but learning is what keeps you there." From a more philosophical perspective, Mr. Edgecombe reminds students that life isn't predetermined: "You build your life the same way you build a project, one decision at a time." His message highlights the importance of noticing the moments that matter—the ones that shape who you become.

While teachers are primarily focused on the academics of their students, they have insight into how their students will succeed. A prime example of this insight is when Mr. Bautista states that "school is not everything, yes, you can use what you learn at school, but your overall success comes from the other experiences you have in life." True success, he explains, comes from experiences: travelling, facing challenges, finding hobbies, and growing into the person you're meant to be. School is an important outlet, however, it is only a portion of your overall entirety.

Teachers share their personal stories that help them understand that they are not perfect, just like everyone else. A prank that Mrs. Buzdon remembers occurred when a group of students attempted to misdirect her into going to a different classroom. Ultimately, the prank did not work, and Mrs. Buzdon was able to remain in her own classroom. Mr. Edgecombe describes one small detail of himself that students probably do not know; he only drinks black coffee. Ms. Fabris has stated that her decision to become a teacher was influenced by a number of other teachers who made her feel "seen, supported, and capable," and therefore, she hopes to honor that legacy.

Teachers were also asked to reflect on the school system. Mr. Bautista, a teacher who has been teaching for a shorter

period, had serious concerns regarding the destreaming of courses. He felt that many academically capable students are being placed in classes without proper preparation. Also, Mr. Bautista spoke about the difficulties of newly hired teachers in securing stable positions and how that can discourage enthusiastic educators at the beginning of their careers.

Through all their reflections, one theme stands out; teachers aren't distant authority figures. They're mentors who celebrate your achievements, worry about your struggles, and hope the lessons they teach last far beyond the due date. The real "spill" is simple, they care more than students will ever see.

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The Hoedown Throwdown!

Milena Fabris

The term “hoedown” was first used in the mid-19th century to refer to both a dance style and a social event. Best Buddies Canada first hosted a hoedown, and the tradition carried on by many schools across the YCDSB, finally reaching St. E on September 25th! Our very own Best Buddies members, along with Ms. Arista, planned this event. The room was decorated with paper farm animals, bristol board barns, and hay bales to fit the theme, mostly donated by generous parents.

Dressed in jeans, plaid, and cowboy hats, everyone participated in ring toss, hot potato, and even western dancing (although some of us were not very good at it)! Alessia Filice, the co-president of Best Buddies, shared, “We, the Buddies, got to introduce ourselves to the new grade nines, and the new kids to our other students.” Not only did everyone have fun, but new bonds were formed for the upcoming school year!

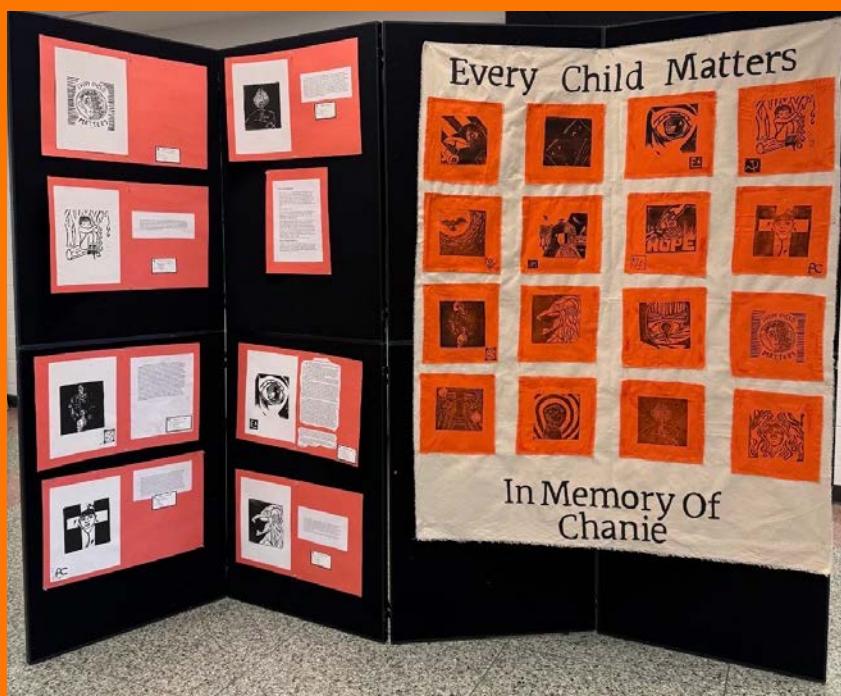
To wrap up the event, everyone spent their lunch eating together. Hoedowns are known for bringing people together through friendships, dancing, and games, making them a perfect fit for the Best Buddies’ spirit!



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National Day for Truth and Reconciliation



Nico Runco

On September 30th, we commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, also known as Orange Shirt Day, which is a day of remembrance in which we recognize the atrocities and multigenerational effects of the Canadian Indian residential school system. At St. Elizabeth CHS, we remember and pay our respects to everyone who was and/or still is affected by the Canadian Indian residential school system in multiple ways, including two displays we had outside the library. One display is a sacred circle, shaped to reflect wholeness and the Seven Grandfather Teachings. This was made by Mrs. M. Sangermano and Ms. M. Arista Vallario, alongside the FLS/SCP students, who gathered to create a space of meaning. Each chair cradles a candle, books by Indigenous authors, stones of the earth, orange shirts, and garments rich



in the spirit of reconciliation. Then, on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, they came together to dialogue and participate in a read-aloud of *Shi-shi-etko* by Nicola I. Campbell.

The other display, adjacent to the sacred circle, is an art display created by Ms. Estabillo's Grade 10 RAP Visual Art class. Each piece is a lino print, created by carving a design into a block and printing multiples from that block. Students created their prints on both paper and fabric. The subject of these works is the story of Chanie Wenjack, an Indigenous boy who died of exposure while attempting to escape from a residential school. As inspiration for their designs, students explored The Secret Path, an animation and musical album based on Chanie's story. The students also researched the history of residential schools in Canada, along with the Calls to Action developed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Alongside these displays, Ms. Acacio's Grade 12 Leadership Class and Ms. Aris-

ta's FLS/SCP Class visited each period 2 class to promote participation in the Blanket project, which honours victims, families, and children of residential schools—inspired by the Witness Blanket Project. The Orange squares collected will be centred onto Indigenous fabrics provided by Special Education and sewn by Ms. Scodellaro's Clothing/Fashion Arts class, showcasing St. Elizabeth's new school Land Acknowledgement.

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Managing Stress in & for Post-Secondary

Stressing About Finals? Read This!

Varvara Guba

We all know that stressful feeling when you're desperately trying to catch up with all your classes while also working on missing assignments, studying for tests, doing work for clubs and councils, and applying for post-secondary. The pressure of all the classes, grades, and having to choose what your future will be like is debilitating so I asked three students who are already in post secondary to answer questions about how they deal with stress and to give us, struggling grade 12s, some advice to manage it.

The first question I asked was: what was the biggest change in workload or expectations when you moved on to post secondary, and how did you adapt to it? Silvia, a second-year acting student at Seneca College, said the workload is heavy but easier to adjust to because professors are more understanding. She also noted that college work feels more manageable when you're studying something you truly enjoy. Daniella, a third-year molecular biology student at the University of Toronto, argues that the biggest change is not the workload but rather the pace and expectations. Since first and second year courses are very general and large, Daniella recommends stepping up and getting as much help as you need by asking questions and getting as many accommodations as you may need to help your learning. Natalie, studying nutrition at Toronto Metropolitan University for her first year, only got adjusted to all the work load after the first month of university. She told me that

sometimes all your tests and assignments might sync with your midterms which can be devastating if you don't prepare. "As a part-time-procrastinator, it was a real eye-opener to the true difficulty of university, in that you should treat most of your classes similarly rather than favouring your time to one, and adjusting to this realization likely saved my GPA," she says.

Secondly, I asked: when overwhelmed, what specific strategies or routines help you regain balance and stay productive? Silvia answered that since professors are more accommodating, they allow her to go on regular walks and mental health breaks as needed. She says that when stressed, it's good to treat yourself, she often gets herself Iced Capps, something so simple can go such a long way. At home she focuses on herself, doing her hobbies which include drawing and listening to music. Daniella's best strategy, though plain, is "less thoughts, more action." She makes detailed lists of everything she has to do and goes one by one, she says it helps to alleviate the pressure of thinking "what's next." Daniella also tries to find happiness in the surface-level things, like getting a coffee or taking a dance class, she says it can be crucial to focus on the little beautiful things in life if you find yourself in a slump. Natalie speaks on how important it is to take breaks, in fact, it is encouraged by your university. "Universities don't give you four weeks to work on an assignment for nothing," she says, "professors account for your workload in comparison to other courses...

they want to help you succeed but they can only do so much." She empathizes with us, saying she's also been there, failing tests and failing to realize that not spacing out her work is sabotaging her. Just the knowledge that you can take a break if you need to, can be all you need to feel less stressed.

Last but not least, I asked: if you could give one piece of advice to grade 12s about managing stress, what would it be and why? Silvia reminds us to not take classes that will be useless to us, if you're going into the arts, don't take chemistry, it will only lower your grades and make you more stressed. "The courses you do in high-school, will not follow you unless you choose them," she says. Daniella, similarly to Silvia, warns us that just because you think you need to do it, doesn't mean you have to or that it's the best thing for you. However, she says it's okay to let yourself explore other options, but if something isn't working for you then you'll need to let it go. Natalie tells us not to be afraid to ask questions. Universities have a lot of different resources which you can read about and discuss with a counselor that can greatly benefit you and make your post-secondary life easier. The shift to post secondary brings new challenges, but it also offers more freedom. Stress doesn't disappear, but with planning, asking for help, and prioritizing what truly matters, it becomes manageable. Most importantly, give yourself grace, taking care of your well-being isn't a setback, it's part of your success.

Varvara Guba

Managing stress for exams is challenging and it's even more challenging to not fall into bad habits and over-work yourself. There are many well-researched and scientifically supported study methods that can improve your performance without sacrificing your wellbeing.

One of the most scientifically supported methods, and one that may seem obvious, is time-structured studying, which reduces stress by increasing predictability. The American Psychological Association states that breaking work into smaller steps lowers stress by reducing perceived task size. A major study by Cepeda et al. (2006) confirmed that spaced studying significantly improves long-term retention compared to cramming, especially before exams. Similarly, Rohrer and Taylor (2007) demonstrated that mixing subjects instead of repeating one topic improves problem-solving and reduces the stress of feeling "unprepared" when test questions vary in format. A studying technique that follows these principles is called the Pomodoro Technique, in which you study for 25-50 minutes non stop, and then take a 5-10 minute break, which improves efficiency and prevents mental burnout.

Managing stress is not only about study habits but also bi-

ology. Sleep has one of the strongest effects on academic performance and anxiety. The Sleep Foundation confirms that 7-9 hours is necessary for memory recall, emotional regulation, and stress reduction. Walker (2017) explains in Why We Sleep that sleep-deprived students show up to 40% less ability to form new memories, and higher levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, making exams feel even more intimidating.

Another evidence-based stress reduction tool is exercise, even in small amounts. The Anxiety and Depression Association of America notes that 10-20 minutes of physical activity decreases stress by releasing endorphins and lowering cortisol levels. Meditation and controlled breathing are also clinically supported.

Lastly, social support is scientifically linked to lower stress levels, the Harvard Study of Adult Development (Waldinger & Schulz, 2010) found that strong relationships buffer stress and improve resilience. Talking to friends, teachers, or counselors reduces emotional load and makes tasks feel less isolating.

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The Crochet Club: Growing One Loop at a Time

Nicole Maghakian &
Artemis Dolatkahah

The Crochet club at St. Elizabeth, led by Ms. Cognilio, meets after school on every Wednesday to work on personal projects, learn new techniques, and support one another through every stitch and slipknot. Whether you're a beginner still figuring out how to hold the hook, or an experienced crocheter, the club offers a place where everyone can learn at their own pace. We had the opportunity to interview the members of the club and here is what they said:

Describe what the club is like in 3 or more words.

They describe it as creative, calming, and inclusive, with a welcoming atmosphere where members feel supported, relaxed, and free to express themselves while learning and creating together.

What's the hardest part about learning to crochet?
Counting your stitches and losing your progress can be challenging especially for beginners. It is easy to lose your place and your stitch but, overtime by the help of your club members and more practice, it becomes easier.

What song or vibe best fits your club when you're all working?
We are currently listening to "In the Club, Summer Boy" by Lady Gaga, and "Flight of the Bumblebee" by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsako on repeat. This is a mix of upbeat pop and fast-paced classical music that keeps everyone motivated, relaxed, and creatively engaged while they crochet.

What kind of things does the club usually make?
They usually make plushies, poppies, ornaments. These creations allow members to explore their creativity, practice new techniques, and make meaningful



items they can keep, gift, or display.

How does crocheting bring the members of your club together? Helping each other, being supportive that brings members together. Whether someone is learning a new stitch or fixing a mistake, members work as a team, creating a positive and welcoming environment where everyone feels encouraged and connected.

If your club had a mascot made of yarn, what would it be? The first crochet project they made was the worry worm and that's what they would call their first mascot made of yarn. It represents creativity, and the supportive spirit of the club.

We asked a member if you could crochet anything with no limits, what would it be? They responded with Fanny from an Object Show. This shows the club's imagination and creativity, as members enjoy turning their favorite characters and ideas into unique crochet projects.

We asked another member what their favorite colour of yarn to work with? Purple fuzzy yarn because it's soft, fun to use, and adds extra texture and personality to their crochet projects.

The crochet club is about creativity, connection, and supporting each other every step of the way. Whether they're making plushies or helping a friend fix a missed stitch, this club is stitched together with teamwork, patience, and fun. With their worry worm mascot and endless imagination, the Crochet Club continues to grow, one loop at a time.



Grace Le

HOSA at St. Elizabeth didn't start with a grand mission statement or dramatic reveal. It started because a Grade 12 student named Katrina realized that our school had clubs for everything except the students who actually liked science. "A friend and I noticed arts students had tons of opportunities, but those of us interested in healthcare didn't," she explains. So she brought the idea to Ms. Pimentel, wrote up the proposal, gathered a handful of friends, and suddenly they were a team of seven trying to figure out how to prepare for the Spring Conference. That tiny group, armed with enthusiasm, laid the foundation for what is now one of the most sought-after clubs at St. Elizabeth. Today, HOSA is the kind of club people actively stalk to join. Spots disappear instantly, and this year, for the first time, not everyone even made it in.

Current president Sabina calls HOSA "a learning opportunity," but the truth is that it's more than that. It forces students to dive into medical topics they've never seen in class, such as EMT

procedures, forensic pathology, dentistry, psychology, biomedical debates, you name it. Members spend weeks turning their binders into colour-coded masterpieces, cramming in hallways, and pretending they totally understood the case study they just read five minutes ago. For many students, the highlight is the Spring Leadership Conference. Two chaotic, exhilarating days at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, where thousands of competitors try their best to look professional while running on caffeine, adrenaline, and minimal sleep. Last year, Sabina competed in Behavioural Health and placed Top Ten. "Kind of shocking, actually," she admits, but also solid proof that studying pays off.

Teacher advisor Ms. Pimentel has watched the club evolve from a small experiment into something that now regularly takes over her classroom. "They push themselves," she says. "Not because I'm forcing them, but because they actually want to. It's strange but impressive." She's seen students grow more confident, more mature, and more motivated, not for grades, but for the sake of learning. She remembers walking into the

MTCC for the first time, seeing thousands of students competing, and thinking, "Okay, this is bigger than I expected."

What makes HOSA different from a science class is that it treats students like future professionals. Members learn how to speak confidently, research ethically, collaborate under pressure, and think like someone working in healthcare rather than a student completing a worksheet.

It's also one of the only clubs where students with completely different interests in medicine, psychology, veterinary care, research, and public health can all compete under the same umbrella. For students who aren't sure what they want to do after high school, HOSA becomes a low-risk, high-reward test drive of the medical field. Some discoveries are inspiring; others are more like, "Wow, I am definitely not meant for anything involving human health." Either way, you walk away with a clearer sense of direction. For a club that started with seven friends and no budget, HOSA has become a defining part of student life at St. Elizabeth. No drama, no cheesy speeches, just a club that pushes people further than they thought they could go. It builds

real opportunities from scratch, and somehow makes the whole process just chaotic enough to be fun.

Interview Transcripts

Ms. Pimentel, Teacher Advisor:
Q: What inspired you to bring HOSA to our school?

Pimentel: It was actually not me who brought HOSA to St. Elizabeth. A grade 12 student two years ago, Katrina, heard about HOSA through friends at other high schools. She brought the idea to me and asked if I would help support starting the HOSA committee here. When I heard about it, I thought it was an excellent opportunity for students, so we went with it. I didn't know about HOSA at first, it was really Katrina who founded it here.

Q: What growth have you seen in the students who joined?

Pimentel: HOSA, and extracurriculars in general, push students to be organized, thoughtful, driven, and self-motivated, to do something not related to marks. A lot of students are motivated by grades, which is fine, but HOSA attracts students who want to learn something new for the sake of learning. I have also seen maturity because they are competing with students across grades 9 to 12, all writing the same exams. They grow in confidence and self-fulfillment.

Q: How does HOSA open doors beyond high school?

Pimentel: The purpose of HOSA is exposure to different healthcare fields. Some students know they like science, some know the exact field they want, but many do not. Through HOSA, you choose a competition stream such as dentistry or veterinary studies, and at the conferences, you attend workshops with researchers and industry leaders. Students may discover interests they did not know they had. It broadens their understanding of all the possibilities after high school.

Q: What makes you proudest about the students who joined

HOSA?

Pimentel: Their motivation. It is really nice seeing them push themselves to do well. We also have a small HOSA community, and they motivate each other. Some competitions involve group presentations, and it is great to see them collaborate, problem-solve, and support each other.

Q: Where do you see HOSA in five years at our school?

Pimentel: I hope we still have strong participation. We started with seven students two years ago, then 20 last year, and doubled that this year. But recently, HOSA maxed out capacity to only 40 across Ontario, so not all our registered students were able to complete their registration.

This is new, it never happened before. HOSA is becoming very big across southern Ontario, so many schools are registering more students. I hope this hurdle gets resolved so all interested students can join. I also hope we reach more grade 9s and 10s. Early exposure helps because switching fields in post-secondary is harder.

Q: Describe HOSA's impact in one sentence.

Pimentel: HOSA opens students' eyes and opens the door to conversations about post-secondary earlier and in more detail than they would have happened otherwise.

Q: How has HOSA changed since you first started it? Any problems that have now improved?

Pimentel: Numbers were a challenge at first. Last year, group study sessions were difficult because not all students attended meetings consistently. This year, we meet every other week without fail, and attendance is higher, so group study is more effective. Hopefully, this means students feel more comfortable and per-

**continued on
next page**



form better. As for budget, there really was no budget. Students pay their fees out of pocket. This year, we are planning to ask the Catholic School Council for possible funding to partially cover fees. We are hoping it gets approved.

Q: Who inspired you the most in HOSA?

Pimentel: The original team, especially Katrina. She wanted this so badly. She did extensive research, brought me information, and took on strong leadership. She is definitely the most inspiring figure for HOSA at our school.

Q: Any particular memory or highlight from HOSA?

Pimentel: Walking into the Metro Toronto Convention Centre for the first conference and seeing thousands of students studying, competing, and working so hard was inspiring. Another highlight was last year when Sabina placed in the top 10 in her event. Out of hundreds of students, she made the top 10. That was incredible.

Sabina Colceriu, HOSA President

Q: Why did you join HOSA?

Sabina: I heard about HOSA before high school and knew it was an opportunity to learn more. St. Elizabeth is an arts school, not IB or AP, so I wanted more academic challenge and to learn about medical science.

Q: What has been your favourite part or memory?

Sabina: Definitely the Spring Leadership Conferences. They are the highlight of HOSA. We go to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre for two days. One day you do your exam or event, and you also go to workshops. There is a closing ceremony where they announce winners. We have done workshops like bone casting and DNA extraction. They are really fun and engaging.

Q: Has our school ever won anything?

Sabina: Yes, last year we got top 10 in Behavioural Health.

Q: Has HOSA changed how you see healthcare or your future?

Sabina: Yes. When you learn

about new things, it helps you figure out if you should pursue that path. I did Behavioural Health, which is similar to psychology, and it is now one of my options. HOSA does that for everyone. You can try events like veterinary science or sports science and see if it is right for you.

Q: What is something surprising or unexpected about HOSA?

Sabina: I did not realize HOSA has only existed in Canada for about 10 years, and yet it grew so fast across the country. It started in the U.S., then spread to Canada, and now we compete internationally.

Q: If you had to pitch HOSA to a student, what would you say?

Sabina: It is a great learning opportunity, especially if you are curious about healthcare. HOSA gives you the resources and exposure to explore different medical fields. It is also great for students in underrepresented groups because it helps them see more and experience more.

Q: Advice for future HOSA students?

Sabina: Do not be intimidated, not by the work, not by other students, not by IB or AP schools. If you study, practice, and believe in yourself, you can do it.

Q: One word to describe HOSA?

Sabina: Learning.

Katrina Enriquez, Alumni:

Q: When did you first join HOSA, and what made you interested in it?

I actually founded the HOSA chapter at St. Elizabeth. Since St. Elizabeth is a regional arts school, a lot of the funding and opportunities go toward the arts programs. But there are many students like me who are not in the arts and are more interested in the medical field. My friend Aisha and I felt that students who wanted to explore healthcare needed opportunities too, and if the school was not going to hand them to us, we would create them ourselves. HOSA is already a huge organization in the U.S. and has grown in Canada as well, so we thought bringing it to our school would be the perfect way to introduce healthcare exploration here. We wrote the proposal,

talked to Ms. Pimentel, who was our Grade 11 biology teacher, and she agreed to become our advisor the following year. After that, we gathered at least ten students, mostly friends who also wanted to go into healthcare, and officially launched the club.

Q: What was HOSA like back then?

Very small. I know it is a big thing at St. Elizabeth now, but at the beginning, barely anyone knew what HOSA was or whether the club would even succeed. When we went to our first Spring Conference, we only had six students total, me, my friends, and one Grade 9 student who eventually became the next president. Even though the group was tiny, there was such a spark of curiosity. We commuted together, connected with students from other schools, and honestly, had a great time. It was friendly and encouraging, and nothing like the intense atmosphere you hear about in DECA. It was just a fun, collaborative environment.

Q: What were some challenges when the club was still small?

Funding was by far the biggest limitation. We received no financial support from the school. Unlike the Student Council or the arts programs, HOSA had no budget. Everything came from our own pockets. Conference registration was around 110 dollars per person, and we also paid for commuting. Even for our long-term care home project, Helpers for Elders, all the supplies and materials were self-funded. It was tough, but we worked around it because we really cared about the club.

Q: Did you ever imagine HOSA would grow this much? Yes, I always had a vision for it. I do not start something ambitious unless I can see the potential behind it, and I knew there were many students who wanted opportunities to explore healthcare. I used to wish I could attend a high school with more options, so creating HOSA felt like giving other students the chance I did not have. Seeing it expand now just proves that the interest was always there.

Q: How did being in HOSA influence your decision to study life sciences?

HOSA did not create that interest, I have wanted to go into healthcare since elementary school. But it definitely reinforced my decision. Through

HOSA, I met experienced people in the field and learned more about different healthcare disciplines. Networking through conferences and events strengthened my confidence in choosing life sciences in university. I even continued HOSA in university because it exists at that level too.

Q: What skills did you develop through HOSA that you still use?

Teamwork, one hundred percent. When you are starting a new club, you need a strong team, good communication, and constant collaboration. I also improved my communication skills and time management.

The club runs the whole year, and you have to stay consistent because there is always something to do or prepare.

Q: Do you feel HOSA gave you a head start compared to your peers?

Compared to other university students, not really. A lot of people come in with incredible experiences. University humbles you. But compared to other high school students at the time, yes. HOSA gave me experience that many peers did not have access to.

Q: What is your favourite or funniest HOSA memory?

My favourite memory is from visiting a long-term care home. We gave handmade felt hearts to the residents. One patient told us, "If you smile, the whole world will smile with you." He wanted to give the heart to his wife on another floor. That moment of connection stays with me.

Q: Did HOSA help you discover something about yourself?

It taught me not to underestimate my ideas. Even if something sounds too ambitious, you will not know until you try. Starting HOSA showed me that big things can happen from small beginnings. You just have to start.

Q: Who inspired you during your

time in HOSA?

A friend of mine, actually, someone who was always too afraid to try things. That is how I first learned about HOSA in the first place. Their hesitation made me want to be someone who did take the first step.

Q: What advice would you give your younger self?

Tell more people about HOSA. I wish we had promoted it more in the beginning.

Q: How does it feel seeing HOSA become such a big part of our school now?

It makes me really happy. Knowing that students now have opportunities I wished for is something I am really proud of.

Q: What do you wish today's members knew about the club, or what advice would you give them?

Treat your first year as a learning experience. Yes, it is a competition, but the most important part is understanding how it all works so you can improve and try again. Have fun with it, learn from it, and let it motivate you.

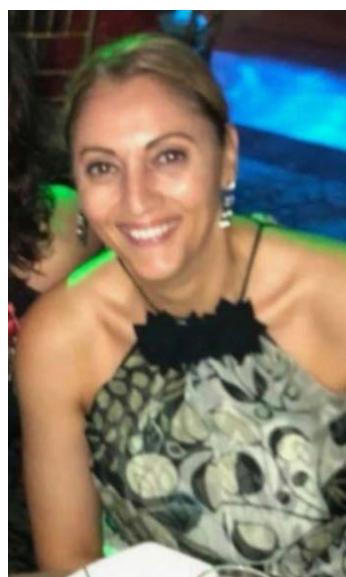
Q: If you had to describe HOSA's impact in one sentence, what would it be?

HOSA is about creating your own opportunities when they are not handed to you.

Q: Do you have a message for Ms. Pimentel or the current advisors?

A huge thank you to Ms. Pimentel for giving my team the chance to start this club and for continuing to support it for new students. I am really grateful she believed in the idea back then.

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**Annamaria
Di Benedetto**

What made you want to become a teacher?
I actually had no idea, as I entered my first year of post-secondary studies, what I wanted to pursue in terms of a career. I know I wanted to pursue something that involved languages (specifically French and Italian) and it was a few conversations with some of my former language teachers at my high school that helped steer me in the teaching direction.

Who are your role models?
My role models, from a young age, have been (and continue to be) my parents. They immigrated to Canada in 1965 and 1968 respectively and have basically spent over half their lives in their newly adopted country. They had no English (both my parents are Italian) and little to no family in Canada. Yet, despite this (or maybe in spite of this), they thrived on levels that continue to amaze me. They taught me how to be resilient and accept the 'failures' as learning opportunities and not to be afraid of them.

What are some of your hobbies?
I am a tomboy at heart. Therefore, whenever I have time, I love to watch sports (NFL games in particular - go Niners!!!!) and I love to play volleyball, go for runs and workout. I also love to watch TV (especially series from the 70s and 80s).

What is something you can't live without?
Music...I need music everyday and twice on Sundays! I grew up in the 80s and we had, hands down, the best decade of music! I have created YouTube playlists of 80s and Euro music that I play in my classroom when my students are working (and I see them out of the corner of my eye tapping their feet and/or pens/pencils tapping while listening to these playlists).

What was your most embarrassing moment?
I actually don't have any embarrassing

moments as I was always 'cautious' when doing or saying things when I was younger.

A unique feature or talent you have?
Many of my friends will tell you that I am "Rainwoman" when it comes to the calendar. If you were to give me a day, month and year (eg. March 13th, 2026), I can tell you what day of the week it will fall on without looking at a calendar

If you could be a superhero, who would you be?
I think it would be Wonder Woman... she has an incredible outfit, gold jewellery and can fly around in an invisible plane! How awesome would that be?

Worst fear?
I think my worst fear would be not being able to be active and having to live a sedentary life.

What do you like about St. E.? The cultural diversity of the student population is incredible and I love how nice the students are...it sounds cliché but it is true!

Future aspirations?
To be able to retire in Italy...specifically in Florence!

What is your advice to students?
Don't be afraid to take risks as it is the only way you will learn, unlearn and learn again! You need to be able to experience 'uncomfortable situations' to thrive academically, professionally, personally, mentally and emotionally.

Favourites:

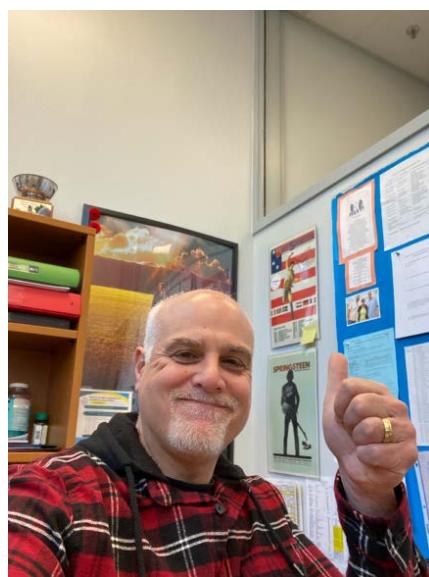
Movie
I don't have one as there are too many that I have enjoyed on repeat!

TV shows
Friends, The West Wing, Blue Bloods, General Hospital

Books
An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy 1917 - 1963 by Robert Dallek
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians by Peter Heather
Il Decameron by Giovanni Boccaccio

Quote
A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions (Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.)

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Gaetano Stramaglia

What made you want to become a teacher?

Growing up with only twelve television stations, school became my safe haven, a place filled with endless opportunities to learn and explore. It was where my imagination could thrive, and I always felt inspired there. What better career, then, than to spend my life in the very environment that once inspired me?

Who are your role models?
Without a doubt, my parents are my greatest role models. They came to this country with nothing but a dream and the hope of building a better life for themselves and their children. Their hard work, perseverance, and unwavering belief in the value of education and respect have shaped who I am and continue to inspire me every day.

What are some of your hobbies?

I enjoy all kinds of sports and proudly support and often suffer with all the Toronto teams. As I've gotten older and my knees have started to give out, I've joined the growing community of aging Pickleball enthusiasts. More recently, I've discovered a new hobby: collecting Christmas houses and setting up an elaborate Christmas village in my basement each year.

What is something you can't live without?
I may be showing my age, but I don't think I could live without my Bruce Springsteen albums and CDs. No Spotify, playlists, or streaming services for me, just good old-fashioned albums and CDs. I even drive a fourteen-year-old car because I recently discovered that new cars don't have CD players. Now that's just wrong!

What was your most embarrassing moment?

I live with two amazing daughters, which means I'm constantly embarrassing them and honestly, I've learned to live with it. So what if I still don't know where the on/off button is on my iPhone, or if I cry every time the Toronto Maple Leafs lose another playoff round? I still enjoy watching Little House on the Prairie reruns and wearing black dress socks in shorts while mowing the lawn. My life is full of everyday embarrassing moments and I'm perfectly okay with that.

A unique feature or talent you have?

Over the years, I've developed a unique talent: the ability to watch a sporting event while still listening to the people at home. I've mastered the art of nodding and saying "Okay" at just the right moments, a skill, I believe, everyone should learn.

If you could be a superhero, who would you be?
Spenser, a fictional tough and witty private detective in the series written by Robert B. Parker who is known for honour, integrity and loyalty.

Worst fear?
Waking up after a long, restless night... only to

find I'm wearing a Montreal Canadiens jersey. Now that's a nightmare I hope never comes true.

What do you like about St. E.?

I love this school because it truly feels like my second home, filled with energy in the morning, calm at the end of the day, and students who keep me feeling young and inspired.

Future aspirations?

My greatest aspiration is to be in a position to give, to have the time and energy, to serve others, and to guide my children through this complicated world. Spend more time with my wife exploring small towns in Ontario and Eastern Quebec driving a Subaru Outback.

What is your advice to students?

Read the Wealthy Barber by David Chilton and The Legend of the Monk and the Merchant by Terry Felber. Follow Dave Ramsey's Baby Steps to become a millionaire. Be a lifelong learner. School gives you the foundation, but your education doesn't end here. Read, ask questions, travel, listen, and keep your curiosity alive. Don't be afraid to fail because failure is just feedback wrapped in experience.

Favourites:

Movie
The Godfather

TV show
Mr. Dressup, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, Dance Moms, and The Sopranos.

Book
The Lives of Saints by Nino Ricci.

Quote
"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:6).



Lora Scodellaro

What made you want to become a teacher?

I know this sounds cliché, but I've always wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember. When I was little, I would line up my dolls as if they were my students and spend hours "teaching" them lessons I made up. Even in elementary school, I would give up my recess to help teachers mark work or set up classroom activities. Teaching also allowed me to share my passion for cooking and sewing with my students. Every day brings an opportunity to inspire curiosity and creativity in my students. That's what drives me to teach.

Who are your role models?

My biggest role models are my parents. They immigrated from Italy with very little money and faced many challenges as they started a new life here. Despite the struggles, they worked incredibly hard to provide my brother and I with everything we needed. Not just the basics, but also opportunities to succeed and follow our dreams. Their determination, resilience and strong work ethic have always inspired me. They taught me the value of perseverance, gratitude and kindness. Watching how they faced obstacles with courage and never gave up has shaped the way I approach my own goals and challenges. I try to carry their example with me every day in the way I teach as well.

What are some of your hobbies?

I don't have a lot of hobbies. My husband does say I'm quite a boring person. But if I were to choose a few, they would be baking; especially baking bread and hiking with my family. I really enjoy the calm, creativity and aromas that come with baking. Spending time outdoors with my family is always something I look forward to. Now that I'm retiring from teaching, I'm hoping to explore and add more hobbies to my life, maybe even try a few new things I never had time for before.

What is something you can't live without?

Something I absolutely can't live without are my shoes. They're definitely my weakness! I have a pair for every mood, season and excuse imaginable. Somehow, there's always room for one more pair (even when my husband strongly disagrees). Whether it's comfy sneakers for a walk, cute sandals for summer or heels that I'll regret wearing after an hour, shoes are 100% my downfall.

What was your most embarrassing moment?

My most embarrassing moment happened while I was teaching a food class in my first year of teaching. I was demonstrating how to use the mixer and, in my usual enthusiastic way, forgot to check that it was on the lowest speed. The next thing I knew, flour went flying all over me, the counter and a few unlucky students in the front row. The students burst out laughing and I looked like a snowman covered in flour. It definitely wasn't my proudest moment as a first year teacher. But at least everyone learned an important lesson: always start the mixer on low!

A unique feature or talent you have?

I don't really have a unique feature or talent, but what I'm actually good at is ballroom dancing! My dad taught me when I was young and it became something really special we shared together. We even entered a few competitions and won some ribbons along the way. My favourites are the Tango, Bossa Nova and Waltz. I don't get to dance anymore, but whenever I hear a good song, I can't resist showing off a few moves to my children. I guess this would be another most embarrassing moment!

If you could be a superhero, who would you be?

If I could be a superhero, I'd be Wasp from the Ant-Man movie. Like her, I'm clever, quick and adaptable, and able to handle whatever comes my way. I also relate to how she can act on instinct.

Sometimes I "sting" a little too quickly when reacting to people or situations without thinking things through first. I love her mix of intelligence, courage and energy, and I think it perfectly matches my Gemini personality.

Worst fear?

My worst fear is finally retiring after 32 years of teaching. It's a mix of excitement and sheer panic. Over the decades, this career has become more than just a job. It's been a part of who I am. Leaving the classroom feels like stepping away from a community I've built, the students whose lives I've witnessed and helped shape and the daily rhythm that has defined me for so long. The thought of moving into a life without that purpose is both daunting and emotional. Retirement brings freedom,

but it also brings the challenge of redefining myself after so many years dedicated to teaching.

What do you like about St. E.?

What I love about teaching at St. E is the vibrancy of it all. It's a school filled with incredible talent and being surrounded by students who are so creative and passionate is truly inspiring. There's always so much happening in every corner of the school. The energy is contagious and I feel lucky to work alongside such a wonderful teaching staff who are supportive, dedicated and full of ideas. Every day brings something new and that combination of talent, collaboration and excitement is what makes teaching here so rewarding.

Future aspirations?

After 32 years of teaching, retirement feels very scary as well as exciting. My aspiration is to embrace this next chapter fully and spend more time on personal passions, exploring new hobbies and finally giving myself the space to relax and enjoy life at a slower pace. I definitely want to travel more. Most importantly, I hope to continue learning and growing, just in different ways than I did in the classroom. Retirement isn't about stepping away from purpose, it's about discovering new ways to find joy, fulfillment and adventure.

What is your advice to students?

My advice to students is simple: stay curious, be kind and don't be afraid to make mistakes. Learning isn't just about memorizing facts, it's about asking questions, exploring your passions and discovering what excites you. Life will throw challenges your way, but each one is an opportunity to grow. Always treat others with respect and empathy because the connections you make are just as important as the knowledge you gain. Remember to enjoy the journey of learning. Celebrate your successes, laugh at your missteps and keep moving forward with curiosity.

Favourites:

Movie

Mean Girls

TV show

The Middle and Gilmore Girls

Book

'Angels in My Hair' by Lorna Byrne

Quote

"Let them talk. Let them criticize. Let them misunderstand you. And the people who matter will still love you." – author unknown



Joe Moriana

I enjoy travelling, and I always look forward to opportunities where I can hop on a plane and visit someplace new. My favourite place to explore is Europe. I'd love to spend a year just travelling from country to country and experiencing each place totally unhurried.

What is your advice to students? Don't let your fear of others' opinions hold you back from doing something. I know it's easier said than done, but the worst thing you can do is let your fear of judgment prevent you from trying something new.

Favourites:

TV show

I have so many favourites. Schitt's Creek and Seinfeld are shows I can watch over and over. More recently, I am really into the show Severance. It's a great sci-fi thriller.

Quote

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

What made you want to become a teacher?

Probably my grade 10 history teacher. He was a very unconventional teacher, which made him quite popular with students. He rarely relied on a textbook. Most of our classes were conducted with him lecturing us in his animated style and dictating our notes verbally. When I went through a difficult period that year, he reached out to me and showed genuine care. I wanted to be that person for students who are struggling.

Who are your role models?

I admire my family members who came to Canada and built a new life from scratch. My dad immigrated here in his early 20s with my grandfather, with little money, few contacts, and no knowledge of the language. They worked hard by taking on horrible jobs and managed to scrape together enough money to eventually buy a house. Later, he put himself through university. He not only created a better life for himself but also provided a comfortable life for my siblings and me.

What is something you can't live without?

Like many adults, I definitely need to start my day with my morning coffee.

Future aspirations?

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Triple the Threat, Triple the Creativity, & Triple the Hard Work



Camryn Bland

Through the Regional Arts Program, (RAP), St. Elizabeth arts students face exciting opportunities to reach new limits and learn incredible skills. This semester, selected performing arts classes were challenged to master not only their own art, but those of other programs through triple threat.

Triple Threat is a unit in select drama, dance, and vocal classes

where students experiment with other art forms to enhance their skills as well-rounded performers. This year, the unit included Mr. Arizo's grade 9-12 vocal music, Ms. Johnston's grade 11 dance, and Ms. Jaworsky's grade 11-12 drama classes.

The unit began on September 24, when drama students went to Mr. Arizo's vocal class, vocal students to Ms. Johnston in dance, and dance students to Ms. Jaworsky's drama room. During their week, drama students

learned the melody and harmony of "Hakuna Matata" from The Lion King, while vocal students choreographed their own dances to "The King of New York" from Newsies. Meanwhile, dance students memorized and planned choral readings, in which small groups performed poetic scripts in an unique, creative style.

The second week, spanning from October 3 to October 10, students rotated art forms, continuing to experiment with performance. Drama students, now in dance,

choreographed to "Luck be a Lady" from Guys and Dolls. Vocal students worked hard at their choral readings, while dance students rehearsed both "How Far I'll Go" from Moana and a mashup of "Defying Gravity" from Wicked and "Go the Distance" from Hercules. Each class had impressive final performances, leaving individuals impressed by how much can be learned in just one week.

Although these performances were challenging, they proved to be an enjoyable learning experi-

ence for all students. Whether in RAP drama, vocal, or dance, the students got to create, rehearse, and perform in a new way which has improved their skills as performers and students overall. In two weeks, Triple Threat taught more than art; it taught perseverance, courage, and collaboration.

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The Significance of Silence

Riddled with insecurity, you walk to the teacher's desk to collect your test.
Glancing at the mark, you sit there, perplexed.
"Well, I tried my best..."
Your hands begin to tremble, your eyes well up with tears.
As you leave to go home, your mind lists your flaws and fears.
To cancel out the overwhelming pressure of perfection,
your escape is listening to music. Consuming media.
Sometimes for hours at a time.
After you've finished your daily schoolwork, you're left with a sense of emptiness.
Without the background noise of constant stimulation.
The feeling is unfamiliar and renders you restless.

In our fast-paced modern world, productivity runs in whirlwinds, allowing no room for pauses.
The action of taking regular breaks is perceived as futile.
Shoved aside to accommodate more work.
When what society truly needs is silence. To just be.
Even for the briefest moment.
To reflect, to breathe, basking in the absence of sound.

Humanity has grown to forget the ambiguous art of silence.
Silence is where ideas thrive.
Silence is change.
Silence is peace.
Silence is power.
Silence is liberation.
We can all learn from its healing abilities.
What else can silence be?
It's your turn to discover.



POET: Veronica Geadah

An Interstellar Message

Astronaut
hello?
i beg the eternal question
are you aware of our sentient presence
merely inside the Milky Way
do you think of us as we do of you?
Desperate, but sure,
when our regards collide
the answer would be worth waiting for.

Extraterrestrial
hello?
is anyone listening?
across the expansive universe,
i wish to tell you
i long for evidence
disassociated, i plead.
i will know



Upon a bed of roses,
The young caterpillar stands
A swift breeze passes by.

pictures:
google images





The Summer I Turned Pretty: Sorry Jeremiah...Team Conrad Wins



Stefania Iaboni

The Amazon Prime original is the show of the summer 2025 and has acquired a massive TV following since coming out in 2022. The highly anticipated third season aired its first two episodes on July 16 and its season finale on September 17. The drama series follows Isabel "Belly" Conklin (Lola Tung) who spends every summer at the fictional beach side town of Cousins with the Fisher brothers Conrad (Christopher Briney) and Jeremiah (Gavin Casalegno).

Although the TV show was originally based on Han's young adult novels of the same name, the adaptation has managed to capture an entirely different—and much larger audience, particularly millennial women. The show perfectly blends nostalgia and romantic intensity, providing a form of escapism for its viewers. It allows older audience members to remember what it was like to be a teenager with confusing and conflicting emotions, while also validating those same complex feelings for today's youth. Even though the premise of being fought over by two brothers may not be entirely relatable for the average person, I'm confident that anyone who watches the show can relate to Belly's overwhelming emotions, uncertainties, and struggle to make the right decisions—especially when it comes to love.

Now, let's talk about the biggest debate surrounding the show: Team Conrad or Team Jeremiah? Although I'm Team Conrad myself, I do believe both brothers have had their moments and are right for Belly in different ways. Jeremiah is the goofy, charismatic younger brother. Conrad is the introverted, brooding, sensitive older brother and is Belly's first love. Belly has yearned for Conrad since she was ten years old, wishing for him on every birthday, every lost eyelash, every shooting star. Her love for Conrad is grand—head over heels and all-consuming. As Belly puts it best, you can only love someone like that the first

time around. So let's dive into their story and why Team Conrad is the clear winner.

Conrad and Belly's relationship has many layers, which is why the couple deeply resonates with viewers. The recurring idea of infinity is a major theme between them. As Conrad says in season 2 "No matter what happens, we'll still be infinite". The concept of infinity seems to follow them, beginning with the infinity necklace Conrad gives Belly for her 16th birthday in Season 1. I believe Conrad's most alluring quality is his emotional intelligence. He and Belly understand each other on a deeper level, which strengthens their connection and attraction. Despite having known one another their entire lives they still give each other butterflies.

Their ability to talk about serious things with such ease shows that they are both complex individuals who appreciate having someone who understands their intricate thoughts and emotions.

There is a deep sense of endearment and admiration between them. For example when Belly reminisces about Conrad crying over Rosie the dog, saying it was one of the sweetest things she had ever seen, or when Conrad buys Belly a glass unicorn for her birthday after watching her fixate on it all day in the mall as kids. These moments reveal his tenderness and thoughtfulness. Later on, when Conrad visits Belly in Paris for her birthday, he's curious about the person she has become and admires the woman she is now. Even though he clearly still loves her, he doesn't want to interfere with the life she's built for herself there.

Their relationship is rooted in respect and quiet admiration. They care for one another deeply and often express that love through acts of service, like when Conrad teaches Belly how to dance or how to ride a bike.

But most importantly, above all else Belly and Conrad challenge one another, and it is the key reason I think team Jellyfish doesn't fit and never would have lasted.

In Season 3, episode 7, Conrad confesses his undying love for

Belly. Before this confession, however, he confronts her about still marrying Jeremiah even after discovering he cheated on her. Conrad says, "You're not the kind of person that would take that from a guy", reminding Belly of who she truly is and that the real her would never have stood for something like that. He asks why she continues to defend Jeremiah and go through with the wedding despite knowing the truth. Conrad questions all her recent decisions—one of them being her choice to have the wedding at a country club, which he knows is completely unlike her. Belly is acting out of character, and Conrad's confrontation is his way of calling her out, urging her to find her voice again and come to her senses. At the end of their conversation, Belly becomes defensive but also reveals truths about how she felt when she and Conrad were together. One thing that stands out is when she compares Jeremiah's love to Conrad's, saying that Jeremiah loves her no matter what and doesn't take that love away when things get hard. This is something I believe Conrad really needed to hear, since he has struggled to break his old habits of being moody, unpredictable, and emotionally closed off. When they were together, Conrad often assumed that Belly simply knew how much he loved her, but her honesty forces him to confront his struggles with communication and vulnerability.

However, Conrad proves Belly wrong about this past issue when he says, "I love you. I will never not love you. I think you know that. I think you've known it all along". With these words, he forces Belly to acknowledge that their connection still exists and that she's only trying to convince herself otherwise.

Belly and Conrad's honesty, even in the face of uncomfortable truths, reveals the depth and authenticity of their connection. It also shows how they bring out the best in each other—helping one another grow, evolve, and confront their flaws, just as all great love stories should.



Styles Shaping St. E Students

Isabella Carmen Rivera

In today's society, fashion trends come and go with remarkable speed. Many teenagers' styles evolve every few years—not just as a matter of clothing, but as a reflection of culture and personal identity. Fashion serves as a powerful tool to show self-expression, helping individuals stand out or fit in with societal norms. Yet, for many, it remains a constant challenge trying to find personal style alongside shifting trends.

This autumn, fashion trends are coming to make bold statements across the youth. One style that gained popularity during the summer is the performative style, which features short-sleeve plaid button-ups, baggy jeans or jean shorts, tote bags, and accessories like wired earbuds and a matcha drink in hand. It's a look that blends cool and casual with a touch of style. Meanwhile, mainstream fashion continues to dominate among many teens. For girls, this includes leggings, baggy jeans, mini skirts, baggy graphic hoodies, matching sweat sets, and babydoll tops—balancing both comfort and trendiness. Boys' mainstream fashion tends to have a more casual look with sweatpants, baggy jeans, hoodies, and athletic staples like compression tees, Nike tech sets, Nike socks, and sneakers.

These fashion trends continue to gain popularity through both online and real-life influences. The performative style continues to trend, especially on social media, where many engage with it, either ironically or genuinely. This all began from the rise of supposed "performative males", a term describing a man who adopts a certain aesthetic or persona, like carrying feminist literature or listening to indie music, in an inauthentic way to gain social validation or attract romantic attention. Despite its satirical

roots, the style has evolved into a widely recognized fashion trend. Meanwhile, mainstream fashion thrives thanks to the constant visibility on social media. Teenager influencers play a major role in keeping it alive, as their entire aesthetic often centres around this look. As their content reaches wider audiences, others begin to imitate the style, further spreading the trend across the youth.

These fashion trends have significantly shaped this year's style. As temperatures drop, however, the performative style, often considered to be a summer style, may begin to fade. In contrast, mainstream fashion should remain strong, with seasonal staples like The North Face and Aritzia puffer jackets making their annual comeback. Other winter essentials, such as UGG boots in girls' mainstream wardrobes and Timberland boots for boys, are expected to return. If the performative style does persist into the colder months, it's likely to evolve, incorporating leather jackets, checker scarves, and cozy beanies. While some trends may fade, each has played a role in helping individuals express themselves through fashion, which is what modern-day fashion is all about.





In a Crowd of Uniforms: The Subtle Art of Student Self-Expression



Eileen Galarosa

Uniform is expressed and interpreted throughout the student body as a restriction for freedom of expression, while it supports the safety of the school's community and establishment. Despite it aiding the never-ending debate on what to wear in the morning, many adolescents find themselves at an impasse when following such regulations. The evolution of uniform pieces at St. Elizabeth CHS have made tremendous leaps in recent years. With the new addition of a black polo, and sweater crew necks, it seems to students as an optional feat. To uphold expectation, uniform is prudent towards fostering unity, identity within the student body, as well as more beneficial attributes of safety and equality of each individual. I find that it is not only important for staff to ensure that students are in uniform, but for students to be comfortable in being in uniform, to be accepted and knowingly part of the school community. It allows approachability, and identity during such an unexpected time growing up. These expectations can be clearly shattered within a student's perspectives due to the downfalls in materials, shape, and fitting. A handful of surveyed peers find that most especially during the growing chilly seasons, uniform pieces feel itchy, thin, and distortedly shaped.

Others decidedly find that they are uncomfortable with how it looks on oneself, rather preferring something more flattering and appealing a certain way towards their peers.

Through a sea of uniformed students, there are a handful of outliers that peek out seeking comfortability, trends, and peer expectations. In order to combat the four-year long uniformed school days, individuals find themselves dressing up their bland, duplicate identities, with simple accessories of jewelry, hairstyles, cover ups, and makeup. This allows for a form of one's identity, to follow, yet lead a path for themselves. In an attempt to "dress up" uniform or even just by creating a comfortable school day to get by, high schoolers constantly have additional layers beneath the monotone polos and sweaters. Even through smaller accessories that don't undermine the mandated fashion; scarves on a cold day, or layered sweaters that enhance the pristine look we try to uphold. As a result, not only staff, but students are satisfied with their presentation that can strengthen the unity of the school, along with the need for self-expression.

Within the regulated uniform days, civvies days are created in order for students to uphold their own personality with a once-a-month opportunity to be themselves, and observe what modern society has cultivated as the

newest outfit expectations for high schoolers. Alongside the school's assigned civvies days, it can lead students to stress of wearing something unique that they can bring to the table, as well as demonstrate their school spirit by following through a themed day. Nowadays, students are typically following up with the latest fashion trends of full track suit pairings, matching outfits with friends, or even a brief snippet of their everyday wear outside of school. To an outsider's surprise, teens aren't as adamant on brands and labels as they once were. In current times, this generation looks more towards style and uniqueness, where we see the rise in thrifting and flattering pieces of clothing. Somewhere along the way, a majority of modern teenagers find themselves wearing the next best thing, rather than an interpretation of their identity, which I believe contradicts the whole concept of civvies days.

Through the past few years at St. Elizabeth, I find that the inputted civvies days can most definitely be a hit or miss. The Student Council here at the school creates themes within new trends that attempt to represent our school spirit. A plethora of times, most of the adolescent crowd prefers to dress up to their own accord, or comfortability over anything, which truly piques the opportunity into more comfortable uniform options. Anything from hoodies to sweatpants, it isn't just a lack of school spirit, but rather the constant nag for comfort in classes.

Exposing yourself to a variety of styles, aesthetics, and personalities, is crucial to development in perspective, individuality, and creativity. Fashion, especially in the formative years of high school, becomes more than a surface-level interest—it becomes a language. It teaches these growing students to become themselves, while the world is still so fresh to them, and embody the confidence it takes to find individuality in an environment with the pressures of being their best selves academically. It is a reflection on how presentation shapes identity, more so on the countless outlets to cater to interests and real-world situations. Even within the limits of a uniform, or in the fleeting freedom of a civvies day, the act of choosing what to wear encourages a growing person to reflect on who they are and who they hope to become. Fashion is a crucial vessel to these adolescents during their most influential years to provide a constant source of inspiration, supportive environment to experiment, redefine, and ultimately unearth expressing one's true self.

Keep that lip liner on



Gracielle Villanueva

Keeping your lip liner on all day throughout classes and end-of-day activities can feel impossible, but with the right routine, you can look sharp from the morning rush music to the final dismissal. Start by prepping your lips, because just like getting ready for a big school event, a good base makes everything better. Gently exfoliate your lips with a scrub or even a damp washcloth to remove any dry or flaky skin, then apply a light layer of lip balm. Next, lightly dust translucent powder—with a brush—over your lips to create a dry, matte surface that your lip liner can cling to all day. After that, apply your lip liner like how you usually would, whether it's overlining, outlining and filling in your lips, or keeping it a neat line. Either way, this method will last through lunchtime chatter or after-school clubs. Once that first layer is on, use a powder puff to press a little more translucent powder over it. This step

will lock the lip liner down, not causing a single budge. If you want your look to last through practice, meetings, or spirit events, add another layer of lip liner and repeat the powder step again, creating a long-wear effect that will leave your lips pigmented. After layering, spritz a bit of setting spray directly onto your lips—from a reasonable distance, about 6-8 inches—to lock in the lip liner and powder. Before it fully dries, tap on another light layer of powder. When everything sets, you can finish with lip gloss or lip balm if you prefer to add shine, moisture or comfort without disturbing the color underneath.

By following this routine, you will have lip liner that lasts through math, science, gym, and even those after-hour hangouts, helping you look and feel ready to show your school spirit all day long.



Peer Ministry Articles: Giulia Galati, Christina Sangermano & Chaplain: Mrs. Mina Sangermano

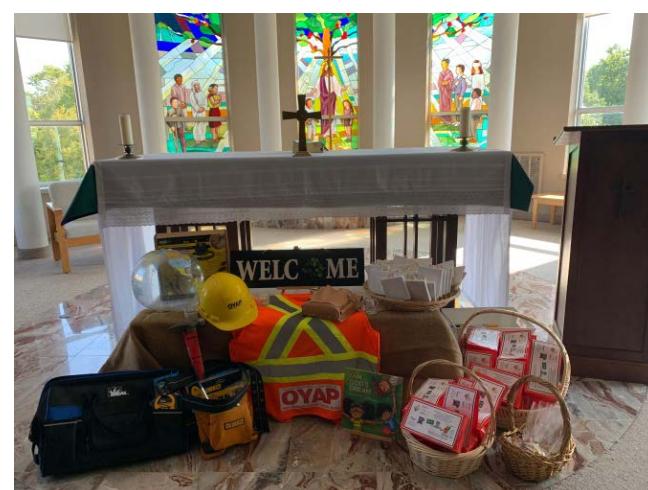
Prayer Serving Co-op



Student Virtues of the Month
In September, we reintroduced the Student of the Month Virtue Certificate Program at St. Elizabeth Catholic High School. The program aims to foster a Catholic learning community guided by Gospel Values and Catholic Virtues. Every month, all staff are invited to nominate ONE (1) student from each grade who ex-

emplifies and demonstrates excellence in the monthly virtue. Here is the list of the monthly virtues for semester one:
Month Virtue
September - Courage
October - Compassion
November - Justice
December - Hope
Congratulations to all the student virtue leaders of the month.

On September 16th, 2025, through the tenet of Catholic Social Teaching, our Chaplain, Mrs. Mina Sangermano, developed a Co-operative Education Prayer Service, inviting the semester one co-op students from Mrs. Bastone and Mrs. Us-



sia's classes to the chapel to reflect on the value of work. The Prayer Service provided support for the Co-op students as they prepared for their vocational callings. The Prayer Service highlighted St. Joseph as the patron Saint of workers and a model for

hard work and stewardship. Each Co-op student received a package containing a Footprints' poem, a rosary, and a "Fruit Snacks". Tangible reminders and symbols that God and the Fruits of the Holy are constantly in our lives, be it at home, school or work.

God is Always With Us



On October 8th, 2025, we celebrated our Opening/Thanksgiving Mass together. Father Augusto from St. Joseph the Worker was our celebrant. At this mass, we were invited to remember that God is always with us: in our studies, our friendships, our sports, our hobbies and everything that is part of our school and home life and that we have many gifts and blessings to be thankful for.



Peer Minister
photographers:
Victoria Lajeune,
Rashi Llacuna
And Chaplain: Mrs.
Mina Sangermano



Peer Ministry Articles: Giulia Galati, Christina Sangermano & Chaplain: Mrs. Mina Sangermano

Prayer of Hope Welcomes Grade 9 Students



On October 14th, 2025, Peer Ministers, our Chaplain, Mrs. Mina Sangermano and Ms. Edna Fonseca prepared a retreat prayer service in the theatre for the Grade 9 Orientation to Muskoka Woods, our staff from St. Elizabeth, and you, our grade 9 panthers. The Prayer Service provided an opportunity to focus

on the role of hope in sustaining our faith and make connections to hope as an anchor contributing to the health and well-being of the staff at Muskoka Woods, our staff from St. Elizabeth, and you, our grade 9 panthers.

Stewards of Hope



WFMP Youth Forum: "Stewards of Hope: Sharing our Time, Talent and Treasure." On October 23, 2025, ten (10) Peer Ministers, along with our Chaplain, Mrs. Mina Sangermano, attended, participated, and gathered with approximately 1,000 students for a day energized, with Danielle Campo McLeod, an award-

winning keynote speaker, mental health expert, and coach renowned for her expertise in leadership, resilience, and fostering connections. A celebrated Paralympian and recipient of the Order of Ontario, Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, Terry Fox Humanitarian Award, and a Canadian National Hero Honour. We participated in liturgy and inter-

Compassion Scares Hunger Away



Homerooms were invited to participate in the Scare Away Hunger with Compassion: Food Drive from October 20th to November 7th, 2025. Peer Ministers, Mrs. Sangermano, Ms. Fonseca and Ms. Santapaga, extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who made our Scare Away Hunger with Compassion food drive an incred-

ible success! It is because of our Panther compassion and generosity that we have truly made a difference in our community. We were able to collect "800 pounds of food" for the Richmond Hill Food Bank. This incredible outpouring of support will provide countless meals to families in need.

Called to Serve



In November and December, our Chaplain, Mrs. Mina Sangermano, organized a retreat for the Grade 10 students at the Canadian Charity, Global Medic. The retreat aims to explore our faith while being called to serve. A Retreat is a prayer that can be experienced as both communicat-

ing with God and being with God. Students spend the day assembling Emergency Food Kits. Such kits are provided to people affected by poverty, disaster or conflict with humanitarian aid. Our Chaplain provided students with an opportunity to reflect on how being a part of the Global Medic

team was helpful to them and in what ways Global Medic, inspire, challenge, or motivates them to give of themselves in service to others.

Peer Minister photographers:
Victoria Lajeune, Rashi Llacuna
And Chaplain: Mrs. Mina Sangermano



Peer Ministry Articles: Giulia Galati, Christina Sangermano & Chaplain: Mrs. Mina Sangermano

What does it take to be a Panther hero? Faith, Fellowship & Fun

What does it take to be a Panther hero? It takes compassion, action and you. This holiday season, we have a unique opportunity to be a beacon of hope across York Region. Peer Ministers and Chaplaincy invited all homerooms to extend their faith and leadership beyond the classroom by helping community members facing life's toughest challenges by donating new, unwrapped toys and gift cards. All donations supported the annual York Regional Police Holiday Heroes Campaign. A shout-out goes to Mrs. Santapaga's grade 9 Students for creating two incredible and creative banners promoting the charity initiative. Together, we sent a powerful message that when a community unites, no one is left behind.



On December 12th, 2025, Peer Ministers, Mrs. Sangermano and Ms. Fonseca, set aside time for self-care and to reflect on the semester one faith development initiatives with a social at Bowls and Blast-

ers and dinner. The social not only fostered belonging, but also continued to build friendships, and allowed us to express our gratitude for each other. Together we live out our council's motto of faith, fellowship and fun.

Celebrating Christ's Birth



On December 16th, 2025, we welcomed Father Augusto from St. Joseph the Worker Parish as our celebrant for our Advent Mass. Together, with our trustees, Ms. Jennifer Wigston and Ms. Garella, we gathered to celebrate and reflect on Advent, a season of preparation and hope as we await the birth of Jesus.





Top row from left to right: Ms. Rotondo (layout & editing), Sophia Agro, Nicole Maghakian, Camryn Bland, Stefania Iaboni, Julianna Ali, Monique Maghakian (President), Savannah Chu Morrison, Veronica Geadah, Sofia Pantarotto, Varya Guba, Vinisha Kukkala

Bottom row from left to right: Yuna Jeong, Grace Le, Sabina Colceriu (front page & banners), Eileen Galarosa, Gracielle Villanueva, Isabella Carmen Rivera, Milena Fabris, Maria Di Nallo

Not photographed: Artemis Dolatkahah, Nico Runc, Emma Marer