



SJC Gazette

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“Who are you? And, what are you doing here?” These are basic questions about identity. Questions that cause us to keep searching, thinking, and learning. The interesting thing with questions like this is that despite our efforts, we may never get any answers. We may come to know who we are in a certain moment, but we change on a moment by moment basis; leading us back to the difficult nature of such questions of identity.

This issue represents a moment in time wherein our contributors have attempted to answer these questions for you as a school community. You will get to read about who and what makes St. John’s College what it is in October, 2019.

As publishers we are very proud of the Gazette staff and hope that you enjoy reading this edition as much as our contributors and editors enjoyed creating it. As far as answering these questions of identity – keep searching, thinking, and learning SJC.

Mr. Heida and Mr. Salciccioli



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Why do we need to take these courses?

First-hand Info from the teachers

By Makayla Cavin and Angela Yousef

In high school, everyone must take mandatory courses that sometimes we don't enjoy taking. However, we can't graduate without these courses because they're important, even if we don't always understand why. In order to understand why these courses are essential for our future lives, we went around the school and asked one teacher from the departments a few questions. Here are their answers;

Why do we have to take Religion?

"Religion is a very important subject we must take throughout high school, as we attend a Catholic School. Religion has always been with us. As spiritual human beings, we have always been fascinated with questions, such as, 'where do we come from? Why are we here? What happens to us after we die? Why do we suffer? How should we act?' Which are questions about existence and nature of God. The study of religion allows one to consider his/her own beliefs and values. It also helps one to understand the diversity of people and societies around the world. It is essential that we come to understand the diverse religious roots of individual and communal identity. Religion also teaches us how we are never alone, there is God who loves us. We never have to feel alone. He is always there for us."

-Mrs. Duffy, Religion.

What are the benefits students will gain from taking science?

"What are the benefits students will gain from having to take science in grade nine and ten? A question that most students ask everyday whenever they have to go to science class. Some of these benefits are the chances to learn how our body/world works. In addition to the chances to do fun hands on activities and labs to help experience course content. These tasks allow students to do activities that aren't just quizzes and tests."

What skills can we gain?

"Skills we can potentially gain from science are Problem solving skills, co-operative learning skills and lab skills."

-Mrs. Dickens, Science.

What are the benefits students will gain from having to take geography?

"You learn about Canada, and how beautiful it is, and all of the water and land we have. You also learn about the people who live here, and just why it's a really good place to live and to grow up."

What skills do your students learn?

"By taking geography, you learn your mapping skills, so you learn how to read a map, you learn how to use directions, to get around and not get lost, and you learn how to colour inside the lines properly, and you learn critical thinking, when we talk about natural resources, and Canada's people."

-Miss Cupoli, Geography.

Why do students have to obtain a gym credit?

“Because it is one of the mandatory credits that have been regulated by the government, and that its important that kids should be active.”

How does this credit impact our lives?

“I believe that it introduces kids to sports, and teamwork, and knowing about fitness.”

-Mrs. Boyd, Gym.

“What are the benefits students will gain from taking math?”

“Although students have to take math until grade eleven, math minded people are so good at using information that by taking math it helps people get places faster and become more successful... Everything in the world, created by man or not, has to do with numbers, and involves math... by taking it, you are able to obtain vital information you need in the everyday world.”

-Mr. Yakymyshyn, Mathematics.

What are the benefits from having to take English?

“The benefits of taking an English course are seen throughout one’s whole life. First of all, students will obviously improve their reading, writing, and speaking, which are necessary for communication skills in future jobs. Furthermore, students will improve their critical thinking skills as they analyze texts and character’s lives which will hopefully assist in decision making for our students as they go through life.”

Why do students have to read Shakespeare in English classes?

“What a great question! Shakespeare was an observer of human life, so the things he wrote about are still current today- love, heartache, greed, peace, jealousy corruption, family life- these are all still seen in today’s world.”

Mrs. Luciani, English.

What are the benefits student will gain from choosing to take healthcare?

“Students will gain exposure to different careers and health care topics they can take in post-secondary.”

What skills can you potentially gain?

“Students can develop critical thinking skills about different healthcare situations, as well as teamwork and situational skills.”

-Mrs. Hyndman, Healthcare.

In conclusion, all of these courses are very important for our futures, so always do your best and never give up.

The Annual European Art Trip: My Experience

By Meagan Cavin

I heard the first announcement for the art trip in grade nine. It was the beginning of my high school career, and I was just settling in. I really wanted to go to Italy and Greece, but I thought it was too late. I then pledged to myself that I would go next year, in grade ten, on the trip that was yet to be discussed. Am I ever glad I made that decision, because that trip ended up being one of the most amazing experiences I had ever had.

I travel with my family quite a bit, through the Caribbean and different parts of Canada and The States- but I had never flown for more than five hours over a large body of water. I was excited and nervous, and ready for the challenges ahead of me. For the first time in my life, I had to look after my own passport. You might be thinking, "It's not that big of a deal", but this is a huge responsibility, as your passport, away from home, is your lifeline.

We landed in France seven hours later and had the whole day ahead of us for touring the Louvre Museum. The majority of us were completely exhausted- to a point where I HAD to sit down while admiring the paintings and artefacts before me. We were also travelling with a school from Etobicoke- and of course, I didn't realize it yet, but one of those girls was going to become my best friends.

At the Eiffel tower, we met a girl from Greece, named Sophie. We chatted for a bit, and I realized that it was these moment I would remember forever- not the silly souvenirs I bought for one euro from a street vendor (although those are pretty cool too).

It wasn't until the six-hour train ride I would befriend the girls from Michael Power St. Joseph School in Etobicoke. My friends and I, while everyone was sleeping, sat with three other girls from that school. We played games and laughed, probably too loud, while everyone was trying to get some shuteye. Nice, by far, was one of my favourite places. The safety and cleanliness of it, in comparison to Paris (no offense, Paris), was astounding, and the warmth and sea breeze embraced us after the modern and stale air of the big city. We also, in this time, visited Monaco, a whole new country- yet smaller than Brantford. We strolled in this seaside park, meeting locals and even befriending this huge seagull.

In Florence, My twin sister and I ended up rooming with Julia and Sarah, two girls from MPSJ. I was so excited. That night, our group headed down to this dance club, and we had a blast. (Let me just add that I am not going into full detail about my trip- if you would like thorough explanation on what we did, come talk to me).

Leaving my new friends was the hardest part by far. I had just become so close, and yet, after ten days, I'm leaving them. I know that Etobicoke is not far away, and yes, I do hang out with my friends quite often, and it is amazing to know that I met these people halfway across the world, yet I still hang out with some of them, but stay in touch constantly through text.

These experiences that you have in high school are the ones you will remember, and can relive just by thinking about them. I don't want this to be too lengthy, but when I say the trip changed my life, I really mean it. I'm not just saying that to get you to come on the trip, I'm saying it because the experience I had with my friends and teachers changed me.

In conclusion, I am telling you that the trip is 100% worth it. Those long hours I spent working at my part time job saving every dollar I made and taking advantage of the payment plan offered through Explorica really helped me. It is a different experience for everyone, but I am telling you from the heart, to sign up if you can. The teachers- Mrs. DiStefano and Mrs. Duffy, put all of their hard work into making this trip an amazing experience, so a quick thank you to them. Our trip would not be half the fun it was without them. I loved the trip so much, that I will be attending the trip next year.





*"Il faut
chercher
avec
la coeur."*

You may have seen these words on the backs of t-shirts on Spirit Wear Day: the motto of the SJC French Club. The quote is taken from "Le Petit Prince," a novel about childhood and the true beauty of life, and the French Club holds it close to their hearts.

Four or five times a year, at both junior and senior lunch, the French Club gathers in Madame D'Eramo's classroom to experience French outside of the school curriculum. As the students enjoy various French food, they are given the opportunity to listen to a guest presenter with a personal connection and experience with the French language and culture.

In May, students from the French Clubs of SJC, Assumption, and Holy Trinity gather for a French-themed dinner and an evening of cultural experience. The dinner, as well as the meetings throughout the year, is a celebration of French language outside the classroom and a time of friendship and fun. The students of the SJC French Club truly look at life with their hearts, and they wear those words proudly.

Emma lacurti, une membre du Club français, a dit que ses parties favorites du Club sont Madame, qui est la plus gentille professeure, et les petites surprises de nourriture à la fin de cette réunion. Emma est devenue une membre du Club en neuvième année, et elle l'aime beaucoup. Au dîner en mai, il y a un grand groupe d'étudiants de St. Johns, Assumption, et Holy Trinity. Les profs et deux étudiants ont parlé au groupe, et la grande règle du soir est "pas d'anglais." C'est une bonne expérience, et à la fin du soir français les étudiants parlent mieux qu'au début du Club.

"On ne sait pas la vraie essence de la langue française dans la salle de classe," Emma a dit. "Les papiers et devoirs...c'est ce qu'on cherche avec les yeux. Mais au Club français on peut chercher avec le coeur."

If you're interested in joining the French Club for a time of friendship, culture, and fun, sign up at room 210.



Themes: St. Vincent De Paul Donation Bin, Riverview Terrace, Soctober

As December approaches, many of us think about the Christmas season and become drawn into the spirit of giving. We give gifts to our friends and family and take time to consider others before ourselves. At SJC we are encouraged to have that attitude and embrace giving throughout the year and our school community has provided us with many opportunities to be charitable.

The St. Vincent De Paul donation bins are available year-round in the upper cafeteria. We collect used clothing to give to those in need in our community. The winters in Ontario are cold and long and many benefit from extra sweaters and pants to keep them warm. SJC also helped St. Vincent De Paul directly last year by helping set up their new location in Brantford. We cleaned, cleared and planted for them along with Chaplain Andy and the MIH crew.

Another opportunity for giving lies in giving our time to other community members. SJC visits with Riverview Terrace residents at their nursing home. Students can meet and get to know residents, play games and even just have conversations with people who don't always have lots of visitors. This is both a chance to meet new friends at school as well as learn from the seniors in our community. The gratitude expressed by the residents is remarkable.

During the month of 'Soctober', SJC collects new, clean, warm socks that are donated to Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario to help them weather the cold, long winters.

These are only a few of the opportunities to give to our community, and there are always many in need. Chaplain Andy and MIH meets on Wednesday mornings at 8AM in the Divine Mercy room and new students are always welcome to join in.

There are many options for students at SJC to get involved helping out!

A Chapter on Charlie

By Grace Ratelband

Charlie O’Sullivan is a bright-eyed, playful, four-year-old dog who finds it easy to make friends with canines and humans alike. A mixture of different breeds, (husky, border collie, and golden retriever) he finds great joy in his walks outside and the friends he’s made with other dogs, along with quality time spent with his human family, the O’Sullivans. “Charlie is not a sporty type,” admitted Mrs. O’Sullivan, one of Charlie’s owners and a librarian here at St John’s College, “But he does love the outdoors, and he loves chasing rabbits.” Though Charlie is quite similar to other dogs in many respects, there is also an aspect to Charlie that makes him truly unique: he’s a perfect candidate to be an emotional support dog.

For those unaware, an emotional support dog is a canine companion designated to help those experiencing emotional distress, such as anxiety related to schoolwork or stressful social situations. Emotional support dogs are similar to therapy dogs, but often act within more general situations of emotional distress, whereas therapy dogs usually have a specialization in dealing with a specific issue (such as social anxiety or depression). When asked what sparked the idea to bring Charlie to St John’s in the role of an emotional support dog, Mrs. O’Sullivan recounted an occasion when Charlie, outside for a walk, had meandered over to a senior’s event taking place nearby. He sat among the seniors and allowed them to pet him, becoming the highlight of the day for many.

“He lifted spirits,” Mrs. O’Sullivan recalled. In addition, Charlie has befriended a child in his neighbourhood who has an extreme fear of dogs, helping them to overcome their fear with his calm and gentle personality. Charlie is also predominantly a golden retriever, the only breed suitable to become therapy dogs or emotional support dogs due to their calm temperament. Charlie deals with typically stressful situations for a canine with calm and ease, showing comfort around children, loud noises, and other dogs.

A rescue dog who was once a stray in Quebec, Charlie no doubt understands some of the emotional traumas his human friends might be experiencing. Though Charlie has not yet received any formal training to be an emotional support dog, he displayed such a calm and easygoing demeanour around young children that the O’Sullivans soon began to bring Charlie for sporadic visits to St John’s College. He has now been a regular part of the SJC community for about two years, and loves the work he does at school. “When Charlie gets his leash to go to school, he gets so excited. Sometimes he even jumps in the car early.” Mrs. O’Sullivan told the *Gazette*.

Charlie isn't the only one who enjoys his visits to St John's College, as students sometimes request for Charlie to come in to school during the more stressful times of the year, such as periods surrounding exams, or the OSSLT (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test) written by grade ten students. Charlie's presence "absolutely" makes a difference in the daily lives of St. John's students and staff, helping those under stress feel calm and collected. "Dogs are not judgemental," Mrs O'Sullivan commented, "So no matter what kind of situation you are in, or what kind of day you're having, he's just there to give love." As the need for more mental and emotional health support in schools and workplaces gains more attention, the demand for dogs like Charlie is increasing dramatically. "We were looking at bringing in more [dogs], but they were actually all booked, even five or six months in advance." Emotional support dogs are now present in schools, hospitals, retirement homes, and universities. Some universities even have a dog 'in residence' with the students! "With therapy and emotional support dogs gaining more popularity, you're going to see a lot more of that." Mrs O'Sullivan concluded.

The O'Sullivan's are considering getting Charlie officially registered as an emotional support dog, which would earn him a special vest to identify his job at school. Until then, Charlie plans to continue brightening the days of St John's students. "We hope to get him vested, but Charlie is going to continue coming in all the way to the end unless there's an allergy or something similar... this will be his career." Mrs O'Sullivan noted. "I think animals... are such a healing component that we really need to tap that a lot more. Should they be more used in school? Yeah, I think so. Animals are just so non-judgemental; the only thing that want is love."



Waking up in the morning is not a routine, it's a chance.

Forget who you want
to be like and focus
on who you are

*It's not worth to be
mad at someone, we
are here in this
world to love and be
loved.*

*You don't have to smile every day, just try to find the things that
make you smile*

*Your eyes never lie,
and they never keep
a secret, they
represent your soul.*

**Smile, laugh and enjoy life
because you are only going
to live it once**

Don't let your fears stop you, you
are strong enough to stop them

It's ok if you fall
- imagine you can
fly.

Don't look at life
from the dark side,
look at it from the
bright side so you
can find the light for
the darkness

*Don't let those voices in
your head stop you from
doing what you are able
to.*

You will not fall if you look at the road carefully