



# HEALTHY SCHOOLS

## St. Frances Cabrini Gets Silver Certification for School Health

A new banner will be added to the walls of St. Frances Cabrini School in Delhi as the school achieved silver status in OPHEA's Healthy Schools Certification program for the 2016/17 school year.

The Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) Healthy School Certification celebrates schools for planning and taking action on topics such as physical activity, mental health, and healthy eating.

The process guides schools through a 6-step process to plan and implement a range of activities that promote well-being in the school community, focusing on a selected health topic that is important to the school.

This year the Healthy School Committee at St. Frances chose mental health as their priority topic. The committee, made up of students, teachers, parents, Health Unit staff and the school's principal, Mr. Caltagirone, created a variety of initiatives to promote positive mental health among students and staff.

Each month the committee focused on a different "I am" statement as their theme, such as "I am thoughtful", "I am healthy" and "I am kind". Using this theme as motivation, some of the group's activities included:

- **Messages in a bottle:** Each student wrote a personal "I am" statement at the start of the year and placed it in a bottle. At the end of the year the messages were read and reflected on.
- **Mental health drawing and colouring contest:** Students were invited to colour Oliver the Cat green in support of mental health, and draw Oliver in a place that brings them joy. The entries were displayed throughout the school and on social media.
- **Positive mental health morning messages:** Each morning students would read messages over the announcements that promoted positive mental health and encouraged students to reflect on that month's theme.
- **Motivational assembly:** Guest speaker Susan Howson spoke to students about the importance of self-esteem and how "I am" are very powerful words, as whatever is added after them becomes our reality.
- **Dragon's Dream charity assembly:** Students researched and 'pitched' charities that interested them to a panel of judges. Three successful pitches received money, generated through school fundraisers, that was donated to their charity.



Congratulations to St. Frances Cabrini for their commitment to establishing a healthier learning environment to support all students in reaching their full potential!

Are you interested in helping improve the health of your school community? Visit [www.OPHEA.net](http://www.OPHEA.net) to find out how to register your school for the 2017/18 Healthy School Certification program, or talk to your school's administration, public health nurse or health promoter!



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# Benefits of Breakfast Programs

Long before the bell rings, many students are racing to school to share a healthy breakfast. As they gather to meet friends and play games, parent and teacher volunteers are busy slicing fruit and handing out yogurt. You might even see a principal whipping up smoothies! But behind the laughter, there's a serious message- a nourishing breakfast is critical to a child's ability to learn.

Research shows that students have trouble learning when they are hungry at school. Well-nourished students are more alert in performing late-morning assignments. They have better concentration and are able to perform more complex tasks.

Student Nutrition Programs (SNPs) are a great way to provide students with nutritious food to fuel their minds and bodies. These volunteer-led breakfast, lunch, or snack programs are open to all children at the school and go a long way to support their learning and healthy development.

Want to get involved with your school's Student Nutrition Program? Contact Sharon Smyth, Community Facilitator with the Child Nutrition Network at 519-587-2441 or [ssmyth@hnreach.on.ca](mailto:ssmyth@hnreach.on.ca).



## St. Stephen's Student Nutrition Program Rises and Shines

St. Stephen's school in Cayuga took their Student Nutrition Program (SNP) to the next level with the help of the Metro Green Apple Grant!

First, students learned about healthy eating, whole foods and how to prepare a balanced snack from a public health dietitian. Each classroom was then challenged to create a breakfast recipe to meet the SNP nutrition guidelines. Classes created grocery lists and, under the guidance of the breakfast program volunteers, students gained hands-on experience in the kitchen preparing their recipes for the whole school to sample. The recipes were compiled into a Crusader's Cookbook for each student so they could share and re-create their favourite recipes at home.

**Kudos to the dedicated team of volunteers, teachers, and the school's principal, Ms. Fortunato, for all your efforts!**

## RECIPE CORNER



### Tutti-Frutti Pita Pizza

A fun, healthy and colourful way to start the day! This recipe includes ingredients from 3 of the 4 food groups and can be easily customized using your favourite fruits.

#### Ingredients

- 30 small whole grain breakfast rounds/pita
- 250g container cream cheese, low fat
- 750g vanilla Greek yogurt
- 4 bananas, sliced
- 2 cups strawberries, sliced
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 cup raspberries

#### Directions

1. Wash berries under cold running water.
2. Hull strawberries slice and set aside in a small bowl.
3. Peel and thinly slice banana. Set aside in a small bowl.
4. Use a hand mixer to combine cream cheese and yogurt. Beat on medium speed until light and fluffy.
5. Spread 2 tablespoons yogurt mixture ('sauce') on each pita or breakfast round
6. Top with berries and sliced banana.
7. Serve with small carton of milk and enjoy!

This recipe was designed by the grade 1/2 students at St. Stephen's school in Cayuga to meet the revised 2016 Student Nutrition Program Guidelines. For additional recipes and inspiration visit: <http://brightbites.ca/badge/rise-and-shine>.

# Pack It Up, Pack It In

Backpacks are handy for carrying books—and lots of other things. But if they're not used right, they can take a toll on your child's physical health.

Backpack safety is important for everyone. It's especially important for children, who can be hurt by regularly carrying too much weight or by not wearing their backpacks safely.

Students, or parents, may put the most priority on picking a pack with a favourite cartoon character or a trendy brand, but when it comes to the health of your child's bones, joints and muscles, there are more important things to consider.

## 1. Pick it carefully

- Backpacks should be made of the light materials. Vinyl and canvas are much better than leather.
- The shoulder straps should be at least 2 inches wide and have good padding. A loaded pack will dig into shoulders and could affect circulation or nerves if the straps are too skinny.
- A waist belt is an important feature as it takes some weight off of the back and transfers it to the hips.
- Multiple handy compartments help distribute the weight more evenly and also make packs easier to organize.
- Look for one with a padded back to keep sharp edges from digging into the back.

## 2. Pack it safely

- As a general rule, to prevent injury, your child's full backpack should weigh no more than 10 to 20 percent of his or her body weight. Don't underestimate how quickly the weight from a packed lunch, shoes, books, agenda, water bottle and other items can add up.
- Pack the heaviest items closest to the back. Packs with compartments make this easier to do.
- Check your child's backpack every day to ensure they're carrying only what they need. Talk to your child about using his or her desk or locker to keep from carrying everything around all day.

## 3. Wear it properly

- Always use both shoulder straps. It may seem easier or more comfortable to sling the pack over just one shoulder, but that's a bad habit that can lead to back or shoulder pain.
- Always use the waist belt and tighten all the straps so the pack fits snugly.
- The top of the pack should hang slightly below the shoulders and the bottom of the pack should hang no more than 4 inches below the belly button
- Make sure your child stands up straight while wearing a backpack. If he or she must lean forward, the pack is too heavy.
- If your child is having back pain or neck soreness, talk to your doctor. Encourage your children to tell you about any pain or soreness.





# Students get Savvy about Smoking in Movies

Students at J.L. Mitchener Public School in Cayuga and Grandview Central Public School in Dunnville learned an important lesson recently: where there's smoke, there's ... probably a youth-rated movie.

Close to 70 students from the two schools participated in a workshop to learn about the ways tobacco companies, along with food and beverage companies, target children with their advertising. Students discussed strategies and tricks companies use to try to influence them into purchasing (or pestering their parents to purchase) an unhealthy product.

Students then had the chance to put themselves in the shoes of a tobacco company advertising executive, and brainstorm ways they would try to convince young people to try their product. This took some creative thinking, as most forms of tobacco advertising are banned in Ontario, and all of the participants were well aware of how harmful and addictive tobacco products are.

Since movies are one of the last ways smoking is promoted to kids, the impact of seeing tobacco in G, PG and 14A-rated movies causes an alarming number of kids to get 'hooked by Hollywood.' Researchers have found that exposure to on-screen smoking is actually one of the leading causes of smoking initiation among young people, with 37% of youth tobacco users recruited by seeing images of smoking in the movies they watch.

This is not good news considering that a new study shows that 54% of the top-grossing movies in Ontario over the last 12 years (54%) featured tobacco. Of the movies with tobacco content, 86% were youth-rated.

The students at J.L. Mitchener and Grandview are now on the lookout for product placements, celebrity endorsements, flashy packaging and other tactics companies use to market their products to children. Many participants also posed for a photo to show their support for keeping tobacco out of the movies they watch!

To show your support for smoke-free youth-rated movies, visit [www.smokefreemovies.ca](http://www.smokefreemovies.ca).



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