

CARFLEO Newsletter

December 2010

kevin.welbesgodin@tcdsb.org



WE WERE BORN INTO THE LIGHT

During these December days, how eagerly we await for the morning darkness to transform into day light—there is that assurance that nature comforts us with every morning. The early turn of light into the dark night is always and has been hard to swallow. Didn't we just leave lingering summer sun-lit evenings?



As I walk my neighbourhood, I marvel at the sight of coloured lights that decorate and silhouette trees and trace the outside of houses. These flickers of brightness contrast the closeness of night and make one aware that there are many allies attracted to the welcoming, relief, and joy that light brings. After all, are we not all members of the Light, ambassadors of extrapolating the metaphors associated with light to bring hope into people's lives?

We all wait for the Light at this time of year. We each carry our own cravings for brightness along with a list of others that need our illuminating prayers. Once outside the shadows of our own concerns we see other global realities, those who yearn and most desperately are waiting to escape the darkness into the more welcoming company of the Light.

O Come, O Come our Palestinian brothers and sisters—landlocked and persecuted from even the most basic of human dignity.

O Come, O Come people of Haiti – devastated by natural disasters and tragedy of piecing together your lives and your country.

O Come, O Come our LGBT students and staff – how long must we wait with you before there is a fuller and honest acceptance of the wonderful gifts you offer to all?

O Come, O Come those afflicted with issues of Mental Health – often stigmatized by our ignorance and inability to talk openly about how to care for each other.

O Come, O Come our First Nations people – you bring out a wisdom and tradition in us that puts us in touch with how Mother earth and its creatures need to be at the top of our priorities.

O Come, O Come... (speak it, name it, open to it – welcome to the Light!)

Keep your eyes open for the flickers of light. Who dispels darkness for you on a daily basis? ...a colleague offering a gentle morning smile? ...a small group of thoughtful people? ... that stranger you pass each day on your way to where ever? ...how about the person who challenges you in ways beyond your comfort zone? ...your partner? Who will you be light for this Christmas season? They are waiting for you.

--Kevin Welbes Godin

When Faith Meets Pedagogy

We are pleased to have been recognized as a valued sponsor of the CCC's very successful "When Faith Meets Pedagogy" Conference. CARFLEO was able to offer two workshops at the conference:

1) "'That's So Gay!' -- Beyond Homophobia by Building Inclusive Communities within Catholic Schools": which addressed a full and lively audience, through identifying and examining obstacles and reflective practice concerning diversity issues in Catholic schools. Participants explored supports and resources for creating safe, caring, and inclusive environments for LGBTQ students. Kevin Welbes Godin and David Szollosy placed specific concentration on the *Pastoral Guidelines to Assist Students of Same-Sex Orientation* and the Ministry Document, *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* and how they dovetail with the goal of creating inclusive communities.

2) "The Spirit-filled Classroom": asked the question, Are we awake to the grace-filled moments in our teaching? We not only encounter God in what we teach but also in how we teach. This workshop invited participants to explore how sacred mystery is encountered in the great spiritual questions, the visual art used in our Religious Education programs, and in stories of diversity and moral beauty. Drawing on their experiences in helping prepare the new *World Religions: A Canadian Catholic Perspective*, Sharron McKeever and Les Miller invited participants to approach their teaching as a form of prayer.

Nice to have seen so many of you at the Doubletree in Toronto...

Executive Profiles: In the interest of generating greater familiarity with CARFLEO, each issue of the newsletter will highlight two or three members of the Executive Committee

Paul Beaudette: For much of my time in CARFLEO, coming from Hamilton-Wentworth, I have been the westernmost member of the CARFLEO Executive. As Secretary, I have the intriguing responsibility to take minutes at our meetings, to generate the Newsletter, and be part of the other writing tasks—besides the major curriculum resources that many on the Executive are involved in writing. Most of all, my role is to complement the strengths and convictions of the other members of the committee—and it was the quality of those people that first attracted me to CARFLEO. After five years, I'm still enjoying sharing time and good work with them.

Jan Bentham: I have had the pleasure of working with a real leader in the area of Family Life Education and Religious Education. John Podgorski has been a mentor and guide for me. I continue to be impressed with the work of CARFLEO and now with John's encouragement, I am pleased to be part of the dialogue and planning of the executive. Hopefully, my passion for Religious Education and integration of the Arts in all areas of curriculum will serve the Executive well. It is an honour to be able to contribute to this work that is so important for the students, parents and educators that we serve. As I continue to explore the Equity strategy and our role in promoting Catholic education, I see CARFLEO as a guide for all of us. It is a great opportunity to represent the Ottawa Catholic Board in this role.

CARFLEO Conference & AGM May 12th and 13th, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto... Registration details are coming soon...Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education strategy challenges Catholic educators to reach out to our most difficult students, to create authentically caring and welcoming communities. A recent Ontario College of Teachers article indicated that teachers play an "absolutely fundamental" role in dealing with students with mental health issues.

This year's CARFLEO conference will provide Catholic educators with professional learning in a variety of issues of concern including the intensifying digital culture, mental health, personal resilience, spirituality and the power of relationship.

WWW.CARFLEO.ORG

The website continues to gather great hit numbers and to be awesome.

Contact les.miller@ycdsb.org to contribute your excellent resources and links.

2010/2011 Executive Committee

Kevin Welbes Godin, *Chair*, Daniel Reidy, *Past Chair*, Michael Jenny, *Treasurer*, Paul Beaudette, *Secretary*, Les Miller, *Webmaster*

Joe Bezzina, *Curriculum*; Sherry Chapman, *Communications* Sharron McKeever, MaryAnn Takacs, *Conference*; John Podgorski, Bronek Korczynski, Sr. Patricia Carter csj, *Northern Boards*, Jan Bentham, *Eastern Boards*



CARFLEO

Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario

“Engaging Students and Empowering Teachers in Challenging Times”

Mark your calendar and join us in Toronto for—

May 12-13, 2011

CARFLEO CONFERENCE

University of St. Michael's College

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education strategy challenges Catholic educators to reach out to our most difficult students, to create authentically caring and welcoming communities. A recent Ontario College of Teachers article indicated that teachers play an “absolutely fundamental” role in dealing with students with mental health issues.

This year's CARFLEO conference will provide Catholic educators with professional learning in a variety of issues of concern including the intensifying digital culture, mental health, personal resilience, spirituality and the power of the teacher-student relationship.

**University of St. Michael's College
Toronto**