

## School Support Report – Sept. 29, 2011

It has been a busy start to the 2011/2012 school year for the School Support Team!

### **September Packages:**

Our portfolio's happenings began even before the school year officially started, with the September Packages. In mid-August, while most of us were still enjoying our summer vacations, veteran volunteer Karen Zeppa and her team were busy putting together hundreds of September Packages that were then sent home with students during the first week of school. We would like to give a huge thank you to Karen, who has been looking after the packages for over 5 years now -- it is a huge undertaking -- and her help is much appreciated. In addition, we would also like to thank her helpers who came in during August to sort and label for distribution, as well as the team who assembled last week to decollate. This really is a large administrative task, and couldn't be done without all of the helpers who each year step forward to pitch in. Overall, the packages went fairly smoothly, though we continue to see some confusion on the part of both teachers, office staff and parents with regard to where the two parts go. In addition, we received a lot of extraneous school and extra-curricular forms unrelated to September packages. The team made sure everything was sent on where it needed to go, but it was clear that some additional communication is needed for office staff, Northlea families and teachers with respect to what belongs in the packages and what then happens to the forms once they come in. In addition, we are also looking for someone to take over Karen's position; Karen has graciously offered to continue helping a new volunteer who would ideally get a walk-through this coming year so that they could transition together and be ready to take it over in 2013.

### **Class Parent Update:**

Also beginning in late August, our Class Parent Coordinators extraordinaire, Sue Gray and Kim Smith, began their work. This year Sue and Kim tried a new approach to the recruiting of class parents; an email was sent during the summer asking parents with an interest in being a class parent in 2011/2012 to contact the coordinators. Then, five "class parent recruitment volunteers" were out on the first day of school with clipboards on hand, walking around the school grounds taking names from parents interested in signing on as potential class parents for the school year. In addition to this approach, which solicited parents, teachers were also asked for their input. First, teachers were encouraged to contact parents if they had someone in mind to work as their class parent; and second, lists of volunteers for class parent positions were given to teachers when there was more than one parent listed as a potential class parent, and teachers were allowed to have a first go, if they wished, at choosing their own class parent. Thereafter, the class parent coordinators made the remaining assignments. This was a new approach that was adopted after lengthy consultations with the home and school, class parent coordinators and the admin team, and so far, the feedback has been extremely positive. Despite the September Packages coming in on the later side this year, and even with curriculum night coming so early this year, this new system seems to have worked well. As of September 28th, every class room at Northlea, including the special needs classrooms, has at least one class parent, and most have two parents to share the workload. Kara and I would like to extend a huge thank you to Kim Smith and

Sue Gray for all their hard work over the past few years and for their thoughtful improvements to recruiting and assigning class parent positions. We understand Sue will be moving on as a volunteer, and so are actively seeking someone to replace her for the next school year.

### **Extra-Curricular Programming:**

Moving on to extra-curricular programming, registration is also up and running for extra-curricular lunch and after school programs. Registrations continue to be accepted for the fall program for programs with two providers: Art Express and Fundamentals. First indications are that five programs will have enough registrants to run, and the majority are lunchtime programs. So far, the most popular course appears to be a new one, called "iCompute: Lego", and it too will run at lunchtime. So far, the programs were only advertised on Northlea's website, but in the next round the aim will be to enable parents to register online more easily from a link on our website. Hopefully, this will result in higher and earlier enrollment. A big thank you to Sarah Dawson who has been organizing and overseeing the smooth operations of the extracurricular programming here at Northlea -- these programs really could not run without her!

### **PSP – Parent Safety Program**

An exciting new initiative aimed at reducing traffic and ensuring safety for our kids will begin next week. The PSP (Parent Safety Program) is implementing a pilot Kiss and Ride beginning on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Erica Roberston has taken on the important role of overseeing the pilot. The program is scheduled to have four parent volunteers situated at the designated Kiss and Ride drop off (Sutherland south entrance) for the first week and from there two parent volunteers will be on duty each morning. The students have all attended assemblies this week to let them know about the Kiss and Ride and educate them on the safe drop-off practices available to their families. Currently there are only eleven volunteers; this will likely mean the current volunteers will have to maintain a weekly rotation. Ideally, the program aims to get enough volunteers to ensure a bi-weekly or monthly rotation (similar to the safe arrival program). An additional email has gone out to all families earlier this week with information as to how the program will run, do's and don'ts as well as a call for additional volunteers. Once the pilot is up and running, we are hoping to draw additional volunteers from those parents who are using the program.

### **Safe Arrival**

This year the large job of heading up the Northlea Safe Arrival program has been taken on by Kathryn Whaley, a veteran volunteer of the safe arrival program. Kathryn did an amazing job of getting the schedule organized to ensure the team could begin the second week of September (for which the office staff were extremely thankful!) The October schedule is just being finalized and training of a few new recruits will begin next week. At this point, afternoon coverage appears to be sparser and the time slots harder to fill. Like the PSP, we would ideally like to have more volunteers to spread the workload. If anyone has a hour to spare 1-3 times a month, please contact Kathryn at [katwhaley@yahoo.com](mailto:katwhaley@yahoo.com). She'd love to arrange training!