



Guatemala Mission Trip – East Region Secondary Schools

The CDSBEO Board of Trustees had the privilege of hearing testimonials from Catholic secondary students who had the opportunity to participate in the Guatemala exposure trip in February. Clearly moved by their life-changing, profound experiences, the group gave an emotional and heartfelt account of their time in Guatemala.

Thirty-one students from St. Thomas Aquinas CHS, St. Francis Xavier CHS, Holy Trinity CSS, St. Joseph's CSS and St. Matthew CSS, along with five supervisors, participated in the experience. The students spent the majority of the week in a village called Anibal Archila, working in the community. Over the course of their stay, the students did work to help support the community, and helped to build a road with interlock stones which will help to reduce mud in the wet season and reduce dust in the dry season.

The students were impacted tremendously by the relationships which were developed during their visit.

"These incredible people who all came from humble beginnings, opened their hearts to us, and showed us what it truly meant to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. It's that sense of community that drew us closer to them every day, and we were all positively impacted by the perfect example of togetherness that they so beautifully showed in all that they did for us," noted student Emma Patterson from St. Thomas Aquinas CHS.

The sense of community among the locals resonated with the youth, as well as the joy and happiness that was so pervasive despite poverty and other daily challenges.

"Everyone welcomed us with open arms and made us feel significant, and like we were making a difference," explained St. Matthew CSS student Damian Ducharme.

He continued, "There was so much love from the people we met, and they were happy to see us every day. The people in the community were so full of love and happiness, and they were living in poverty. That really made me think about how grateful we should be for what we have, and for the people who are in our lives. We should try to approach every day like the people in Guatemala, with love and joy in our hearts. Just like our Board theme: Joy springs from a loving heart!"

"Before we left, we all had an idea of the privilege we have, living where we are and to have the opportunities we do – but knowing something is really different from understanding something," explained student Shaloo Menon from Holy Trinity CSS. "We gained the understanding that we may not be able to change the whole world, but we can change somebody's world."

The students concluded their presentation with the performance of a song that captured the emotion of their experience. A gift was presented to the Board of Trustees which included a



handmade nativity scene from Guatemala, and a framed photo of the group as a token of their gratitude for having the opportunity to participate in the experience.

"I don't think I've ever heard anything so meaningful," noted Vice-Chair Eamer in reference to the song performed by the students. "I'm not sure who put those words together, but they did a fine job, and it was obvious by the smiles on the faces of these students how impactful this experience was. Thank you so much for sharing your story with us, it was very meaningful."

"As a Catholic board, we pride ourselves on Catholic education, but these trips are really part of how we are truly living Christ's love, and bring the excitement of being true Christian social justice warriors," noted Catholic Student Trustee Michael Fenn.

"I would like to thank the staff. I know the dedication and leadership you brought will never be forgotten by these students. Thank you all for the joy you have shared with us today, and for going out into the world to be true ambassadors for Catholic education," concluded Chair Todd Lalonde.

Interim Financial Report

Manager of Finance, Ashley Hutchinson, provided the interim financial report covering the period from September 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 with comparative figures for 2018. A summary of the financial results was shared, including a description of key variances along with details. The report also highlighted the non-financial indicators including a summary of enrolment and staffing.

CDSBEO Board Meeting Hosted at St. Joseph's Catholic Secondary School, Cornwall

The CDSBEO Board of Trustees held their regular meeting on May 7 at St. Joseph's Catholic Secondary School in Cornwall. Trustees and CDSBEO administrators enjoyed an outstanding lunch prepared by students in the Hospitality Program, led by teacher Sylvain Girard, followed by an amazing presentation by the extremely talented St. Joseph's CSS Choir, led by choir director and teacher Gilles Levac.

"I would like to thank Mr. Sylvain Girard, Hospitality teacher at St. Joseph's CSS, and his group of students who prepared an amazing lunch which would rival any five-star restaurant," noted Chair Lalonde.



CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Board Meeting Highlights
From the meeting held May 7, 2019



"Every detail was perfection – the service, the presentation, and the meal. I am so proud of these students, and grateful that we have had the opportunity to taste a small sample of what this group does on a daily basis."

"The student choir did not fail to impress us all with their talent," he added. "We were all sincerely moved by the beautiful performance today by these students."

The meeting was also attended by students in the Grade 10 Civics class, which provided an opportunity to learn about Board governance processes, policies, and to better understand the role of a trustee. The experience supports the curriculum of the Grade 10 Civics course, which explores rights and responsibilities associated with being an active citizen in a democratic society.