

Vanier Community Newsletter – Week 24 (March 1, 2024)

Dear Vanier Family,

Wow, this week was certainly one of highs and lows when it came to our local temperatures. Fortunately, inside the Vanier walls, we experienced mostly highs. I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight a few of them. On Wednesday night, we had our session on human trafficking; thanks to all our parents/caregivers who attended. Special thanks as well to Toronto Victim Services for delivering this very important workshop. On Thursday, we had various visiting professionals in our building, including financial entrepreneurs, authors, members from the Toronto Police Services and the TTC, coaches, and a playwright and producer. They were here to participate in our annual career panel, one of the Black History Month activities at our school. We are so grateful to these professionals who gave up their time to come and share their inspiring stories with our students. Special thanks as well to our assistant curriculum leader, Ms. Heather Davidson, and the BCU (Black Collective Union) for organizing and facilitating such an engaging panel discussion.

The week ended with a spectacular Black History Month Assembly on Friday, which was put on by our students from the Black Collective Union. After months of practicing, students delivered a very engaging assembly, consisting of a play that explores the topic of Shadism, and beautiful performances of dance, music, and poetry. Huge thanks to our resident poet and author, Greg Birkett, who wrote the play that was performed by the students and who worked with them over these past months to fine tune their performance. Special thanks as well to all the staff supervisors - Ms. Chichester, Ms. Davidson, Ms. Bowswell, and Ms. Malcolm - who coached and supported the students to prepare and deliver a very polished, entertaining, and educational assembly. Last, but not least, huge thanks to the students for working so hard over the past few months to bring this show to life. Well done! You did an amazing job, and we are so very proud of you.

This week marks the end of February so it's time to recognize our students for the month. Please see next page for their names and photos. In addition to our Students of the Month awards, which recognize students for their academic achievement and school leadership, this month, our Caring and Safe committee initiated a "Character" award to recognize students demonstrating exemplary virtues. February's character was TEAMWORK and we had four winners; their names and photos are shown further in this newsletter.

Next week will be a very special one. On Wednesday, four of our students (Aayan Ali, Justin Chau, Andrew Street and Matthew Wang) will be at the OFSAA swimming championship. We are so proud of our student-athletes for making it to this level of competition and wish them all the luck at OFSAA. Next up, on Thursday, will be our **PEEL Got's Talent** night, where students from our DD program will showcase their talents. The show is free and will start at 6:30 pm; you are all invited. Last, but not least, next week is our final one before the March break. While I'm sure our staff and students are looking forward to the well-served break, we encourage our students to continue putting forth 100% effort right up until next Friday.

Karen Johnson

Principal, Georges Vanier SS
416-395-3250 Ext. 20010

<https://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/georgesvanier>

Pictures from our Annual Career Panel



Pictures from our Black History Month Assembly



February Students of the Month



Mohammad Aawayed



Abdul Satar Yaqoobi

February Character Winners - TEAMWORK



Neela Basra



Talha Choudhary



Nazifa Shawkat



Rina Woo

Vanier School Advisory Council (VSAC)

Nalini Devineni (Co-Chair) Stephanie Hennaoui (Co-Chair) Danielle Ferguson-Shivrattan (Secretary) Susanna Scocchia (Teacher Rep) Peju Omirinde (Student Rep)	Cordelia Ramses Saber Ullah Maryam Marzban Ivy C.
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Our Co-chairs have created a WhatsApp group for Vanier parents. If you would like to be a part of this WhatsApp group, so you can discuss parent concerns, please click on the following link:
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/DbrLzm6EIJV1a03NVoNCAO>

Upcoming Council Meeting Dates: | April 3, 2024 | May 1, 2024|@ 6:30 pm

Achievement

Peer-Tutoring

Peer tutoring is available for grades 9-11 students who want help with their Math, English, and Science courses. Simply **complete THIS FORM** to request a tutor. Students can sign up at any point in the semester!



After-School Literacy/Math Tutoring

IT'S BACK! The program will start the week of Feb 26 and end, the week of June 3.

This is NOT a drop-in session! Students will need to register to attend. They may do so by coming to the main office. Classes will run from 3:30 to 4:40pm. Below are the teachers who will be providing the tutoring, along with their day and location.

Mr. Husain (Tues/Thurs) – LITERACY Room 203
Ms. Gersternova (Mon/Wed) – LITERACY Room 211
Mr. Hui (Mon/Thur) – MATH Room 320

Student Activity Fee

This year's student activity fee (SAF) will be \$35 per student OR \$60.00 if you have two children in our school. This SAF fee pays for a Yearbook, student ID card, and Student Council activities. **By the end of this month, we will have to submit to our publishers the number of yearbooks to produce for our school. As such, parents are encouraged to use School Cash Online to pay their child's student activity fee, so they won't miss out on the yearbook, as soon as possible.** If needed, financial assistance is available to offset the activity fee. You may contact the principal to provide/obtain more information.



Equity

Greek Heritage Month (GHM) @ the TDSB: March 2024. March is Greek Heritage Month at the Toronto District School Board. It is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the many achievements and contributions of Greek Canadians to Canada, and an occasion to mark and enjoy the history of Greek culture. The theme for this year is: ***Greek Thought and Civilization: From Myth to Logos***



Greek Heritage Month



March 2024

“Greek Thought and Civilization: From Myth to Logos”

“Ελληνική Σκέψη και Πολιτισμός: Από τον Μύθο στον Λόγο”

Please visit the [GHM Website](#) website for information and resources:

[GHM 2024 Calendar of Daily Activities](#)

Join us on Friday, March 22nd for a Social Event at Floga Restaurant: [GHM Social Event](#)

Join us on Sunday, April 7th at 1:30 pm for the Greek Independence Parade on the Danforth (meet at 15 Phin Avenue at 1:00 pm)

Join us for the GHM Closing Event on Saturday, April 13th at the Greek Community Centre at 30 Thorncliffe Park Drive from 1 to 3 pm.

For further information, please contact anna.epitropou@tdsb.on.ca, GHM Chair

Ramadan 2024. Monday, March 11, 2024, marks the first week of Ramadan, one of the holiest months of Islamic calendar. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims worldwide abstain from food and water from sunrise to sunset for 29 or 30 consecutive days - as determined by the lunar calendar. Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam. Muslims break their fast each evening with a communal dinner called an iftar. During Ramadan, Muslims make every effort to recite the Qur'an, participate in extra prayers, engage in charity, and complete good deeds to reach a higher level of spiritually. Once the month is over, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the festival of breaking the fast with family and friends, wearing special clothes and sharing gifts for up to three days. The TDSB's Islamic Heritage Month Committee (IHM) has collated various resources, which our staff will use to affirm Muslim students' identities during Ramadan.

Breaking Down Barriers to Mental Health in Black Communities with Trey Anthony

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement will be hosting a session during Black Mental Health Week 2024 with award-winning playwright, actor, and wellness expert [Trey Anthony](#) 'Da Kink in My Hair'. Honouring the theme for this year, 'Growth and Reflection,' parents, caregivers, students (Gr. 7-12) and community members are invited to join Trey as she delves into important topics such as the stigma surrounding mental health in Black communities. Drawing from her own personal journey, Trey will shed light on her experience with functional depression and mental health. She will also discuss the importance of seeking help and removing the shame and stigma often associated with mental health struggles.

Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Synchronous virtual

Audience: Parents/ Caregivers, Community, Students (Gr. 7-12)

Register [here](#) or bit.ly/3ORt7om

For more information contact, jeffrey.caton@tdsb.on.ca, Centrally Assigned Principal, or lindsey.marshall@tdsb.on.ca , Program Coordinator, Centre of Excellence for Black Student.



Webinar Wednesdays

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is hosting its second session of the 2023 - 2024 Webinar Wednesdays series. The aim of this **virtual series** is to provide space for Black parents and caregivers, and families raising Black children to support their children's success, academic achievement, and overall well-being as they transition from high school. Through collaborations with various post-secondary institutions, the Webinar Wednesdays series shares information and resources on various topics, including, but not limited to, graduation and post-secondary pathways. This session will focus **on Pathways to Skilled Trades**. Join us as we learn more about the various pathways and apprenticeship programs.

Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 | **Time:** 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual | Registration link: bit.ly/42zc7sY

For more information contact, jeffrey.caton@tdsb.on.ca, Centrally Assigned Principal, or lindsey.marshall@tdsb.on.ca , Program Co-ordinator, Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement.

National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM): Legacy and Excellence of Black Muslims Workshop.

This [workshop](#) offers a historical overview of the excellence, resilience, and resistance of Black Muslim communities globally. Attention will be given to the untold stories of Black Muslim trailblazers and contemporary changemakers. The workshop will conclude with practical resources and recommendations to promote the ongoing affirmation and recognition of the achievements and wide-spanning contributions of Black Muslims within our local and global communities.

Date: March 5, 2024

Time: 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Audience: Parents/ Caregivers, Community, Students (Gr. 7-12)

Location: Virtual

Register [here](#) or bit.ly/49HwLcx

Health and Well-Being

The **TDSB Special Education & Inclusion Team** will be hosting a **virtual** session for parents/caregivers of students with special needs to learn about the following:

- *Transitions for Students with an IEP*
- *Elementary to Secondary Transitions*
- *Post-Secondary Transitions*
- *School/Home Partnerships*
- *Resources*

Information on how to sign up can be found by clicking on the following links:

Morning Session – March 5th from 10:00 am – 11:00 am

[FLYER Parent Session March 5th AM Session.pptx - Google Slides](#)

Evening Session – March 6th from 6:30 pm – 7: 30 pm

[FLYER Parent Session March 6th PM Session.pptx - Google Slides](#)



Mental Health Resources: Mental Health and Well-Being is essential to student success. The TDSB is committed to improving the mental health and well-being of students and has created resources to achieving this goal. Please sure sure to visit the [MHWB website](#) these resources.

Protecting Yourself Against Scams: The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has led to a rapid increase in scamming activities using AI, which almost perfectly reproduces a person's voice. An "impersonation scam" occurs when criminals make use of AI created voices to read pre-prepared scripts in order to trick people into giving the scammers money. These scenarios can include:

- A young individual was arrested and needs cash to make bail.
- A family member has been kidnapped and they require a ransom for release.
- A friend, claiming to be stranded, urgently needs money for travel expenses.

Scammers will often use pressure tactics like the emergency situations listed above to make you feel like you have no choice but to give them money. These calls are, by design, very stressful, and AI makes it practically impossible to tell reality from fiction. Therefore, it is very important to follow the tips below to better react to and prevent fraud:

- Contact the friend or family member, or someone who can confirm their condition, to ascertain whether or not the original call was genuine.
- Be cautious about what you post online, as scammers will gather voice clips from social media and through other means to create the clone.
- Consider setting a code word for phone calls with close ones as authentication.

Please review the following resources which will deepen your understanding and better protect yourself and the people around you from voice cloning scams.

- [Police believe AI voice cloning used to scam seniors](#) (Video)
- [Ontario man out \\$8K in scam that uses AI to mimic voices of friends and family](#) (Article)

As times change, so too do fraudsters. It is important to keep yourself safe, so please remember these cyber tips and stay vigilant about new and dangerous scams.

***NEW* Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Helpline 9-8-8**

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) through the Canadian Radio and Television Corporation (CRTC) has announced on November 30th, 2023, a national three-digit Mental Health and Suicide Prevention hotline number, 988, will be in effect.

CMH's new role in leading the development of 988 service delivery in Canada builds on their experience delivering Talk Suicide Canada, previously known as the Canada Suicide Prevention Service. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has been selected as the organization to lead the coordination of service delivery for the national three-digit number.

In the face of increased demand for crisis services, **9-8-8** provides:

- A number that's easy to remember in a crisis.
- Support in English and in French, by phone and text.
- Quick access to support from trained responders, available 24/7/365.
- High quality, evidence-based, equitable suicide prevention and crisis support for everyone in Canada.



For more information about 9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline, visit <https://988.ca>.

More information is also available at [9-8-8 | CAMH](#) and [9-8-8 number for mental health and suicide prevention | CRTC](#)

Kids' Helplines:

Kids Help Phone Line is a 24 hour/7 days per week crisis line that youth can contact for support:
Online Chat: www.kidshelpphone.ca Phone: 1-800-668-6868 Text: 686868

Black Youth Help Line – available 9 AM – 10 PM www.blackyouth.ca 416-285-9944

LGBT Youth Line – Sunday – Friday 4 PM – 9:30 PM – PEER SUPPORT*

Live chat: www.youthline.ca Text: 647-694-4275 Call: 1-800-268-9688

Naseeha - Muslim Mental Health Help Phone – 1-866-Naseeha (627-3342)

Call: 1-866-627-3342 (7 days/week 12-9 PM) Text: 1-866-627-3342 (Mon-Fri 12-9 PM)

Hope for Wellness Help Chat – offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada

Live chat: www.hopeforwellness.ca Call: 1-855-242-3310 (24/7)

Other Resources:

Help Ahead is the centralized resource and intake phone line for multiple trusted community-based mental health organizations in Toronto. Help Ahead has up-to-date information about the available programs and services and can find local supports to address the needs of your child and family.

<https://www.helpahead.ca/> 1-866-585-6486

What's Up Walk-In Clinic provides free mental health counselling for children, youth, young adults and their families, and family with infants. <https://www.whatsupwalkin.ca/resources/>

One Stop Talk is a free, confidential service that lets children and youth aged 0-17 years call or connect online from anywhere in Ontario to get brief mental health services. Parents seeking services are encouraged to visit *One Stop Talk* with their child to ensure access to a session.

<https://onestoptalk.ca/> 1-855-416-8255

Upcoming Dates & Events

Mar. 1	Black History Month Assembly
Mar. 4	Anti-Trafficking Assembly
Mar. 5	STEM + Ottawa Trip Parent Information Night @ 6:30 in the Learning Hub
Mar. 7	PEEL GOT's TALENT Night @ 6:30 pm
Mar. 11-15	March Break

Parent Concern Protocol

1

Classroom Teacher

Step One

If you have any questions or concerns, the first person to go to is your classroom teacher. The classroom teacher can help with:

- Any questions about the classroom
- Classroom rules and consequences
- Homework and assignments

2

School Principal

Step Two

If you would like more information or you have questions that are beyond the classroom, the school principal can help.

- Concerns about an individual school
- Student registration
- Student schedules
- Student suspensions
- Report card concerns
- Classroom concerns
- Code of Conduct
- Safety and security
- Budget and fundraising
- School Council

3

School Superintendents

Step Three

Superintendents are responsible for a Network of Schools. They support school staff and can be contacted if you have questions that have not been answered or for help with:

- Alternate attendance request
- Suspension appeals

4

Trustees

Step Four

Trustees are your elected community officials. They are available to help you with the following areas of the TDSB:

- Concerns about your community
- Ideas and suggestions for the Board
- Items on Board Agenda
- Board policies under review
- Board budget
- Collective bargaining

Board Office

You can contact the Board Office directly for any questions or concerns related to:

- Continuing Education
- Night and summer school
- Adult education
- ESL
- Board documents

Phone: 416-397-3000 • Email: GeneralInquiries@TDSB.on.ca

School Information

School Phone #: (416) 395 – 3250

School's Twitter: @GeorgesVanierSS

School's Website:

<https://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/georgesvanier>

Our Student Support Team:

Guidance:

Jennifer Hayward (Assistant Curriculum Leader)

Supporting Students with surnames N - Z

jennifer.hayward@tdsb.on.ca

Margarita Leventis

Supporting Students with Surnames G - M

margarite.leventis@tdsb.on.ca

Loraine Chichester

Supporting Students with Surnames A - F

loraine.chichester@tdsb.on.ca

Special Education:

Steven Maurer (Assistant Curriculum Leader)

steven.maurer@tdsb.on.ca

Student Success:

Paula Burgess (Assistant Curriculum Leader)

paula.burgess@tdsb.on.ca

Superintendent: Kurt McIntosh (LC2|LN11)

416-395-8808 • Kurt.McIntosh@tdsb.on.ca

Trustee: James Li • Ward 13

416-395-8787 • James.Li@tdsb.on.ca