

Vanier Community Newsletter – Week 25 (March 8, 2024)

Dear Vanier Family,

As we head out into the March break, I want to share some of the amazing feats we accomplished at Vanier this past week. First up, we rocked at the 2024 TDSB Tech Skills Competition, taking home 5 Gold, 1 silver and 3 Bronze awards! Sixteen of our students competed in an array of tech challenges, ranging from Fashion Design, Baking, Animation, Photography and Graphic Design, Coding, Prepared Speech, and Job Interviews. We want to congratulate Francheska Guilalas and Naisha Patel, who won gold and silver, respectively, for fashion design; Beheshta Masjedi, who won gold in baking; Khushi Masjidi and Sreevali Cherukuri, who won gold and bronze, respectively, in the prepared speech competition; Adel Mohamenriaz took bronze in Graphic Design studio production; Stellar Wong and Seth Aboga, won gold and bronze, respectively, in photography; and Hosna Masjidi, who won gold in job interview Skills. A few pics are shared below.

Another big highlight from this past week was our grade-specific student forum, which we affectionally called "Chai and Chat" on Thursday. We want student voice to be the centre of our school improvement plan. So, since the start of the school year, our Equity Committee has been engaging our staff in analyzing last year's student census data. The data, for the most part, told us **what** students thought. Still, to truly engage in equitable practices that improve our student's well-being and academic achievement, we need to know **why** they feel the way they do and gather their ideas to improve things at Vanier. We are so grateful for the students who volunteered to be part of this very important student forum and to the staff who helped to facilitate it, our teaching staff - Ms. Charron, Ms. Davidson, Ms. Manji, Ms. Maharaj, Ms. Shahbazian, Ms. Wong, and Mr. Wong, and our Guidance and Student support staff, Ms. Araujo, Ms. Boswell, Ms. Chichester, Ms. Hayward, Ms. Leventis, and Ms. Storey.



Last but not least, huge congratulations to the staff and students of our PEEL program who held their 2nd annual PEEL's Got Talent show this past Thursday night. Once again, our students demonstrated tremendous talent, spirit, and heart. Thanks to all those who came out.

I wish you all a safe and relaxing March Break. Remember to change your clocks this Sunday, March 10th, by springing forward one hour as we return to Daylight Saving Time. We will see you back in school on Monday, March 18th.

Karen Johnson

Pictures of some of our TDSB Skills Competition Champs



Some Pictures from our PEEL's Got Talent Show





Vanier School Advisory Council (VSAC)

<p>Nalini Devineni (Co-Chair) Stephanie Hennaoui (Co-Chair) Danielle Ferguson-Shivrattan (Secretary) Susanna Scocchia (Teacher Rep) Peju Omirinde (Student Rep)</p>	<p>Cordelia Ramses Saber Ullah Maryam Marzban Ivy C.</p>
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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

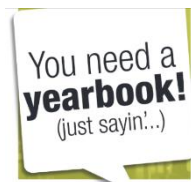
IT'S BACK! The program will start the week of Feb 26 and end, the week of June 3.

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 spirituality. 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.

ASD After School Skills Development Program Spring 2024 Session

The spring session for the ASD After School Leisure Program will run from March 26 – June 13, 2024, in-person and virtual. **The program is available to students in Grades 4-10 who have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.** This program provides an opportunity for students to develop, build and enhance their social-communication skills through either weekly in-person or weekly virtual sessions.

Below is the link for registration of students in Grades 4 – 10 with ASD. The registration period will remain open until Friday, March 15, 2024.

[Afterschool Leisure Program Parent Letter- Spring 2024 .docx](#)

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY (WDSY) 2024

WDSY is marked each year on **March 21**. The 21st day of the 3rd month signifies the triplication of the 21st chromosome which causes Down Syndrome.



Rock Your Socks!!!

Let's Celebrate, in recognition of World Down Syndrome Day

TDSB staff and students are encouraged to 'Rock Your Socks' to raise awareness and create a single global voice advocating for the rights, inclusion, and well-being of people with Down syndrome.

We encourage students to wear mismatched socks or draw pictures of mismatched socks to stir up conversation and remind people that things that are different are still beautiful and wonderful!

[Down-syndrome-fact-sheet \(dsat.ca\)](#)

Health and Well-Being

Black Mental Health Week Resources 2024

TDSB acknowledges Black Mental Health Week, which is from March 4th to March 10th, 2024. This important acknowledgment began with Black Mental Health Day which was initially recognized by the City of Toronto, Taibu Community Health Center, CAFCAN, and Strides Toronto in 2020. In 2021, Black Mental Health Day was expanded to a full week. At TDSB we recognize the global impact Anti-Black racism continues to have on the mental health and wellbeing of individuals, students, and families of African descent.

A day or a week is not sufficient and supporting Black mental health and well-being must be every day. Positive Black mental health, wellness, and well-being are adversely impacted by Anti-Black racism, which is woven into the fabric of our institutions and systems, and we recognize and understand this emotional impact is real, present, and daily. In this link, you will find numerous resources, information, and videos that support [Black mental health and well-being!](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Shameen Sandhu, System Leader, Mental Health & Professional Support Services mentalhealthandwellbeing@tdsb.on.ca



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 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)

***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
Mar. 20	Late Start Day; Classes begin @ 9:55 am
Mar. 27	Late Start Day; Classes begin @ 9:55 am
April 4	Parent-Teacher Interviews
April 11 & 12	R.E.A.C.H & OSSLT DAYS

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

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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

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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

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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](https://twitter.com/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