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Lion's Den

Lion pride

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5



JANUARY, 2009

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

- JAN.19-HOT CHOCOLATE DAY
- JAN.20 CPR TRAINING GR.7
- JAN.30 SPIRIT DAY -PJ DAY

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Mr. S Webb, Principal

Parents as Literacy Supporters-PALS

Each year over 500 000 students in Canada enter Grade One, beginning their formal academic careers. The majority of these students are ready for school. They come to school healthy, well-rested, curious and eager to learn, ready to work cooperatively with other children and to follow teacher instructions. These students are prepared for school because they have been read to at home and have been involved in creative activities like colouring or painting. Due to this, they have age-appropriate language skills and a good level of general knowledge.

However, research tells us that up to 40% of these students arrive on their first day of school a year to two behind in this development. Some of their social, behavioural and learning difficulties are so severe that it will effect their en-

tire schooling experience. Children who demonstrate these learning and social challenges at age five are more likely to drop out of high school than those who come ready to learn.

A child's first five years are magical ones for development. Children's earliest experiences and environment set the stage for their later development and success in school and in life.

School readiness, therefore, begins at home.

With this in mind, the staff at Heximer is thrilled to be a part of the "PALS—Parents as Literacy Supporters" program. This program is *free* and is designed to improve children's performance in reading and writing.

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The staff of Heximer wish you a Happy New Year and hope that 2009 is a prosperous and healthy one for each of you. We are looking forward to working with your children and celebrating their accomplishments with you. As always, we strive to make Heximer a safe and positive place to learn. Our main message to all students at Heximer is that we need to treat everyone, students and adults, with re-

spect. Each of us plays an important role in making our school safe.

We are encouraged by the generosity and the care that the Heximer community demonstrated at Christmas. Thank you for your donations of gifts and food for Project Share.

We continue to demonstrate by our actions, that **Heximer is a "Great Place to Be!"**

Communication Matters: “*Smart talk from your DSBN Speech-Language Pathologists*”

Social skills develop as children mature. Most of us learn social skills automatically. We don't have to think about what we do and *say*, it seems to come naturally.

Poor social skills are common for children with learning challenges. Social skills include *verbal communication* as well as *nonverbal communication* (e.g. facial expression, body language) plus the ability to *think* through social situations. Having good social communication skills helps students to develop positive relationships with others. Difficulties with social language development often interferes with learning, relationships and inclusion/exclusion in school activities.

Nonverbal or physical difficulties can include: poor eye contact; difficulty maintaining appropriate social distance; body language does not match speech (e.g. emotions are stronger than the situation calls for, lack of responses to situations and people); facial expressions do not match the topic or situation (e.g. smiling inappropriately); doesn't use gestures (e.g. waving; shaking hands; nodding head).

Verbal difficulties can include: talks about random topics; constantly interrupts conversations of others; shares too much information in a conversation; unable to take turns or difficulty waiting for or sharing a turn; insistence on being first every time; doesn't use pro-social communication (e.g. manners; giving and accepting compliments; may insult others unintentionally); doesn't know how to initiate communication with others or in group situations; avoids groups or group activities.

Thinking difficulties can include: seems unaware of other's needs or emotions when communicating; takes jokes, sarcasm, and irony literally; laughs or talks at inappropriate times; forgets to take turns in conversation; doesn't pick up on cues to continue a conversation; doesn't consider his/her words before speaking and how these will affect others.

Children with social communication difficulties need to be shown and taught to understand other peoples' feelings and behaviours. Sometimes children don't know which social skills to use and when to use them. Speak to your child's teacher if you think your child is experiencing social communication difficulties that are impacting upon learning and social success.

High School Open House

Information will be going home with our Grade 8 students in January regarding the process of completing their intentions sheets for high school. Mr. Blouin, Principal at Stamford, will be coming to Heximer in early January to speak to our graduates about Stamford and the whole “transition” process. Open House at **Stamford is on January 15th, 6:30p.m.** Please make every effort to go over the information and attend the open house as they will provide some valuable information for you.

*An important message about
Inclement Weather Procedures...*

There may be times during the school year where inclement weather or other situations could cause transportation cancellations or school closures.

Information about transportation changes and school closures will be available on the websites, radio and television stations listed below as soon as it is available. Please do not phone the school for transportation or school closure information.

<p>Websites: www.dsbn.org www.nsts.ca</p>	<p>Radio Stations: CKTB 610 am CHML 900 am KLite - 102.9 fm EZRock 105.7 fm Y-108 - 107.9 fm Wave 94.7 fm Htz 97.7 fm The River - 105.1 fm</p>
<p>Television Stations: COGECO Cable 10 CHCH Television City TV</p>	

If early dismissal becomes necessary, we will use the emergency numbers you provided on the confidential form which was sent home in September. If your contact numbers have changed, please call the office with your updated information.

PLEASE NOTE: The school may be open even though student transportation has been cancelled. The decision to send children to school is always at the parent's discretion.

Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club is offered to all students free of charge. This service is provided by the generous support from Niagara Nutrition Partners, private donations and organizations that kindly donate product and funds. Breakfast is served from 8:10 a.m. - 8:40 a.m..

Many thanks to Rosehill Auction in Fort Erie and Latcham Marine for their donations to our breakfast club program and to all of the volunteers who donate their time. You make a difference!

Please consider making a donation to our Breakfast Club by dropping off a breakfast item (cereal, juice boxes, etc.). Your support is appreciated.



Parents as Literacy Supporters cont'd

This program is offered to families with children who will be starting JK in September. Before starting Kindergarten, children and parents/caregivers will attend 6 sessions at Heximer. During the sessions, parents and caregivers will learn strategies and activities to assist

their child's development of critical literacy skills. In each session, families will go home with a book and activity to support the topic/strategy they were working on at the session. This important home-school connection is critical in assisting children with their transition to school.

Attached to the newsletter is a flyer for PALS which provides more detailed information about registering. Please be sure to let anyone you may know with a child who will be 4 years old before Dec. 31/09.

PALS first session at Heximer is Tuesday, January 20 from 12:30 - 2:30.

PARENT PRINTS



* Hot Chocolate Day -
Monday Jan. 19
(1 cup for \$0.25)

* Spirit Day -
Friday Jan. 30 - PJ Day

* Pasta Night (Feb.26)

tickets on sale in Jan.

* Parent Council Meetings
Mon Jan 5 & Mon Feb 2

* Thank-you for the donations
to the Humane Society!

* Congratulations to our Raffle
Basket winners - Mary Lou
Turner and Margaret Orange

* Your support has given Hexi-

mer's literacy program money for new *Take Home Reading* books & there's a new set of comfortable reading chairs and some equipment for Heximer's kitchen. We've also purchased digital cameras for the staff & students to use at



**ACHIEVING
SUCCESS
TOGETHER**

The District School Board of Niagara and Heximer School, are committed to student success by working together to inspire and empower all learners to reach their full potential.

We value Relationships, Respect and Responsibility.

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KiNDeRGaRTeN CoUNTDowN

Do you know a child who is turning 4 or 5 in 2009? Help them get ready for their big first day of school with the DSBN's Kindergarten Countdown.

Parents and children are invited to a **KINDERGARTEN OPEN HOUSE** at our school on *Thursday, February 5, 2008* from **4:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

Attending an open house is a great way for children and their families to see the school, meet teachers and staff, and register for the coming school year.

To find out all of the information you need to prepare your child for kindergarten, go to: **www.dsbni.org** and click on "Kindergarten Countdown".