

This year OCENET and OCDSB schools are hosting international students...

- from 35 countries
- in 22 high school schools and 21 elementary schools,
- and over 136 visiting educators from 7 countries

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## OCENET welcomes students from around the world: COLOMBIA



Monica Podermo Vega (far left), Sarita, Principal Claudia Liliana Iriarte Barrios (centre), Elibeth, with Richard King (far right), Principal of Ridgemont High School

On a cold and brisk morning in February, Principal Claudia Barrios of Colegio Anglo Canadiense in Neiva, Colombia, made a surprise visit to two students from her school, Sarita and Elibeth, who are

attending Ridgemont High School this semester as OCENET international students. It was a warm reunion and both the Colombian principal and recruiting agent Monica Vega were pleased to find the girls very happy

and enjoying their new school in Ottawa. The girls were impressed by the friendly Canadian reception they have received from Principal Richard King, and all the staff and students of Ridgemont.

### Kenyan education officials to visit the OCDSB

With a newly drafted constitution, the education system in Kenya is undergoing significant and far-reaching changes. Recently, the High Commissioner of Kenya, His Excellency Simon Nabukwesi, met with Director of Education Jennifer Adams and OCENET Executive Director Geoff Best to make plans for education officials from the government of Kenya to visit the OCDSB in May to learn about our educational system and visit local schools.

(l-r) OCENET Executive Director Geoff Best, OCDSB Director of Education Jennifer Adams, and His Excellency Ambassador Simon Nabukwesi, Kenya High Commissioner



## Exploring International Partnership Schools

***“The staff and students are looking to increase their opportunities for international exchanges and giving opportunities to our student body to reach out to learn first hand about the diversity of other cultures. Enriching student learning through partnering with schools around the world is important in the development of our students as global citizens.”***

*- Cathy Belanger, Teacher,  
Longfields Davidson Heights SS*



*Principal of Longfields Davidson Heights Secondary School, Patsy Agard, along with international business teacher, Cathy Belanger, sign a formal partnership agreement with Osaka Jogakuin High School, Japan*

One of the easiest and most effective ways in which students, teachers, and schools can start to reach out internationally and actively engage in global citizenship is to explore a partnership with a school in another country.

Partnerships can range from an informal arrangement between two teachers and their respective classes to a formal signed agreement between schools or school boards, from short-term to long-term, from simple to elaborate, and from being epals to reciprocal student exchanges.

Over the years, many international school partnerships have been formed in the OCDSB. In the *International Education Initiatives Survey* conducted in October 2011, 18% of elementary and secondary schools indicated they had a partnership with schools in foreign countries, including China, France, Haiti, Italy, Kenya, Spain and Sweden, among others. While 82% of OCDSB schools indicated they had no partnerships, over 52% of schools responded that they would be interested in starting an international school partnership. Obviously, there is a great deal

of interest and opportunity to expand the number of partnerships in the OCDSB.

### **Why a partnership?**

- ▶ Students have the chance to learn about the world and engage in life and culture of others in a firsthand experiential way;
- ▶ Students work collaboratively on joint global citizenship tasks, develop cultural competencies, and communicate across cultures;
- ▶ Students use critical thinking skills and are challenged to reflect upon their own society;
- ▶ Teachers develop international professional learning communities and share knowledge about teaching and learning as a means of enhancing their professional development;
- ▶ Administrators are motivated by the experience of seeing students actively engaged and of teachers applying strategies such as differentiated instruction and critical thinking;
- ▶ Parents and the community benefit by sharing in the enthusiasm of the students and staff, and can contribute to the partnership through billeting students or organizing intercultural functions.

### **Getting Started**

Deciding to form an international school partnership requires careful consideration as it involves some extra work on the part of staff and students, and there can be some frustrations when expectations are not

**cont'd on page 3**

## Exploring International Partnership Schools (cont'd)

met. There can be technical glitches, language hurdles, personality differences, and time zone constraints as well. Nevertheless, talk with the vast majority of principals, teachers, and students who have an international school partnership and they will enthusiastically respond that conquering any of the possible roadblocks is well worth the effort. In some cases, a school partnership evolves from personal or professional connections. Sometimes schools link with international "sister" cities. Alternatively, a partnership develops on the initiative of one teacher keen to find a partner school, but if a school is striving for a longer

term relationship that is sustainable over time, it is advisable to involve several people and ideally to form a school committee. Learn more by checking out some of the web links in the info box below.

### Nature of partnerships

Strong international school partnerships develop if the students are engaged because they view the partnership as exciting and meaningful, as well as recognizing its link to their curriculum through a specific project. The most common types of international partnerships include a focus on one of the following areas:

▶ Second language learning;

- ▶ Curricular enrichment (e.g., art and/or music or cross-curricular themes, such as "equity" or "citizenship");
- ▶ Intercultural study of culture and identity;
- ▶ Special joint projects.

### Next Steps

Consider the benefits to students in developing an international partnership, and then explore the many varieties of international partnerships available. Please contact the staff at OCENET who can assist in presenting the many possibilities for our OCDSB schools to pursue an international school partnership.

***"As a parent, I am delighted that my daughter has had the opportunity...to experience another culture by living with a family and getting to know everyday life in Spain. This kind of educational experience ... fosters cultural understanding and tolerance, promotes friendships across borders, and instills a love of international travel, language and learning."***

*- from a parent of a Nepean High School student*

## INFO BOX: Learn more about partnership schools

Alberta Education Guide to International School Partnerships:

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/898881/electronic%20english%20version.pdf>

British Council:

<http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/>

European Schools Exchange Network:

<http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm>

Tips for getting students involved:

[http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/inspiration/involving\\_pupils.htm](http://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/inspiration/involving_pupils.htm)

Virtual classroom – practical suggestions:

<http://www.virtualclassroom.org>

## The Nepean High School International Partnership Experience



*Nepean HS students enjoying the language, culture and cuisine of Spain*

In 2011, Nepean High School signed a partnership with Instituto de Enseñanza Secundaria "Campo de San Alberto" from Noia, Galicia, in northern Spain, with the goal of fostering intercultural exchanges between students and teachers. For 15 days in March 2012, five Nepean HS students and their teachers, Ms. Coulombe and Ms. Pelletier, lived with their host families, and each Nepean student "shadowed" the Spanish students by attending classes and exploring the rich history and culture around the fishing community of 14,000. The Ottawa students were treated like VIPs and were totally immersed in the local culture that included speaking Spanish and sampling the local cuisine, the specialty being octopus. The Nepean students will have an opportunity to reunite and return the hospitality of their Galician hosts when their Spanish partnership school students visit Ottawa in May.

## Teach Abroad: An OCENET program which gives educators teaching opportunities around the world



Ross Laing, International Education Coordinator, promoting OCENET's Teach Abroad program at the OISE Teacher Recruitment Fair

During the past few months Greg Duggan, Director of Studies of YPLS, and Ross Laing, International Education Coordinator, attended several teacher recruitment fairs at universities throughout Ontario, including the University of Ottawa and Queens' University, among others. At these fairs, Greg and Ross met hundreds of educators who were keen to learn about OCENET's Teach Abroad program.

The teacher recruitment fairs are attended by educational agencies which recruit

educators to teach internationally.

Over the past year OCENET has developed Teach Abroad, which assists in placing Canadian educators in teaching and administrative positions overseas.

Since teaching positions are increasingly scarce in Ontario, the Teach Abroad program provides opportunities for recent B.Ed. graduates who want to gain teaching experience and explore life and culture in another country. The pro-

gram also attracts retired teachers and others who have educational qualifications.

Currently there are several positions available in Vietnam, China, South Korea and The Netherlands. Information regarding teaching positions is updated regularly on the ocnec.ca website, and can be found at the following link:

<http://www.ocnet.ca/ocnet/cms/teach-abroad/page/show/teaching-positions>

## Meet OCENET: YPLS Director of Studies, Greg Duggan



Greg Duggan, Director of Studies of the Young People's Language School (YPLS)

*Each issue of Global Connections will include a feature interview with one of the OCENET team*

### What are your roles at OCENET?

I'm the Director of Studies at the Young People's Language School. (YPLS). I oversee the delivery of curriculum, develop the educational programs, teach classes, coordinate teaching staff, and communicate with the various stakeholders in our students' education.

### What is YPLS?

The Young People's Language School is the division of OCENET that provides academic ESL programming for international students in Ottawa. YPLS operates year-round, and our regular programs accommodate anywhere from 80 to 120 students each year. We currently have students from China, Japan, South Korea, Chile, and Colombia.

### What is the purpose of YPLS?

Our primary objective is to prepare our students to make a successful transition to a Canadian high school. To do this, we focus on the development of each student's English ability and learning skills.

### How did you become interested in international education?

I travelled to Japan upon completing my B.A. in English and discovered an interest in and aptitude for teaching and inter-cultural communication, important aspects of international education. I've been involved in teaching, particularly in the field of ESL, ever since.

### Which of your accomplishments at OCENET gives you the most satisfaction?

Whenever former YPLS students have success in their Canadian high school, I

feel a great deal of satisfaction. Most of our students come to us with very little functional ability in English, so when they move on and do well, it tells us that we are doing something right at YPLS.

### What are some of your personal interests and pastimes?

I'm very involved in sports and physical fitness. I help coach my son's hockey team and have recently discovered an enthusiasm for boxing.

### What new projects are you working on with OCENET?

Currently, I'm coordinating OCENET's Teach Abroad program which helps qualified Canadian educators find rewarding teaching positions internationally. I'm also involved in planning two new programs which we aim to start offering during the summer of 2013.

## Life as an “international student” at Brookfield High School



Both in Grade 11, Stephanie from China and Long from Vietnam, are international students enjoying the classes and their friends at Brookfield

Even though the two international students featured in this article may have been studying in Ottawa for very different lengths of time and have come from different countries, they both share a common appreciation for the friendly and positive learning environment they are experiencing at Brookfield High School.

### Stephanie's story

Having arrived from Shanghai only three months ago, Stephanie is a newcomer to Brookfield. One of Stephanie's prime motivations for studying in Canada is to improve her English skills. A different language was one of the biggest challenges for her at first, but Stephanie has overcome her shyness and feels much more

self-confident as “I feel I am out-going now.” She enjoys the choices she has selecting her courses and feels she is becoming more independent and mature. She finds her teachers very approachable and appreciates the thoughtfulness and care of her Homestay family. Her advice to new international students is to “depend on yourself and be yourself.”

### Long's story

A student at Brookfield for three years now, Long feels very happy studying in Ottawa. He is focused on his studies as a way towards achieving future success. With some determination, he overcame his initial shyness and has made many Canadian friends. He feels he adapted well to Brookfield because of the support and friendly help of the teachers and his fellow students. Of his host family, he says: “I consider my Homestay family the best Homestay family.” His advice to new international students is to get involved in school activities, such as sports or clubs.

**“...I feel that everyone in this school is my friend, everyone.”**

- Long, international student from Vietnam

## HOMESTAY update by Jennifer MacKie



-photo by Melanie Turcotte

Canada Homestay host Barb and international student Jin prepare dumplings at the Chinese cuisine cooking class

Canada Homestay recently hosted two Cultural Cuisine classes at the Westboro Superstore. The event was open to international students, host families and friends to foster the relationships that are so important to our international community.

In the morning a Chinese Cuisine class was held, and in the afternoon, a South American/Brazilian themed class was enjoyed by participants. Recipes and nutrition tips were shared and new friendships were forged by all who attended.



Canada Homestay Network  
Incorporating Canada Homestay International  
Serving Canada from Coast to Coast



## Thinking About Becoming A Homestay Host?

Among the many benefits of being a Homestay host:

- make a significant difference to the life of a student from another country
- learn about people from other cultures
- make friends across the world
- introduce your children to an intercultural experience
- share Canadian culture and life in Ottawa
- Host Support 24/7
- receive an honorarium to cover expenses

Visit “Hosts” at  
[www.canadahomestaynetwork.ca](http://www.canadahomestaynetwork.ca)

## New program encourages students to be global citizens



*The members of the International Education Advisory Committee discussing the new International Certificate*

**“The International Certificate pilot project will provide our students with a wonderful opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes with respect to global citizenship and cultural proficiency. The project demonstrates our district's continued and growing commitment to international education.”**  
 - Pino Buffone,  
 OCDSB Superintendent of Curriculum

Starting this September, a pilot project will be initiated in four OCDSB secondary schools which enables students to pursue an OCDSB International Certificate.

This new International Certificate program recognizes those students who demonstrate a commitment to global citizenship by completing a series of three components:

**Component 1:** learning an international language besides English and French  
**Component 2:** completing credits from a selection of Grade 11 and 12 courses with an international focus  
**Component 3:** engaging actively in an international experience, which may be completed through, for example, an international student exchange or by assisting international projects locally by working for an NGO or involvement in a student organization that has a specific international focus.

A final requirement involves assembling an international portfolio of the student's accomplishments and is an opportunity to showcase commitment to being a global citizen. The portfolio includes a presentation and personal reflections.

Students who register for the program will be assisted by an International Certificate Advisor in their school who is a teacher who has a keen interest in international education and who will provide support and encouragement for students as they work towards fulfilling the requirements of the International Certificate.

The benefits of this type of program are tremendous for all involved. In terms of personal growth, the certificate will encourage students to become more culturally proficient and globally competent. There is an emphasis on language acquisition and leadership skills. Academic achieve-

ment is an important cornerstone of the program, but so is the necessity of some type of international experience and engagement. The International Certificate may also be influential in assisting students to make future career choices. In addition, teachers will be encouraged to internationalize course content.

While several Ontario schools offer a variation of this kind of program at the school level, it is believed that this is the first time this kind of recognition for students who are committed and involved in global citizenship initiatives will be formally acknowledged through a certificate program at the board level. Based upon the feedback and results from the pilot year, consideration may be given to extending the program to elementary students, to teachers, and to individual schools as a way of recognizing their international engagement by promoting global citizenship in our schools.

## OCENET and OCDSB “star” in a documentary

In March, a film crew from Korea visited OCDSB schools to interview students, teachers and administrators about ways in which inclusion and diversity are embedded within the culture and curricula of our schools. The OCDSB and OCENET were selected because of their exemplary practices, and are the only Canadian educational institutions to be featured in a series of documentaries on international education initiatives to be aired on Korean national television later this year.



*Members of the Korean documentary film crew interviewing Marianne Harvey, Principal of Rockcliffe Park Public School*

*OCENET Tip Sheet #1:*

## **WELCOMING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO YOUR SCHOOL**



International students face many challenges upon arriving in Canada to attend an OCDSB school. For these students there are adjustments to new living arrangements with a Homestay family, there may be language barriers and major cultural differences to overcome, there is a new school environment with lots of new faces and names, and there may be very different curriculum expectations and classroom routines. These students are a long way from home and far from everything that is familiar. The vast majority of the students will make a very successful adjustment to life and school during their stay in Canada, but we can show care and support for our international students with some of these proven ways to help them make a less stressful and more successful transition to their new school:

- ▶ Establish a series of standard school protocols for welcoming international students
- ▶ Select a friendly staff member to welcome all international students and provide time and resources to assist with this designated role. Some schools have assigned a staff member to the role of “International Student Advisor” who acts as a “go-to” person and advocate for supporting international students and teachers
- ▶ Provide an informal orientation tour of the school from student peers
- ▶ Assign each international student a “buddy”
- ▶ Introduce the “new” international students to other “experienced” international students at the school
- ▶ Consider classroom assignments or timetabling international students along with at least one other student who speaks the same language
- ▶ Give international students a copy of their timetable, being sure to explain how it works and checking for understanding
- ▶ Introduce students to your school’s webpage
- ▶ Invite international students to a formal group orientation meeting (within the first three weeks) which allows the students to get to know each other and enables the Principal or designate(s) to relay key information and answer questions from the students
- ▶ Encourage international students to become involved in school life by informing them about student clubs, sports teams, and extracurricular opportunities
- ▶ Display a world map or the flag(s) of the country of origin of your school’s international student(s) in a prominent location in the school
- ▶ Learn how to say simple greetings such as “Hello” or “How are you today?” in the languages of your school’s international students
- ▶ Inform staff about any international students before they arrive at the school
- ▶ Host a lunch or reception for your international students within six weeks of the students arriving at your school
- ▶ Know the stages of cultural transition [Honeymoon (may last for days, weeks to months), Frustration (about the 3<sup>rd</sup> month), Acceptance (about 6 months), Adaptation (after 6 months)] and monitor how well your international students are dealing with “culture shock”
- ▶ Use funds the school receives for hosting international students to facilitate activities specifically for the international students, such as experiencing a “Canadian” outdoor activity or attending a cultural event representative of Canada.
- ▶ Inform your Parent Council and school community on your school website and in newsletters about hosting international students and visitors at your school
- ▶ Invite a member of the OCENET staff to make a presentation at a staff meeting on the benefits of international students bring to a school or on intercultural awareness



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## OCENET links to the OCDSB Strategic Plan

International education initiatives are directly or indirectly linked to the 4 Key Priority Areas of the 2011-2015 OCDSB Strategy Map, and specifically to the following priority areas:

**Well-Being #3:** *“In collaboration with community partners, develop specific strategies to further the cultural proficiency of the school district in terms of inclusive and accessible practices and a workplace representative of the workplace we serve”*

**Engagement #2:** *“Develop a framework for and initiate effective partnerships with organizations that enrich our schools as community hubs”*

**Engagement #4:** *“Develop a strategy that supports and encourages engagement in provincial, national and international initiatives to encourage organizational learning and global citizenship”*

**Leadership #4:** *“Encourage and support student leadership and citizenship to promote global competencies”*

## The Branches of OCENET



**INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS**  
Elementary School  
High School  
University Preparation



**GROUP PROJECTS**  
English Immersion  
Teacher Training  
Summer Programs



**ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
SCHOOL**  
Academic English  
Leadership and  
Outdoor Education Programs  
Summer Study



Please direct any comments,  
questions, or suggestions to:  
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