

**This semester
OCENET and
OCDSB schools
hosted**

- **439** international students (250 new arrivals)
- from **30** countries
- in **22** high school schools and **9** elementary schools,
- and over **130** visiting educators from **6** countries

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OCENET welcomes students from around the world



The OCENET international students pose for a group shot at "Ride into the Mist"

In late September OCDSB international students were invited to participate in an extended weekend excursion to explore Toronto and Niagara Falls. Over 100 students took advantage of this opportunity to get to know each other better and to become more familiar with Can-

ada. Highlights in Toronto included a shopping trip at the Eaton Centre and dinner at the Hard Rock Café, followed by a chance to view Toronto from the heights of the CN Tower. Early the next morning, the group ventured to Niagara Falls to experience a cruise on the

Maid of the Mist tour and the "Niagara Fury Experience" in 4D! The last day of the trip included a visit to enjoy the thrills of Canada's Wonderland. Everyone thoroughly appreciated this special opportunity to become more at home in Canada.

International Education Initiatives Survey 2011

An online survey of 20 questions related to international education initiatives taking place in all OCDSB elementary and secondary schools was distributed in October.

Congratulations to the staff and students of Convent Glen Public School for winning the draw for submitting survey responses by October 21. For a summary of the results, see page 5.



Convent Glen PS Principal Rita Cardarelli is presented with a "flip" camera by OCENET Executive Director Geoff Best

OCENET Homestay Student Forum

Over 170 Homestay students arrived in Ottawa during late August and early September to attend OCDSB schools as new international students. For most of these students it was their first time in Ottawa; they were away from their family about to attend a new school in a different country and live with a Homestay host family.

student make a successful adjustment to life and school in Canada.

Most people progress through a predictable series of steps in making the adjustment to a new environment and lifestyle. Adapting to a new school and a new country can be difficult. Being away from home, family and friends, sometimes for

Based on the online survey results, the international students showed an extremely high level of comfort with all aspects of their experience. Most love being in Canada, enjoy their Homestay host families and like all of their school classes. The overwhelming majority are happy, making new friends, and participating in extracurricular school

“ At different times your attitudes and feelings will change because of the different stages in your [international student] experience .”

from *The Exchange Student Survival Kit* (p. 51)
by Bettina Hansel



Students attending the student forum discuss solutions to scenarios common to international students

Nonetheless, each of these students had an extensive support system already in place upon their arrival. Whether from a friendly welcome by the Homestay family to visiting the OCENET offices at the Albert Street Education Centre, from the support of the Homestay and OCENET Orientation sessions to the help of Guidance counselors in their new schools, everyone involved is dedicated to assist each new international

the first time, can also be very challenging for some students.

As a way of monitoring how each international student is doing, students are asked to give feedback on their experience. This year students were invited to complete an online survey about their feelings on their Homestay placement, their school, and how they are coping personally in their new environments.

activities. Everyone feels their learning is progressing and that their English language skills are improving.

During the morning of Saturday, October 29, all new international students and their host families were invited to attend workshops at the Albert Street Education Centre. The Homestay host parents attended information sessions in the Library with the Homestay

cont'd on page 3

The Homestay Experience



Homestay host parents Lorna Charbonneau and Pete Seguin with Alicia, Felicitas and Cara

What's it like being in a host family? What's it like being a host parent? Here's the story of one local Homestay family.

Host parents Lorna Charbonneau and Pierre Seguin have enjoyed hosting 30 plus students to date. According to Lorna the most interesting aspect of being a host parent is "the gratification I feel when we see the students progressing and blossoming in school. Their levels of con-

fidence and independence increase dramatically."

Felicitas is from Germany and enjoys being with her host family because she has independence, but if she has a question or concern Lorna and Pete are always there to help with guidance and support. When Felicitas first arrived in Ottawa, her host family helped her get her bus pass, and attended parent teacher meetings to

provide assistance to Felicitas. In her words: "My host family is really fantastic!"

Cara is an international student from China. Here are Cara's thoughts about her Homestay experience: "I am enjoying my time here because everyone in my host family is very friendly. My host parents take me shopping and also keep in contact with my teachers to deal with any issue at school."

From Vietnam, Alicia is very appreciative of the home environment that Lorna and Pete provide: "I really enjoy living with my host family. They are ideal hosts; we are like a family. They have helped me with a lot things such as reviewing my homework, explaining new words, and coping with culture shock. They are friendly and great to be with."

"From the beginning of their journey to the end, when they come to Canada they are changed forever; we all are enriched and friends forever too."

*- from Lorna Charbonneau,
Homestay host parent*

OCENET Homestay Student Forum (cont'd)

coordinators while the students attended a brief plenary session in the Auditorium where they were informed about intercultural communication and the common stages that a new international student experiences. All were re-assured that any occasional feelings of "homesickness" and "culture shock" are natural for everyone.

Later, students were divided into groups of 20-25 students each to attend a workshop on a series of realistic scenarios which a

new international student might face. Students had an opportunity to meet with each other and to brainstorm collaboratively for ways to solve the issues presented in the scenarios. These scenarios covered a broad range of "real life" and practical topics dealing with issues such as homework, food choices, assisting with Homestay chores, physical exercise, things to do in Ottawa, and internet usage. Students put their heads together to arrive at and share constructive ways in which to overcome and suc-

cessfully adjust to the changes and challenges of being an international student. Students found the morning to be energizing, rewarding and helpful.

Local teachers generously volunteered to assist in facilitating the workshops and the student discussions.

Many thanks to Mr. Best, Mr. Duggan, Ms. Hanes, Ms. Hemstreet, Ms. Rapsey and Mr. Speidel for supporting our newly arrived international students.



YPLS students explore Ottawa's Haunted Walk tour



YPLS students share a hug and a laugh

Young People's Language School students "shadow" at Glebe and Gloucester High Schools

The Young People's Language School (YPLS) has an essential role within OCENET because it supports international students who need to further develop their English language skills before attending an OCDSB secondary school.

Currently there are 22 students enrolled in the program. These students come from around the globe and take classes at the Albert Street Education Centre to acquire the level of English language proficiency necessary to be successful when

they attend their assigned high school at the beginning of next semester. YPLS consists of two classrooms, a computer lab, and a recreation area. Students and visitors are greeted by Ms. Insook Bowman upon entering the YPLS offices. Teachers at the school include the Director of Studies, Mr. Greg Duggan, and six other experienced and enthusiastic staff who teach part-time at YPLS.

As part of becoming familiar with the daily routines and the English skills they will be

learning and using in their classes next semester, the YPLS students will have an opportunity to visit Glebe HS or Gloucester HS in December to "shadow" international students who currently attend those schools. This experience will be a significant change from their current classes at the YPLS Centre, but it will give each student a "taste" of life in the regular school program and relieve any anxiety about what school life will be like when they move to their new schools this coming February.

The People of OCENET: Executive Director Geoff Best

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

1. What is the Ottawa Carleton Education Network (OCENET)?

GB: The Ottawa-Carleton Education Network is a non-profit organization established to provide financial support for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

2. What was the origin of OCENET?

GB: OCENET was the idea of a former OCDSB Director and was created in 1992 to market and sell various services and products of the board. In 1999 OCENET elected to focus on International Education as the primary means for generating revenue.

3. What is your role at OCENET?

GB: As the Executive Direc-

tor I am responsible for the ongoing growth and development of the organization.

4. What are the main goals of OCENET?

GB: The main goals of OCENET include the following: to create an international network of educators and students to share knowledge and expertise; to create a forum for Ottawa students and teachers to meet and learn from international students and teachers; and to provide a sustainable source of funding for the OCDSB.

5. What are some of the accomplishments of OCENET?

GB: Over the last 10 years OCENET has attracted over 2000 students to OCDSB schools. We've also established a language school and provided training to more than 600 teachers from a number of countries includ-

ing Korea, China, Sweden, Spain and Nigeria. Revenue from these initiatives has helped to provide funding to support OCDSB schools and programs in such areas as outdoor education, ESL programming, and a wide variety of individual school projects. We have also partnered with schools in China to provide EFL training to students there, and we are continuing to develop partnerships with schools in other countries. It's an exciting time to be involved in international education!

6. What are the next steps for OCENET?

GB: We will work closely with the OCDSB on international initiatives that will help to promote and support the board's new strategic plan in areas of global citizenship, intercultural learning and in internationalizing the curriculum.



Executive director of OCENET
Geoff Best

By the Numbers: A numerical snapshot of recent survey results

Based upon the responses to the International Education Initiatives Survey 2011, here are some of the findings:

120 OCDSB schools, both elementary and secondary, responded to the survey between its release on October 5 and the closing date of October 21, 2011

86% of schools had sponsored international activities and primarily either for the purposes of fundraising for a cause or to support human rights or social justice issues

66% of schools reported having a student club or group which focuses on international connections or global issues

52% of schools are interested in starting an international partnerships

62% of OCDSB schools have hosted an international student during the past three years

42% of our schools have welcomed an international teacher or delegation of teachers

87% of respondents indicated an interest in hosting an international teacher in their school

19% of our schools have used technology to make a link to school in another country

39% of our schools have modified curriculum to address international issue or initiative

16% of schools have a staff committee

that focuses on international education initiatives

49% of respondents indicated that a staff member has participated in an international teaching exchange

43% of schools indicated that at least one staff member was a fluent speaker of Arabic

42% of respondents have students which have distinguished themselves in demonstrating strong leadership and active engagement in international education projects.

The time each school took to respond to the survey is appreciated. The data generated by the survey will assist both the OCDSB and OCENET in its future planning for international education initiatives.

“...the survey will assist both the OCDSB and OCENET in its future planning for international education initiatives.”

OCENET helps build new play structure for Clifford Bowey Public School

On November 17, the students and staff of Clifford Bowey Public School celebrated the official ribbon-cutting ceremony at the site of newly installed playground structures. OCENET contributed \$50,000 to this project. The playground area is specifically designed to meet the unique needs of the special education students who attend the school. For example, the new playground is accessible for students in wheelchairs and a high-tech “spongy” ground cover protects students from injury. The students are thrilled with their new playground!

On hand to join in the celebration were the contributing partners to the project including OCENET, represented by Geoff Best. OCDSB Superintendents Carson, Paxton and Sliwa, and Zone 11 area trustee, Shirley Seward, also attended the opening among many other distinguished guests.



Clifford Bowey Principal Laurie Kavanagh, Community Foundation of Ottawa Director of Grants Anita James, OCENET Executive Director Geoff Best, Ottawa Centre MPP Yasir Naqvi, and OCDSB Zone 11 Trustee Shirley Seward officially open the new playground area



The delegation of Swedish superintendents in front of Canada's Parliament Buildings and the Peace Tower

“In a different educational system you realize that there are many other ways of teaching and learning, so you can observe and absorb methodologies completely new for you.”

- from a Spanish teacher

OCENET hosts visiting educators from around the world



Galician teachers visit the Museum of Civilization on a tour of Ottawa

South Korea

During the third week of September a visiting delegation of teachers from South Korea met with Ms. K. Ray and Ms. D. Cann of the Guidance Department at Brookfield High School to learn about how student services are provided at an OCDSB school. In South Korea regular classroom teachers address most of the career choice and personal issues of their students, but that is changing as teachers there can now choose to take specialized training to be a Guidance Counsellor. The South Korean teachers were very appreciative of the opportunity to learn from the expertise of the Student Services staff at Brookfield High School.

Galicia (Spain)

OCENET welcomed a large group of 46 teachers from Galicia (in the northwest corner of Spain) who ar-

rived in Ottawa on Wednesday, September 28.

The Galician teachers were about to begin four weeks of learning new pedagogical skills and observing these teaching practices firsthand with the mentorship of OCDSB teachers. The Galician teachers lived in Homestay accommodation

with Canadian families and had an genuine “immersion” experience in Canadian schools, life and culture.

Along with workshop sessions conducted by OCENET staff and weekly reflective journal writing activities, the teachers attended the classes of numerous teachers in their assigned schools. Over the course of one month, each visiting teacher had the chance to become part of the culture of their respective school. Social activities such as museum and art gallery visits, bike riding along the Rideau Canal, a shopping excursion to Montreal, and attending a Sens hockey game were also on the agenda during their stay in the Ottawa area.

Sweden

Throughout the week of October 3, OCENET and the OCDSB hosted a group of Swedish school super-



A visiting teacher from Galicia is excited to meet a real “Mountie” in his red serge uniform at the Museum of Civilization



Spanish and Swedish educators experience an authentic Canadian experience of canoeing on the Ottawa River

intendents. The delegation met several times with OCDSB Director Jennifer Adams and Senior Staff at the board offices. The Swedish superintendents attended presentations that provided an overview of current trends, issues and practices in Ontario education, and had an opportunity to develop an understanding of the assessment and evaluation, instructional coaching and inclusive educational approaches within the OCDSB. In addition to two days with senior administration and system leaders, the Swedish visitors participated in three days of school observations and discussions at local schools, including 6 high schools and 5 elementary schools. Along with their busy schedule there were opportunities to canoe on the Ottawa River with the visiting teachers from Galicia and zip-lining in Gatineau Park.

Nigeria

In the last two weeks of October, OCENET welcomed 26 visiting teachers from Nigeria. This is the first time that OCENET has hosted a group

from Nigeria and the experience was thoroughly exciting and mutually rewarding for both the visitors and hosts. The Nigerian teachers attended workshops at the Albert St. Education Centre on topics focusing upon assessment and evaluation, technology in the classroom, and differentiated instruction, among

other pedagogical techniques commonly practiced in OCDSB schools.

The Nigerian teachers were interested in small group teaching strategies and reflected on ways these techniques could be applied to their schools. A highlight of their time here was visiting local high schools to observe OCDSB teachers and students in their classrooms. Each of the Nigerian teachers is taking the skills and practices learned in Ottawa back to their schools in Nigeria.

Colombia

Principal Juan Carlos Bayona Vargas of Gimnasio Moderno, Bogotá, visited Colonel By Secondary School and had meetings with many of the OCENET international students from Colombia who are currently studying in Ottawa.



The Nigerian teachers share a laugh together while learning at the Albert Street Education Centre

“The new knowledge and skills that I have learned will be shared and used with my colleagues in Nigeria...”

- from a Nigerian teacher



Nigerian technology teacher Sunday Olagboyega Ogundepo meets with students from Earl of March



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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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