



Big bubbles - Amberlee Moore and her sister Zoe of Mount Forest marked the last day of their summer holidays playing in the bubble zone at the Mount Forest Fall Fair on Sept. 5. The bubble zone and the power paws show attracted many families to the fair on Labour Day. More fair photos on page 8. Photo by Olivia Rutt

Hundreds attend grand opening of Emmanuel Christian High School

By Mike Robinson

FERGUS - With freshly scrubbed floors and a shine on the windows, Emmanuel Christian High School has opened the doors of its new home to 166 students.

Like most schools around the county, the school officially opened on Tuesday, but students and members of the public got a sneak peak at Emmanuel Christian High School (ECHS) during an open house and grand opening on Sept. 1.

ECHS Board chair Andrew Westrik said officials are “so excited” to welcome visitors to the school.

“It’s only 13 months ago that stood amongst excavators, rocks and piles of dirt to mark the ground breaking ceremony for this project,” said Westrik.

“Here we stand again. This time, for a tree dedication. Thirteen months ... it’s hard to believe ... it’s nothing short of amazing how this community came together under God’s blessing to [undertake] this project.”

Westrik called the school’s creation “a story of love.”

“May we never lose sight of the fact that all we are and all we have is rooted in the abundant love of Jesus ... We are rooted in our communities and towns. Some of our roots are young, shallow and undeveloped ... others are old, deep and stand the test of time and circumstance.”

Westrik said some might find their connections through the deep roots of what the building used to be: the Fergus High School/Centre Wellington District High School.

He said for others, the roots are young and shallow ... such as for students preparing to enter Grade 9 - or for those new to the community “and the roots of Emmanuel are just beginning to grow.”

Westrik noted that on Sept. 6, the school becomes home to 166 students, along with many dedicated adults who wish to see them succeed.

Westrik said it was fitting to mark the moment by the planting of a tree.

“An oak tree was chosen to adorn the corner of our school. Giant oaks have deep roots that can extend 2.5 times their height. Such trees are rarely blown down regardless of how violent the storm may be,” he said.

“It is our prayer that as the roots of this small oak tree strengthen and deepen, so too the legacy of Emmanuel Christian High School will continue to be a great blessing for this generation of students and the ones to come.”

Those assisting with the planting were Centre Wellington Mayor

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Cost-saving student dental program safe for at least this school year in Wellington County

By Jaime Myslik

WELLINGTON COUNTY - The local health unit’s fluoride varnish program will remain in area schools for at least the next year, a public health official recently confirmed.

Dr. Robert Hawkins, dental consultant at Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, said the seven area schools that received the program last year will continue to receive it this year.

“The only change I guess from previous years is that instead of doing three applications of the fluoride varnish during the school year we’ll be giving two applications ... the evidence-based literature supports doing two to three as being

affective,” Hawkins said.

“We’re not seeing this as making a difference in terms of effectiveness.”

The fluoride varnish program, which targets students’ urgent dental care needs, has been completely funded through the province’s Healthy Smiles Ontario program since its inception nine years ago.

However, earlier this year the funding model changed.

“That’s based on the provincial decision of how the money for Healthy Smiles Ontario will be spent, so they have rules, regulations ... and it didn’t include programs such as the fluoride varnish program for high-risk schools,” Hawkins said.

“That was a provincial decision

and we informed them of this program and what it was doing and the benefit.”

Public health has seen positive results from the program.

“We have done an evaluation in the past and shown first hand that it’s working and [public health] felt strongly that it was beneficial to continue the program,” said Hawkins.

The program began in Centre Peel Public School in Drayton in the 2007-08 school year.

Since then the program has been rolled out in six other schools - Victoria Cross in Mount Forest is the only other school in Wellington County - but at this point there are no plans to expand further this year.

Centre Wellington high school welcomes class of 2020

by Jaime Myslik

FERGUS - Cheering, dancing and high fives met the Centre Wellington District High School class of 2020 as students arrived for orientation day on Aug. 31.

The school held its 10th annual Grade 9 orientation day the Wednesday before school began to help new students feel more comfortable on their first day of high school on Sept. 6.

“We understand it’s a huge step,” said co-organizing teacher Carly McFarlane.

Along with fellow teachers Deirdre Lawler and Elizabeth Wood, McFarlane planned an orientation day that involved a fanfare welcome, time-table distribution, trust activities and small groups that allowed Grade 9 students to get to know each other as well as their Link leaders and their new school.

Link leaders are Grade 11 and 12 students who volunteer to mentor Grade 9s and take time out of their summer vacation to train for orientation day.

“When I first started Grade 9 I was so nervous and I didn’t know

who anyone was, besides the people from my old school, and with the Link leaders [I was introduced] to more people,” said Grade 11 student and first time Link leader Kelsy Lyons. “So I want to help the Grade 9s this year, break them out of their shell I guess to help them find new friends.”

Lyons’ twin sister Katherine said she wanted to be a Link leader because she already has new students asking her for advice.

“I want to do this because there’s so many Grade 9s who have been texting me so scared about coming

into high school and they want to know anything they can and I’ve helped them out a lot,” Katherine said.

“There’s been so many people who have texted me and I really want them to feel welcome and comfortable in our school so they don’t think it’s this huge school that has a million bullies, it’s not that.”

On the first day of school Link leaders were to wear their blue shirts so Grade 9s could easily identify them if they are looking for advice or guidance.

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