



**Ontario Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Education and Health Standing Committee**



Care for our Common Home

Directive #16

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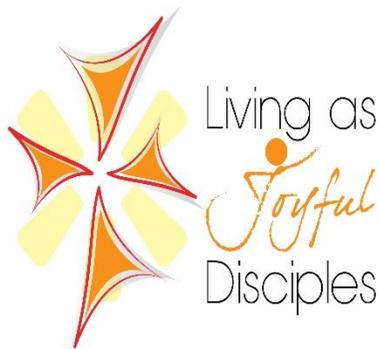
April 6, 2019

Attachments: 1

To: Diocesan Education and Health Committee Chairpersons

From: Wilma Vanderzwaag, Ontario Provincial Council, Sub Committee Chairs: Mary Lou Watson and Heather Sisk

cc: Diocesan Presidents, Archbishop O'Brien, Ontario Provincial Council Executive, National Health and Education Standing Committee Chairperson



May 5-10, 2019 is Catholic Education Week in Ontario. This year's theme is "Living as Joyful Disciples". This reminds us that publicly funded Catholic education is a call to service. Birthed in our Baptism, our Catholic education system brings the saving message of Jesus Christ into the lives of students and their families. This year's theme was inspired by 3 sources: *Renewing the Promise*, The Pastoral Letter on Catholic Education from the Bishops of Ontario, *Gaudete et exultate*, the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis on the Call to Holiness; and *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, the October 2018 Synod

of Bishops. The theme is directed to our students, to grow in holiness and their formation as disciples of Christ. Go on your local Catholic School Board website to find out what events are planned in your area and support their efforts.

To help develop and strengthen our sense of community with our schools, I have listed some suggestions for councils to reach out to their school principals with. See if any of these suggestions would be beneficial to your feeder schools.

- 1) Donate youth size socks to the school. Some students do not have proper winter footwear and end up in wet socks all day in school. Teachers will know who would benefit.
- 2) Prepare paper bag lunches for students who do not have a lunch. Teachers and support staff will know which students come regularly to school without a lunch for whatever reason. Ask the principal/teachers what they would like in these lunches and let them distribute discreetly to students in need.
- 3) Donate feminine hygiene products to the school. Girls may begin menstruation at school and not be prepared. The average age for girls to begin menstruation is 9.7 years.
- 4) Parish Council Presidents make an appointment to sit with the school principal and ask how your council can help the school.
- 5) Attached to this directive is a template for an appreciation Mass for the teachers and support staff. See if your school principal would welcome this way to show our support for our schools. June is the best month to contact the principal to set up a date for the beginning of the school year. Be sure to check with your pastor first, then perhaps you can go to the schools together to discuss. The social after is hosted by the council and is an opportunity for council members and the teachers to meet and discuss any ways to assist our schools. Councils may also get help from the schools in the future.

Our schools need our support at this time, especially in light of the government cuts that have been put forth.

Another concern for that covers both education and health is the fear of vaccines. Doctors in Ontario are warning that misinformation online is undermining public trust in vaccines. The Ontario Medical Association President, Dr. Nadia Alam reports that doctors are hearing from patients who say they are afraid to get a vaccine or have their children immunized because of information they got online. "They're more worried about the vaccines than the illnesses themselves," she said. "They don't realize that the risks of the illnesses are actually much, much greater." Dr. Alam said one of the most damaging myths about vaccines is a debunked study which linked the measles immunization to increased rates of autism in children. This myth has persisted even though there have been a number of studies since then that have proven that there is absolutely no link between the measles vaccine and autism. Let's help spread the truth and make sure all are immunized so that no one is in danger.

Homelessness—

There is an initiative, Built for Zero Canada recently launched by Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness that is helping to eliminate chronic homelessness. 21 municipalities in Ontario are part of the initiative. Some communities affiliated with this program have already started to show significant results. The municipalities of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton have reduced their homelessness by 51% in a six-month period. To learn more about this program and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness go to www.caeh.ca and www.bfzcanada.ca.

Catholic Education Week Prayer

Loving God,

We thank you for our Catholic school community where we can journey in faith together. Help us to accompany each other in our learning as we grow, living as joyful disciples of Jesus and bringing good news to the world.

May your love speak to our hearts, helping us to bring hope to others and a commitment to justice in all we do.

We make this prayer through Jesus, our Lord and teacher.

Amen.



Blessings,

Wilma