



OCSTA News



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

— *Building Strong Schools and Communities*

April 2011

Volume 32, Issue 5

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12: 4-7 (English Standard Version)

Do you ever find it ironic that Jesus chose his disciples from sectors of society that were not the elite? He chose fishermen, tax collectors, ordinary men who knew the meaning of a hard day at work. Of course, Jesus had followers and disciples across all areas of society but just on the face of it, he chose his disciples from the less prestigious level of society.

I have read books about the personalities of each of the disciples. Academic knowledge was not high on the list. This does mean that academic knowledge wasn't important, but I do wonder about the other things that those disciples brought to their tasks through their personalities, gifts, and strengths. In the book, *Leading with your Strengths*, the authors state that when most people are asked about their strengths, they tell you about their academic knowledge, not really about their strengths. I wonder if in our schools we only focus on the academics—whether we too are missing out on something more reliable or deep or true for our students.

Maybe in our schools, we ought to have a list of academics—what we know a lot about—AND a list of personal strengths and qualities for all students. In the 21st century, psychology has taken a huge leap into the area of “maximizing” the potential (strength) of people rather than only focusing on what is “wrong” with them. People who work with those in crisis continually state that if we focused on building “resiliency” or “potential” in people and communities, we would be able to prepare people for the crises in their lives. We know that a good life is also filled with sorrows and difficult times. What marks us is *how* we deal with those difficult times.

So in schools, we should find out what a student's strengths are, perhaps even using tools such as Tom Rath's *Strengths Finder*, which identifies over 30 strengths (many not academically based) and offers techniques for using these personal traits to advantage. Remember, some students do well in our academic institutions but not so well at life; other students don't do well in class but are very successful in business or lead meaningful lives in spite of poor grades. Perhaps we need to start with ourselves as educators. We need to understand more fully who we are, what our strengths are, how we “see” the world, and how others (in our staff) see us. This type of exercise would allow for some interesting conversations, I suspect. It would allow us to identify how success in the classroom could be achieved through really understanding who we (staff and students) are, how we operate, and where we can contribute in the community of learning in which we find ourselves.

Jesus may not have chosen the so-called smartest people in his society, but he did choose resilient leaders who faced all kinds of hardships. They became courageous men who led the early church. Yes, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, but I wonder whether the Holy Spirit changes fundamentally who you are or what you are good at. Rather, I think the Spirit directs your life to use your gifts, talents, and strengths to the service of the others and the world. As educators, what could be a better legacy to leave our students?

Shalom, *Diane*

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM OCSTA BOARD REGARDING DUES

Since 2007, OCSTA has put into place strategies to highlight and develop the organization and its work. Some of the initiatives are listed below:

1. Increasing the profile of OCSTA by developing communication and sharing its purpose and story through regular newsletters and e-newsletters.
2. Creating leadership opportunities as well as a plan to develop potential leaders for the future.
3. Becoming a “go-to” place for discussions/postings on professional development, international opportunities, and planning for the future.
4. Coordinating PD strands and themes across the convention through regional district PD to Summer Institute.
5. Developing online Professional Learning Communities, called “Educators Helping Educators,” and now partnering with the OACS and OCSAA to develop a web presence.
6. Strengthening our input into, connection with, and development of the *Christian Educators Journal*.
7. Giving voice and representing our members at Christian Schools International, Christian Schools Canada, California Roundtable Forum, and Worldwide Christian Schools as well as our sister organizations, the OACS and OCSAA.
8. Including Tyndale University College as one of our partners in Christian education.
9. Increasing advocacy for our members during difficult employment issues and uncertain economic times.
10. Rewriting the *Personnel Manual* with the OACS.

OCSTA is on the cusp of a total reinvention. Your association has been active in providing opportunities for Christian educators to join as associate members. This ability certainly has enriched and enlarged the association. The Promotion and Membership Committee is ready to launch a new name and a new tagline with an eye to the future.

The annual OCSTA Educators Convention has continued to grow as THE place where conversations about the future of Christian education and its development in the 21st century happen. The OCSTA Professional Development Committee has focused on understanding the best ideas in education and has put long-range plans into place to disseminate these great ideas to our members through the convention, regional PD days, and the Summer Institute.

One area of our services that has grown tremendously in the last number of years is the area of Employment Services. OCSTA has been asked for advice and support on issues of redundancy, the Employment Standards Act, Contract Partnership Committee issues, compensation, prep time, contract interpretations, advocacy in the face of termination, performance plans, facilitation, mediation, and legal resources. As you know, OCSTA supports its members both through representation and through financial resources. We have provided an outside consultant for our members these last six years. The hours that our consultants have put in have more than doubled and the costs paid out for informal/ formal mediations have exceeded \$45,000 in last few years.

Your association has also been busy looking for ways to increase connection and contact by utilizing technology (conference calls, SKYPE) in order to have opportunities for wider input and participation. Yearly, at least one face-to-face meeting for the board and each of the committees has been replaced with such conference call meetings. This has allowed us to streamline our costs.

We have been able up to this point to hold the line on costs for the last number of years and absorb many of the increased costs by becoming more efficient. Your membership dues did change two years ago by an increase of \$4 for technology, international opportunities, district PD days, and leadership development. This increase allowed for development in each of these areas. Costs like rent, salaries, food, and travel have continued to increase.

This year we are letting the membership know that we are increasing our membership dues by \$28 (7.6%) for the following reasons.

1. For consulting and legal costs due to support our members who need advocacy. (2%)
2. For increased costs in rent, salaries, food, and travel. (2.5%)
3. For the redesign, promotion, and revamp of our association (2.5%)
4. For the increase in subscription rates for *CEJ* (\$2 per member) (0.5%) (cont'd.....) ⇔⇔

We are providing the following chart for a look historically at the membership fees and the cost particularly of our continued legal fees.

OCSTA DUES HISTORY

YEAR	AMOUNT
2000-2001	\$305.00
2001-2002	\$210.00
2002-2003	\$324.00
2003-2004	\$340.00
2004-2005	\$360.00
2005-2006	\$360.00
2006-2007	\$360.00
2007-2008	\$360.00
2008-2009	\$364.00
2009-2010	\$364.00
2010-2011	\$364.00

LEGAL AND CONSULTING FEES

LEGAL	CONSULTING
\$1,018.00	\$0.00
\$2,875.00	\$0.00
\$2,500.00	\$0.00
\$6,543.00	\$0.00
\$5,837.00	\$0.00
\$3,357.00	\$0.00
\$6,687.00	\$0.00
\$4,219.00	\$6,930.00
\$6,367.00	\$7,110.00
\$6,133.00	\$7,304.00
\$6,288.00	\$18,540.00 Projected

As you can see, many in our membership continue to need advocacy, support, and resources in order to provide a voice in their contractual issues, whatever they may be. Together we can help one another. Together we are strong.

OCSTA has increased its services and grown its profile. We want to move forward into the 21st century renewed and revitalized. We hope that you will join us in this. We know that the increase seems large, but we also want to point out that our associate memberships (educators who are not part of our OACS schools) were increased last year from \$182 to \$220 and this increase did not affect the number of persons joining us; in fact, the numbers increased. Together, we can accomplish much. We ask you to approve our new budget (in June 2011) which includes the increase in membership. Thank you very much. If you have any comments or questions, please email OCSTA at office@ocsta.org.

For the OCSTA Finance Committee, *Al Korvemaker*, Treasurer

CONGRATULATIONS MRS. VANDERWOERD - CHAMPION TEACHER RECOGNITION AWARD

On Saturday, March 26, Trinity Christian School's (Burlington) own beloved teacher, Mrs. Annette Vanderwoerd, received the Champion Teacher Recognition Award at the 51st Annual Bay Area Science and Engineering Fair (BASEF) held at Mohawk College in Hamilton. This award includes induction in the BASEF Champion Teacher Hall of Fame, a plaque, and \$100. A panel of BASEF Organizing Committee members selects the winners from among those nominated online by their peers, parents, and students. This award recognizes a science teacher who displays a remarkable ability to empower and excite student interest in science and who actively promotes the Bay Area Science and Engineering Fair. Annette is an inspiring science teacher and she does excellent work with her students. Trinity is so blessed to have her on staff!!

**EMAILING THE OFFICE**

If you have emailed the office (or Diane) and have not received a response within a day or two, please phone us. We strive to respond as quickly as possible but there have been some instances that an email was not received on our end.

Looking to take an **AQ** course?

Redeemer's Education Department offers AQ courses in a blended on-line and in-class format.

The following AQ courses are being offered this spring/summer:

*NEW Special Education – Intellectual – Gifted

*NEW Kindergarten

Special Education I, II & Specialist

Reading I



Classes begin on May 7. Please register by April 29. For more information on our AQ courses and to register, please visit www.redeemer.ca/clear.

SUMMER 2011 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OCSTA is pleased to offer the following workshops during the week of July 4-8, 2011:

- ◆ Restorative Justice Part 1 (2 days)
- ◆ Restorative Justice Part 2 (2 days)
- ◆ Moving from Level 2 to Level 4: Assessment & Evaluation in Schools (1 day)
- ◆ I Heard What You Said/Managing the Difficult Discussion (1 day)
- ◆ Techie Tips and Tricks—Five Ways to Bring Technology in Your PJ Classes (1 day)
- ◆ JUMP Math—How to Reach & Teach Every Child (1 day)
- ◆ The Combined Grade Classroom Experience (1 day)
- ◆ JUMP Math—Taking it to the Next Level (1 day)
- ◆ The Digital Elementary Classroom (1 day) (@ Halton Hills Christian School, Georgetown)
- ◆ Early Reading Success: Developing and Using Levelled Book Collections in Your Classroom, Gr. 1-3 (1 day)
- ◆ Listening to Those Who Hurt (1 day)
- ◆ Learning Through the Lens—The Digital Camera Across the Curriculum (1 day)

Being offered the week of July 4-15, 2011

EDUC 531—Professional Development and Supervision

To register for EDUC 531, please apply online at:

www.calvin.edu/academic/graduate_studies/apply/non-degree.html

Complete the Graduate and Undergraduate Guest Application Form. All payments for this course are to be made through Calvin College.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: May 13, 2011

In order to ensure that a workshop is not cancelled due to lack of enrolment, please register early.

FYI: Redeemer University College is offering the following courses at OACS schools this summer:

REL-201D Theological Interpretation of the Bible (July 4-8, 2011) at Redeemer Christian High School, Nepean AND

EDU 306D History and Philosophy of Education (July 4-8, 2011) at Maranatha Christian Academy, Windsor.

(see pages 20 & 21 in the Summer Institute Booklet)

BUILDING COMMUNITY WITHIN OUR MEMBERSHIP

Celebrate With Us

Congratulations to Tanya & Joe Smits (Sarnia Christian School) on the birth of a new son, Tyler Mark, born Feb. 25, 2011. A new brother for Jadyn and Kayla.

Willowdale Christian School is hosting a very special celebration of the work and upcoming retirement of our Special Education teacher, **Maria Gittins** (nee Brus). Maria began her teaching career at Fruitland Christian School back in 1966. She spent two years there prior to spending time at Timothy Christian School in Rexdale, Immanuel Christian School in Scarborough, and now over 25 years at Willowdale Christian School. All interested people are invited to come to the school on Saturday, May 28, from 1:30 – 3:30 pm to join in the festivities. There will be a brief program at 2 pm. Please RSVP to celebratemia@hotmail.com.

Willowdale Christian School is located at 60 Hilda Ave. in North York, Ontario.

Calendar of Events

March 23-25	Mediation Course	April 21	RJ Committee Meeting-HDCH
March 31	OCSTA Board of Directors	April 28	OCSTA Convention Planning Committee-Kingston
April 4, 5	Mediation Course (continued)	April 29	Bluewater OCSTA PD Day, Strathroy
April 8	North Toronto OCSTA PD Day, TDCH	May 6	OCSAA Membership Meeting
April 12	Forum (OACS, OCSAA, OCSTA)	May 7	Christian Educators Journal Board Meeting
April 13	OCSTA Credentials Committee Executive	May 12-14	Christian Schools Canada Board, Langley, British Columbia
April 15	Seaway OCSTA PD Day, Ottawa	May 25/26	Cardus Meeting
April 15-17	Fruitland Christian School 50 th Anniversary	May 26/27	CSI Pension and Insurance Board
April 16	Guelph Community Christian School 50 th Anniversary	July 4-8	OCSTA Summer Institute, RUC
April 21	High School Principals Meeting	July 4-15	Calvin College Master's Course at RUC
April 21	Coordinating Committee	August 8-12	Educators Leadership Development Institute, Orillia

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