

James E. Conners bursaries benefit another batch of young musicians

Sherbrooke Record · 23 May 2018 · By Gordon Lambie

Twenty-nine lucky students from Princess Elizabeth Elementary School went home with good news on Tuesday following the awarding of this year's James E. Conners' Foundation music Bursaries. Awarded every year by a random draw from students whose parents consent to be a part of the program, the bursary grants \$700 to four students from each grade in the school to be used on professional music lessons in an instrument of their choosing.



“Music is something that just makes you happy,” said Harvey Catchpaw, President of the Foundation, sharing a feeling that it is important for young people of all ages to have the opportunity to experience and learn the complexities of musical theory and performance. “It really should be a part of the curriculum,” he added.

Catchpaw explained out that the 29th student is the subject of a special drawing held in honour of former bursary winner Matthew Cloutier, who lost his life in a car accident in 2011 while studying at Alexander Galt Regional High School. It is possible for a student

to be given both a bursary for their grade level as well as the \$600 Cloutier memorial bursary.

The bursary draw is preceded every year by a concert, which piano teacher Roxane Johnson explained is a mix of the previous year's winners and students from a nearby music school.

Parents told angry bus driver is off the road

Sherbrooke Record · 25 May 2018 · 1 · By Matthew McCully

Parent Megan Crook, whose children were on the school bus leaving Princess Elizabeth Elementary School last Wednesday when the driver lashed out at kids, was told that he is no longer driving.

“The day after he was, but now he is supposed to never be allowed again,” Crook said.

According to Crook, the trouble started before the bus even left the PEES parking lot last Wednesday after school.

“There were kids who wanted their windows down since it was hot that day, especially in the bus,” she said.

The bus driver, who was a replacement, told the kids not to put down the windows, but Crook said the kids did it anyway.

According to Crook, the driver then began yelling at the kids to close the windows and be quiet. The yelling continued as the bus left the schoolyard.

“He got maybe 10 minutes max from the school and he decided to turn around and go back to school, Crook explained, adding that all the while the driver continued yelling and also swearing at the kids.

At one point, Crook said the driver pulled the bus over and got up to yell at the kids. The situation escalated further when the bus got back to the school.

“He shuts the bus off but then gets up and completely loses it,” Crook said, “he isn’t just yelling and swearing at them, he starts going down the aisle yelling ‘sit down and shut the f-up.’”

Crook said the driver was also pushing and shoving the kids back into their seats.

Crook’s oldest child video called her and she heard the commotion first hand. “He was telling the little ones they weren’t going to see mommy ever again,” commented Crook.

All the parents got a letter the next day, Crook said, adding that she also received a call from the ETSB transportation department.

The bus was equipped with video surveillance. “The transportation guy said he saw it and everything happened in the video the same as what the kids said,” Crooks said.

“It all started with one boy, then it went on like the kids said. It was the day after that we got the info that he had seen the video,” she explained. “He said it on the phone that he knows what happened and that the guy will no longer be driving,” Crook said.

The Record made two attempts to reach the ETSB communications consultant for a comment, but did not receive a response.

Waterloo kindergarteners become stars of the big screen

Sherbrooke Record · 24 May 2018 · 1

with help from Colleagues Chris Page and Elisa Joest.



Close to 200 people attended the premiere. Over 100 tickets, which had been handmade by Joest, were sold in advance.

Appropriately named *The Adventure*, the film tells the story of a royal family living happily in their kingdom until young Princess Millie goes missing.

A team of courageous heroes including Cowboy Ed, Lumberjack Joe, Alex the Dragon and a number of others head out in search of the princess, travelling far and wide.

Meanwhile, cold and hungry, Millie seeks the help of the animals of the forest; a friendly mouse, some bunnies, a porcupine, and even a family of bears decide not to eat Millie, but instead offer her food and shelter as she attempts to find her way home.

After a long and harrowing adventure, Princess Millie is reunited with her family.

At the premiere, Barr congratulated her students on a job well done and thanked colleagues and parents for coming along on *'The Adventure*.

Barr said a DVD will be made available for anyone who would like to see the film.

Waterloo kindergarteners become stars of the big screen



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW MCCULLY

By Matthew McCully

The kindergarten class at Waterloo Elementary School took audience members on quite 'The Adventure' on Tuesday afternoon at the premiere of their feature film written, directed and produced by teacher Natalie Barr.

The stars of the film did some schmoozing on the red carpet before

of a packed house at the Waterloo Cultural Centre.

According to Barr, the film started out as 'an attempt' that, with support from parents and the school, was able to become a reality.

Costumes were either assembled from odds and ends found at the school, or made by volunteer parents.

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COURTESY

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THURSDAY, MAY 24, 2018

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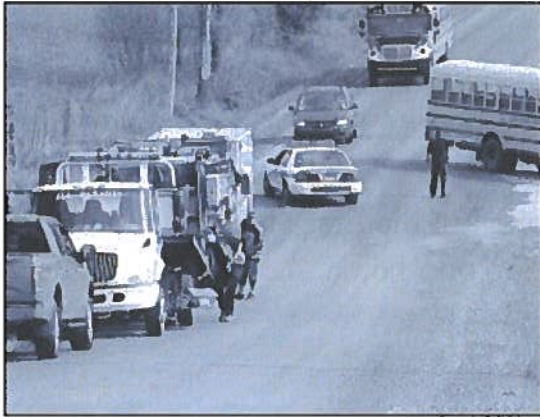


COURTESY

Bus safety and dropout rates make for a heated board meeting

Sherbrooke Record · 24 May 2018 · 4 · By Matthew McCully

Mike Pezzi lost his battle with the board to have his son safely board the bus in front of his home, but he went down swinging.



During question period, Pezzi criticized the board for not taking the safety of children seriously.

Referring to his time on the St. Francis governing board as well as the transportation advisory committee, Pezzi went on to accuse the board of ignoring complaints from parents about bus drivers refusing to speak English to kids, a claim categorically denied by board chair Michael Murray.

Insisting it was not a board wide issue, Murray encouraged Pezzi to provide specific examples of bus drivers refusing to speak English, to which Pezzi responded, 'you were sitting at the table.'

The resolution adopted by the board regarding Pezzi's file denied the request to declare his street a danger zone, and also included recommendations to the municipality of Saint-françois-xavier-debrompton to improve signage in the area in question and plow the sidewalk in winter.

During the director general's report, Kandy Mackey disputed a recent media report that was based on statistics prepared by the Institut de Quebec. The article pointed out that Quebec schools have the highest dropout rate in Canada. Claiming that a comparison between the graduation rates from Quebec and other provinces was like apples and oranges, Mackey suggested the media report was misleading by its omission of 'all the facts' related Quebec's long-standing trend of finishing in last place.

In the Chairman's report, Murray said there is no final resolution yet for the class action lawsuit regarding school fees charged to parents.

Murray went on to take a dig at the Liberal government's election spending, saying the education ministry is 'botching the job' and depriving students by haphazardly throwing money at the system in the 11th hour, hoping it will do something useful.

In new business, the board approved the appointments of principals at two elementary schools; Nicole Carrière was appointed principal 100 per cent at Sherbrooke Elementary School, replacing Anastasia Christodouloupoulos, who retires this year.

Catherine Zahra was appointed principal 100 per cent at Princess Elizabeth Elementary School, replacing Marie-pier Cabana.

The tax rates for the upcoming school year were adopted at Tuesday's meeting. The four rates, covering the different administrative regions, are for the most part substantially lower than last year because of the equalization measures implemented by the Quebec government.

The deficit created by the lower tax rate will be made up in the form of a grant to the board from the government.

In addition to the lower rate, there is also an exemption of the first \$25,000 of property value assessments for taxpayers. For someone with a \$200,000 home, for example, the rate will be assessed based on \$175,000, Murray explained.

Although this year's concert was composed entirely of piano performances, Johnson said that the student's freedom to choose means that the show can change significantly from one year to the next.

"Some years we have had guitar players, or singers," the teacher said.

Performances varied from simple lines of music to full compositions, and ranged in theme from video game music to "My Heart Will Go On" from the feature film, "Titanic."

Several of this year's bursary winners were performers in this year's concert.

As a part of his presentation of this year's winners, Catchpaw put out a call for members of the community to help support the fund to ensure that the bursaries can continue to be given year after year.