

School marks 50 years of educating Brooklin children

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The outdoor space was also used for assemblies, school masses and the annual crowning of Mary.

"St. Leo Catholic School today will not forget its roots," said Ms. Strong. "We are a faithful community that continues to love the great outdoors and treasure God's greatest gifts."

Much has changed in education over the decades but the school's tight-knit community remains connected by a common thread, said Jim McCafferty, chairman of the Durham Catholic District School Board.

"What has remained consistent throughout the years is our faith," he said. "We continue to pray together in good times and bad. It strengthens us and molds us in becoming community leaders and good corporate citizens ... our faith is a bond that must be nurtured and it's times like tonight that we have the opportunity to celebrate all the great things our Catholic education provides."

Jennifer Orsag attended the mass and open house that followed at the school with her husband and two children, Emma, 3, and Sarah, 7. Both she and her husband are Catholic school teachers -- she at All Saints C.S.S. in Whitby and he at Archbishop Denis O'Connor C.H.S. in Ajax. "It's important to us that our kids are part of the community and know the history of their school but also to see



RYAN PFEIFFER / METROLAND

BROOKLIN -- Joe Fusco, left, and Rob Frendo-Cumbo graduated from St. Leo Catholic School in the 1970s. They looked at old class pictures during a 50th anniversary celebration at the school.

how far Catholic education has come in this area," said Ms. Orsag.

Whitby Mayor Don Mitchell, who grew up in Brooklin and had just turned 13 when St. Leo opened, described it as "the little school that could."

"It was this little building with this really active community," he said.

The mayor added that the community has shown remarkable resiliency over the decades in the face of tremendous change. "As our little village has

grown ... the St. Leo community -- both the church and the school -- has kept up and expanded to remain an important and vital part of our now much bigger town," he said.

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Brooklin business gathering highlights benefits of boosting workplace morale

PARVANEH PESSIAN

ppessian@durhamregion.com

WHITBY -- As the days get colder and darker during the fall and winter months, the Whitby Chamber of Commerce is helping local business owners keep spirits up in the workplace.

How to boost morale among employees was the main topic of discussion at a Brooklin Java Jolt meeting held last month. The meetings are hosted regularly by the chamber to allow local professionals to connect and discuss projects or issues they may be facing.

"Morale is a big issue that I don't think enough businesses pay atten-

tion to," said Colin Deyong, owner of Smash Local, a Whitby-based marketing consulting firm. "They're so focused on trying to just run the business and make money and survive but they're not thinking about their best asset, which is their employees."

Mr. Deyong was one of about a dozen people who attended the Sept. 16 meeting to exchange ideas on how to keep staff motivated and productive.

"You need to treat them well and they need to be happy because when they're happy, they will do their best for you," he told the group. "And when they do their best, you can be more productive and make more money."

Ideas for boosting workplace morale

that came up during the meeting include adding plants to liven up the decor; organizing football and hockey pools to encourage friendly banter among staff members, and even something as simple as making sure coffee is on hand.

"People gather and have a nice coffee in the morning, it's great," said Shannon Hunt from PGL Environmental Consultants. "Especially when you're in the office all day and where we're located, there is no coffee shop nearby."

Derek Candolini, owner of Emergency Notification Solutions, said he currently runs his business on his own so keeping others motivated isn't an issue but it can be equally challenging to cope with the down times when working alone.

"In any business, there are highs and lows; there's not enough hours in the day and sometimes you feel that and it's tough but you've got to plow through it," he said. "During the slower periods, I try to look at what new areas I can maybe focus on in my business, review what I've done and what's been successful or what hasn't been successful, and learn from those experiences."

Kyle Paterson, members relations lead with the Whitby chamber, said sometimes it can even come down to improving air quality in a workplace, which he said can increase productivity by three to 20 per cent.

Contact Mr. Paterson at kyle@whitbychamber.org for more information.

B
Vintage



BETTY STAPLETON
Owner

905.493.7005
bavintage@hotmail.com
148 Brock St. N,
Whitby, ON L1N 4H4

Visit us on Facebook  facebook.com/bavintage