

Halton Hills high schools aim for the best

Acton High School has new initiatives

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

Technological advancement, teacher's growth, increased attendance and a review of the behavior code are all ongoing initiatives that have been undertaken by Acton High School this year.

"Our goals for this year are to work together to improve instruction," said Principal Ozzie Calderelli.

To reach this goal, school administrators are renewing their efforts to have good attendance (Acton High School is the only school, according to Mr. Calderelli that still telephones students in the morning if they are missing from class; establishing a computer teleconferencing network for students to communicate with other students across the world; and continuing with a three-night trip to Terra Cotta conservation area to increase outdoor education.

The outdoor education trip was established last year and was a great success, not only academically but socially as well, said Mr. Calderelli.

The computer teleconferencing program is an exciting chance for students to learn how advanced technology is.

Some of Acton's success stories over the past year include the

girls volleyball team which competed at OFFSA, two national awards in science, winning the Halton computer contest and receiving critical acclaim for a play students in the drama department wrote and produced on family violence.

This despite the fact the school had the lowest number of students last year than ever before with only 580 grade 9-13 students.

Because of low enrolment the school had to drop some optional courses like Ontario Academic Credit (OAC) art and Grade 11 family studies course.

"Now we're looking forward to a slow and steady growth," said Mr. Calderelli.

Next year, students will be able to enjoy a completely automated library since Acton High School has been chosen by the Halton Board of Education as one of two schools in the North to serve as a pilot project for library automation.

The school will also be examining the issues surrounding the transition year of Grade 9 and the possible restructuring of the Grade 9 year.

Presently, Mr. Calderelli said the school body is beginning to get back its school spirit after a certain sombre state permeated the school as students reflected on the Gulf war said Mr. Calderelli.



The soothing sounds of the Georgetown District High School Quintet delighted seniors at the Bennett Health Care Centre in Georgetown when the Quintet gave a special performance for them

Musicians include Sarah Geh on Bassoon, Becky Heinmiller on French Horn, Leanne Atkinson on Oboe (back row, right), Sara Lynn Wray on Flute and Sara Howitt on Clarinet. (Herald photo)

GDHS offers new programs

The high school that can boast of the largest co-operative education program, Georgetown and District High School, is starting a new apprenticeship program and cosmetology program in an effort to provide all students with an education that offers not only knowledge, but practical training.

GDHS is one of several schools in Halton initiating the School Workplace Apprenticeship program which allows students to work towards their apprenticeship certificate while obtaining their Grade 12 diploma.

Another new course, cosmetology is expected to begin in September. Students include hair styling, facial, manicuring techniques and beauty salon techniques.

Other new courses the school is hoping to offer this year include entrepreneurship studies, outdoor education, communication technology, advanced drafting, architectural drafting, computer technology-interfacing, home

maintenance, and Grade 12 environmental studies.

GDHS principal, Bryn Davies, said the staff is undertaking a major initiative called co-operative group learning. As well, the staff is trying to work more as a team.

"Our long-range intention is to look at ways the whole staff can function as a team around common themes," he said. "One thing everyone seems to consider a priority, is the transition year (Grade 9).

Looking back over the past year the incident that created the most tension, but also increased school spirit involved the school's flag and the name 'Rebels' as it pertained to GDHS athletic teams. Mr. Davies expressed his discomfort that the flag of Confederacy had been used by the KKK. Since the school has two symbols, the Confederacy sign and the letter 'R' for rebels, it was eventually decided students would have a choice of which symbol they used.

"The controversy pulled the school together and boosted school spirit said Mr. Davies.

As a new principal coming into the school, (he arrived in Georgetown a year ago from a previous vice-principal position in Oakville) the thing that impressed Mr. Davies most about the school was the students.

"The students are terrific," he said. "They're hard-working, friendly, down-to-earth and have comparatively fewer problems compared to the students in Oakville.

He also lauded the staff for its skill as well as the community support of GDHS for the school's success over the past year.

Some highlights of the past school year were the swimming team's 3rd place ranking in the province, the senior girl's volleyball team ranking 4th in the province and a first place winner in the Halton Region Science Fair.



"Our Favourite Drug" was the topic of Acton High School student, Matthew Fleet's science project which was exhibited at the school's science fair. The projects were required as part of the science course outlines and Michael helped judge the projects. (Herald photo)

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