

# SPORTS & LEISURE

## Students finding a future in sports

By **EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

A new program at Christ the King Secondary School geared to students interested in athletics is winning over a lot of new fans.

The sports performance program is the first of its kind in either the Halton Catholic or public board that falls under the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) umbrella of career fields offered such as arts & culture, business, hospitality and several others.

Students can select the sector they'd like to pursue, developing skills and work habits that they can carry into apprenticeships, an entry-level workplace or various post-secondary pathways.

A SHSM program has a number of requirements that its participants need to complete in order to graduate, including a defined bundle of Grade 11 & 12 credits and the Ontario Skills Passport. They also enter apprenticeships for their desired field, receive certification in areas such as first-aid or CPR, spend a day in university kinesiology classes and get some hands-on training from someone already in their profession of choice in the community.

"The focus of the program is to give it a university slant with a major and you choose what that is. We're trying to give them a sample of that in high school before they really jump into the real world and make that stressful choice, because students can and will change their minds," said Jodie Rideout, CtK's Sports Performance SHSM lead teacher and the school's Health & Physical Education Department Head.

"We had a parent-teacher night recently and a few of the parents really didn't want to talk about marks, but more like, 'My child is in Grade 12, they want to go to university, but they don't know what to do or take.' They just need help focusing on something, so they can get confidence and support for what they want to do later on, because kids have to make important decisions at a very young age now."

Cathy Jenkins, the HCDSB's SHSM/OYAP Pathways Itinerant, said the sports performance program is an example of the Ministry of Education's efforts to address dropout rates for high school students in the province.

Enrolment in SHSM programs has increased from 660 students Ontario-wide in 2006-07 to 34,000 this year while the graduation rate has risen to 81 per cent from

68 in 2003-04.

"I find from talking to the students that so much of our education system is geared toward one type of student, which is very knowledge-based and auditory, and that's not connecting with a lot of kids," Rideout added.

"Most kids are proven to be more tactile, hands-on learners and that's why this program is a huge asset to them because they get to go out in the field and get their hands dirty. They can talk to people in that field and it's not just the experience of having the teacher tell them something; rather, it's respected member of the community providing them with advice and an opportunity."

Hired by the Ministry of Education a couple of years ago for a summer writing project, Rideout helped compose the framework for the first sports performance SHSM in Ontario at Bill Crothers Secondary School in Unionville and made a few alterations to the program introduced this fall at CtK, which has 10 students on board.

Grade 12 sports SHSM student Shana Toale aspires to be a firefighter after changing her mind about taking sports marketing in university and plans to pursue kinesiology as a post-secondary major.

Along with a couple of part-time jobs, Toale's co-op placement is with the Oakville Hornets' midget AA hockey team she also plays for, performing several off-ice duties related to her vocation.

"A lot has changed in the last month with what I want to do with my life and the good thing is I know I can test something out before I go to school for it," she said.

"People thought there was just a music (SHSM), but now that there's an athletic one, there are a lot of kids who want to go into it."

A popular topic amongst Grade 10 students looking at the sports SHSM as an option is an English sports literature course at CtK that will be in place for 2012-13.

What Grade 12 student Jaime Vieira likes about the new program is the "reach-ahead" opportunities to job shadow or serve as an apprentice in her field of choice. After a couple of months as a co-op placement at Generations Physiotherapy in Georgetown South, Vieira has been hired on as a part-time therapist and through research has discovered that the University of Guelph-Humber's kinesiology program offers a scholarship for SHSM graduates.

"I started doing research in Grade 10 because I knew I wanted to get into health services and with the SHSM



Grade 12 Christ the King student Jaime Vieira (top) prepares to help "patient" Taylor Currie do some work on the exercise ball at Generations Physiotherapy in Georgetown South. Vieira is enrolled in a new program at CtK that caters to students with a sports background and her co-op placement at Generations as a physiotherapist has turned into a part-time job that she'd like to parlay into a career.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

program, it really re-enforced it with all of the activities that this is what I'm really interested in. I can see myself out in the workplace doing that sort of thing."



## Storm capture volleyball crown

Undeclared in league play this season, the Silver Creek Storm swept through the Halton Tier I elementary school girls' volleyball championships held at E.C. Drury in Milton last week, defeating Burlington's Florence Meares in the final. The Storm's strong serving and power attack resulted in a tight 25-23 win in the first set and then Silver Creek took control from there, taking the second game 25-14. Team members (front, from left) are: Chelsea Dixon, Rebecca Osterlee, Cailin Wark. Middle row: Rebecca Scott, Antonia Pancevski, Kenny Young, Tarea Heshka, Rupee Kalirai. Back row: Alana Coughlin, Hannah Miller, Sydnee Scott, Jennifer Tumilty, Madelynn Tabakos, Alexandra White, coach Tim Davis. Silver Creek last won the Halton Tier I title in 2007. As well this year, the Storm girls won the Silver Creek Invitational, the Stewarttown Stinger Invitational, the Sunningdale Invitational, the Charger Invitational and the Huskies' Invitational, while posting a 16-0 record in Halton play. Stewarttown's Stingers made it to the championship match of the Halton Tier I boys' finals last week, bowing out to a powerful Chris Hadfield squad from Milton 25-8, 25-20.

Photo by Glenn Heshka