



p.s. notes

New public schools in Georgetown and Milton prepare for September students

BY DONNA DANIELLI

Two elementary schools in Milton and Georgetown may be brand spanking new, but the people running them are seasoned veterans.

Milton's newly built and newly named Chris Hadfield Public School, located in the middle of the new development on Woodward Street, will have Rick Nodwell at its helm. Rick has been the principal at Brookville Public School for the last five years, and before that he had a five-year stint as principal of George Kennedy Public School in Georgetown, and three and a half years as principal at Park Public School in Georgetown. Earlier in his career, Rick also taught special education students in a self-contained classroom.

"I'm really excited about the name of the new school," says Rick. "It gives the kids something to look forward to in life, and it gives them a connection to know how far they can go to achieve their goals." Rick is hopeful that someday Colonel Hadfield will have the opportunity to visit his namesake.

Chris Hadfield Public School will open in September 2003 with approximately 591 Junior Kindergarten to Grade 7 students, but it is expected to be at capacity with over 800 Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 students within two years. "There's a great opportunity here to create a community of people, but the challenge comes in helping each student create their own identity within such a large school," explains Rick. "It's exciting, but it's like putting a puzzle together. You see bits and pieces going together, but you won't know what the final picture will look like yet."

Chris Hadfield Public School and its Georgetown counterpart, Silver Creek Public School, were designed by the same architect: they both are two-story, air-conditioned schools with elevators. These new schools have the capacity to add portapack classrooms if necessary, and it is planned that each school will eventually incorporate wireless systems that allow students to access technology directly at their desks.

"Our new school will be inno-

vative in practices and technology," promises Wendy Harrison, principal of Silver Creek Public School, located in South Georgetown on Eaton Street. Wendy has been principal of the twin schools of Joseph Gibbons and Park Public Schools in Georgetown. She also spent five years as vice principal at Brookville Public School and three years as a Special Education Co-Ordinator for the Halton District School Board.

Silver Creek Public School will be starting next September with 660 Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6 students, but it will grow in the following two years to over 800 students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8.

"I want this to be a very innovative school," says Wendy. "We will be a community of caring learners. All teachers will have a TRIBES focus in their classrooms, and that's how the school community will be connected, through

that caring and respect for each other." TRIBES is a social program that focuses on listening with the ears, eyes and heart, and provides strategies on how students can listen, encourage and be thoughtful of one another.

"My values and beliefs are around recognizing and appreciating the hearts of people," explains Wendy. "If you have those social barriers of not being able to get along, then you don't get to the learning."

Interviews are currently underway for the teaching staff of each school, and it is hoped that the full complement of teachers will be hired within the next two months to prepare for the first day school in September.

"This is the absolute highlight of being a trustee," exclaims Chairman of the Halton District School Board, Ethel Gardiner. "To see new schools being built for these kids is simply an incredible feeling."

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