

Education

St. Catherine kids pitch in

Students from St. Catherine of Alexandria School, located in Georgetown South pitched in to clean up their schoolyard during Earth Week. As well the students helped out TEAC (Town Environmental Advisory Committee) by cleaning up the woodlot located behind their Barber Ave. school. Steve Jackson, a volunteer member with TEAC provided assistance to the students.

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GDCS play educates as well as entertains



Students at Georgetown District Christian School recently brought the Biblical story of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem to life as they performed the musical *O Me! O My! O Nehemiah!* for classmates and parents at the school. Among those taking part (from left) Jordan Vetro (Nehemiah) addresses workers Jeffrey Nesbitt, Stephen Van Helden, Ricky Davids and Braden Slessor as they prepare to rebuild the walls to protect the city.

Photo by Ted Brown

About 2,500 years ago, the Jews were under the control of Babylon. Some of them had been carried off as slaves, and one of these, Nehemiah ended up as the winetaster for the Babylonian king. Distressed about the ruined condition of his beloved Jerusalem, Nehemiah's sadness attracted the king's notice.

That is how the musical recently performed by GDCS (Georgetown District Christian School) opens. *O Me! O My! O Nehemiah!* (by Dave Noel and Steve Schmidt) was directed by teachers Joan Collier and Caroline VanDonkelaar, with a cast of 26 and the rest of the school forming the chorus.

Nehemiah appeals to God for guidance. "It seems impossible, but nothing is impossible when you believe and pray," he says. "I have a dream that is bigger than me." The king gives him permission to return to Jerusalem and organize rebuilding.

Nehemiah's dream comes true despite the taunts of town officials, Sanballat and Tobiah, and their attempt to terrorize the Jews by preparing a military attack. Under Nehemiah's fearless leadership, the builders hang in, working with trowel in one hand and a weapon in the other. When the wall is finally built there is rejoicing, dancing, and feasting.

Songs in the musical help bring home the main lessons of the story: that all such dreams begin with God, whose power can make anything happen, but they also take planning, hard work, community, and courage.

Interspersed with the biblical story were vignettes intended to transfer these principles to situations facing today's kids, such as broken relationships or friends in need. The vignettes could have included more concrete responses to the problems they raised, but their message applies: we all have 'ruins' to rebuild, in our personal lives, our communities and society, and even on a world scale. They can seem overwhelming, and rebuilding is both hard and dangerous. But with God and one another, it is possible.

Grade 8 student Jordan Vetro was inspiring a lot of kids with his pep talks, devotion, good sense, and determination. The narrators, Alicia Kruisselbrink and Ashley Cate, in Grades 7 and 4 respectively, spoke clearly with convincing expression and well-paced delivery, while the smaller roles also reflected capable direction. Songs, with harmony, were carried off well by the chorus, and amplification in the new gym was excellent, in contrast to some previous GDCS productions. Jewish folk dancing during one of the two of the songs was a nice touch, as well as the coloured lights and flagwaving dancers as part of the victory celebration. Costumes and set, produced by GDCS community members, were effective. And the kindergarteners did a fine job, before the musical started, of introducing its theme with a little miniconcert of their own. Well done, GDCS.

—By Debbie Sawczak
a Georgetown writer and editor who has three children at GDCS



Think Bowl champs

George Kennedy Public School Think Bowl team members (from left) Zack Austin, Kylie de Chastelain, Max Lawlor, Saveena Loch, Ginny Anderson, and Tracy Richardson proudly displayed their medals after coming home with second place in the junior division at the Halton Think Bowl competition. Under the guidance of teacher Barb Farley, the Grade 4-5 members competed against Grade 4-6 students.

Photo by Ted Brown



Centennial wins gold

Centennial's Grade 4-6 Robotics team won gold at the Skills Canada robotics provincial competition. Team members (from left) Justin Doorn, Emily Dobson, Matthew Slater and Marianne Langstaff were presented with an Award of Distinction at last week's Halton Board of Education meeting. The students built the robot (inset) and faced three challenges with it, such as climbing and staying on a mountain.

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