



Pictured above is the graduating class of 1962 from Stewarttown Public School, when it accommodated students in Grades 1-8. In one of its many transformations over the past half-century, the school changed to a senior student body of Grades 6-8 in 1967 to better serve the population of Esquesing Township. Submitted photo

Stewarttown races to 50th birthday

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Given the proud history of running at Stewarttown Middle School, it's only academic that its 50th anniversary reunion festivities set for this Saturday include some sort of athletic element.

Students and staff at the school, located at Trafalgar Rd. and 17 Sideroad, have been hard at work this week decorating and compiling materials for the various theme rooms and "a walk through the decades" for the expected 400 visitors tomorrow.

Activities will get under way with the inaugural 5-km Old Mill Run on a course that passes by Stewarttown's original mill that helped establish the community in the 19th century.

"Our school is well-known for its cross-country and I think in the past five years we've been first in all of Halton, so that's a really nice tradition to begin the day with," said principal Shirley Chiasson.

"We've also been playing music from each decade for the past five weeks and the students have had a lot of fun with that. Many of the students have volunteered to perform solo and in groups during the open house on Saturday, and we are going to bring back the original Stewarttown school song from 1980 that will be performed by the school choir."

A *So You Think You Can Dance* competition will also be part of the activities and a special presentation begins at 2 p.m. An open house will run from 1-4 p.m.

The open house will allow for visitors to see some of the newer additions to the school, including the outdoor learning garden in the courtyard and the reconstructed trophy case inside the front doors that has incorporated bright red bricks taken

from the original schoolhouse, which was demolished in the late 1990s.

The school's current building was opened for classes in 1958 and was expanded to a senior school in 1967, accommodating students in Grades 6-8 from Pineview, Limehouse and Joseph Gibbons.

Chiasson, who has been principal at Stewarttown for five years and was vice principal from 1995-98, said that some interesting tidbits of information have popped up as students and staff have pored over some of the school's pictures and artifacts.

"There's an article from the 1950s when they were talking about building the new school and it was going to cost \$70,000. People were wondering where they were going to get all that money from," she chuckled.

"I'm thinking my director of education will be here on Saturday and I want to point that out to her. We pay millions of dollars for schools in these communities now."

Items are also being collected for a time capsule that will be placed in the new trophy case at the end of the school year and locked up for the next 25 years.

Among the invitees who have indicated they'll be in attendance Saturday are Ron Chatten, who was principal when Stewarttown switched to a middle school in 1967, along with dozens of former teachers.

The first-ever Old Mill Run is open to the public and will become an annual event. Entrance fee is \$10 for children and \$20 for adults. Start time is 9 a.m. and prizes will be awarded at 10:30 a.m.

For more information, visit the school's website at <http://ste.hdsb.ca>.

(Eamonn Maher can be reached at emaher@independentfreepress.com)

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