

Homework clubs open at two Acton schools

By Frances Niblock

Homework clubs are now operating at McKenzie-Smith Bennett and Robert Little Schools, offering after-school help to students who need it, thanks to OFIP (Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership: OFIP Investment in Tutoring) grants from the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat/Ministry of Education.

Ontario school boards will share \$8-million in OFIP grants this year – the Halton board received \$189,000 to initiate and extend programs to help students, beyond the regular school day, with external support.

A \$15,000 OFIP grant allowed Grades three, four and five students – and their parents – at Robert Little School to attend a twice-weekly math-tutoring program that began last week.

“Problem solving is a big, big area of change in the way we used to be taught math, with rote learning...we’re looking at problem-solving strategies, and also helping parents learn the strategies, so they can help their children with homework,” said

Principal Leona Skanes, adding they targeted math because it has been a weaker area in provincial testing.

There are 34 students registered for the program that began yesterday (Wednesday) at Robert Little, which operates with tutors, including high school students and adult volunteers.

“We’re looking at incorporating babysitting because some of our volunteers have little kids, so we’re thinking of using some of the (grant) money to hire a babysitter and putting a movie on,” Skanes said, calling the grants an “investment in the future.”

At McKenzie-Smith Bennett School, the focus for spending a \$15,000 OFIP grant is on one-on-one tutoring and support for a homework club.

Principal Sharon French said the homework club, running for the past month, meets twice weekly with a snack from 3:30 to 4, and work from 4 to 5 p.m.

“It’s open to everyone, but there were some children who were encouraged to participate,” French said, adding the club meets in the

MSB library with volunteer tutors, including high school students and MSB teachers.

MSB teacher/ librarian Wendy Webber said one-on-one tutoring is underway with a few students and letters have gone out to the parents of others who would benefit from extra help.

Webber said they’d like to get the tutoring homework club set up and running and then have the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization step in and run it, like they do in other areas of Halton.

French said a Halton Learning Foundation grant of \$1,500 will help pay for a Recess Revival program – training groups of kids in leadership roles to play outdoor games, and a \$2,500 grant from Food For Thought will help MSB to start a breakfast program that opens on May 15.

“The Food For Thought people have been wonderful. In addition to the \$2,500 grant, they are giving us a fridge and will train all of the people that will be preparing breakfast two mornings a week,” French said.



HOMEWORK HELP: With help from volunteer tutors, including Acton High School students, the McKenzie-Smith Bennett School Homework Club offers after-school help to students to help them reach their potential. – Submitted photo

Back Facts

From the April 13, 2006 pages of The New Tanner.
One year ago, The fire department hopes new fines and fees will stop illegal open air burning and reduce the number of preventable false alarms in Halton Hills. Town Council approved changes allowing the fire department to recover costs for responses to unauthorized burns, preventable false alarm activations and for issuing permits to sell fire works and to conduct open air burns.

In other news:
 •During the Acton Figure Skating Club’s awards ceremony, skater Ashley Macpherson was chosen to skate in a special SkateCanada’s 50th anniversary Past, Present and Future show – featuring Donald Jackson, Brian Orser and Elvis Stojko.

From the April 11, 2002 pages of The New Tanner.
Five years ago: Money trouble put the future of Acton’s Off The Wall youth drop-in centre in jeopardy. Following a special meeting, the board of directors of Halton Hills Community Support and Information said the drop-in might close June 1.

In other news:
 •Acton volunteers – called the “glue that holds society together” were honoured for donating their time and talents to Halton Hills Community Support and Information.



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