

MSB teacher honoured for international work

McKenzie-Smith Bennett (MSB) educational assistant Lidra Remacka visited Palestine last November to help improve the teaching system. In the process, she introduced her school to a whole new world – and a bunch of new friends.

Remacka travelled to the politically-fractious Middle East with Sustainability Frontiers, an international alliance of sustainability and global educators dedicated to curriculum development and teaching innovation. Members of the alliance are concerned with formal and informal education, through a holistic approach, that transcends social, psychological and spiritual levels.

The alliance was invited by the Teacher Creativity Centre, a Palestinian, non-profit, non-governmental organization working to ensure a peaceful and se-

cure environment within schools. During her 10-day visit, Remacka spoke on the need for things like environmental, peace and civics/human rights education.

“Everything is inter-dependent of each other,” she said in explaining how so many issues relate to each other, creating a sort-of domino effect on society.

Before she left for the West Bank city of Ramallah, Remacka brought with her 80 student letters from her school. When she returned home, she brought with her 90 letters from students she met during her trip.

Remacka helped start a penpal network that has strengthened over time and gained the support of MSB staff and, just as importantly, the students. She hopes it broadens their global

perspective and provides a bigger picture of their place in the world.

“One day these (students) can do something together,” she said with a smile. “You are global citizens. We share the same planet.”

Mai-Lynne, 13, said she has learned to appreciate Canada even more through the penpal network, having learned about Palestine.

“I’m more thankful I live in Canada,” the Grade 8 student said.

The students have exchanged correspondences three times so far.

The letters resemble the kind of interests and subjects near and dear to students in Canada.

One Palestine letter from “outgoing” Jihad Abed, who loves playing soccer and basketball, partly reads: “My favourite season is summer. I also like

the summer vacation from school. Between October and November, it’s olive picking season. This is where we get our olive oil.”

Another student, hip-hop-loving Fuhmi Zhou, wrote: “...the sports I enjoy are football and swimming. The subjects I take are history, science, math, english and geography.”

MSB principal Sharon French said she loves the penpal network because it helps expose her school to the world around them and have her students connect with kids they might not normally connect with.

“It was an amazing experience for her and it’s been good for our school,” French explained. “We’re a small school and fairly isolated in our part of Halton. For Lidra to bring the message of civics and re-

sponsibility and character education and growth and the commitment of the environment we focus on here is really important.”

Albania-born Remacka, a former research assistant at the International Institute for Global Education of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at University of Toronto, said she made the trek last November to impress upon the people the issue of inner peace and environmental preservation.

“I’m lucky I went there and saw what was going on,” she said, adding she was “humbled” by the experience. “What I learned is freedom is the most important thing in our life... freedom in every aspect.”

Remacka’s background in education is impressive.

Among her accomplishments is the development of a human rights education

program for girls in Afghanistan funded by Right to Play, Toronto, in 2004.

Remacka was also heavily involved as an international consultant with the Albanian Pedagogical Institute and Ministry of Education, particularly in the areas of integrated curriculum for Albanian students with special needs, helping prepare the integration of autistic students in the classroom.

She facilitated conference and workshop sessions on civic, environmental and global education for various international organizations, government bodies and non-governmental organizations.

Remacka, a nominee for the Ontario Premier’s Award of Teaching Excellence in 2009-2010, said she hopes to visit Ramallah again this summer to continue her work.

Be Car Care and Planet Aware

April is Earth Month in Canada. It doesn’t matter if the car you’re driving is new or old, big or small. There are preventative maintenance steps every vehicle owner can take to make sure their car is green, clean and lean this spring, summer and all year long. By following some simple preventive maintenance steps, you can help protect the environment by improving fuel consumption, which in turn saves money at the pump.

Step One: Keep it Clean

- The products that you use to clean and care for your car should be environmentally friendly. Check the labels of items such as polishing compounds, engine fluids and cleaners to make sure they are recognized as truly green.

- Do not pour antifreeze or other engine fluids into sewers, on the ground or into floor drains. Bring used engine fluids to a certified recycling location for disposal.

- If you change your own oil, be sure to properly dispose of it as well. One litre of oil can make a slick larger than a football field! One drop of oil can pollute 25 litres of water!

- Never pour used oil down the drain or into the ground. Not only is it illegal, it’s also harmful to the environment.

- Changing the oil and the oil filter as recommended in the owner’s manual is one of the best ways to keep the engine running trouble free. Oils carrying the label “Energy Conserving” can reduce fuel consumption by up to 2.7 per cent compared to those without the label.

Step Two: Keep your car properly tuned for optimum performance.

A well-tuned engine delivers the best balance of power and fuel consumption and produces the lowest level of emissions. A

21st Century tune-up for modern vehicles includes the following system checks: battery, charging and starting; engine mechanical; powertrain control (including onboard diagnostic checks); fuel; ignition; and emissions. A proper tune-up can improve fuel consumption by an average of four per cent.

Step Three: Have the spark plugs checked.

A vehicle can have four, six or eight spark plugs, which fire as many as 2 million times every 1,000 kilometres. This results in a lot of heat, electrical, and chemical erosion. A dirty spark plug also causes misfiring, which wastes fuel.

Step Four: Maintain the cooling system of your vehicle.

A cooling system thermostat that causes the engine to run too cold will lower the fuel efficiency of a car by as much as one or two mpg. There also are improved radiator caps on the market today that allow the cooling system to operate at a higher temperature before boiling over, increasing the system’s efficiency and reducing emissions.

Step Five:

Watch your Tires.

Improper tire maintenance

causes 1.5 million tonnes of CO2 to be released into the environment annually and is estimated to cost Canadian light-duty vehicle owners almost 643 million litres of fuel per year. At 99 cents per litre for regular unleaded gasoline, that amounts to \$637 million a year in wasted fuel!

Tires that are not properly inflated add rolling resistance that makes the engine work harder to move the vehicle. Tire pressure should be checked at least monthly, including the spare. (Operating a vehicle with tires under-inflated by 20 per cent (8psi) can reduce their life by 15,000 kms and can increase fuel consumption by up to 4 per cent.)

Step Six:

Green Driving Tips.

Aside from maintenance, your driving plays a big role as well. Jerky and aggressive driving can increase fuel consumption by as much as 37 per cent and also increases wear and tear on your vehicle. Avoid sudden starts and stops and go the speed limit.

Thinking ahead, getting directions and planning your errands in one trip will minimize un-

necessary kilometers and will also make driving less frustrating and more relaxing.

1. Only use air conditioning when necessary as it causes vehicles to burn more fuel.

2. Faster driving burns fuel more quickly. Increasing speeds from 100km/h to 120 km/h will cause a vehicle to consume about 20 per cent more fuel and contribute unnecessary CO2 to the environment.

3. Cruise control can improve fuel consumption for most drivers by allowing their vehicles to maintain a constant speed.

4. If you idle your car more than 10 seconds it burns more fuel than it takes to restart the engine. For the average vehicle with a 3-litre engine, every 10 minutes of idling costs over one quarter of a litre (over 1 cup) in wasted fuel.

Step Seven: Go Green, Clean and Lean

Visit <http://www.carcare-canada.ca> for a link to the free Family Road Trip Guide, which includes tips for saving gas and protecting the environment.

Everyone is invited to join us for two inspirational ecumenical events

Procession of the Cross



Good Friday

The procession begins at Churchill Community Church at 5:30pm, winds through the downtown area and ends with a service at St. Joseph Patron of Canada.

Light refreshments will follow.

At each stop along the way, there will be a short scripture reading, a prayer and a verse of a hymn.

Easter Sunday Sunrise Service

7:00am Churchill Community Church



After the outdoor service, breakfast will be available (Free-will offering)

These ecumenical events are sponsored by Acton Ministerial Association.

Knox Presbyterian Church



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Sundays at 10:30 a.m.
In a world of change, come and worship the unchanging God.

Apr 01: MAUNDY THURSDAY (Mark 14:26-31, Luke 22:39-54)
Apr 04: EASTER SUNDAY 8:30 Sunrise Service
10:30 Why Do You Weep? (John 20:1-18)
Apr 11: Where Are You? (John 20:19-31)
Apr 18: Waiting in Galilee (John 21:1-19)
Apr 24: MISSION SATURDAY 5:30 Have/Have Not Dinner
7:00 Glen Soderholm Concert
Apr 25: MISSION AWARENESS SUNDAY Rev. Ian Shaw

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