

## Region's schools have a lot to offer communities

From page 14.

high arched windows and embossed tin ceilings.

Almost 116 years later, Franklin Street Public School has 22 classrooms, a resource centre, general purpose room, a gym and stage, staffroom and offices.

The school is unique in Markham for its bilingual Canadian citizenship court. About 25 people will become Canadians in front of a judge and an RCMP officer at the school on Feb. 12 at 9:30 a.m.

Students in Grades 4 to 8 are attending as part of their Canadian studies, music students will perform and Grade 1 to 3 pupils will welcome the new citizens with music and gifts at a reception.

Also in February, the entire school will have a chance to try something new each Thursday afternoon.

The school's electives program gives pupils a chance to go skating or bowling, try woodworking, arts and crafts, drama or science.

The program is "cross graded", said principal Josette Sassoon. That means Grade 5 students could be skating alongside Grade 8s, or a Grade 1 pupil could be trying her hand at cooking with children from Grades 2 or 3.

All students from junior kindergarten to Grade 8 take part.

Environmentalism is emphasized at the school with "boomerang lunches" — everything that comes to school has to go back home — and ink cartridge recycling.

Under this program, the school receives \$1 for every cartridge brought in. Magazines and newspapers are also recycled, for the community as well as the school.

Students stage a annual bilingual play and there are twice yearly musical concerts by the Grade 7 and 8 classes. The bilingual school choir draws children from Grade 3 and older.

Every month each class is responsible for an assembly, where plays, musicals or skits are performed.

The school council recently completed a beautification project of the court-

yard in front of the main entrance. It's also held pizza lunches, book fairs and other events that have brought in about \$10,000 annually.

From 1995 to '99, the council put \$35,000 towards computers and classroom printers as a shared venture with the school board.

Parents volunteer in the classrooms, as library assistants, assistant coaches, for field trips and with the electives program. They also reviews the Code of Behaviour and various school policies.

The full complement of extra-curricular activities includes cross-country running, volleyball, basketball, track and field, a chess club, Math Olympics, Jump Rope for Heart, a talent show and battle of the books, among others.

The school's longest serving principal is Lloyd Abernethy, who held the post from 1955 to 1985 and became supervising principal of Roy H. Crosby and William Armstrong Public Schools until 1969 when the York Region Board of Education was formed.

The school has many notable graduates. The mother of pupil John Neely, who was in Grade 4 during 1952/53 started the Markhaven Home for Seniors.

In 1956, 12-year-old Chris Martin became that year's "Timmy" for the Eastern Seals campaign.

Premier John Roberts visited the school in 1963 to present a safety plaque for seven accident-free years.

More recently, the Grade 6 and 7 French immersion classes created 22 quilts to mark Markham's bicentennial.

## Students' progress rewarding for teacher

From page 14.

dously hard with them. She runs the chess program and many of her students play a very good game of chess. Lois spends the time, she's patient and she sets high expectations, which help students achieve success."

Ms Brisbois, who has taught on and off for more than 20 years, but returned full-time five

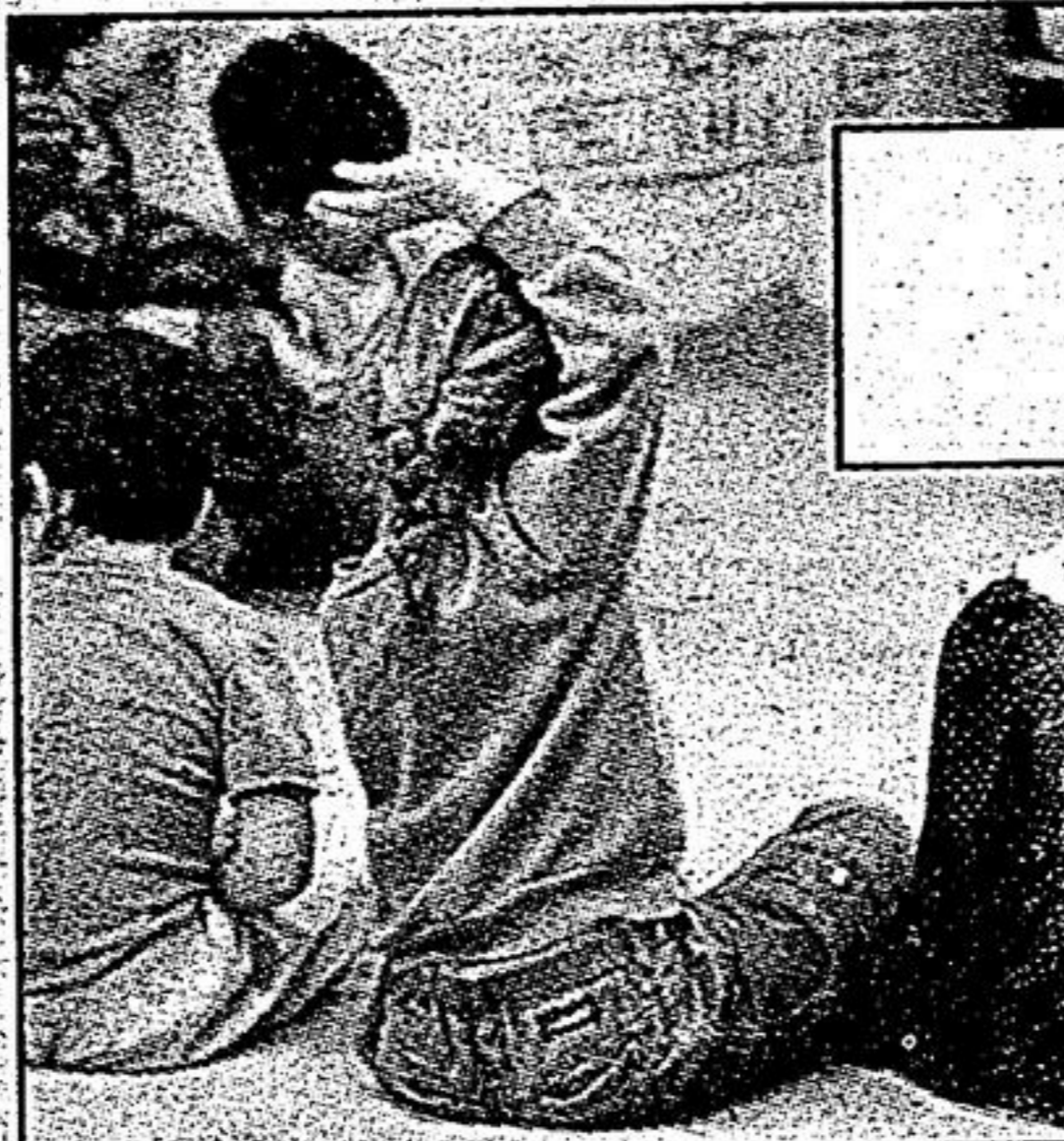
years ago, was a tad more modest.

"All the teachers work really hard," she said. "And I love teaching — but of all the teaching I've done, I probably love this more than anything. There's a great sense of satisfaction. To me, it's extremely rewarding to see the progress of the students."

She described Celestino as focused student, aware of what's going on his world and the one

around him, and a hard worker. "I'm pleased for Celestino," she said. "I'm proud that he had the initiative to do something like this."

Each month in our At the Schools section, students are invited to nominate the outstanding teachers who are making a difference in their lives. A Teacher of the Month will be chosen by a panel of judges and the winning teacher's class will be treated to a pizza party.



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