



From the President

June 2017

Shawn Martin, GEETF President – smartin@geetf.ca

Thank You for a Memorable 1st Year

Thank you to all who have assisted me in my first year as GEETF President. I wish to especially thank Maggie, Nancy and Cory for all they do. I wish you a very happy summer break. Be safe, have fun, and recharge.

Social Justice Committee News

The GEETF Social Justice Committee, with support from the Status of Women Committee and the GEDSB, organized the Boys' Conference. Guest speakers and group activities got the boys thinking about their responsibilities as males in society. The boys participated in discussions on the impact of their actions and on the choices that their peers have on others. Thoughtful discussions and an understanding of choices took place.

Grand Erie Partners with the GEDSB to Showcase Indigenous Culture

On June 20th, the GEETF, in partnership with the GEDSB, provided Grand Erie students the opportunity to experience "Sharing Our Voices". Held at the Sanderson Centre in Brantford, several Indigenous artists showcased the culture of First Peoples. I wish to thank Sabrina Sawyer for her hard work in organizing this outstanding event as both chair of our Indigenous Partnerships Committee and as Teacher Consultant, Indigenous Education for the GEDSB.

Grand Erie Celebration Dinner



The GEETF Celebration Banquet took place on June 22nd to honour this year's retirees. We celebrated the years of service of our colleagues, an Honorary Life Membership Award was bestowed upon our past president, Dave Peters, and we awarded the hard work and dedication of many of our members who went above and beyond this year to offer their excellence to students and colleagues. Again, thank you to the retirees for your decades of service. You will be missed and remembered dearly by so many.

Reminder of Pay Gap this August

Just a reminder that our last pay of this school year will be on August 17 and the first pay of the next school year is September 7th. That gives us a three-week gap between our last and first pays. Our first pay of the new school year will be the first Thursday after Labour Day starting in 2017.

Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety

ETFO participated in a provincial working group to ensure our schools are safer and healthier places in which to work and learn. The Ontario government has committed to:

- Support and enhance the role of the Ministry of Labour to better understand and respond to workplace health and safety in schools (i.e. specific training of their inspectors, ensuring school board compliance with the JOHSA, developing guidance materials);
- More consistent and better ways to share information to help reduce the risk of student violence;
- Clarification and streamlining of reporting requirements for incidents of violence in schools.

The working group will report its final recommendations in the spring of 2018. I am personally pleased to see that the government is heeding the call to address the urgent need for action to reduce violent incidents in schools.

Thank You to GEETF Committees

Thank you to all the volunteer work that our colleagues did this year to make the many workshops, social events, community supports, student activities that promoted social justice and cultural awareness, resource sharing and many other events a reality. Please think of joining one of our committees next year and/or taking part in an activity or two or more!

GEETF Participates in Haldimand Norfolk Pride and Brantford Pride



Our local set up an information and welcome table at Pride events held in both Dunnville and Brantford. Volunteers from our Social Justice and Political Action/Public Relations Committees enjoyed the outdoor festivities and promoted the need for inclusive and accepting values, policies, and action.

ETFO and the GEETF Donate to African Famine Relief

At least 17 countries in Africa are struggling to cope with two consecutive years of drought. More than 20 million are at risk of starvation and famine. ETFO locals have committed to making donations totaling \$55,500. In Grand Erie, the Executive voted to provide \$3,500 to Oxfam. With ETFO Provincial matching local donations, \$121,000 will be provided to support those facing extreme hardship and personal crisis.

GEETF Office

The GEETF office will be closed from July 1 to August 28. Maggie, our Executive Assistant, will be in the last week of August.