

From the President

May-June 2013

Editor: Donna Howey President

Grand Erie Elementary Teachers' Federation



GEETF Meetings and Events are listed on our website

www.gefed.on.ca

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Grand-Erie-Elementary-Teachers-Federation-of-Ontario/218009294961984>

Twitter: @geetfo

Please take a moment to "LIKE" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter

Our Office

You will find us at our office at 49 Dalkeith Drive, Units 1 & 2, Brantford. Our phone number for local calls is 519 753-9291 and toll free at 888 753-9291. The office is open each day from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Many evenings the office is open much later due to meetings and workshops. We also endeavour to leave Fridays at 3:30 pm.

Counting the Days

When our work-life balance is balanced, we don't need to "count the days". Workplace stress can lead to "counting the days" until a marker that signifies relief comes into play. That marker could be a break in routine, a work deadline achieved, a change in job assignment,...

We are reaching the end of another school year without a clear end to our contract negotiations. We have lived, first hand, the direct impact of politics on our work environment. GEETF members may have experienced this impact in their relationships with parents, students, administrators, teaching colleagues and fellow GEDSB employees. This was stressful. The "ETFO advice to members", the uncertainty of outcome and the loss of control of the process placed additional strain on the system. Individuals differ in their ability to be resilient in these circumstances. The responses of individuals led to the strengthening of some relationships and the disintegration of other relationships. After reflection, it is my hope that people will take steps to restore strained relationships. At least, GEETF members will want to respect the boundaries of their roles, have reasonable expectations, know when self-advocacy is important and know both when and where to seek support in the face of unacceptable circumstances.

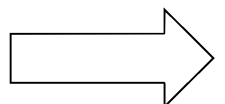
Know Your Role—As professionals, we all have a standard of conduct to uphold.
Know What to Expect—As members of the school community, we can also expect that other members of the school community uphold the code of conduct in relation to us.

Know what NOT to Accept—Seek support if you are not being treated properly in your workplace. Your federation is always available for advice.



GEETF teachers

Hayley LaPierre, Karen Peters and Mark Smith at the USW 8782 Rally. GEETF President, Donna Howey is presenting a cheque to USW 8782 President Bill Ferguson.





Plan to attend the BDLC Labour Day event. Entry is FREE to Earl Haig Family Fun Park for all who join in the Labour Day Parade (which happens immediately following the Soap Box Derby). Derby flyers are approved to be sent home with students in Grand Erie elementary schools. Stewards will provide each classroom teacher with a flyer. I hope to see you there with your families. Please share the information with your students so that interested students can plan to participate.

Canadian Labour Congress —ETFO is a member of the CLC. The CLC's current message is: Together—we've got better things to talk about. Together—we've got decent wages. Together—we've got fair treatment. Together—we've got job security. "Together" is important as we face challenges. What we have, we want for all, and we need to stand together to retain.

Safety Memos

From time to time, GEDSB teachers may receive a "Safety Talks" memo; either forwarded electronically or posted in the school. The most recent is on the topic of "summer clean up". Previous "Safety Talks" memos have been on topics such as, preventing injuries, and dealing with hot weather. Although the topics may seem like common sense, please understand that these memos are the board's manner of informing employees of standards and expectations related to the topics.

Note that the sub-heading in the "summer clean up" memo says, "DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING TIPS WITH YOUR STAFF". Depending on the cleaning protocol for your building, it may or may not be necessary to empty file cabinets and bookshelves.

Upcoming GEETF Events—

June 13—GEETF Retirement Celebration Banquet

September 2nd —FREE Family Day at Early Haig (water slides, lazy river, mini-golf, batting cages, children's water play area) following Labour Day Soap Box Derby and Parade

Our Professional Responsibility

If you haven't yet, please read, "*Safety in Learning Environments: A Shared Responsibility*". It is available on the Ontario College of Teachers' website (members, resources, professional advisories) and was included in your recent OCT magazine. According to College CEO and Registrar Michael Salvatori, the document, "sets out a '4Rs for safety' framework to help members **recognize** responsibilities and dangers, **respond** professionally, **report** incidents properly and **reflect** to prevent future occurrences." Our job is to educate students but, keeping students safe while in our care is of prime importance. *We do have a legislated responsibility to report all incidents which must be considered for suspension through the completion of a Safe Schools Incident Report.*

United Way Member Agencies Help Students in Our Schools

Every September, there is a workplace campaign asking employees to make a donation to the United Way. A staff member is asked to volunteer to be the United Way campaign coordinator. This involves distributing forms, collecting forms and ideally generating enthusiasm for all teachers to contribute in some way.

There are good reasons to have enthusiasm for supporting the United Way in Grand Erie (Brant United Way, and Haldimand-Norfolk United Way). The United Way is a volunteer-led organization with a vision to create opportunities for a better life for everyone in our community. Approximately 1 in 3 citizens in the local community will be helped by United Way funded agencies. All donations made to United Way are invested locally, into our communities.

So, when the "labours of love" list comes around, don't be shy of taking on the role of being the United Way school campaign coordinator. It is a worthwhile cause that supports the students in our schools.