

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN ACTION

Learning opportunities and initiatives demonstrating commitment to
Thames Valley's Strategic Priorities and Operational Goals



Huron University program offers support to under-represented students

Thames Valley has partnered with Western's Huron College to offer a new program aimed at empowering students who are traditionally under-represented by helping them to plan for their future and expand their educational opportunities.

The Scotiabank Scholars Program aims to provide better access to university opportunities for students who are Indigenous, Black, racialized, experiencing poverty, or new to Canada.

As part of the program, each Thames Valley high school can nominate up to five Grade 11 students and three Grade 12 students to participate in virtual and in-person sessions at Huron University that cover topics such as university preparation and career development. Sessions will be conducted by Huron staff or special guests during school hours and all costs will be covered. Grade 12 students will also receive support in applying for university, including a full scholarship at Huron.

Such programs help to ensure that all students have equitable access to opportunities and will help present and future generations of minoritized students reach their fullest potential.

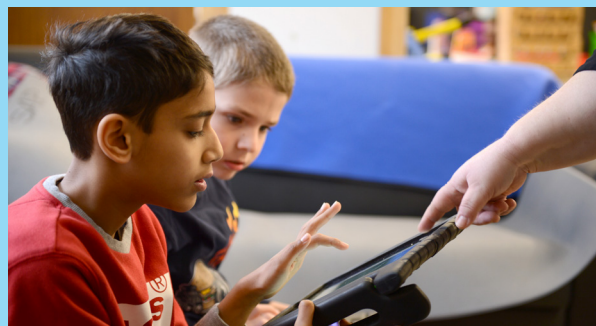
The program will be offered monthly beginning December 2021. Interested Grade 11 and 12 students are encouraged to speak to their guidance counsellor for more information.

TVDSB hosts first Learning Disability Information Night

On Wednesday, November 10th Thames Valley hosted our first Learning Disability (LD) Information Night. The focus of the session, which was developed in collaboration with the Learning Disabilities Association of London Region (LDAO), was to provide parents, guardians and students a better understanding of Learning Disabilities, explore the most commonly used compensatory strategies and accommodations, and provide them with a review of our Assistive Technology Family website.

More than 180 families registered for the virtual session and provided very positive feedback to our district's staff:

"My son felt validated and loved the fact that he was included in the seminar. He even learned about some different features on his computer that he was not aware of."



Families also appreciated learning about the tools students can have access to:

"I feel the technology will be a great tool and not a barrier to their continued growth. I was worried it would make him lazy or give him shortcuts that prevent learning. The tools seem amazing and just that; a tool to overcome barriers."

"I was hesitant encouraging her to use technology because I wanted her to practice writing. I now understand how technology can improve her level of abilities."

Thames Valley's Special Education team looks forward to future learning opportunities for parents, students and the school community.

TV Education Foundation launches Giving Tuesday fundraiser for families in emergency need



The Thames Valley Education Foundation is launching a one-day fundraising campaign on Tuesday, November 30 aimed at helping students and their families facing food insecurity issues caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Requests have jumped 70 per cent so far this year for emergency financial support from TVEF's Caring Fund, which provides up to \$500 to students and families in need of food, clothing, and transportation.

The goal of the Giving Tuesday campaign is to raise \$20,000 in one day to provide a boost to the Caring Fund. Community members can donate by visiting www.tvdsb.ca/Donate.

"The pandemic has put additional pressure on families that were already struggling," said TVEF Executive Director Jackie Ellefsen, noting that 215 families have been assisted with \$79,000 in emergency funding to date.

"If the trend continues, we project a need for more than \$270,000 – a significant jump over last year's \$167,000 funding total," added Ellefsen.

Requests for Caring Fund support are turned around in under 48 hours and are designed to create a bridge between a family facing immediate crisis and more long-term community-based support. It is also aimed at helping to ensure students can focus on learning and attend school, even during a crisis.

For Thames Valley Principal Dawn Ruddick, being able to support families during the pandemic has been essential.

"We want to be able to do more than just say 'We feel for you,'" said Principal Ruddick. "Some families are in immediate need and so the Caring Fund is a way for us to give some deliberate, intentional, purposeful help to our school community members when they are in the greatest need of their lives."

One family learned firsthand of the importance of the Caring Fund's emergency support after their home caught fire, leaving the family of five homeless and without essential items such as warm clothing.

"You don't realize how important this kind of support is until you find yourself receiving help," said the mother of the family. "It made me realize that our family mattered to the community, and that there are people out there who cared about our family."



Director's Corner

 @DirFisherTVDSB

A priority of mine since I began my tenure as Director has been to visit every Thames Valley school and meet with teachers and students. These visits give me the opportunity to see first-hand the great work staff are doing at our schools to bring to life our three strategic priorities: Student Achievement and Well-being, Equity and Diversity, and Relationships.

Over the past three months I have had the opportunity to visit a number of our schools, including Southwold PS, South Dorchester PS, College Ave SS, Central PS, and Knollwood Park PS. Most recently, I met with staff and students at Lester B. Pearson School of the Arts.



Former TVDSB student, Shaeden Sharpe, signs contract with Kentucky Wildcats



Thames Valley alumni Shaeden Sharpe recently committed to play basketball with the University of Kentucky Wildcats – the most successful NCAA Division 1 basketball team in U.S. history.

Shaeden attended HB Beal SS where he led his team to the OFSAA Basketball Championships before moving to the United States to play for Dream City Christian School in Arizona.

Recently, Shaeden's family and friends, former teachers and supporters gathered at Beal where he signed his letter of intent to play for Wildcats.

For more information, see: <https://london.ctvnews.ca/sharpe-signs-letter-of-intent-to-play-at-the-highest-level-1.5661256>

Outdoor learning spaces create new opportunities



Over the past several years, Thames Valley has supported the construction of outdoor learning spaces in order to create new learning opportunities for students.

Outdoor learning spaces function as classrooms outside the school walls and often consist of many different natural elements, including rocks and logs.

Last year, over 40 outdoor learning spaces were created. Many of these projects were funded using a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Education earmarked to support outdoor learning.

The Environmental Education Learning Portfolio worked in close collaboration with Facility Services to identify school communities across the district who would benefit from outdoor learning spaces purchased through this funding.

While Environmental Education Learning Coordinator Erin Mutch worked with each school to customize an outdoor learning area based on their learning goals and needs, Danielle Kettle, Project Coordinator at Facility Services implemented the design and coordinated construction.

The creation of each outdoor learning space involves working closely with school principals, educator teams, custodial staff and Maintenance Zone leaders.

These areas have also helped build stronger school communities by offering students a place to play before and after school and give parents a place to make connections with staff and each other.

SAFE program provides mental health and well-being supports to TVDSB families during COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the mental health and well-being of many Thames Valley families.

In response to an increased need for mental health services, the Support and Aid to Families Electronically (SAFE) program was launched to provide free, remote access for parents and caregivers of TVDSB students.

This important initiative was developed in partnership with the School of Social Work at King's University College at Western (King's). SAFE is a unique, rapid response to the mental health and well-being challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic among parents and caregivers, while also enabling King's students to receive stable, quality mental health training opportunities.

Through SAFE, families who are experiencing concerns about their child's behaviours, anxiety around managing household routines or stress related to virtual learning have access to referrals and counselling supports. Services include access to parenting strategies and tips regarding child behaviours; mental health, addiction and domestic violence interventions and assistance in navigating community services. King's Masters Level Social Work Students provide these services while being supervised by a registered Social Worker and course instructor.

Families are referred to the SAFE program through TVDSB Professional Student Support Services staff. To date, almost 100 Thames Valley parents and caregivers have been referred to the SAFE program.

To learn more about this program, [please visit the King's University College at Western website](#).



Chair's Corner

 @lapizzolato

It has been a busy month for Thames Valley Trustees with a number of initiatives and projects underway across the Board. Here are some highlights:

- We are inviting applications for the position of Trustee to serve as one of two Trustees representing London Wards 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13. The successful applicant will complete the Board's current 4-year term expiring November 30, 2022. Interested applicants can find more information on [Thames Valleys' website](#).
- We passed an important motion at the November 23 Board of Director's meeting to deal with urgent capacity challenges at Sir Arthur Currie Public School in northwest London – an area of the city that has seen unprecedented residential growth in recent years. The measures approved include limiting further enrolment at Sir Arthur Currie to siblings of current students only and redirecting new students to attend Knollwood Park Public School beginning January 1, 2022. [Read more](#).
- We have deferred the launch of the London Area Attendance Review and Report to the January 25, 2022 Board meeting. This will give us time to review and reflect on new information by the Ontario Ministry of Education about a major capital funding announcement. Education Minister Stephen Lecce announced \$600 million in capital funding to support 78 school and child care related projects across Ontario. [Read more](#).
- Thames Valley's new southeast London elementary school has officially been named Summerside Public School after the results of a community poll were endorsed by Trustees at the November 23 Board meeting. The name was supported by 74 per cent of those who participated in the poll of families whose children will attend the school when it opens its doors in Fall 2022 – and reflects the name of the surrounding London neighborhood of Summerside. [Read more](#).
- Thames Valley's Rural Education Task Force has launched a series of special community consultations across school district to help identify the unique opportunities and challenges of providing public education in rural communities informing the creation of a TVDSB Rural Education Strategy. [Register to be part of the conversation](#).

We welcome your feedback and input. For more information on the ridings we represent and our contact information, [visit the Trustee page on the TVDSB website](#).