

**GCA Education Committee  
Report to the GCA Board  
January 26, 2010**

**Contacts**

- The GCA Education Committee held its first meeting last Thursday. In attendance were Lynn Watson-Senecal (principal), Tim Hore and Sharon Chartier from First Avenue, Margo Williams, Barb Massey, Cindi Kirk from Mutchmor and Joey Gunn from Lady Evelyn School.
- Prior to this meeting, Christine McAllister (Chair) spoke with the principals at Mutchmor and GCI and has exchanged emails with the principal and school council reps from Glashan and Hopewell.
- Contact has yet to be made with Corpus Christi or Immaculata.
- Christine attended the Zone 9 meeting where the OCDSB CFO gave a presentation about the anticipated \$14 million deficit.

**Lansdowne Park Concerns regarding Education**

- Additional housing units, even if condos, could mean more students, which could negatively impact First Avenue (due to current overcrowding)
- Mutchmor has many children who walk from Old Ottawa South, so walking through a construction zone is a concern; the Principal has requested an additional school crossing guard for Bank Street on the Glebe side of the bridge should construction begin.
- Mutchmor also has many students who are bused – there is concern that traffic during construction as well as during major events will cause significantly longer busing times, resulting in children spending more time on a bus to get to school or to get home.
- GCI has concern regarding use of the dome at Lansdowne Park and whether it will have similar access.

**Other Concerns**

- Teenagers and drugs: if you see kids doing drugs in front of your house or in our neighbourhood, Pat Kulka, principal at GCI, suggests you call the police. She will deal with students when on school property.
- Pat also cautions about teenagers spending too much time on computer/electronic games – this negatively impacts sleep patterns, homework and learning.

**Local Schools Needs**

- Parking is an issue for GCI – they have 100 spaces for about 135 staff cars. They have asked the City to allow street parking to accommodate, but the City has refused. Maybe the Traffic Committee could help brainstorm some ideas.
- Mutchmor is redeveloping its field behind Corpus Christi. It has applied to the City for a greening grant to replace the dying Ash trees. They could use help from garden angels in watering the trees, particularly over the summer, as well as some garden angels to take care of the heritage garden at the front of the school.

### **Beacon Schools Needs**

- Beacon schools are those which have been identified as significantly less privileged than other schools.
- The Committee discussed whether we should support any of these schools which are near Glebe.
- While there was general agreement, it was suggested that we look at “near Beacon” schools – those which have not been formally identified for help, but who really need it.
- The suggestion was to speak directly to principals once those schools are identified to determine whether there is some way our community can help. Christine will pursue this.

### **Alternative School Review impacting Lady Evelyn**

- School Board staff have submitted their recommendations to the Board and are suggesting winding down the alternative schools program.
- This will affect Lady Evelyn elementary school, located in Old Ottawa East. The proposal is that the program at Lady Evelyn will wind down when the accommodation review is done for our area (currently not scheduled).
- The committee discussed this at length and has identified a number of potential impacts for our community:
  - Choice as a principle: committee members felt strongly that families should have options for schooling within their communities. The Glebe is fortunate to have a number of schools within walking distance that offer choice: English and English gifted, French Immersion, Catholic at the elementary, middle and high school levels, as well as a number of other specialized programs. In addition, they can access the Alternative learning options currently available at Lady Evelyn school.
  - The alternative programs offered at Lady Evelyn offer children a different approach to learning, which may be more appropriate to some children than that offered at other schools.
  - The elimination of the program at Lady Evelyn represents a reduction of choice in education for Glebe-area families. There was some concern that once one program is eliminated, it may become easier to reduce the number of other choices available in our community.
  - Lady Evelyn represents to some degree, a “best practices” R&D lab, which contributes to excellence in education. While Board staff feel the best practices can be rolled out to other schools (which the Committee supports), the report did not adequately identify how the R&D will continue. This could be a negative impact.
  - A number of Glebe children attend Lady Evelyn. If they can no longer attend the program at that school, they could transfer back to a Glebe area school. In the case of First Avenue, this could have serious negative impacts as the school is already over-capacity by more than 100 students.
  - Overall, the Committee felt this issue has broad community impacts, and that the GCA should voice its concern to the OCDSB and support the Alternative Review Program at Lady Evelyn.