

Inclusive Communities

Edmonton Catholic Schools



We are called to be leaders of hope and mercy. As we work together to answer this call, let our actions of love and grace guide us as we continue to build inclusive, welcome, safe, and caring learning and working environments for all.

Issue No. 9
February 2017



Love –it’s in us to give

February is an amazing month. We feel more light in our steps and light in our hearts after making it through January, which for some can be a dark and cold month. In February, spring is just around the corner! We also have great traditions and days of celebration in the month of February. In Edmonton Catholic Schools we hold our annual Faith Development Day, a wonderful tradition where we gather as a community to celebrate and grow in our faith journey. In Alberta we celebrate Family Day, a wonderful tradition that provides everyone a day to spend quality time with family. And then we have Valentine’s Day, a time when we think of those we love and give them a gift. Love is in the air! So how can we expand on the theme of love in the month of February? When we look all around us, can we see glimpses of love coming to life? What can we do to share more love in our lives? Here are some ways to explore more love:

- **Love your SELF:** positive affirmations; healthy habits of mind; meditations; journaling; mindfulness; pride in yourself and your accomplishments. Write a positive affirmation to yourself every day for the month of February.
- **Love your BODY:** healthy practices to show love to your body: nutritious eating, consistent exercise, explore new ways to move your body (yoga, meditation, a new class at the gym, dance). Move and feed your body in a healthy way every day in February.
- **Love GOD:** more time for prayer, reflection, meditation, reading of scripture. Try a new spiritual experience like a retreat or visit a new Church community or take a nature walk and have a talk with God. Saying “thank you” is a powerful prayer.
- **Love your FAMILY:** spend time together; say “THANK YOU”; enjoy an activity together (board game, movie, go out for dinner, go to Church, take a walk, go skating). Enjoy Family Day!
- **Love your FRIENDS:** spend time thinking about your friends and how important they are to you. Life would very lonely without friends. Be kind to them. Hold their friendship as precious to you and don’t take it for granted. Make time for one another. Cultivate positive and healthy relationships. Remember, your words matter.
- **Love HUMANITY:** think of how you can give back....give your time to serve...give donations to those in needs....give food to those in need. Stand up for others. Communicate with respect and the dignity of others intact. Hold God’s creation with respect.
- **Love LIFE:** take more time to breathe...to show gratitude...to look for joy in your life every day. Start a gratitude journal. Take pictures of great moments in your life and share them with friends. Count your blessings. Reflect on a moment of gratitude every day.

Here is a video story of one community’s showering of love on all those who give. It is told by the kids and the caregivers of Neurosurgery at the Stollery Children’s Hospital. “Shower the people you love with love.” (James Taylor)

Video: [Neurosurgery Kids Fund Flash Mob Video](#)

A Celebration of LOVE

How can we grow in our love? Here are some ideas to explore in the month of February

Video: Love Lesson

Children are asked one question: “what is love?” Then there is a follow up question: “how do you think we should show people that we love them?” Show love.

Video: What is Love?

Kids are asked ‘what is love?’ Let this message fill up your heart...and inspire you to show more love. Love inspiration.

Video: Comfortable In Your Skin

Adults are asked a question: “if you could change one thing about your body, what would you change?” The same question was asked of children. Their answers are amazing. How do we lose that love of ‘self’ when we get older? When was the last time you were comfortable in your own skin? Love yourself.

Video: To the Girl I Was

Dove asks women of diverse backgrounds to reflect on their life experiences. Then they are asked ‘if you could tell your younger self something, what would it be?’ Life lessons. Love life.

Video: A Boy and a Man Talk About Life

A wonderful conversation on life and love. Love your life.

Video: People React to Being Called Beautiful

Watch the reactions. We don’t hear kind things enough. You are beautiful! Love yourself.

Video: Students react to being called Important

Teachers are asked to take a picture of a student who is important to them and inspires them. Teachers share their message of love and inspiration with their students. Love your students.

Video: Dove Real Beauty Sketches | You’re More Beautiful Than You Think

This sketch explores the gap between how others perceive us and how we perceive ourselves. Love your thoughts about yourself.

Video: Dove Legacy | A girl’s beauty confidence starts with YOU...

Dove asked mothers how they felt about their body. Dove then asked their daughters the same question. A look at how our words to ourselves influence our child’s self-worth and beauty. Be happy. Love your daughters. Love you.

Video: You’ve Got a Friend in Me

A loving duet between a father and daughter. Love to sing.

Video: How to love your body

A female video-log lessons on how to love your body. Love your body.

Video: You Are More

A young boy’s struggle with food and weight issues. You are more than your struggles. Love your body. Love your friends.

Video: 11:11

This is a story of a man who learns how one small act of kindness can make a big difference. Love others.

BLOG: Lessons With Laughter—The Best Part of Me Writing Activity

What are the best parts of you? A portrait reflection that shines the best light on you.

Reconciliation

A Restoration of Friendly Relations

On January 31st Fr. Julian Bulyj shared a homily after a reading of the Holy Gospel according to Luke (Luke 19:10). In this homily Fr. Julian reflected on the story of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was known in his community as a cheat who collected more tax money than was owed and kept the extra for himself. He became a very rich man at the cost of hurting others. On this day, Jesus was coming to see the people and, like his townsfolk, Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. But the crowd was large and Zacchaeus was not tall enough to look over the crowd, so he climbed a tree. As Jesus walked by He called out “Zacchaeus, come down from the tree!” and told him that he was going to visit his house. This shocked the people, who all disliked Zacchaeus for his cheating ways. Why would Jesus go to visit Zacchaeus? When Jesus went to Zacchaeus’ house, Zacchaeus repented for his mistakes and told Jesus of his plan to repay the people that he took from. He also decided to give a large amount of money to the poor.

Fr. Julian’s homily reflected on God’s love for us. In this story Jesus went to see Zacchaeus. Like Zacchaeus before us, we can call on God and he will be there for us. For God LOVES us, especially when we make mistakes. This is an important message for kids today...that they are loved especially when they make mistakes. We are all hard on ourselves when we falter and we fear that everyone will be mad when we do. Sometimes we don’t know how to recover and ‘fix it’ when we’ve made a mistake, so it seems easier to keep spreading hurt instead of doing the right thing to repair hurt feelings.

Fr. Julian reminded us that God’s mercy and love is like the rain falling down upon us. He shared that he uses this analogy when talking with kids. He encourages them to go and stand outside in the rain, yes they will get wet...but do it...stand in the rain. That rain is like God’s love coming down on us.

Fr. Julian also reminded us that we do not need to climb trees in order to see Jesus. We can see Jesus when we pray; when we read scripture; when we repent our mistakes and make reconciliation; when we serve others; when we love.

In our schools we focus on prayer, on reading the bible, on service and justice projects, and on love. How can we grow in helping our youth to learn from their mistakes and to reconcile their errors with those that they hurt? Learning the skills of reconciliation is a big step towards healing our spiritual self and showing that we want to make ‘right relations’ again. It helps to put thought into our mistakes by making a plan to fix it with others. These steps of *conflict resolution* are important steps to learn as we walk our daily path. When we hurt others with our actions, we need to not only learn from our mistakes (internal learning) but also learn to heal the hurt of the other person (communal learning). Saying “I’m sorry” is a good place to start. But showing how you are sorry, and how you can make up for it, shows the importance you are putting into the relationship you have with others. Some call reconciliation the ‘restoration of friendly relations’. How can you restore friendly relations with others when a hurt has occurred in your community?



Video: Zacchaeus

Love Life

By Abraham Maslow

Love today.

“Here I am, where I ought to be.” Louise Erdrich

Love the ordinary.

“Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are. Let me learn from you, love you, bless you before you depart. Let me not pass you by in the quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow.” Mary Jean Iron

Love the possibilities.

“You, whose day it is, get out your rainbow colors and make it beautiful.” traditional Nootka song

Love yourself.

“The greatest gift you will ever receive is the gift of *loving and believing in yourself*. Guard this gift with your life. It is the only thing that will every truly be yours.” Tiffany Loren Rowe

Love your work.

“Do what you love to do, and do it so well that those who come to see you do it will bring others to watch you do it again and again and again.” Mark Victor Hansen

Love new things.

“The firsts go away—first love, first baby, first kiss. You have to create *new ones*.” Sarah Jessica Parker

Love doing everything.

“I don’t want to get to the end of my life and find that I just lived the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well.” Diane Akerman

Love doing nothing.

“If you can spend a perfectly useless afternoon in a perfectly useless manner, you have learned how to live.” Lin Yutang

Love your family.

“I think the most significant work we ever do, in the whole world, in our whole life, is done within the four walls of our own home.” Stephen R. Covey

Love your friends.

“Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. And if you have a friend who makes you laugh, spend lots and lots of time with them.” unknown

Love being in love.

“Rules for lovers: 1) Be romantic. 2) Be passionate. 3) Be imaginative. 4) Never be rushed.” Charles Olson

Love to play.

“Always be ready to have the time of your life.” Unknown

Love the moment.

“The work will wait while you show the child the rainbow, but the rainbow won’t wait while you finish the work.” Pat Clafford

Love simple pleasures.

“I have never been a millionaire. But I have enjoyed a great meal, a crackling fire, a glorious sunset, a walk with a friend, a hug from a child, a cup of soup, a kiss behind the ear. There are plenty of life’s tiny delights for all of us.” Jack Anthony

Love taking chances.

“I have enjoyed life a lot more by saying YES than saying NO.” Richard Branson

Love your mistakes.

“You will do foolish things, but do them with enthusiasm.” Colette

Love taking your time.

“It is a great art to saunter.” Henry David Thoreau

Love the open road.

“When you’re travelling, you are what you are, right there and then. People don’t have your past to hold against you. No yesterdays on the road.” William Least-Heat Moon

Love your own backyard.

“Experiencing our familiar rooms and belongings, our local supermarket and neighborhood streets as if we had never been there, is also traveling.” Melanie Peter

Love the outdoors.

“Forget not that the earth delights to feel your bare feet, and the winds long to play with your hair.” Khalil Gibran

Love a good walk.

“Wander a whole summer, if you can. Thousands of God’s blessings will search you and soak you as if you were a sponge, and the big days will go by uncounted.” John Muir

Love the earth.

“If the earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it, declare it sacred, and protect it.” Joe Miller

Love your neighbors.

“One great, strong, unselfish soul in every community could actually redeem the world.” Elbert Hubbard

Love helping others.

"A lot of dreams don't come true in life. If you can make somebody's dream come true, you should."
Jameer Nelson

Love the children.

"I hear babies cry, and I watch them grow, they'll learn much more than I'll ever know. And I think to myself, WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD." Weiss and Thiele

Love your memories.

"Recall as often as you wish; a happy memory never wears out." Libby Fudim

Love every birthday.

"Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know 'why' I look this way. I've travelled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved." Will Rogers

Love to be amazed.

"If I had influence with the good fairy, I would ask that her gift to each child be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life." Rachel Carlson

Love new beginnings.

"With every rising of the sun, think of your life as just begun." Unknown.

Love what's next.

"I haven't a clue how my story will end, but that's alright. When you set out on a journey and night covers the road, that's when you discover the stars." Nancy Willard

Love life.





FACEBOOK COVER
BEINGLOL.COM

Be **you**tiful



Instagram

WHAT IF
YOU
SIMPLY
DEVOTED
THIS YEAR
TO LOVING
YOURSELF
MORE?

I'm not a **perfect** girl.
My hair **doesn't** always **stay** in place &
I **spill things** a lot. I'm **pretty clumsy** &
sometimes I have a **broken heart**.
My friends & I sometimes **fight** &
maybe some days **nothing** goes right.
but when I think **about it** & take a **step back**
I remember how **amazing life** truly is
& that maybe, just maybe, I like being
unperfect..



RESPECT YOUR BODY.
FUEL YOUR BODY.
CHALLENGE YOUR BODY.
MOVE YOUR BODY.
AND MOST OF ALL,
love your body.

21 Day
FIX

ALWAYS REMEMBER
YOU ARE **BRAVER**
THAN YOU BELIEVE
STRONGER
THAN YOU SEEM
SMARTER
THAN YOU THINK
& **TWICE AS**
BEAUTIFUL
AS YOU'D EVER
IMAGINED



"God created *our skin*
tones with *beautiful*
variety, but *all of our*
souls are the *same color*."

DaveWillis.org

10 Ways to Love...

LISTEN without interrupting.
(Proverbs 18)

SPEAK without accusing
(James 1:19)

GIVE without sparing
(Proverbs 21:26)

PRAY without ceasing
(Colossians 1:19)

ANSWER without arguing
(Proverbs 17:1)

SHARE without pretending
(Ephesians 4:15)

ENJOY without complaint
(Philippians 2:14)

TRUST without wavering
(1 Corinthians 13:7)

FORGIVE without punishing
(Colossians 3:13)



Positive Affirmations—Cultivating Healthy Habits of Mind

What we say to ourselves, our inner talk, is so important to the development of our healthy minds. Helping our youth learn self-love is the greatest gift that we can give them. When we love ourselves we can turn our love out to shine on others.

But often love of self is hard to grow. We can begin our day in conflict, or have an argument at recess, or hear a name thrown our way in the hallway...and self-doubt sets in. What messages do we want our youth to hear? The more we surround them with the message of LOVE, the greater and healthier our communities will be!

Here are some resources to help to cultivate healthy habits of mind in your school communities:

Videos

[Video: Sesame Street: “Will.i.am Sings “What I Am”](#)

[Video: Sesame Street: Bruno Mars—Don’t Give Up](#)

[Video: Sesame Street do Growth Mindset](#)

[Video: Louise Hay—affirmations and power thoughts](#)

[Video: Louise Hay—40 minutes every day to CHANGE your life—guided meditation](#)

[Video: Beloved –Jason Felix](#)

[Video: Just Be Held—Casting Crowns](#)

[Video: Power of Your Love – Hillsong](#)

[Video: You Raise Me Up – Josh Groban](#)

[Video: Blessings – Laura Story](#)

[Video: Perfect Peace –Laura Story](#)

[Video: Thrive – Casting Crowns](#)

Websites

[3 Minute Retreat: Made in God’s Image. Loyola Press.](#)

3-Minute Retreats invite you to take a short prayer break right at your computer. Spend some quiet time reflecting on a Scripture passage.

[Gratitude and Grateful Living: Welcome to Gratefulness.org](#)

A Network for Grateful Living is a global organization offering online and community-based education programs and practices which inspire and guide a commitment to grateful living. Log in for a daily question to reflect upon.

Today’s question is “What feeds my soul?”

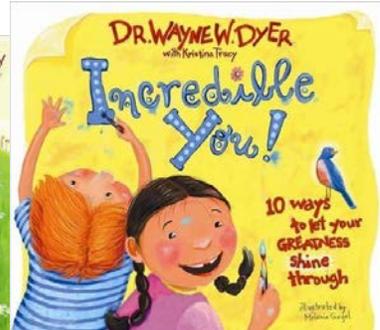
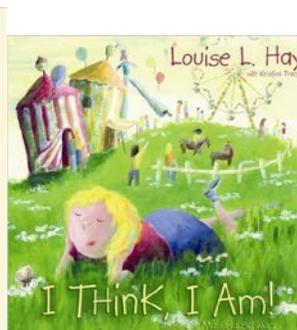
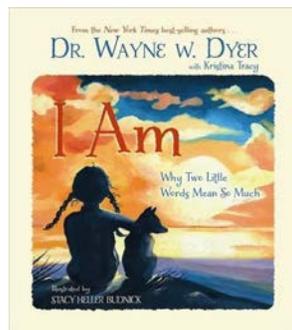
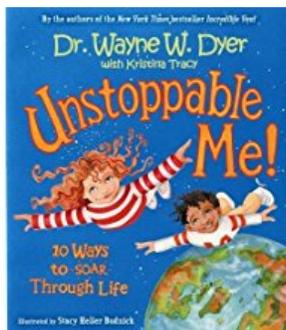
Positive Affirmations—Cultivating Healthy Habits of Mind

Playlist

Consider some of these songs to share in your classroom community for reflection and inspiration, or to add to your personal collection.

Forever Young, The Canadian Tenors
Lead With Your Heart, The Canadian Tenors
Always There, The Canadian Tenors
Psalm 40: Here I Am Lord, Steve Agrisano
You Raise Me Up, Josh Groban
Love is Everything, K.D. Lang
Song of Bernadette, Melanie Doan
Songbird, Rita Gold
I Hope You Dance, Lee Ann Womack
I Believe in You, Amanda Marshall
Secret of Life, James Taylor
My Own Two Hands, Jack Johnson
A Beautiful Day, India Arie
I Am Light, India Arie
Wish For You, Faith Hill
Moments, Emerson Drive
Hallelujah, K.D. Lang
Here Come the Sun (instrumental)—The Beatles

Literature for Youth (click on pictures for link to website)



Where is the love?

Thirteen years ago *The Black Eyed Peas* asked us “*where is the love?*” They came together to ask humanity where is the love after many acts of violence and hate became oh so common around the world. They asked:

**“Mama, tell us, what is going on? Can’t we all just get along?
Father, help us, send some guidance from above, ‘cause people got me questioning
where is the love?”**

The video drew a global community together and lead us all on a human call to action—to put love first. Today, 13 years later, the Black Eyed Peas issued a new version of the **Video: Where Is The Love?** Consider using this video in your classroom to open up dialogue about the world today. Help your students have a platform to talk about what is happening around them in a safe and open way. Our youth are watching it all on social media. They are more tuned in than we know, and their hearts hurt for the pain that humanity is in. Helping our youth process what is happening and to talk openly about what they are hearing and seeing will help them deal with their hurt. Because they are hurting... from the pain, the discrimination, the racism, and the fighting. They need a safe space to talk openly and to process their thoughts. They also need to be taught how to communicate and create a fair discourse amongst their peers. When we are faced with an opposing view, how do we communicate respectfully? Helping to create a space of sharing of viewpoints, opinions and concerns are important lessons in valuing the voice of all. Choosing your words in a clear and respectful way is met in a reciprocal dialogue of sharing vs choosing words that can create more conflict. Words can create conflict and words can create open dialogue. Helping your students to set the ‘norms of discussions’ will be a great place to start when cultivating open dialogue.

The Black Eyed Peas also shared this reflection-- that it was the greater community who asked them to release their video again to the world.

“After the Paris attacks, after Brussels, Turkey, Orlando here in America...our hearts were in pain and aching like everyone else.”

Watch the **Video: Where is the love ATTN** to hear the Black Eyed Peas’ call to action for humanity, to show ourselves and each other where the love is....it is right here in our heart.

God is LOVE. Father Michael Mireau reminded us every day of this message: “God is LOVE”. In the month of February help our communities keep LOVE at the front of our daily living—through prayer, through song, through friendship, through community, through action. Help each other to answer the call to love—love yourself, love others, love God, love your family, love your school, love of humanity, love of creation.

**“Love is the key. Love is the answer.
Love is the solution.”**

The Black Eyed Peas

February 22, 2017 is
PINK SHIRT DAY

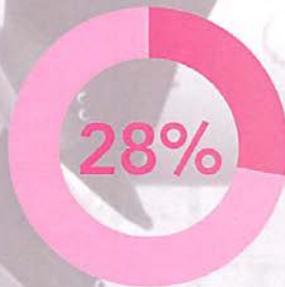


Albertans that agree that
*they have a personal responsibility
to reduce bullying in their community*



Albertans that agree that
*bullying prevention should be an
urgent priority for their community*

Despite this shared sense of urgency to eliminate bullying,
bullying behaviour is still a problem in our schools and communities
and



28% of people in Alberta
still believe that
*bullying is just a
normal part of growing up*

BULLYING ISN'T AND SHOULDN'T BE CONSIDERED NORMAL

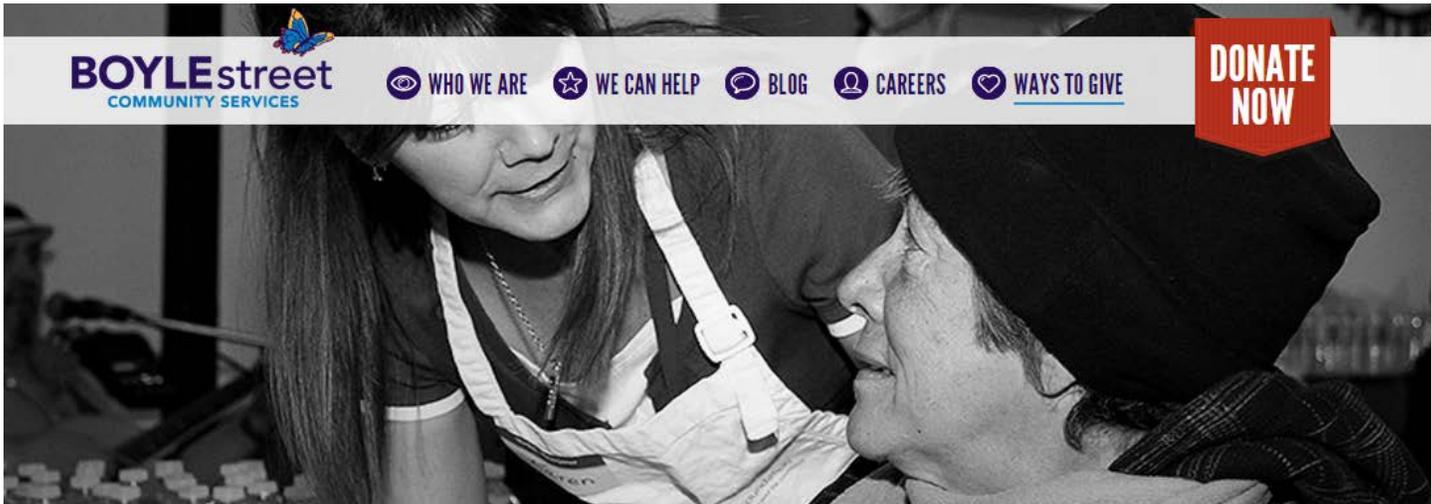
**LET'S STAND TOGETHER IN SUPPORT OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
LET'S CELEBRATE PINK SHIRT DAY ON FEBRUARY 22**

wear a pink shirt | discuss negative impacts of bullying in your class | promote positive relationships
share photos & inspiration on Twitter, using #PinkPromise and @SafeandCaring

Visit www.safeandcaring.ca/pink-shirt-day for more ideas



Source: Human Services. 2016 Albertans' Perceptions of Family Violence and Bullying Survey, March 2016.



SPONSOR A MEAL

Meal Sponsorship

Are you looking for a way to give back to the community with your family, friends, teammates, or coworkers?

Sponsoring a meal at Boyle Street is a fantastic way to spend time as a group while also making a huge difference to our community members. And, it's simple and easy!

Step 1: Fill out the form below – a Boyle Street representative will contact you shortly to schedule your meal sponsorship

Step 2: Schedule your sponsorship date. Please note: the maximum number of people we can accommodate in our kitchen is 8.

Step 3: What do you want to serve? Choose from our very own Boyle Street menu of delicious dishes.

Step 4: Meal day! Once you arrive at Boyle Street, your ingredients will be ready in our kitchen for your group to start cooking (don't fret – our amazing cook will be there to help out as needed!)

*You can choose to simply sponsor the meal, but it's a lot more fun to come to our downtown community centre and help prepare and serve our community members as well. You'll walk away with a great experience and will meet some amazing people.

Visit: [Boyle Street Community Services](#) to locate the form and proceed with sponsorship.

Current Events and Resources

"Love is the key. Love is the answer. Love is the solution."

The Black Eyed Peas

The Washington Post: "Pope Francis washes the feet of Muslim immigrants, says we are 'children of the same God.'" | March 25, 2016 –although this is an old post, it has been re-circulated on social media after the recent incident in Quebec City.
theme: children of God, life in peace

Edmonton Sun: "Alberta vigil responds to Quebec City mosque shooting" | January 31, 2017
theme: unity, community, support, stand together

CBC Radio: "Gay Dads Navigate the Taboos Associated with Single-Sex Parenthood" | January 27, 2017
theme: *stigmas and stereotypes*

CBC Radio: "Family often feel 'used' by media", says Indigenous reporter of MMIW coverage | February 1, 2017
theme: *media bias, factual coverage*

CBC Arts: "Gigi Gorgeous: The Canadian transgender star who took over Sundance" | January 26, 2017
theme: *identity and self-acceptance*

Edmonton Journal: "Black History Month officially recognized in Alberta" | February 1, 2017
theme: *identity, acceptance, community, history*

City of Edmonton: "Family Day Unplugged"
theme: *turn off devices and reconnect with family*

TV2 Denmark: "All That We Share"
theme: *putting people in boxes, common ground*

CBC News | Indigenous: "Why indigenous boys and men choose to wear braids" | February 26, 2016
theme: *identity, tradition, cultural teachings, respect*

University of Alberta: "President Turpin stresses UAlbarta commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity" | January 29, 2017
theme: *commitment to diversity and inclusion, values, equality and dignity of all*

Video: "She was wearing a sleeveless top and jeans"
theme: *change thinking, not clothes; harassment, stand up to stop*

Edmonton Shift Lab: "Exploring Racism with the CRC" | January 17, 2017
theme: *racism, privilege, action*

Inclusive Communities Event Calendar

February 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
February is... Black History Month Heart Month Psychology Month National Therapeutic Recreation Month			1 Eating Disorders Awareness Week Feb. 1-7 World Interfaith Harmony Week (Feb. 1-7)	2 World Wetlands Day Groundhog Day	3	4 World Cancer Day
5 White Cane Week (Feb. 5-11) awareness of vision loss	6 International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation	7 Faith Development Day, Edmonton Catholic Schools	8 International Safer Internet Day	9	10	11 Tu B'Sheavat (Arbor Day) Jewish Holiday International Day of Women and Girls in Science
12 Sexual and Reproductive Health Awareness Week (Feb. 12-18) International Day of Women's Health	13 World Radio Day	14 Valentine's Day Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day	15 International Childhood Cancer Day National Flag Day of Canada	16	17 World Human Spirit Day Random Acts of Kindness Day	18
19	20 Family Day! World Day of Social Justice	21 International Mother Language Day	22 Pink Shirt Day! Anti-bullying campaign World Thinking Day	23	24	25
26	27	28 Rare disease day Shrove Tuesday	Ash Wednesday			

Newsletter Contact: Sonja Willier
Principal, Inclusive Communities
Edmonton Catholic Schools
sonja.willier@ecsd.ne