



MARCH BREAKOUT



Nick Kirby, 9, in yellow, and James Reynolds, 12, take advantage of the sunny weather and climb around on the jungle gym at Zwicks park in Belleville on March 14. Photo by Dan Pearce

(From left) Quintin Traynor, Patrick Fee, and Caleb Fee catch a ride on a giant green dinosaur early in the morning at a playground along Bayshore Trail in Belleville on March 13. Photo by Topher Seguin

Liam Gray, 7, tries on a helmet and gloves during the “You wouldn’t want to live in Medieval Times” event at the Belleville Public Library on March 14. Photo by Dan Pearce

Ben Pross, 6, explains the creation that he brought to the Belleville Public Library for the LEGO building contest that was held on March 13. Pross proudly describes the treasure being brought to the King and the role of the snakes and the scorpions in his LEGO castle. Photo by Megan Voss.



VIDEO LINK



Students disappointed about current tuition framework

Five per cent increase in tuition fees planned for next fall

By Joanna Becket

Ontario’s students say they are disappointed over the government’s decision to extend the current tuition framework over the next academic year.

University and college students will be required to pay an average of five per cent more in tuition fees next September, as the provincial cap on tuition fees has been extended until fall 2013.

The current tuition framework has been in place since 2006 and has permitted an average increase of five per cent in each of the last two years. The policy was set to expire this month.

The province will continue to provide a 30 per cent rebate on tuition for college and university students for qualifying students.

The decision was announced in a statement released on March 8, by Glen Murray, minister of training, colleges and universities.

“This means that the average tuition will increase by five per cent this fall for the seventh year in a row, leaving Ontario with the highest fees and lowest per-student funding in the country yet again,” stated a press release issued March 8 by the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance.

“Increasing tuition fees at well above the rate of inflation is not a sustainable future for Ontario’s students and families,” said Sean Madden, OUSA president, in the release. “We will continue to work with the government toward the creation of a fair, long-term tuition framework and an enhanced financial aid system.”

“We’re disappointed and concerned about it for lots of reasons,” said Sam Andrey, OUSA executive director, in an interview.

“Our organization’s vision has been that tuition should not make up more than one third of the cost of your education. So, one third of the operating budget should be contributed to by students. Now it’s about 50 per cent, which we think is too much. We would have preferred a much lower cap if any increase at all.

“So even just from a fairness perspective and worrying about the erosion of public education, what does it say about public education when the majority of the costs are born by private dollars, student dollars?” said Andrey.

Other student groups also raised concerns.

“I’m really frustrated that this government continues to try to tout itself as the education government or McGinty as the education premier, when all they’re doing is increasing tuition fees, saddling students with debt, and making sure that more students can’t attend their secondary education,” said Sandy Hudson, Ontario chairperson, of

the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, in an interview.

“Since this government’s been in power since 2006 when they first allowed tuition fees to increase, tuition fees have increased 71 per cent on the high end. It’s unbelievable,” said Hudson.

“Across the board – colleges, universities, graduate students – everyone is paying the highest in Ontario.”

This announcement comes just weeks after students rallied outside Queen’s Park to protest the McGinty government’s new 30 per cent tuition rebate that promises \$1,600 per year to university students already carrying a government student loan, and \$730 per year to students in college diploma and certificate programs.

The grant excludes mature students, part-time students and students whose family income exceeds \$160,000. The protesters, organized by the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, were demanding that the rebate be applied to all students.

In his report released in February, economist Don Drummond recommended that if the government cannot operate within his recommended 1.5 per cent increase in government funding for post-secondary education until 2017-18, they should scrap the new 30 per cent tuition rebate program.

He also recommended that the tuition grant be targeted to low-income students.

Students awarded with scholarships

By Melissa Murray

Ashley Solmes, a Bayside Secondary School student, always wanted to pursue a job in health care.

Her decision to pursue health sciences was amplified when she found out that her sister’s friend had cancer. Now, she wants to study medical oncology at Queen’s University.

Her dream to help research cancer became a little easier last night when Solmes and six other area high school students received a \$5,000 scholarship to help them pursue health studies in university.

At the Belleville Bulls game, Medigas, a healthcare supplier, presented a student from each of the Belleville high schools with a cheque with the hope that the students will learn and succeed in different health-care fields and then come back to the Belleville to serve their community.

This year’s recipients include Nicholson Catholic College student Elizabeth Lee; Centennial student Micaila Mahoney-Ashberry; St. Theresa’s Sawyer Bonin; Albert College’s Minal Aundhia; Quinte’s Christine Cyr; Moira’s Georgina Chapman and Bayside’s Ashley Solmes.

Solmes, whose parents knew she had earned the scholarship before she did, was elated at finally hearing the news.

“It’s still a shock,” she said.

Cyr, a Quinte Secondary School student, who is also studying at Queen’s University in the fall, was also surprised.

“The school set up a fake guidance appointment to tell me I had won. Even though I applied for the scholarship, it still hit me in the face like a brick,” she said.

Cyr, whose mom teaches medical terminology at Loyalist College, has always been exposed to health studies.

“I’m a compassionate person and Belleville needs doctors. I’ve always felt that healthcare

would be a good choice for me,” said Cyr.

“The scholarship is most of the cost of our first year of tuition,” said Aundhia who completed a placement with a paedodontist, a dentist who cares for children.

The scholarship application is comprised of an online form and a 500-word essay. Each year, Medigas representatives go to schools personally to explain the scholarship process and to announce the winners.

“Most scholarships, you have a one in 5,000 chance or a one in 10,000 chance, but because you are competing with people in your own school, for me, it was a one in 180 chance,” said Aundhia.

This is the fourth year the Driving Dreams for Our Youth scholarship has been handed out and this is the first year, that the scholarship included a student from privately-funded Albert College, said Bonnie Sullivan, director of the Driving Dreams for Our Youth committee.

“The students are thrilled to have received the assistance,” said Sullivan, “We hope that it eliminates some of the burden put on parents because of rising tuition, as well.

“These students are competitive, gifted and bright young people. They are the top of their class and they get involved with the community and are an impressive group,” said Sullivan.

“They are also excellent representations of their school community,” she added.

“Medigas wants to be out in the community,” said Matt Hamilton, territory manager of Medigas, “We want to be able to really sink our teeth into a community and make a difference.”

The scholarship is funded through the Medigas celebrity classic charity golf tournament that takes place every summer, which also gives money to families with children that have physical challenges.