

Group marches to support feminism

Message sent out that all people should be treated equally

By Tyson Leonard

On a cold November morning, Ellissa Robertson and a small group of mostly young women, sat on the steps of Belleville city hall, assembling posters and making small talk. Robertson finished her poster, turned to the group, and asked if they were ready to head out.

The group packed up the markers and raised their signs as they started on a march that would take them through downtown Belleville. Robertson's sign read "I need feminism, because no one should be taught to be ashamed of their body!"

Robertson was one of the organizers of the Everyone Needs Feminism march held earlier this month.

Robertson said the march was held to raise awareness.

"I wasn't expecting very many people to come out, but it's a start, and it puts the idea out there which is the main goal," said Robertson.

The idea she is referring to is gender equality. Robertson said she feels like men and women should feel like equals, and be treated like equals.

Robertson is currently enrolled in the college prep program at Loyalist College. She said Belleville needs to have more marches, which are more inclusive.

"I've been to a few of the women's marches; International Women's Day, Take Back the Night, and I wanted to run an event that brought men and women out, and maybe some of the younger crowd," said Robertson.

She said the next step is to organize bigger events.

Caitlin Sexton, also in the college prep program, held her sign high as the march wove through downtown Belleville. It read "I need feminism because women account for over half the Canadian population, but are only represented in parliament by 37.9%."

Sextons said she sees the major cause of



Photo by Tyson Leonard

Ellissa Robertson (middle), and Caitlin Sexton (left), walk down Front Street while shouting out reasons they need feminism. The third person is unidentified.

the gender gap as patriarchy.

"When I was younger (patriarchy) just always went unnoticed and it wasn't really until I started questioning things at 12 or 13 that the differences were really made

clear to me," said Sexton.

She said it's important to march for feminism because of the ongoing attacks on women's rights. She referred specifically to the Republican Party's attack on

reproductive rights in the U.S.

"I know that there is an International Women's Day march here on women's day, but I've never heard of there being a feminism march here before, so it's a good

opportunity to get some people together," said Sexton.

The march was also a great way to make new contacts throughout Loyalist College and even online, said Sexton.

Hangover cure is starting to drink before you go out

Swiss-based study outlines dangers of this practice

By John Boldrick

Denver Gooderham slowly rises from his bed. He lets out a big yawn, evidence that last night had ended only a few short hours ago.

For some, the effects of the big night would be evident: lack of sleep, an uneasy stomach, and headaches. Simple ailments

that are accepted consequences of a night out, but not for Gooderham, as he has found a way to prevent feeling the effects of the booze long after the last drop has touched his lips.

"It's definitely a lot better for a hangover, if you can prevent it, it's always best," he said.

No, it isn't some kind of miracle cure or magic powder that turns hangovers into a hoax. It's pre-drinking.

Pre-drinking is the act of having a couple of drinks, getting a buzz, before going out to the bar for the night.

Gooderham may be an exception to

the rule.

Recently, a Swiss-based study was released, outlining the dangers of the practice. In the study, it showed that those who have a couple of cocktails before bar hopping tended to drink twice as much as they normally would had they skipped the pre-fiesta festivities.

The extra drinks often lead to unfortunate consequences. Among the horrors included are unplanned drug use and blackouts. It also showed tendencies towards vandalism, property damage and unintended sexual intercourse.

Obviously, drinking large quantities

throughout a night out can have rather immediate negative effects on your health.

Loyalist College's on-campus nurse Lauren Deans said that memory loss, injuries and lacerations are among the most common injuries after a long night out.

If your night out becomes a common practice, the list of health risks begins to grow longer and far more severe. Damage to vital organs such as the brain and liver quickly become a reality.

"You certainly can't replace the brain. They're having a little bit of luck with the liver, but still it's not good," she said.

If that isn't enough to scare you into a panic, it gets worse for those who drink too much.

"If the too much is above and beyond alcohol poisoning, it can even cause death," said Deans.

It all may seem like a lot. We've all heard cautionary tales involving someone who drank too much and then paid dearly for their actions. Whether it be injuries, arrests, liver damage or death, it's clear that drinking in excess is a dangerous practice, but no one is saying you have to put down the bottle for good.

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Protestors gather looking for tougher animal cruelty penalties

Group met at courthouse during trial of two men charged with dog drowning to seek stiffer punishment

By April Lawrence

Protestors gathered peacefully outside the courthouse in Napanee last week to demand harsher penalties for animal cruelty crimes.

They gathered at the courthouse because two 19-year-old men were on trial for drowning a dog last April at a quarry off Kimmett Side Road in Napanee. Travis Haaksman and Carl Wood have both been found guilty.

Vicky Deodato gathered over 1,000 signatures on a paper petition and over 8,000 on an online petition to ask that stiffer penalties be dealt in animal cruelty cases. The paper petition circulated around Kingston, Napanee and Belleville. Deodato started the petition and gathered supporters for the protest when she first heard about the case.

"I hope as an outcome, there will be stricter penalties against animal abuse; there has to be," said Deodato. "There's a direct correlation between animal abuse and domestic abuse, especially violence against women and children."

She said she doesn't necessarily think jail time is the answer but that in a perfect world, they would receive

counseling and a lot of community service, to get them help and that they shouldn't be allowed to have an animal ever again.

"Animals are their own beings and should be protected just like children," said Deodato.

Leeanne Hinch has been an animal rights activist since she was five-years-old. She said laws need to be changed to protect the voiceless.

"The laws need to change and they need to change now," said Hinch. "Too many innocent are suffering, too many innocent are dying."

Supporters honked and some even called to their windows or pulled over to talk to protestors to show their support.

Sentencing for the trial has been scheduled for Jan. 29. Deodato and the other protestors are planning to be at the sentencing. She said she wants more people to show up to the sentencing to demand that they receive the harshest penalty.

Deodato said she is also considering bringing to attention the issue of animals being sold and given away on the Internet. She said people don't do as much screening of whom they are giving the animals to when they are selling online. And when cases like this occur, after an animal has been bought online, she said the person that sold the animal should be as equally accountable as the buyer.

She encourages people not to use internet resources to sell their animals.



Photo by April Lawrence

Marguerite Crouse and her dog Breeze outside the courthouse in Napanee.

Retired teacher releases new mystery novel

By Dan Cannataro

Loyalist College held a book launch Wednesday for author Hilary MacLeod's latest mystery novel book release, All Is Clam.

MacLeod is fresh off retiring from her 22-year teaching career in the Media Studies program at Loyalist.

"It's funny, because first coming to the teaching job, it originally was part of my five-year plan. It just turned into 22 years," said MacLeod.

Revenge of the Lobster Lover and Mind Over Mussels were MacLeod's first two books, All Is Clam is the third book she has released since 2010. Shore series are stand-alone books, each one with different characters.

"Third one's a charm, it's better than the other two because you get better at it, I'm told by people who read it. It's smoother and the characters are more believable," said MacLeod.

All Is Clam reached Amazon's top 10 bestseller list weeks leading into Christmas.

Many students, friends and family packed the Loyalist College cafeteria to support their friend and colleague.

"I have never missed one of Hilary's book launches, I have great respect for not only her as a teacher but a person," said 91X Radio professor John Henderson.

Henderson has known MacLeod for quite a while and read a part of the new book to the audience during the book launch.

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Businesses cater to theatre crowd

Number of stores grow as Stirling Theatre attracts many to village

By Steph Crosier

The top of the half-glass door brushes past a group of six bells, letting everyone in the boutique know someone else has joined the conversation. Once you're through the door, you're no longer a stranger in this boutique.

It's "how are you, what were you looking for?" and "I love your shirt! I saw you wearing it outside, it's so different."

Sitting in a large arm-chair next to an electric-fire, Tammy Latchford, owner of Bella Ever After, is a bundle of energy. When she decided to open her own all local-product women's store just under a year ago, she found that Stirling was perfect.

After doing research about the community, and looking into the popularity of the theatre, the Tweed native knew that this was a perfect location for her shop.

Bella Ever After is just one of a number shops, boutiques, and cafés that have popped up to cater the Stirling Festival Theatre crowd.

Before the theatre, Stirling was a farming community, said Elisha Maguire, economic development officer for Stirling-Rawdon Township, over a latte at West Wings, another town boutique with books, lattes, clothing, and knick-knacks.

In 1993, when the township was deciding to tear down the building, a group of residents got together, called themselves

the Stirling Performing Arts committee, and saved the theatre. Today, the theatre has shows every month. During the summer, shows come to town for up to three weeks. In November, the panto comes to town for five straight weeks through to New Year's Eve.

A panto is a winter musical comedy style that is often based on a children's story. In Stirling, the troupe performs both a children's version, and a more popular naughty adult version. This year, the show is Alice in Wonderland.

Latchford opened her store Dec. 13, 2011 right in the middle of the theatre's panto season. At first it wasn't that bad, but suddenly her number of patrons skyrocketed.

"On a Saturday afternoon I had 30-40 people in the store consistently throughout the day," said Latchford. "It was one of my best days since I've opened."

This economic boost during the Christmas season is felt all over the small Stirling village, said Maguire.

"November and December are a huge time," said Maguire. "We completed a business survey in 2011, and we had businesses identify what patterns in days and months what were the busiest, and across the board, it's November and December that were the best months for retail."

Maguire said the numbers could lead back to the holiday season but the panto supports that by bringing customers to the village.

David Vanderlip, managing director of the Stirling Festival Theatre for three months, said last year the shows drew 45,000 people to the village.

"They say that for every dollar spent here, it's \$3.50-\$9 into the community," said Vanderlip.

Using the Ontario Ministry of Tour-



Photo by Steph Crosier

Tammy Latchford, owner of Bella Ever After, opened her shop just under a year ago. When the shows run at the theatre, a customer can bring in their show ticket and receive 10 per cent off.

ism & Culture's TREIM model, Maguire said the economic impact of just 40,000 patrons visiting the theatre in all of Hastings County for 2012 has the potential to be over \$5,500,000, and a gross domestic product of over \$2,350,000.

Vanderlip said that other than the township owning the theatre's building, they aren't very involved with the community, but he is happy that the shops in the village have tailored themselves to complement the theatre's patrons.

Scheona West, owner and operator of West Wings, said during the panto season, they stay open later.

"This is the most important time of year in terms of traffic," said West. "We just sell a lot of drinks, but we find that people tend to return another day for merchandise."

Jim Ringas has owned and operated Jim's Pizzeria for 30 years. He was there for the first year the theatre opened and has watched as the crowds have gotten larger.

"When I first came, 90 per cent of the store fronts were empty," said Ringas. "Every year it gets bigger and every year it gets better. It's put Stirling on the map."

Ringas said that while the panto is in town his business increases 15 per cent, and the busy theatre days makes up to 20 per cent of his yearly net income.

West and Latchford agree they receive the most customers in their stores when the theatre does bus trips.

"The bus usually drops them off an hour or two early to visit the village," said West. "So it really gives them time to come into the shops and look around."

Latchford said she hopes that the theatre will organize more for the shorter shows. She recalls last summer when a talented singer came to the theatre but they had to cancel shows due to lack of ticket sales.

"It was just heartbreaking because he was such a talented guy," said Latchford. "I don't know if there needs to be better marketing or what, but with bus trips at least we can guarantee the seats will be filled."

Latchford said she will always support the theatre and the town as much as possible. Whether it's filling half her window with posters, or voting for Hockleyville, she wants to see her community blossom.

"My dream for Stirling, on a small scale, would be the next Bloomfield. On a large scale I think it could be the next Niagara-On-The-Lake."

Author...

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Henderson, a long-time friend and office mate, was one of the first to get the chance to read All Is Clam before it was published.

"I remember Hilary gave me the final product to read before anyone had seen it, I'm pretty sure, and the prologue was so

good it seriously was one of the best I ever read in my entire life," said Henderson.

MacLeod dedicated the novel to all of her students she has had the pleasure of teaching over the years.

"If you ever had the chance to meet her, let's just say if you can say the word that's not in the dictionary, that's Hilary," said Henderson.

She remembers lying in bed making up stories at age five.

"She's just the most creative, imagina-

tive, passionate person and would do anything for a student," said Henderson.

All three of the books she has written have a shore theme. MacLeod has always wanted to be a writer but she just had a hard time finding out what she wanted to write about.

"The thing since I taught for so long, I had time in the summer to be on a deserted island, this place was very special to me and I found out what I wanted to write about," said MacLeod.

Just recently it was announced the last independent bookstore is being shut down in Belleville. It has existed for 32 years.

"We all try to support them, however the fact of the matter is the big chain stores have got books at a better price and get the books from the publishers and they pass them on to us," she added.

"It's too bad, if you're a writer you love books and you love book stores and I

think it's a very hard fight because I think Belleville has a downtown to support it," She added.

All Is Clam was published in August.

"I thought it was a wonderful book, very impressive and I know a lot of people aren't going to get the chance to read the book but it's your loss if you don't," said Henderson.

MacLeod is working on a new book titled Something Fishy.

Recreation centre to get a facelift

Tyendinaga township proposes tearing down and rebuilding

By Sarah Armour

Tyendinaga's recreation complex is looking to give its 20-year-old canteen a make-over.

The present complex is located on the corner of McFarlane and Melrose roads.

It's home to a 200-seat capacity multi-purpose building, four soccer pitches, a softball field, a hardball field, two beach volleyball courts and a children's playground.

The canteen itself consists of a small server, two bathrooms and a utility closet. After years of use, the building is rundown and outdated, said Steve Mercer, clerk of Tyendinaga Township.

The township is proposing to tear down the current canteen and rebuild a brand new building. They are looking into a

partnership with Trenval Business development cooperation for a 50/50 split on the cost of the new building, which they are estimating will cost between \$90,000-\$100,000.

Mercer said they hope to finalize the plans for the new building as of February and begin building next fall.

The recreation complex is open seasonally for the summer months and hosts different sports such as soccer and volleyball, but Mercer says it is baseball that is mainly played at the complex.

"We can't begin any construction until the season is done," said Mercer.

A pattern of infrastructure within the town has been noticed, but is the outcome of time and wear and tear, said recreation coordinator of Tyendinaga Township, Mandi Buma.

"Every few years roads and buildings need to be updated as technology changes and things become worn and aged," said Buma.

She said the canteen is just the next project on the list.

Drinking...

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Most students pre-drink to cut down on cost

There are still ways to enjoy the barley ale or whatever drink you prefer, while being able to keep your mind, body and liver intact.

While the study told of the potential horrors of pre-drinking, there are ways to perfect the practice so that it isn't all bad.

The study says that people would routinely have between four and five drinks per night at the bar. If they drank beforehand, their total number of drinks in the night climbed by almost double.

Gooderham doesn't agree with the assessment. He said that while there is a risk of drinking too much if you pre-drink, there are benefits to be had.

"By the time I'm at the bar, I'm already at a healthy buzz level and I don't feel the need to drink as much as I would if I didn't pre-drink," he said.

Gooderham usually has between five and six pre-drinks before going out. It's a part of his evening that he has no problems with.

"I don't see an issue with it. Most students are going to pre-drink because it's going to cut down on their bill because most students are on a tight budget, they're going to spend, if they can, only about \$20-\$40 on drinks at the bar, as opposed to if they don't pre-drink, then they have a better chance of spending \$100-\$150 depending on how much they are willing to spend and drink," he said.

Gooderham said pre-partying saves wear and tear on his body.

"If I'm having that, my amount at the bar is cut in half, so I'll only have about two-three drinks as opposed to not pre-drinking I'll have about six-10 drinks," he said.

Having dealt with drunks for 32 years, Deans has certainly seen her fair share of circumstances. She offers her own words of advice to those planning a big night out.

"If you're going to have some drinks, have dinner or certainly have some food with it," she said, "If you've already had dinner and you want to do the pre-drinking certainly pull out some snacks. Things that are good for you but things that are going to hold a balance between the alcohol and your poor system."

Travelling offers chance to change some lives

Fundraising event to raise funds for human rights centre

By Shelby Wye

The idea of travel often corresponds with images of iconic buildings, white beaches and pure relaxation. Emily Smith van Beek thinks otherwise.

Travelling represents the opportunity to change lives and help others. Smith van Beek has seen the Eiffel tower and Jamaica's tropics, but it's the idea of helping towns under pressure that really gives her satisfaction.

"It's absolutely a waste of money to visit these countries stricken by poverty and devastation just for the tourist spots and your relaxation," said Smith van Beek.

She wants people to enjoy their vacations, but remember that the reason to travel is to take in new culture.

"Visiting the tourist spots is not the same as seeing the native culture," said Smith van Beek.

Smith van Beek is a student at Loyalist College, taking part in the International Support Workers program. The program annually visits a location of a different culture. This year it's Chiapas, Mexico.

"I've been excited for this trip since I was accepted into the program," said Smith van Beek.

The students will immerse themselves with native families and participate in their day-to-day work and their lifestyle. They have many opportunities in this town to participate in a variety of organizations.

Before they leave, Smith van Beek and those in her program have some work to do in Belleville first. They are hosting an event night to raise funds for the human



Photo by Shelby Wye

Emily Smith van Beek perches in the International Support Worker's office, a place in the school where she 'lives most of her life'. She is one of the seven students going to Chiapas, Mexico this January to live with a native family.

rights centre in Chiapas, called FRAYBA. The night consists of guest speakers who will touch on local issues of migrant workers and food security, and how these issues affect Belleville.

The event takes places on Nov. 30 in Loyalist's Alumni Hall. Smith van Beek encourages students to take part and learn more about social issues in their own town. It's also for students to be

aware of what the ISW program does and how fun it is to be part of the program.

The program is a one-year postgraduate. Smith van Beek completed a BA in political sciences, with a minor in film studies before coming to Loyalist.

Smith van Beek plans to apply her former education everywhere she can while she takes this trip. Her interest in political science brought her to this program in the

first place, and her minor in film studies is what inspires her to host her blog.

Smith van Beek blogs regularly, and is going to continue to do so while she lives in Chiapas. She will be updating her fans with blogs of her experiences on napemily.tumblr.com.

The class of seven will be visiting Chiapas, Mexico, under the guidance of their professor Kate Rodgers. They leave Jan. 24.

Military medals handed out

Ribbons and medals recognize hard work done for Canadians

By Kristen Oelschlagel

Decoding messages and planning missions might sound like something out of a movie, but for Cpt. Sophia Polwin, it was real.

"I'll remember lots of planning. Having to get up in the middle of the night and plan missions and decoding some messages we got," said Polwin.

"They're called tasking order, like ATO is an air-tasking order. We'd have to decode that and go and fly the mission based on the coded message we got."

Polwin is one of 166 military personnel from CFB Trenton who were deployed in support of Operation Unified Protector. The NATO operation, which was a military intervention in Libya in response to events during the Libyan civil war, formally began on March 23, 2011 and ended Oct. 31, 2011.

On Nov. 16, Polwin, along with 58 other members of 8 Wing Trenton, were awarded the Non-Article 5 NATO Medal for service. The medal is awarded for 30 consecutive or 60 cumulative days of honourable service under NATO Operation Unified Protector.

Polwin was deployed in Sicily for 64 days, flying the airbus in air-to-air refueling missions. It was her first real deployment and she said it was exciting to be able to put all her training to use.

"It was a real wartime situation so we it was pretty intense at times. Taking off in the middle of the night, having fighters come to you that were on their minimum fuel and needed to get to the hose right away to fuel and go drop their bombs over Libya," said Polwin.

Lieutenant-General Yvan Blondin, the commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force, was at the medal ceremony to present medals to those in attendance.

Blondin said what the medal symbolizes mean more than the medal itself.

"It's just a piece of ribbon and medal, but it means so much for us. It's what you do, you get the recognition from Canadians, that's what it means," said Blondin.

"It's something you can put on your uniform and wear proudly, it's a symbol of the sacrifices you need to make to serve Canadians."

Polwin, whose dad was there to watch her, said the ceremony was nice



Photo by Kristen Oelschlagel

Sophia Polwin receives her medal from the Commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Lieutenant-General Yvan Blondin. Honours were bestowed upon several military personnel during the event.

for those receiving the medals, as well as their families.

"It's my first medal, so it's nice to have the general come here and give it to us in a formal setting with all our spectators here. It's nice for the families because obviously some peo-

ple were away for a long time so it's nice to have the parade and recognize them and their families as well," she said.

Polwin said there are some memories from her deployment that she'll never forget.

"Working with all sorts of different nations. We were working with the Spaniards, Italians, Brits, UAE (United Arab Emirates), French, and the Canadians of course. So it was a big multinational operation and that was one of the best parts I think."

United Way sustains organizations in community

By Kristen Oelschlagel

Susanne Quinlan knows how important it is for the United Way of Quinte to reach its goal.

Quinlan, the director of operations at Gleaners Food Bank in Belleville, said the funding from the United Way is important to Gleaners' operation.

"The service we provide to the community is like water, it needs to sustain life. So the money from the United Way is greatly appreciated to help pay for the staff wages," Quinlan said.

The goal for this year's campaign is \$1.925 million and so far over \$730,000 has been raised.

"We know where these dollars are coming from and where they are out there, it's just a matter of campaigns finishing up and recording," said Judi Gilbert, executive director of the United Way of Quinte.

This is week 10 out of 17 for the campaign, and there are still several workplace campaigns which still be starting up in the final weeks.

"Many major banks are starting their campaigns, they usually kick off in the latter part of November, and QuintEssential Credit Union is about to kick off as well," said Gilbert.

The United Way distributes the money raised from the campaign to 42 agencies in the community.

"Last year, 55,000 people accessed one or more of our 42 agencies, so there's a huge need," said Gilbert.

Gilbert said there is a strict application process agencies have to go through when they apply for the funds, so that the money gets distributed fairly based on need.

Quinlan said that without the United Way they would have to do even more fundraising.

"We operate a food bank that serves 4,400 families in Belleville and we serve out of the Tri-County Warehouse to nine area food banks, including Loyalist College, and 150 non-profit agencies," said Quinlan.

"We are the lowest paid executive director and staff members in any food bank across Canada, so we don't have high wages. That funding is very important."

Major companies, like Nestle and Proctor and Gamble, will also be finishing up their campaigns in the coming weeks.

Gilbert says even though the campaign officially started the last week of August, the United Way gets support throughout the year.

"There are lots of workplace campaigns that do events throughout the year, so the United Way is top of mind with many workplaces throughout the year."

Youth benefit from YALE program at John Howard Society

By Sarah Armour

Walking through the doors of the John Howard Society on Wallbridge Crescent in Belleville, you get an immediate cold feeling as you approach the large white room equipped with two basketball nets.

While the feeling is cold, something special is happening inside these walls. Upstairs, in between a dance studio and a games room, is the tutoring room which is slowly filling up with teens.

A brunette boy with glasses, Patrick Thompson, 16, sits at a small square table sipping a juice box with two other teenage boys. The Grade 11 student began

volunteering at the John Howard Society in Belleville after his English teacher told him about the YALE program.

"This room should be filled on Thursdays," said Thompson.

Thompson said there aren't enough volunteers for the Thursday afternoon youth program.

"Not many people want to volunteer, because they think it's a waste of time," said Thompson. "I'm not working, and its only two hours after school once a week."

Thompson's role as a volunteer is to oversee the students during their tutoring hour, then take part in free gym time with them.

"Seeing the kids dance is definitely my favourite part," said Thompson with a laugh.

The Belleville John Howard building is home to the YALE (youth academic learning exposure) program. The after-school program is for local youth ages 10-17. It runs from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. every Thursday. The first hour is dedicated to the tutoring portion, and the second is open gym time.

One of the few students who is able to take advantage of the YALE program is 16-year-old Matt Snider. Snider was encouraged to join after returning from a school trip to Germany.

"I had fallen behind in schoolwork and

needed a way to catch up... this program is really helping me in chemistry," said Snider.

After a quick glance around the high-energy tutoring room, it is obvious there is one person at the centre of this group: program director Brenda Gabriel.

Gabriel said the program provides opportunities for youth to discover different life passions and propel them to a brighter future.

"This is a place where they can feel accepted, and somewhere they can call home," said Gabriel.

As for the lack of volunteers, Gabriel is unsure of the reasoning.

"People are busy, and can't commit... if

people want to volunteer, they will," said Gabriel.

It's not in the program's funding to pay for advertising so they rely on word of mouth to encourage people to volunteer.

The John Howard Society's mission is to have an avenue for the youth of the community to explore, inspire, discover and achieve success for better wellness of life. The society has many future plans for the program including a dance program, boot camp and art classes.

Anyone interested in volunteering, donating or learning more about the programs offered to youth can call 613-968-6628.

Staff and students share steps to reduce bullying

By April Lawrence

Courtney Ketcheson is one of the students at Deseronto Public School who participated in the bullying awareness and prevention week kick off by sharing her bullying poster.

In a presentation Monday morning, staff and students at the school shared the steps they are taking to reduce bullying. Deseronto Public School use programs to help students learn in a positive environment.

Classroom circles are one of the practices being used. They encourage students to listen intently to each other.

"Everybody gets to have their voice heard," said student Aliya Cherneskie.

Ketcheson said that the programs should continue. She said it's good that the students get to learn more about each other and more about the other classrooms around the school. Other students had similar opinions.

Classroom circles are being used to teach lessons, promote equality, community and wholeness. Each student is given the opportunity to speak while everyone else sits quietly and listens. These circles are used in classrooms from J.K. through to secondary school.

It is one of several programs used to encourage student voice and positive relationships. Another program used at the school is Focus on Character Education, which teaches students elements of good character. Students and staff demonstrated a classroom circle during the presentation.

Playing throughout the presentation was a slide show with pictures of students'



Photo by April Lawrence

Courtney Ketcheson, a student at Deseronto Public School, explained her antibullying poster to everyone at the bullying awareness and prevention week kick off at her school earlier this week.

bullying prevention posters. The posters are based on the presentation the Power of One. In the presentation, the students learned ways to identify the bully, the target and the victim. Students were able to sign a pledge following the presentation.

Ketcheson shared her poster at the presentation Monday. In her poster, she drew two scenarios. In one, she showed a person being bullied and in the other how to not be a bully. She said that a strategy that could be used to stop bullying was including people in activities so that they have friends.

The school received the Speak Up grant which goes to schools that apply for special funding for programs that support student voice. To encourage this, a second presentation to kick off bullying prevention and awareness week was held the following day that was largely put on by the students.

Teachers are just as enthusiastic about these programs as the students, said principal Heather Seres. Teachers are also using classroom circles to start their meetings. They want to have good, supportive relationships throughout the school.

"We believe strongly that students should treat each other with respect. Students should treat teachers with respect and staff should treat each other with respect. It's really about being kind to each other," said Rob McGall, director of education for Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board.

The school board has designated the third week of November to be bullying awareness and prevention week.