



The Catholic Women's League of Canada Diocese of Edmonton



Education and Health Report September 30, 2017

Madam President,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as Standing Committee Chair for Education and Health.

Education:

“The Holy Spirit has gifted us with understanding to see the world and our lives within it...”

Recently, an e-mail was directed to Councils requesting feedback to share with you today; and, the following is some of the e-mailed responses received.

a) Goals and Objectives for Education and Health for 2017-2018

Catholic schools were supported through prayer and action. Members lead by-
Presenting Awards and providing funding-

- Grade 9 and Grade 12 - Christian Life Award; monetary awards to most deserving Religious Studies 35 students; cash awards to Grades 10,11 and 12; commemorative gifts upon receiving the sacraments (Communion and Confirmation); funds annually to most disadvantaged schools for their hot lunch program

Purchasing and Presenting: -

- a picture of Mary to new Catholic School;
- bibles to Grade 4 and Gr 9 students
- “Dove” pins to Confirmation candidates who received this sacrament
- crosses for new district schools
- one-decade rosaries and going into schools to pray with the children
- providing bookmarks to be included in Grad Prayer Bags

Recycling: -

- providing funds to the parish for student’s focusing on recycling
- collecting Campbell Soup labels to Elementary schools so they could purchase various items of need.

Communication and prayers:-

- continuing to inform members on issues such as Lyme Disease, Palliative care, Euthanasia and Catholic Education and to participate in petitions
- writing to Prime Minister and Minister of Health regarding our opposition to the legalization of marijuana
- participating in CWL 12 hours of prayer for Palliative Care

- voicing concern about the \$650 million the federal government provided to support “sexual and reproductive health programs”
- visiting CWL websites for information
- upholding the value of Christian Catholic education

b) Poster Contest

- Did students from your District Catholic schools and/or Council’s members participate in our 2016 Poster Contest?
 - i. The small number of responses received indicated that they had in fact not participated in our Poster Contest
 - ii. Recommended to try something else and to perhaps change the presentation to either Friday night or Saturday afternoon of the convention.

Conclusion: Your Diocese Officers will review further in October and Councils will be advised.

c) Participation with District Catholic Schools

Our Council advised that they continue to reach out to students by assisting in reading programs, with donations, scholarships, and funding of various programs such as the lunch programs.

We, as CWL members, are blessed with many charitable actions, service projects, fundraisers for opportunities to celebrate our Catholic faith through school celebrations, closing liturgies, graduation masses and prayer assemblies. Many have expressed how thankful they are for all your CWL continued support received. Any act of kindness no matter how big or small can make a difference –especially when done intentionally. Sharing with others is a gift that members can pass on with great results.

Thank you for your feedback, which is greatly appreciated.

Health and Wellness:

The stigma related to mental health continues to be predominant in our society. The key to ending stigma is education. Educators are often the first to notice mental health problems.

Parents, teachers, and you as a volunteer caregiver can help children express their emotions through conversation, writing, drawing, and singing. Most children want to talk about a trauma, so let them. Accept their feelings and tell them it is okay to feel sad, upset, or stressed. Crying is often a way to relieve stress and grief. Pay attention and be a good listener.

If human violence or error caused an event, be careful not to blame a cultural, racial, or ethnic group, or persons with psychiatric disabilities. This may be a good opportunity to talk with children about discrimination and diversity.

Lastly, your counselling should be designed to: -

- Provide support and understanding
- Help build coping skills, and
- Teach ways to effectively manage issues and problems

Improving children's mental health at all ages can help schools avoid many academic and behavioral problems.

As well, we should be concerned by the increasing rates of opioid overdoses among Alberta youth; and, should be urging the government to improve grade-school education on drug use. A report by the Canadian Institute for Health Information found, in 2016-2017, there was an average of 11 emergency department visits per day attributed to opioid overdoses in Alberta.

Education Minister David Eggen also advised in a recent article in the Edmonton Journal that superintendents were provided with an Alberta Health fact sheet about fentanyl to help you as a caregiver to talk to the young people in your lives about the danger of the drugs.

Walking . . . a healthy journey!

Life is full of challenges. Because we all lead such hectic lifestyles, many of us want to be able to manage our own and our family's health and wellbeing in our own way, at times when it works best for us.

Ranked the number one activity of choice among Canadians, walking is a prescription for improved health and wellness. Walk briskly for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, and minimize your risk for cardiovascular disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer.

Additional benefits include weight management, blood pressure control and boosting good cholesterol (HDLs)

Other benefits of walking:

- Releases the body's tension and stress.
- Refreshes the mind and body, especially when walking outdoors.
- Allows you to connect with your community.
- Offers an excellent way to socialize with family and/or friends.
- Increases "eyes on the street", enhancing community safety.

Walking is an easy activity to do, costs very little money and the benefits to health, fitness, and mental well-being are priceless!

This concludes my report, are there any questions?

Mary Pat O'Neill
Education & Health Chair