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**MAKE A DIFFERENCE BBQ BRINGS THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER**

DDSB encourages families to engage with supportive organizations in their neighbourhood.

On October 17th, the DDSB Make A Difference team brought the fun and excitement of a community barbecue to Queen Elizabeth PS in Oshawa.

"We cooked up over 800 burgers" explains Tanja Lamanna, Project Coordinator for the Local Poverty Reduction Fund Grant at the Durham District School Board. The school gymnasium and surrounding hallways were packed with students and families meeting friends, teachers and community partners who attended the event.

Parent Stephanie D., new to the country from Jamaica with two girls in Grades 3 and 5, found out about the barbecue through the school and decided to attend. "I found it to be very interesting and appropriate. It brought to the fore, what resources there are, and the fact that I know so little about the resources that are available," says Stephanie. "I was interested in the multiplicity of activities and resources.



I think we should have the barbecue more often." Sherri Savard, Principal at Queen Elizabeth Public School, was happy to host the event. "We invited all of our

families and community services close to our school," says Savard. "We had the Facility Services Department come and barbecue for us. We had a great time with dancers, lots of laughs and fun with over 600 people attending." Huge benefits for the community, families and teachers "A lot of families felt comfortable to bring extended family members," explains Savard who is new to the Queen Elizabeth school community, arriving from Waverly Public School over the summer. "It gave me a chance to go around and introduce myself and meet extended family members. We made connections to our local community services available to our school community and the event brought everyone together. The benefits were huge having the community, families and teachers here to mingle with everyone," says Savard.

"The goal of the program is to offer a fun evening for the

Queen Elizabeth Public School students, parents and family members to engage with community partners, gain information, have a good night out, receive free resources and of course, enjoy some

able information on their services and answer questions from students and community members," explains Lamanna. The DDSB Make A Difference community barbecues are



free food," states Lamanna.

"We had community partners such as Durham Region Police Services, Oshawa Fire, Carea (Community Health Centre), Region of Durham, Indigenous Groups, John Howard Society and many more come out to share valu-

held twice yearly in school communities across Durham to engage families and bring them together with community partners in the region. This was the fifth annual event, with another one scheduled in May at Bolton C. Falby Public School in Ajax.

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