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Feature Story on page 16

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Letter from the Editor



As summer ends and the crisp autumn air gently settles in, we embrace a season of transition. The new school year begins, marking the start of an exciting journey on the path of learning. I fondly recall when my own children began their school years, filled with anticipation and excitement for the new adventures ahead.

September brings Grandparents Day, a special occasion to honour those who

lead by example and shower us with wisdom and love. Many of us are fortunate to still have our grandparents, who continue to play pivotal roles in our lives. Let's take this time to treasure them and acknowledge their invaluable contributions.

Fall is also synonymous with preserving the bounties of summer. With grocery prices soaring, preserving certain foods at home has become even more meaningful. The act of preserving not only sustains us through the colder months but also evokes a sense of tradition and family unity. As the leaves change colors, we are reminded of the beauty of transformation and the gratitude we feel during Thanksgiving. It's a time to gather with family, express our thanks, and reflect on our blessings.

In this edition, my cover choice seemingly fell into my lap. While out in the community, I often meet remarkable individuals, but few have stood out like Doctor Frank Procopio and Violet Buda. Dr. Procopio, a dedicated dentist with over 30 years of experience, and his partner, Violet, a dental hygienist, exude an energy and dedication to their patients that is truly inspiring. Their longstanding commitment to our community has made a significant impact. If you have the opportunity, I highly encourage you to stop by their office and say hello.

As you navigate through this edition, may the stories of passion and community service inspire you deeply. Embrace the essence of fall, a season of change and gratitude, by finding joy in the little moments, cherishing the warmth of family gatherings, and striving to make a positive impact in our community.

Here's to a fall filled with reflection, inspiration, and the beauty of new beginnings. May your Thanksgiving be blessed with family, gratitude, and the comfort of togetherness.



Josie Alonzi

The Voice IN ACTION

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Our Community In Action

A Message from the Mayor

With summer coming to an end, let's look back at all that we achieved so far this year.

In May, we broke ground on the Canada Drive-America Avenue Bridge, which will connect two vibrant communities over Highway 400. This is just the latest project of the City's determination to fight traffic gridlock.

In June, we took the next step in our historic journey to develop Vaughan's state-of-the-art performing and cultural arts centre by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with QuadReal Property Group. This new venue will be a cornerstone of the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and it represents a significant investment in our city's cultural vitality and economic prosperity.

In July, we had the opportunity to gather for Vaughan Celebrates Canada Day and commemorated our country's 157th anniversary.

Together, we are making historic progress and we are continuing to serve the residents of Vaughan achieving great success.

Steven Del Duca - Mayor, City of Vaughan





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Back to School: A Message from MPP Michael Tibollo

by MPP Michael Tibollo

As the new school year begins, the excitement and anticipation for new opportunities and learning experiences are everywhere. As your MPP for Vaughan-Woodbridge, I extend my best wishes to all students, parents, and educators as you embark on your academic journey.

Education is the cornerstone of personal and societal growth. It opens doors to new opportunities, broadens perspectives, and equips us with the tools needed to succeed. The importance of academics cannot be overstated, as learning provides the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the world and contribute meaningfully to our communities. Our government is committed to providing exceptional education and supporting young minds. We recognize that education is a powerful tool that shapes the future, and we are dedicated to ensuring that every student has access to high-quality learning opportunities.

Students, being prepared is key to success. Organization and planning can reduce the anxiety that often accompanies a new term. Set goals, create a study schedule, and gather the necessary materials. Preparation builds confidence and reduces stress.

Staying motivated can be challenging, but a positive attitude and

focus on your goals make all the difference. Dedication and hard work will pay off. Celebrate your successes and learn from setbacks, as they are part of the journey to reaching your potential.

Follow your passions and talents. Each of you has unique abilities and interests. Pursue what you love with enthusiasm and dedication, as your passions can lead to amazing opportunities and a fulfilling career. The path to learning and self-improvement is always worthwhile.

This school year, prioritize your mental health. School can be demanding, so it's essential to take care of your well-being. Make time for activities that relax and rejuvenate you. If overwhelmed, seek support from teachers, counselors, or loved ones. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Parents and educators, your support is invaluable. Your encouragement and guidance create a nurturing environment where children can thrive. Let's ensure our students have the resources and support they need to succeed academically and personally.

Let's step into this new school year with enthusiasm, determination, and a commitment to excellence. Children are the future, and it is our responsibility to support their educational journey. By fostering a love for learning, encouraging resilience, and promoting mental well-being, we can help our students reach their full potential. Here's to a successful and rewarding school year ahead.

Warm regards, Michael Tibollo - Member of Provincial Parliament



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Canada's Wild Rose Country: Alberta's Contributions to our Nation

by *The Honourable Senator Tony Loffreda*

Alberta is home to nearly 5 million Canadians. With a booming high-tech sector and a reputable global agri-food industry, it's the heart of Canada's oil industry. It's also the place that gave Canadians hope this year that Lord Stanley would return to Canada after a 31-year drought.

I was tremendously proud of seeing our country rally behind the Western Conference Champions, Edmonton Oilers this spring as we all stood behind McDavid and his crew, who provided us with nail-biting moments and heart-pounding excitement.

Like with the Oilers last month, it would be great to see Canadians rally behind Alberta and get a better appreciation of its many contributions to our country's prosperity and growth. That's exactly what I had a chance to do when I recently spent four days in Alberta as part of a "familiarization tour" organized by my Alberta colleague Scott Tannas.

I had been to Alberta before but having an opportunity to meet the very friendly people of Alberta and learn more about what drives its economy was a rewarding experience. In some ways, I think Alberta is sometimes misrepresented or misunderstood by the rest of Canada – which is something Quebecers know something about.

Oil production is obviously synonymous with Alberta, but there is so much more to Alberta. Regardless of where you stand on the matter, Canada is a global energy powerhouse. We have the fourth-largest global supply of proven oil reserves. The oil and gas sector contributes \$235 billion to our nominal GDP with over 412,000 direct and indirect jobs. The oilsands alone, for example, contributed over \$20 billion in taxes and royalties to all levels of government in 2023. During our visit to Fort McMurray, we met with oil executives and visited Suncor's Base Plant Operations where 350,000 barrels are produced and shipped each day.

According to the federal government, Alberta is also home to more than 16% of Canada's cleantech companies and more than half of them relate to the energy industry, operating in renewables, energy efficiency, and smart grid technology.

Under the stewardship of the Pathways Alliance, Suncor has come together with the other five largest oilsands producers to find innovative ways of reducing their emissions. In fact, thanks to cleantech, the industry has reduced its emissions intensity by 23% between 2009 and 2022, and the Alliance is currently exploring the possibility of building major carbon capture units to make further reductions. I know Canada can be at the forefront of the clean energy transition and our visit to Fort McMurray confirmed that.

Of course, innovation is not unique to the oil industry. The

Senator Tony Loffreda



agri-food sector, another one of Alberta's major economic drivers, is at the forefront of new technologies. Beyond the obvious benefit of providing Canadians (and the world) with high-quality, healthy food, the industry contributes significantly to our nation's GDP (\$10.3 billion in 2022) and employs approximately 69,000 Albertans. The sector has an aggressive investment attraction strategy which has already successfully attracted \$2.1 billion in investments in the last five years. These investments will contribute to the development and application of new technologies to increase the quantity and quality of agri-food products in Alberta and beyond.

These technological improvements are bound to contribute to the industry's overall expansion which has already set a third consecutive record high for total agricultural exports in 2022 at \$16.2 billion. While in Alberta, we visited the MacMillan Hutterite Colony and the Lowe Ranch, just outside High River.

In the past six months, Alberta has also been responsible for 90% of all of Canada's private sector employment growth. That's good news for Alberta as private sector job creation is a cornerstone of a strong economy. According to the Business Council of Alberta, these new jobs have largely been driven by gains in the construction industry, finance, forestry, mining and oil and gas. Beyond those sectors, nearly 10% of all jobs in Alberta are attributable to tourism-related business activities.

Like in any other province, tourism plays an important role in regional and local economies. Alberta is no different and this was clearly in evidence when our group visited Banff and Lake Louise. The industry has yet to return to pre-pandemic activity, but the future is bright. In 2022, total visitor expenditures were \$600 million higher than in 2019, reaching \$10.7 billion. While in Banff, we were spoiled to have the city's former mayor, and now Senator, Karen Sorensen speak to us about the region's many attractions and global appeal.

One thing is for sure: for four days, Senators were reminded why Alberta is an important part of our federation. As Senators, we are uniquely positioned to take the long view when it comes to public policymaking and I felt, as did my colleagues, that visiting Alberta gave us an opportunity to better understand the province's reality including its current concerns, and more importantly, its opportunities for the future. I learned so much during our visit and I thank Senator Tannas for organizing this extraordinary tour of the province. It was a wonderful way to kickstart the summer.

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Sweet Success: Navigating Your Child's Health This School Year

By Dr. Sarah Capetola, ND

As the back-to-school season approaches, many parents are preparing their children for a successful academic year. Amidst the flurry of purchasing school supplies and setting up new routines, it's crucial to consider the role of diet in supporting a child's ability to learn and thrive. Sugar consumption, in particular, warrants attention due to its impact on health and learning.

Sugar is prevalent in many foods marketed to children, such as sugary cereals and snack bars. Although it provides a quick energy boost, excessive intake can lead to fluctuations in blood sugar levels. This results in energy spikes and crashes that can impair a child's concentration and mood. Such effects make it challenging for children to focus on their studies and participate actively in class. Moreover, high sugar consumption is associated with an increased risk of developing chronic conditions like obesity, type 2 diabetes, and dental issues. These health problems can have long-term implications for a child's well-being. As parents, understanding these risks is vital to making informed dietary choices for our children.

To reduce sugar intake, be vigilant about the foods and beverages consumed at home. Reading labels is enlightening; many products contain hidden sugars listed under various names, such as high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, and glucose. Choosing whole, unprocessed foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can significantly cut the amount of added sugar in a child's diet. Encouraging water over sugary drinks can also make a substantial difference. Incorporating a variety of nutritious foods into your child's diet not only helps in managing sugar intake but also ensures they receive essential nutrients necessary for growth and development. Teaching children about the importance of a balanced diet empowers them to make healthier choices independently.

While the occasional sweet treat is acceptable, moderation is key. By understanding the impact of sugar on health and learning, parents can better support their children's educational journeys and overall well-being. As we prepare for the new school year, let's seize the opportunity to foster healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime.

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To Reset or Not to Reset The FAQ on Nutritional Resets

By Vince Soda

What is a “Reset”, does it work?

The importance of dietary reset is that it involves supporting the body’s natural detoxification processes and promoting overall health and well-being. Additionally, resets help individuals break unhealthy eating habits, improve digestion, and enhance nutrient absorption. It’s important to note that individual responses to dietary reset programs may vary, so it’s recommended to consult with a healthcare provider or nutritionist before making significant changes to your diet.

Are All Resets the Same?

Dietary reset programs are not all the same however, often most will involve eliminating processed foods, sugars, and unhealthy fats while increasing intake of nutrient-dense foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. This can help reduce inflammation, support gut health, improve energy levels, and promote weight loss.

Is it really important?

A nutritional reset is important because it helps individuals rethink and improve their dietary choices in order to optimize their health and well-being. By resetting one’s nutrition, individuals can break unhealthy eating habits, reduce intake of processed and unhealthy foods, and establish a balanced and nutritious diet. This can lead to numerous health benefits such as improved energy levels, better weight management, reduced risk of chronic diseases, and overall enhancement of physical and mental performance. Resetting nutritional habits can also help individuals develop a sustainable and healthy relationship with food, leading to long-term benefits for their overall health and longevity.

What program do you use and why?

1Eighty Program Beyond the Reset. This is a comprehensive program designed to make your wellness journey easier and more fulfilling. Here are some key features that make The 1Eighty Program unique:

- Holistic Approach:** The program takes a holistic approach to wellness, focusing on nurturing your mind, body, and spirit to achieve balance and optimal health.
- Meal Plan Booklet:** You will receive a meal plan booklet that provides nutritious and delicious choices that support your wellness goals.
- Low-Glycemic Shakes:** Our program includes low-glycemic shakes for the first 5 days, they are designed to keep your blood sugar levels stable, reduce cravings, and support your energy levels throughout the day.
- Craving Reduction:** By following The 1Eighty Program, you will experience a reduction in cravings for unhealthy foods, making it easier for you to make nourishing choices.
- Microbiome and Cellular Nutrition:** The program is focused on supporting your microbiome and cellular nutrition, promoting a healthy gut and overall well-being.
- Educational Mindset:** We empowering our participants with knowledge and tools to make informed decisions about their health. Our program encourages an educational mindset that will support you in making sustainable lifestyle changes.

Should you have any questions or just want to learn more don’t hesitate to reach out.



The Importance of Grandparents: Navigating the Transition from Parent to Grandparent

Grandparents Day, celebrated on the first Sunday after Labor Day, is a special occasion to honor the invaluable role grandparents play in our lives. Grandparents often serve as pillars of wisdom, stability, and unconditional love within the family unit.

In my practice, I am fortunate to see generations of family members and I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that grandparents can have on their families. Let's explore the importance of the grandparent role, the transition from being a parent to a grandparent, and strategies to navigate this transition smoothly with your adult children.

Grandparents occupy a unique and irreplaceable position in the family structure. They provide a sense of continuity, connecting generations and preserving family history and traditions. Their experiences and stories serve as a living link to the past, offering grandchildren a deeper understanding of their heritage and identity.

Beyond this, grandparents often serve as trusted confidants and sources of emotional support. Their life experiences grant them a perspective that can be both comforting and enlightening to younger generations. In times of family stress or crisis, grandparents can be the steadying force that offers guidance and reassurance.

Moreover, grandparents play a crucial role in the emotional and social development of their grandchildren. Research has shown that children who have close relationships with their grandparents tend to have higher self-esteem, better emotional regulation, and a greater sense of security. The nurturing and supportive presence of grandparents can foster resilience and well-being in children, contributing to their overall development.

Now, the transition from being a parent to a grandparent can be both joyous and challenging. While the arrival of a grandchild is often a time of great excitement, it also brings about a shift in family dynamics. Here are some key considerations for navigating this transition and embracing this new role:

Accepting your new role as a grandparent involves recognizing that your primary parenting duties are now over. This doesn't mean stepping back entirely, but rather adjusting to a supportive role that respects the primary authority of the parents. Enjoy the freedom of being a grandparent—one who can offer love and guidance without the day-to-day responsibilities of parenting.

It's essential to respect the parenting choices of your adult children. They may have different approaches to parenting than you did, and it's crucial to honor their decisions even if you don't always agree. Offering advice should be done with sensitivity and without imposing your own methods.

Next, maintain open and honest communication with your adult children. Discuss expectations and boundaries regarding your role as a grandparent. Clear communication can prevent misunderstandings and foster a harmonious relationship. Be willing to listen to their concerns and preferences and strive to be a collaborative and supportive presence in their parenting journey.

The transition to grandparenthood also requires navigating your relationship with your adult children. Here is when we can recognize and respect the authority of your adult children as the primary caregivers of their children. Avoid undermining their decisions or stepping into a parental role. Instead, offer your support and guidance when asked, and trust their ability to make the best choices for their family. Offer Support, Not Criticism! Be a source of support rather than criticism. Parenting can be challenging, and your adult children may face moments of doubt or stress. Offer encouragement and empathy, and refrain from offering unsolicited advice or criticism. Your positive reinforcement can go a long way in strengthening your relationship. Try to celebrate important milestones and events together as a family. Whether it's birthdays, holidays, or special achievements, being present and involved in these moments reinforces your commitment to the family unit. Sharing in these celebrations creates lasting memories and reinforces the bond between generations.

Transitioning to grandparenthood is an adjustment for everyone involved. Be patient and understanding as your adult children navigate their new roles as parents. Offer your support and reassurance and allow them the space to grow and learn in their parenting journey.

Grandparents play a vital role in the family, providing love, wisdom, and stability across generations. The transition from being a parent to a grandparent is a significant and rewarding experience that requires adaptability, respect, and open communication. By embracing your new role, respecting boundaries, and building strong relationships with your grandchildren and adult children, you can navigate this transition smoothly and continue to be a cherished and influential presence in your family's life.

As we celebrate Grandparents Day, let us honor the invaluable contributions of grandparents and recognize the enduring legacy they create within our families. Your love, guidance, and support are treasures that enrich the lives of your grandchildren and leave a lasting impact on future generations. Happy Grandparenting!

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Doctor Frank Procopio and Violet Buda Partners in the Dental Industry with a Solid Foundation

By Angelo Filoso

Early into a conversation with Dr. Frank Procopio, it became apparent that his expertise extends beyond that of an ordinary dentist. His success story is one of determination, passion and community spirit. Born in Toronto shortly after his parents immigrated from Italy, Frank grew up in the St. Clair district of Toronto's Little Italy. Reflecting on his childhood, Frank recalls the family, friends and personalities that defined his cultural roots and shaped his identity.

Frank learned the value of hard-work and integrity from his father, Giuseppe, who worked tirelessly as a janitor to provide a better life for his children, and his mother, Maria, who dedicated herself to caring for the family at home. Maria was the first born of eleven children in Calabria, Italy, who lovingly raised her siblings at the sacrifice of her education. The hopes of both parents for a better life in Canada fostered opportunity for Frank, his sister Anna who later became a pharmacist, and his brother Robert, a dental hygienist, to build promising futures.

In high school, Frank had a passion for the sciences, particularly in Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry. He would often find errors in math textbooks and would have written new volumes given the time, but Frank was raised as a TV child during the classic years of the sitcom in the 1960s and spent most of his spare time writing for television.

In the summer of grade twelve, Frank wrote a half hour comedy script called "25 cents" that on a whim, he

We have known Frank and Violet for over 17 years and can verify that regarding their profession they have always been a forward thinking, enterprising and dynamic positive couple. They are held in high regard in their professional community as well as in the community at large because of their genuine thoughtfulness and integrity. Socially they are sincere friends, very engaging, always congenial and reliable when needed. They have sound family values, which they have passed on to their three children, Joseph (film maker), Katherine(nurse) and Susan (dentist) who show the same genuine wholesome respect for others.

- Rocco -

hand-delivered to Alice Sinclair, Head of Comedy at the CBC, with a ten-dollar bill paper clipped to the cover to spend if she didn't laugh ten times. Alice told Frank that it would take six to eight weeks to evaluate the submission and that she was amused by the ten-dollar bill. Alice called a few hours later, admitting that curiosity led her to read the script, and told Frank to return to the CBC that same



afternoon because she had just read the funniest script of the year. She signed him to develop a TV Series that proved too costly to produce.

In the meantime, with solid marks in the sciences, Frank's journey into dentistry was further inspired by a family cousin who baptized him, Dr. Isidore Codispoti. During summer visits to Dr Codispoti's dental clinic in Canton, Ohio, Frank grew to respect the privilege of helping others in a clinical setting, that solidified his decision to pursue a career in dentistry. Frank was accepted into the University of Toronto (UofT) Faculty of Dentistry at age 19 and graduated in 1981 with the Albert E. Webster Award for Clinical Excellence in Restorative Dentistry.

While serving as an Associate Professor at the UofT Operative Clinic, Frank worked at the Dental Emergency Service. As an associate, he worked with Dr. Aldo Boccia and Dr Gerard Maggisano before opening his practice in North York in 1984. After hours, he worked on his comedy craft as a writer and was convinced by his high school friend, Director-Producer-Writer Jerry Ciccoritti, to collaborate on a stand-up comedy routine that Dr. Frank later performed at the original Yuk Yuk's Comedy Club.



The award-winning routine led to three years of performances including Curtains Up at The Second City Toronto before Frank stepped off the stage to begin writing his first feature film that launched the producing career of William Vince, who went on to produce the Oscar Winning film, Capote (2005), with the late Philip Seymour Hoffman.

Frank's personal life forever changed while immersed in the production of a short film he directed in 1989, featuring lead actor Santino Buda. Frank came into contact with Santino's family who offered their home as a set location, and that's when he met Santino's sister, Violet. Her parents, Domenico and Vincenzina, immigrated in 1956 from Reggio Calabria, Italy, and raised a family of 5 children through the ups and downs of launching various businesses; the strongest of which continue to operate today through Violet's brothers and nephews serving the community in the sanitization, disinfection chemicals, and service industries.

Violet was raised with strong family values and the



knowledge of commitment required for businesses to flourish. Her brother Tony initially inspired her to become a lawyer because of his passion for literature, ethics, and philosophy of law. While working on the film, Frank seamlessly blended with Violet's family, sharing traditional similarities that ironically turned his passion project into a labour of love. Even the film's producer, William Vince, felt that Frank was destined to be with Violet. They married a year later in 1990.

After they married, she worked as Frank's dental assistant while preparing for the LSAT. During that time, her interest shifted into dentistry, and she began taking courses including Practice Management before ultimately pursuing a career in Dental Hygiene.

Violet's academic excellence was recognized as the sole recipient of all 4 four graduation Awards: The Academic Achievement Award, The Hu-Friedy Golden Clinical Award, The Faculty Recognition Award, and The Peer Recognition Award. In private practice, Violet introduced new hygiene technologies and improved treatment protocols for non-surgical therapeutic intervention.

In 2002, Doctor Procopio moved his practice to Vaughan with a focus on prevention, interceptive orthodontics, implantology, and esthetic reconstruction. He completed a surgical residency for implant placement and is a member of numerous associations. Shortly after that, he turned his attention to applied dental materials and high-energy physics. Frank conducted a research project in laser bio-photonics at the UofT McLennan Physics Laboratory for a dental laser device he co-invented with oral pathologist, Dr. Allan Dovigi. The proof-of-principle and the resulting apparatus were filed at the U.S. Patent Office. Ongoing research continues.

Frank's passion outside of dentistry continues to be in the world of motion picture arts. Frank is a produced writer, associate director for the theatrical screen, and mentor of 16 short films he produced with his family that have screened worldwide at more than 200 festivals and won over 50 Awards. During production of these films, Violet multi-tasked in departments of Script Supervision, Production, and Makeup & Hair. Her most notable contributions were in Wardrobe and Set Design for the

comedy, “Piece of Cake” which was awarded at TIFF: Next Wave and internationally.

Frank and Violet currently live in Vaughan and are parents to a son, Joseph, and twin daughters, Susan and Katherine. Joseph is now working in Beverly Hills, California as an executive assistant at Fuzzy Door, the company owned by Seth MacFarlane, creator/producer of Family Guy. Their daughter Susan is currently in her second year of dentistry at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in Boston and plans to join the practice in 2027. Their second daughter Katherine is a newly graduated Registered Nurse from York University, with interest in psychiatry and innovative plans to improve the accessibility of mental health resources in Canada.

Frank and Violet have built a successful state-of-the art family practice, grounded in preventative evidence-based dentistry, teamwork and continued education. The majority of their practice has grown by referral from other patients. Over the decades, they have witnessed significant changes in the industry, such as the shift away from silver amalgam fillings, the advent of dental implants and aligner orthodontics. They advocate for comprehensive dental care for seniors and emphasize the importance of regular dental maintenance for overall health.

Doctor Frank Procopio and Violet Buda’s partnership in both life and the dental industry exemplifies dedication, resilience, and a commitment to their community. Their story is a testament to the belief that with a solid foundation, anything is possible.

For many years, my family and I have entrusted our dental care to Dr. Frank and Violet. Their exceptional care has consistently stood out. Their dedication to our dental health, coupled with their genuine kindness, transforms every visit into a positive experience. They consistently go above and beyond in their service, making us feel like part of their family. We cannot imagine entrusting our dental care to anyone else. If you are looking for a dental office, I highly recommend them.

- Anne Marie -

COVER IMAGE CREDITS
HAIR COLOUR - La Couture Hair Lounge, Mary Bruccoleri
HAIR STYLIST - Alure Hair Salon, Kam
MAKE UP - Sabrina Perpetua
FRANK’S CLOTHING - Studio on 7
VIOLET’S CLOTHING - Veronica Beard, Stylist Fatima Hughes;
Grafic Woman, Stylist Sadaf Ramezani;
PHOTOGRAPHY - Valeria Subata Photography



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Shifting to the Back to School Mindset

by *Valentina Di Domenico, Principal*

It is that time of year again! Should we say, “Back to School” or instead “New school year, new beginnings.”

The new school year “to do” list for parents can be extensive regardless of the age of their child. However, it is all these preparations that support a positive back to school experience as well as a healthy, happy, and successful school year. The list can include all the items to purchase (clothing, school supplies, school bag, etc...) and all the items to organize (transportation, childcare, etc...) but equally as important is the “back to school” mindset.

Beginning a new school year can bring on a flood of emotions for students (and parents!) which can include positivity and excitement as well as anxiety and apprehensiveness. Being prepared to navigate these emotions can help with the “back to school” transition. I have had the privilege of serving in education for 27 years, 13 years as Principal and also wear the hat of proud parent. Here are some strategies I have learned, recommend to families, and apply to my personal life.

Establish Healthy Sleep Schedule

Sleep is essential for our overall health and well being. A consistent sleep routine ensures children have enough sleep to perform throughout the day. Well rested children can better perform academic tasks, concentrate, and remember what they have learned. Adequate sleep supports self regulation of emotions and management of stress. Without enough sleep, children can be irritable, have mood swings, act out emotionally and physically which can negatively impact how they feel about themselves and their social interaction. With enough sleep, children can actively participate in physical activity at recess and physical education classes which is important for their growth and development. The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends 9-11 hours of sleep/night for children ages 5-13 and 8-10 hours of sleep/night for children 14-17.

As a mother, some of my fondest bonding moments with my children were during bedtime routines such as reading stories in bed and talking about the day. This is a wonderful way to calm the mind and prepare for a good night's sleep.

Plan Healthy Meals and Snacks

Planning ahead with healthy lunch and snack options helps to ensure children go to school with the foods needed to provide them with a steady supply of energy throughout the day. Lunch bags packed with fruits, vegetables, whole grains and protein gives the body and mind the

tools it needs to do the hard work of the day. Sugar dense snacks and beverages eventually lead to low energy and difficulty concentrating. Nutritious foods help students stay focused, energized, and ready to problem solve. There is plenty of resources online and on social media accounts with creative ideas to keep packed lunches and snacks interesting and healthy. The planning and getting ahead of the everyday rush helps with keeping this important daily routine consistent. Establishing these habits early on in their school years sets the foundation for many years afterwards.

Cultivate a Growth Mindset

A new school year always brings new learning opportunities and new challenges. Children are not going to be successful at everything all the time. There will be some concepts they will learn quickly and others will take more time and practice. Cultivating their growth mindset is essential because it is the belief that with consistent practice and good strategies they will improve. Children need to be reminded that mistakes are part of learning and the struggle is needed to accomplish goals. When your child says they don't know how to do something, you can remind them that they don't know how to do it “yet”. It can be helpful to set smaller goals that are measurable and attainable that lead to larger goals. Effectively using constructive feedback in the learning process is another tool to progress in learning. The development of a growth mindset in children will give them the perseverance and resilience to approach and work through learning challenges and ultimately achieve their full potential.

Support Academic Needs

Parents are a child's first teacher and life-long teacher. Parents are partners in education and play a crucial role in supporting children's academic progress. Parents can support at home by establishing a routine of when homework is completed, establishing expectations of how it is completed free of distractions (i.e. devices, television, etc...), and providing a dedicated, comfortable space for their children. As a partner with your child's school, stay informed about homework, assignments so that you can help your child manage the workload, and ensure everything gets completed. As tempting as it may be to take control, let your child do the work, encourage them to ask questions and think critically instead of just giving them the answer. Reflecting on the past school year can help determine areas of strength and areas of growth. The report card can be a useful tool for looking at not just the areas of growth in the academic subjects but the learning skills portion on the first page. Children that are able to set priorities and feel supported in their learning are more likely to develop a love of learning and growth and ultimately achieve success.

Balance Extra Curricular Activities

Extra curricular activities provide children with a plethora of benefits such as learning time management skills, having an enjoyable outlet to explore interests and passions that bring joy and reduce stress. It can provide them with a social network and community membership that provides positive experiences, relationships, and builds confidence which can ultimately positively impact school performance. Like anything else, balance is the key, so that extra curriculums benefit children's overall health and well being rather than hinder it. Over scheduling can also be hard on children and families as they attempt to accomplish so much with limited evening and weekend time. Parents can determine what that healthy balance will look like for their child (and the parent too) as they schedule extra curricular activities.

Talking about the new school year with your children helps them to think ahead about the possibilities. Talk about what may worry them and strategies to address those worries. For new kindergarten students or students attending a new school, visiting the school grounds before the first day and familiarizing them with the routine helps with the first day jitters.

School provides for wonderful learning opportunities academically, emotionally, and socially. It is where many long-lasting friendships are formed, fond memories and character-building experiences happen. I wish all our students and families a smooth and rewarding school year ahead. Onwards and upwards!

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Our Community In Action

Ottawa Firefighters Band visit regions in Abruzzo, Italy



Montepiano Carmine Mariani Family Volunteers who received the Ottawa Firefighters Band



Mayor Arturo Scopino hosts band in Montepiano



Mayor Diego Giangiulli Receives Band in Pretoro Italia



Maestro Paolo Casagrande exchanges gifts with Mayor Diego Giangiulli and Vice Mayor Fabrizio in Pretoro Italia



Ottawa Firefighters Band with Nicola Di Virgilio bus driver in Montepiano



Mayor Marinelli hosts Band in Roccamontepiano



The Alpini of Pretoro and Mayor Diego host the Ottawa Firefighters Band



Nico and staff of Antico Tratturo in Fara Italia



Band visits the Sanctuary of San Gabriele, Abruzzo



Mayor Mario Santovito with Maestro Paul Casagrande and Fire Chief Alessandro Marchione in Rapino



Honouring our Canadian Soldiers in Ortona Italy



The band is received in Rapino by Mayor Mario Santovito and Commandant Alessandro Marchione of the Vigili del Fuoco Chieti



Atilio Dannibale from Giulianova, Pescara, Italy hosts the Firefighters band



Angelo Filoso hosts Ottawa Firefighters Ban in Pretoro Italia

Our Community In Action

Ottawa Firefighters Band visit regions in Abruzzo, Italy



Pizze Fritte in Rapino Italia



Band in Rapino with the Owner of The Tiglio Restaurant



Guests honoring the Ottawa Firefighters Band in Rapino Italia

Our Community In Action

Ottawa Firefighters Band visit regions in Abruzzo, Italy



Ian Mcleod and Dave Smith



Staff at Mediterranean Hotel in Rome welcomes the Firefighters band from Ottawa



Editor Josie Alonzi of The Voice, Maestro Paolo Casagrande and Dave Smith meet the Vice Commandate di Vigili del Fuoco, Roma, Italia



Councillor Chris Ainsworth and MPP Laura Smith with residents



Mayor Steven Del Duca with regional councillors Gino Rosati and Mario Ferri presents cheque to the bocce group in Vaughan



Group with MP Francesco Sorbara, Senator Varone and Carlo Baldassarra



MPP Michael Tibollo annual picnic with guests

Our Community In Action



Picnic with guests hosted by MP Anna Roberts and Michael Guglielmin Conservative candidate for Vaughan-Woodbridge



Jennifer Coletta-Rashty President of Vaughan Chambers of Commerce with members - Annual BBQ Bash



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