



**Weekly E-Newsletter**  
**Stay Connected @ BCSS**  
 Friday, December 15, 2017

**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

The juncos are dancing at my backyard bird feeders, as Winter finally arrives.

One more week before the break – and I think everyone needs one!

Week 15 ends with an excellent Music Recital, “Seasonal Sounds”. What an amazing and talented group of young musicians we have, as well as an amazing music teaching crew, Mrs. Buelow, and Mr. Johnston. Thanks to everyone for their efforts. Thanks should be garnered to the custodial staff as well as the tech crew.

Winter sports seasons are continuing, ISU’s and presentations are coming due, and with only 3 and a half weeks left in courses, teachers and students are mentioning final projects and exams. It is a very busy time of year.

We would like to continue to wish the Jewish members of the Bear Creek community a very happy, illuminating, and festive Hanukkah, from sundown on the 12<sup>th</sup> to sundown of the 20<sup>th</sup>. “*Hanukkah Sameach!*”

I am always open to suggestions and comments, so please contact me at [twilkinson@scdsb.on.ca](mailto:twilkinson@scdsb.on.ca) if you have something on your mind.

E-newsletters are available on the Bear Creek website: <http://bss.scdsb.on.ca/>

Please follow me on Twitter: @VPWilkinson

Please follow me on Instagram: sfx8691

If you see a topic you want to learn more about, you go to the item and press the “Ctrl” button while you click your cursor and you will be “magically” transported to the topic you chose. To “magically” transport back to the table of contents, go to the “Back to the Table of Contents” words at the end of each article, and press the “Ctrl” button while you click your cursor and you will be “magically” transported back to the table of contents.

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## What’s Happening at BCSS?

### Holiday Music Show

A big congratulation to all of the Bear Creek musicians who put on a fabulous Seasonal Sounds concert last night. You sang and played us all into the Christmas spirit! Well done!

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### Breakfast Club

Bear Creek’s Eat Well to Excel - Breakfast Club has been very successful, so far. We have served over just shy of 22,000 students since the second week of September! The Breakfast Club is serving over 300 students a day at a cost of 13.8 ¢/day/student.

If you are looking to donate to a cause, for instance donating in someone else’s name for Christmas, the Breakfast Club could really use and greatly appreciate your donations. Receipts would be given upon request.

Students who miss breakfast at home can get a nutritious breakfast at school prior to period 1. This will be located in the main forum. We are very fortunate and grateful for the assistance of Tim Horton’s who are donating bagels, muffins, scones and croissants.

We would like to thank Mrs. S. Elines for donations of breads, muffins, and other baked goods.

While there is no cost to the student, the program depends on donations from our community to keep going. We are asking parents and community members for donations of the following to help with our costs: cereal bars (peanut-free), cheese, fresh fruit, bagels, jams, non-hydrogenated margarine, light cream cheese, 100% juice

boxes, multi-grain breads, yogurt, muffins, dried fruit, raisin boxes, granola/fruit bars, and cash. Anything you can assist with, would be greatly appreciated.

Ornella and her crew in the cafeteria provide free hot oatmeal porridge (also provided by the Breakfast Club) with plenty of toppings. As the weather gets colder, not much warms you up better than hot porridge.

If you wish more information about the program or wish to donate, please contact Terry Wilkinson at (705)725-7712, voice mail, 43664. Bear Creek's priority is to have healthy students!

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## **Register Now for Night School (Semester Two) To Complete High School, Prepare for Post-Secondary Education**

Night school at the Barrie Learning Centre offers secondary school credits in a variety of subjects for students completing their Ontario Secondary School Diploma and for students who are preparing for post-secondary education. Subjects include math, english, chemistry, biology, physics, social science and history.

All night school courses are offered in a blended format where students attend in-class sessions once a week and complete the remainder of their assigned weekly work online. Students are welcome to access computer resources and meet with their classroom teacher during the office hours of their online night class. Learn more and register at: [www.thelearningcentres.com](http://www.thelearningcentres.com).

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## **Holiday Cheer**

Holiday cheer is continuing - all period 2 classes are collecting unwrapped toys. Grade 9's and 10's are buying for boys, ages 10-15, and grade 11's, 12's, and up are buying for girls, ages 10-15! We are asking that all toys be brought in by December 18<sup>th</sup> and remember the class to bring in the most toys will be rewarded with bonus marks or a low quiz/test grade dropped!

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## **OSAP Applications For 2018-19 Now Available**

Going to college or university next year? The 2018-19 Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) is now accepting applications for full-time students. Apply early to get an estimate of the amount of grants and loans you could receive. Apply now at: [www.ontario.ca/osap](http://www.ontario.ca/osap).

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## **Scholarship Report – December 2017**

Speaking of getting money for post-secondary education through OSAP, the December 2017/January 2018 Scholarship Report has been attached. There are so many avenues for post-secondary financial support/reward. Please check it out.

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## **BCSS Lunchtime Live/Jam Sessions**

Jam Sessions is a “safe space” mental health initiative that allows staff and students to learn and play guitar and/or ukulele, for FREE.

Jam Sessions is now in need of any gently used acoustic guitars and currently looking for a Cajun (slap) drum or djembe drums.

BCSS Lunchtime Live provides a venue to showcase their talents - some of which performing for the first time (students with high anxiety too!). BCSS Lunchtime Live mainly features music but will have other themed events like poetry, dance, and improv as well.

Eventually we're looking to have our own sound system for Lunchtime Live as we increase our performances from 2 times per month to every available Friday lunch: microphones and speakers/amps. (Tech crew is busy as is and we can't always rely on booking out their equipment.)

Any community support, donation, connection that will help with equipment or costs would be appreciated.

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## Chess Club

Chess Club is on Fridays, in the Career Centre, from 2:30 until 4-ish. All are welcome. No experience necessary.

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## RVH Film Festival Welcomes Student Submissions

Barrie's Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) has partnered with the Simcoe County District School Board, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board and Unity Christian High School to offer students, classes and schools the opportunity to participate in RVH's annual Film Festival in two external categories:

 Kindergarten to Grade 6

 Grade 7 and up

This year's theme is "Making mental health matter - how are you making a difference?" Students and classes are invited to make a two-minute video showing how they promote mental health. The deadline for submissions is Feb. 5, 2018. Voting will take place from Feb. 16 to 26 and those with the winning entries will be invited to an awards ceremony on March 8. Find out more and submit your video at:

[www.rvh.on.ca/SitePages/rvhfilmfestival.aspx](http://www.rvh.on.ca/SitePages/rvhfilmfestival.aspx).

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## Parents, Guardians Invited to Learn About Special Education in the SCDSB at Upcoming Information Sessions

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) will host a series of six information sessions for parents and guardians to learn about special education in the SCDSB, and how to support students with special education needs.

The following sessions will be offered:

### December 18, 2017

Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) Information for Families

### January 22, 2018

**February 19, 2018**

Transition Planning Grade 8 to 9

**March 19, 2018**

Accessing Supports in the Community

**April 16, 2018**

Understanding Alternative/Non-Academic IEP Goals

“Parents play a critical role in supporting students’ success, especially for those with special education needs,” says Chris Samis, Superintendent of Program/Special Education. “Being the parent of a child with special education needs can be complicated and confusing. Finding ways as a school system to reduce that confusion helps make the pathway simpler and straightforward, and ensures chances of success for everyone, especially the child.”

The information sessions take place from 6 to 7 p.m. at the SCDSB Education Centre, located at 1170 Highway 26 in Midhurst.

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## **Schulich Leader Scholarship Program**

Western University is proud to be one of the 20 participating university partners of one of the largest and most prestigious scholarship programs, the Schulich Leader Scholarship program.

With this partnership, Western is in support of students pursuing their dreams to become the next global pioneers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The scholarships are awarded to students on the basis of academic excellence and demonstrated ability for creative and innovative thought and a passion for higher learning.

Each year, Western will select 2 students to receive a Schulich Leader Scholarship:

\$100,000 to a student pursuing an Engineering degree

\$80,000 to a student pursuing a Science, Technology or Math degree

For more information on the Schulich Leader Scholarships including nomination process please visit:

<http://www.schulichleaders.com/>

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## **Gene Researcher for a Week**

The Gene Researcher for a Week (GRFAW) program, developed in 2003 by The Canadian Gene Cure Foundation, was created to support the goal of fostering the growth of genetic clinician-scientists by inspiring and mentoring high school students in Canada. In the years to come, these emerging scientists may be the ones who will make ground breaking discoveries, and translate these findings to improved patient treatment and care. Under the sponsorship and guidance of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Genetics (CIHR-IG), the GRFAW Program can look forward to the longevity and growth of the program.

CIHR-IG is pleased to announce that applications will be accepted for the 2018 Gene Researcher for a Week Program November 1, 2017 through December 24, 2017. Funded by the Canadian Institute Health Research Institute of Genetics, CIHR-IG selects motivated and ambitious students in grades 11 and 12 who have an innate curiosity for science, human genetics, and human genetics research. This year we anticipate being able to place 50 plus students in this program.

The program offers high school students:

1. The opportunity for a hands-on learning experience in the field of genetic research. Students gain insight into the world of genetic diseases by observation and are often provided the opportunity of conducting real, hands-on scientific experiments (i.e. DNA isolation, PCR, gel electrophoresis, SDS-PAGE, Western blotting, cell culture and ELISA assays). Participants may also learn how genes cause human genetic disorders and how top scientists translate these findings into treatments and cures for genetic diseases.
2. The opportunity to work in one of Canada's top genetic research laboratories. These students are placed in labs of influential Canadian scientists for one week over Spring Break. This experience gives young students what many have called "a life changing experience". The GRFAW mentoring program is a great opportunity for young scientists to learn about human genetics research and connect with some Canada's best researchers.
3. The opportunity develop a network of high potential peers. Student gene researchers are bright, talented and highly motivated individuals. By participating in the program, they will have an opportunity to meet people in their host lab and institution. Some labs will host more than one student, providing a further opportunity to network with other students.
4. The unique opportunity to learn about the many exciting career paths in science and genetics

Through the science teachers in the schools, it is our hope that motivated science students across Canada have ready access to this one-of-a-kind opportunity.

Please encourage your students that are eligible to apply; Application will be posted on November 1<sup>st</sup> at [www.grfaw.ca](http://www.grfaw.ca) and will CLOSE December 24, 2017.

## **Selection Criteria**

Selected students will be placed with their host scientists during Spring Break. Due to the high number of students that apply, candidates will be selected based on the following criteria:

- ✓ Must be a resident of Canada
- ✓ Must be a high school student in grade 11 or 12
- ✓ Must be 16 years of age by January 1st of the year of participation (2017)
- ✓ Must have a high academic standing (overall GPA of 85% or higher)
- ✓ Must show an interest in pursuing a career/education in human genetics
- ✓ Must be well rounded in all areas (academic, volunteer and extra-curricular activities)
- ✓ Must be willing to travel to another city or province to participate (up to 35% of our participants are placed outside of their home city/town)

Cost to students: There is no cost to participate in the program or to apply. If travel is required, a stipend will be provided by the CIHR-IG, however it may not cover all travel costs including food and accommodations.

NOTE: Student placements happen during their own school's Spring Break dates. This information is requested on their application.

Important dates:

<b>Application Deadline</b>	<b>24 December 2017</b>
<b>Teacher recommendation letter due date</b>	<b>12 January 2018</b>
<b>Parental Consent due date</b>	<b>12-January 2018</b>
<b>Review &amp; selection period</b>	<b>8 January–9 February 2018</b>
<b>Anticipated notice of Decision</b>	<b>12–16 February 2018</b>

More information is available on the website [www.grfaw.ca](http://www.grfaw.ca) or you may contact us at [cihr-ig@mcgill.ca](mailto:cihr-ig@mcgill.ca) or phone 514-398-3416.

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## **Inclement Weather Days & Road Conditions**

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC) provides student transportation services within Simcoe County for the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB) and the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB). The role of the SCSTC includes contracting bus and vehicle operators on behalf of the SMCDSB and SCDSB.

As winter weather approaches, the SCSTC reminds all students and their families that school vehicles may be cancelled due to poor weather, road conditions or visibility concerns.

Home-to-school transportation for Bear Creek is cancelled when the SCSTC announces:

- 1) All school vehicles are cancelled in Simcoe County; or
- 2) Central Weather Zone school vehicles are cancelled in Simcoe County

These announcements are made by the SCSTC through the local media. Cancellation information for Simcoe County is also available through the SCSTC website at: [www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca) or via Twitter @SCSTC\_SchoolBus. When school vehicles are cancelled in the morning, the decision remains in effect for the entire school day.

**If you are on Remind, I will let you know almost immediately when the cancellation message comes through.**

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## **Sanofi Biogenius Canada – Biotechnology Competition**

For over two decades, the Sanofi Biogenius Canada (SBC) program has nurtured young minds and fostered great talent for the future by challenging high school students to carry out groundbreaking research projects in the field of biotechnology. Detailed information about the competition can be found at [www.biogenius.ca](http://www.biogenius.ca).

This is an opportunity for students to work under the guidance of an expert scientific mentor and gain access to a real-world laboratory environment. Not only will students learn how to structure, conduct and report on your experience, but you'll also learn how to share your discovery with others and communicate high-level scientific concepts to a wide audience.

Ready to apply? Submit your application now! You DO NOT NEED a mentor to submit your application:  
<http://biogenius.ca/apply/>.

More detailed information and promotional posters can be downloaded from their website: [www.biogenius.ca](http://www.biogenius.ca).  
for more information about SBC's key managing partner, Partners In Research, visit [www.pirweb.org](http://www.pirweb.org).

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## **A & E Canadian Classroom - 2017 Lives That Make a Difference Essay Contest – For Students and Teachers**

Welcome to the 2017 Lives That Make a Difference Essay Contest.

If you go to <http://www.livesthatmakeadifference.com/index.html> , you can learn more about this year's essay contest and Official Rules, check out last year's essay winner, and submit your own essay into the competition!

**A Bear Creek Student Could Win \$3,000!**

Students in grades 5-12 may enter by writing an essay based on someone they think made the biggest impact on Canadian society in 2017. Prizes are awarded in two grade levels: 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Two winners will be selected in each level.

**GRAND PRIZE**  
Student: \$3,000 Prize  
Department/Classroom  
of Teacher: \$1,000 Cash

**FIRST PRIZE**  
Student: \$2,000 Prize  
Department/Classroom  
of Teacher: \$1,000 Cash

Contest ends **December 31, 2017**

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## **Green Team**

Hello Bear Creek!

If you only like some coffee or juice, please don't put the half full container in the recycling. It makes a huge mess for custodians and recycling teams and wastes that recycling which goes into the landfill adding to our overuse of Earth's resources. Not to mention, it does draw fruit flies and mold. All those few of you that do this need to do is remember to drain the liquid into a sink first, then recycle. Thanks for your cooperation and consideration.

Thanks for contributing to a greener future!

To help more, see you at the Green Team meeting Monday at 10:45 in 207.

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## **Volunteer Opportunities**

**VOLUNTEER!**

**GET INVOLVED!  
BE A PART OF YOUR COMMUNITY!**

Do you want to volunteer or get a summer job? Not sure where to start? Check out Bear Creek's volunteer and student job opportunity board located outside of the Guidance office. It is updated weekly with fantastic opportunities! Still not sure what to do? Make an appointment with your Guidance Counsellor for some further suggestions.

**Remember, EVERY student must complete a minimum 40 hours  
of volunteer work to graduate.**

Please submit your "Completion of Community Involvement Activities" sheet (this sheet can be found either on-line or at the Guidance office) to the Guidance office as soon as it is signed by both you and a parent.

1. Do you like sports? Are you in need of community service hours? Do you want to get a jump on community service hours? Well the home game crew might be for you! We are in need of capable and trustworthy students to help with sports scorekeeping for the year. Basketball and volleyball are the main sports in which we require help. Please sign up on the list outside of the student success office room 110 or see Mr. Wilkey.

2. Mr. Wilkinson is looking for students to be part of the Breakfast Club. Please see him at the Breakfast Club table any day for more information and to sign up.

3. Kidney Clothes Christmas Elf Campaign

Earn 15 hours stuffing 30 bags of clothes. Please see attached for more information.

4. If you are a student still looking for volunteer hours we have an opportunity for you. Gift Wrapping Helpers are needed for a fundraising event at the Georgian Mall. There are many shifts still available. Please see Guidance for more details.

5. If you like being outdoors and are a skier or snowboarder this may be right for you. Canadian Adaptive Snowsports are looking for volunteers for the upcoming season. Orientation day will be this Saturday December 9th at Horseshoe Resort. Participation in this does count for Community Service Hours. If you are interested, please come to guidance for more information.

6.

**Subject: Volunteers needed**

Samaritan House offers a free after-school tutoring program at Andrew Hunter School Monday nights from 3:30-5:00. **They are in need of volunteer tutors and would welcome students interested in earning community volunteer hours.** If you know any students interested in working with children please encourage them to contact Samaritan House by emailing [shbarrie@gmail.com](mailto:shbarrie@gmail.com) or calling 705-791-7731.

Here is a link to their ~~website~~ [samaritanhousecommunityministries.com/contact-us](http://samaritanhousecommunityministries.com/contact-us)

7.

The Barrie Public Library's  
**TEEN ADVISORY BOARD**

**ATTENTION Students!!**

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG!  
Get involved today and take part in what you enjoy! The Barrie Public Library offers a variety of fun and informative programs and activities. Pursue your passions and voice your opinions!

What we have to offer:

- Tinker Tuesdays
- Teen Coffee House Nights
- Chess Titans Chess Club
- Employment Ontario Info Sessions
- Teen Lego Robotics
- Youth Health Connect

If interested, please contact:  
Gabrielle Huston  
Bear Creek Student Rep, BPL Teen Advisory Board  
Email: theyavr1@gmail.com  
Cell: (705)816-3332

Barrie Public LIBRARY

8.

**Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing - HURONIA**

**Be a Volunteer Come Ski With Us**

Would you like to help others learn the joys of skiing? Then come and join us. We are a national grassroots volunteer organization that assists people with a disability to learn to ski or snowboard.

**Just the Facts**

Where: Snow Valley, Horseshoe Valley, Heights of Horseshoe  
When: Saturday or Sunday - January to first week in March  
How: **Volunteer Orientation is Sat. Dec. 9th**  
- Registration 8:30 am at Horseshoe Resort  
Cost: \$40.00 Membership which includes liability insurance while volunteering

For more information or to confirm your attendance call:  
**David @ 705 725-4774**  
or email: cads-ontario@rogers.com

**What do you get out of it?**  
We provide the training, a ski pass and a fun environment. You get to share the smiles with your fellow volunteers and students

For the latest information: [www.cadsonario.ca](http://www.cadsonario.ca)

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## Sports News

To check out scores, schedules, standings, etc, please go to: <http://www.scaasports.ca> .

Next week's sporting events look like:

Monday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Boys' Basketball Vs. Eastview	Girls' Volleyball vs. Orillia	Nordic Skiing @ Hardwood	Girls' Volleyball @ North	
			Alpine Skiing @ Moonstone	
	Girls' Hockey @ Banting		Boys' Hockey vs. Collingwood	Wrestling

Are you a new student to Bear Creek in grade 10, 11, or 12 and are interested in playing sports? Did you transfer from another high school? Please come to see Mr. Wilkey in Student Success, room 110, to fill out the necessary forms so you can play sports this year.

**Badminton Club** runs every Tuesday and Thursday from 4:15 to 6. You need a student card to play. **Anyone** can come out. There may be a slight cost to cover equipment. The various badminton teams will be chosen from the club members. See Mr. Wilkinson for more information.

Anyone interested in **Nordic Skiing (Cross Country skiing)** are welcome to join in for practices from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. after school here at Bear Creek on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please see Mr. or Mrs. Loucks in the Phys. ed. office for details.

Any **wrestlers** wishing to compete this week in Brampton are reminded of the mandatory practice tonight after school. New athletes still wishing to try out for the wrestling team are encouraged to see Coaches Cryer or Chestnut.

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## Important Dates

Tuesday, December 12 – Wednesday, December 20

Friday, December 22

Friday, December 22

Monday, December 25

Tuesday, December 26

Tuesday, December 26 – Monday, January 1, 2018

Monday, January 1, 2018

Monday, January 8, 2018

Hanukkah

Winter starts

last day of classes for the calendar year

Christmas Day

Boxing Day

Kwanzaa

New Year

classes resume

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## Positively Speaking

For those of you that know “The Twelve Days of Christmas”, every year, some store in London or New York prices out the actual cost of the items in the song. This year, if one bought all the gifts for their true love, it would set them back US\$ 34,559, up about US\$200 from last year. Click on the link for the article:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2017/11/15/buying/862441001/>

I have found as I have gotten older, maybe (but necessarily, especially if you speak to my wife or kids) wiser, that I enjoying giving much more than getting. I have included a list of areas where we can give or at least, reflect on.

It also doesn't matter that it is a Christmas song or Christmas time, to give. I had a fascinating talk with my eye doctor, who is of the Sikh faith. I hope I can generalize from that discussion that regardless of faith, all we really want is for peace, family, stability, full belly, warm home, etc. – the basics. There are many – too many – that don't have that.

I hope that this “article” provides some insights on quitting.

## Twelve Good Things

- ☺ Generosity is at the heart of being human, and please consider these worthy organizations: [Against Malaria Foundation](#) helps prevent malaria; [Food Lifeline](#) rescues surplus food to end hunger; and [Heart to Heart International](#) distributes medicine, food and other supplies to communities in Puerto Rico affected by Hurricane Maria.
- ☺ [Spirit Rock Meditation Center](#) has been my primary personal wellspring of contemplative practice. Check out the workshops, retreats, and online offerings from this peaceful, welcoming, world-renowned center.
- ☺ [Dharma Seed](#) is an online archive of freely offered talks by hundreds of teachers to develop mindfulness, compassion, and an awakening heart.
- ☺ [The Poetry Foundation](#) has a wonderful variety of [audio poems](#), and will deliver a [Poem of the Day](#) into your Inbox.

- ☺ The [Foundations of Well-Being](#) is my online program for growing an unshakable core of calm, strength, and love - for resilient happiness in a changing world. It's super practical, you can go at your own pace, and there's a money-back guarantee. Starting January 2, you'll get the tools you need to grow a new inner strength each week - and there's a \$180 discount if you [sign up](#) by December 15th.
- ☺ The [Economics of Happiness](#) is a positive alternative to the "growth economics" of greed and short-term thinking. Also check out this great TED Talk by high school economics teacher Elizabeth Salinas: [The Economics of Happiness and the Significance of Joy](#).
- ☺ The [Greater Good Science Center](#) is a world-class resource for compassion, empathy, parenting, and positive psychology. They have a phenomenal [Greater Good Magazine](#) full of useful articles, videos, podcasts, and quizzes. You can offer support by [becoming a member](#), as I have.
- ☺ [Plan International](#) works in 50 developing countries to lift children out of poverty. My wife and I have supported Plan for over twenty years. Their focus this year is on investing in girls' education in Africa and protecting children of the displaced Rohingya in Bangladesh. You can support their work by [becoming a child sponsor](#).
- ☺ [Child Advocates](#) (CASA) and [Guardian ad Litem](#) (GAL) programs train volunteers in local chapters to become champions for child victims of life-threatening abuse, neglect, or abandonment.
- ☺ The [Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation](#) supports mindfulness practice centers, international humanitarian projects, and health care for monks and nuns. Their [website](#) also hosts a [wonderful blog](#) of Thay's teachings.
- ☺ [Your Skillful Means](#) (sponsored by [The Wellspring Institute for Neuroscience and Contemplative Wisdom](#)) is a kind of Wikipedia for psychological or spiritual growth, with nearly a hundred different methods or tools.
- ☺ [Gratitude](#) elevates, energizes, and transforms, and it can help us deal more effectively with tragedy and crisis. Check out this [TED Talk by Dr Tanmeet Sethi](#), who discovered how saying thank you for the things in life you don't want helped her find peace with her son's devastating diagnosis of a life-threatening disease.

Source: "Twelve Good Things", by Rick Hanson, December 13, 2017, [news@rickhanson.net](mailto:news@rickhanson.net).

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## Parent's Corner

How do you feel about cell phones for your kids?

I have found, very unscientifically, that there are more mental health issues, since 1991, when I started teaching (hopefully no correlation there), it spiked again in 2007 and is worse today than it ever was, than, I remember as a teenager, in the '80's.

I have reflected on that and I personally believe it started with CNN – 24-hour news, to cover the first Gulf War, in 1991. The television is never off and can be filled with negative, hopeless imagery.

The development of the Smart phone in 2007 or so, means you are now constantly connected to others anywhere in the world.

In my day (let me just go get my walker), you passed a note to someone; maybe, three people saw it.

Now, with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, you can have people comment of your short comings or misdeeds or your anything, that someone else posted, from all over the world – immediately! You have lost control.

France has started a movement to ban cell phones from the school -

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/11/france-to-ban-mobile-phones-in-schools-from-september>

What do you think.

I hope you find the below article enlightening.

## **Is Social Media Messing with Your Teen’s Mental Health?**

The scary risks and possible benefits of living in a social media dependent world.

Social media dramatically changed the way we communicate, socialize, and make and maintain friendships.

While there are benefits to living in a digital world, there are also risks. Today’s youth miss out on critical social skills development when they spend the majority of their free time connected to and interacting through a screen. They can also get lost in a world of unrealistic comparisons, cyberbullying, and feeling left out.

Research shows an increase in major depressive episodes from 8.7% in 2005 to 11.3% in 2014 in adolescents and from 8.8% to 9.6% in young adults. The increase was larger and only statistically significant only in the age range of 12 to 20 years. Clearly depression is on the rise among teens, the question we need to ask ourselves is how much does technology and social media contribute to it?

It’s no big secret that connecting via texting, Instagram, and Facebook can include harsh judgments and comparisons. It’s easier to make statements on a screen that would otherwise be difficult to verbalize face to face. And disjointed shorthand conversations can easily result in misunderstandings. It doesn’t help that digital communication occurs at a rapid pace, one that is difficult to process at times.

One report by the Royal Society for Public Health in the UK surveyed 1500 young people, ages 14 to 24, to determine the effects of social media use on issues such as anxiety, depression, self-esteem, and body image.

Their findings show that YouTube had the most positive impact, while Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and SnapChat all had negative effects on mental health.

While these findings might make you want to delete all social media apps and ban your teen from any digital communication, avoidance isn’t the answer. Teens use social media to connect, seek friendship and support, and even ask for help at times. A better bet is to understand how and why your teen uses social media, stay connected, and know what to look for if your teen shows unexplained emotional changes.

## **Symptoms of Depression**

The defining feature of a major depressive episode is a period of at least two weeks during which there is either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in nearly all activities. For children, you are more likely to see irritability than depressed mood. Other symptoms of depression can include the following:

- ⊗ Feelings of hopelessness
- ⊗ Loss of interest in normal daily activities
- ⊗ Irritable mood
- ⊗ Significant weight loss or weight gain
- ⊗ Diminished self-care
- ⊗ Insomnia or hypersomnia
- ⊗ Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- ⊗ Fatigue or loss of energy
- ⊗ Feelings of worthlessness
- ⊗ Excessive guilt
- ⊗ Difficulty concentrating
- ⊗ Difficulty making decisions
- ⊗ Physical complaints: headaches, stomachaches
- ⊗ Social isolation
- ⊗ Recurrent thoughts about death
- ⊗ Suicidal thoughts, actions, or plans.

The symptoms of depression exhibited by teens are likely to negatively affect school performance (and even attendance), friendships, and family relationships. The tricky part about teen depression is that it can be gradual.

Complaints of difficulty sleeping or frequent headaches seem age appropriate, and in many cases they are. They shouldn't happen regularly, though. When your typically active and social teen appears isolated, sad, and unreachable, it's time to get help.

## **How to Help Your Teen Navigate Social Media**

Believe it or not, your teen does want your support and guidance, but it can be hard to strike a balance between helping and trying to fix everything. Follow these tips to support your teen:

### **1. Ask Questions**

Teens need autonomy in their lives, so micromanaging their online use can backfire. The best thing parents can do is engage with their teens. Ask which apps your teen uses the most often and why. Give your teen the space to tell you about the benefits of social media.

When difficult situations arise online, either in the news or in your teen's life, ask your teen how she or he would handle it. What can teens do to make social media a more positive experience?

### **2. Model Appropriate Behaviour**

Modeling is very important during adolescence. Teens are confronted with new and confusing information almost daily. Growing up in the digital age is no easy task. When parents follow their own rules and stick to their own boundaries, teen learn important lessons in self-care and setting limits.

When teens begin to internalize the importance of limits and boundaries, they can set limits with their peers. This is an important life skill that is sometimes overlooked when teens are stressed, busy, and constantly connected.

### 3. Talk Often

Parents play a critical role in helping teens process and cope with what they're seeing online. Talk about your own experiences with social media. Have you ever experienced envy when scrolling through your feed? Have you accepted a friend request that turned out to be a fake profile because you didn't take the time to look? When parents share their own experiences and talk openly about the highs and lows of social media, teens are more likely to open up about their experiences.

Parents can also help teens broaden their social media experiences by talking about interesting Instagram accounts, Twitter feeds, or Facebook pages that share information about certain topics. It's too easy for teens to get stuck on the treadmill of social comparisons when engaged with social media. Guiding them toward their areas of interest using social media helps them expand their experiences and learn new things.

Connection is key when it comes to parenting teens in a modern world. The single best thing you can do for your teen is make time for face-to-face connections and simply be present.

Source: "Is Social Media Messing with Your Teen's Mental Health?", by Katie Hurley, October 22, 2017, <https://www.psychom.net/depression-teens-social-media>

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## Parent Pointer Calendar for the following week (Dec. 18 – Dec. 22)

Monday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Browse the audiobooks section of your library. Have your teen check one out to listen to.	Talk with your teen about why you appreciate your education. Or talk about why you wish you'd learned more.	Take turns making statements with your teen. Identify each one as either fact or opinion.	Ask your teen to locate the coldest and warmest places in the nation today.	Help your teen bake cookies today. Have him/her use his/her math skills to double the recipe.

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Have a great and restful weekend!

Congratulations to the TFC for winning the MLS Cup!

Stay warm and drive safely/carefully!

Be well!

***Terry Wilkinson***

Vice Principal  
Bear Creek Secondary School

**P.S. (Positive Statement):**

“My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?”

- Bob Hope

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**P.P.S.: If you like what you have read so far, please tell another parent/guardian, get them to e-mail me, and I'll add them to the e-mail list.**

In honour of the new Star Wars movie opening today:

