



# Amigo News

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Learning to Honour Others 2
- KPR Trustees Presentation 2
- Everyone is 'gifted' 3
- Amigos is hiring! 3
- Notes and News 4
- Contact Us 4

## Amigos share their 'spirit'

To break up our long winter, Amigos got together for three Spirit Days / Lunches to celebrate their friendships, learn about leadership, and of course, enjoy lunch together.

**Over 100 students** took part in the Spirit Days. Peterborough Collegiate Vocational School (PVCS) and Thomas A. Stewart Secondary (TASS) had their own days in February.



"the ice-breaker activities, hula-hoop exercise, Inuit Blanket time, meeting Amigos from other schools, and having an easy-going time together."

For an 'uplifting' example of how Amigos overcome obstacles and make anything possible, see page two - 'Learning to Honour Others'.



ENSS and CDHS Spirit Day

Campbellford District High School (CDHS) joined East Northumberland Secondary School (ENSS) for a shared day in March. Students remarked that they enjoyed



PVCS Sprit Day



ENSS Sprit Day

## Holy Cross Secondary School Joins Amigos!

We welcome our latest addition to the Amigos program. We are piloting our first program in the PVNCCDSB at **Holy Cross Secondary School** in Peterborough and it's off to a fantastic start! There are 38 Amigos matched. Thanks to all the staff support in getting this project started.



Holy Cross Amigos with the Leadership Class



# Learning to Honour Others



*"I'm a fairly new teacher and I've been really impressed that the Amigos program is available. It shows that the Board is working to make our schools more inclusive. Amigos really takes a step in the right direction as it gets LLS students integrated into the school.*

*I hope that Amigos will be around when my daughter goes to school.*

*Students who volunteer to be Amigos are exposed to experiences that will help them later in life. All of the teachers really want to continue to be able to run these special events and keep the Amigos program going."*

**Suzanne Kerr**  
LLS Teacher,  
East Northumberland  
Secondary School

At the combined Spirit Day for ENSS and CDHS, we were joined by **Jacob Rodenburg, Executive Director of Camp Kawartha**. Jacob shared with us the Inuit Blanket, a traditional Inuit game. Made from seal or caribou skins, this large and sturdy blanket can support the weight of an adult as they are thrown up to 20 feet in the air. Traditionally, the blanket was used to allow



hunters to spot whale

or caribou far on the horizon. Today, Jacob uses the blanket to teach us to be mindful of others' wishes. He says, "We always ask a volunteer first, 'How high do you want to go— a little or a lot?' Then we honour their wishes by only pulling the blanket hard enough to toss them the distance they are comfortable with."

Amigos were stepping forward to try this daunting experience, including many who are usually quite reserved. "When they see the smiling and supportive faces of those holding the blanket, it builds trust and the person in the middle feels comfortable," shares Jacob.



## Student presentation to KPR School Board Trustees

On February 28, Catherine Foster, Amigos Coordinator, accompanied five Amigos to the **Kawartha Pine Ridge School Board Trustees** meeting.

This was an opportunity for the students to tell Trustees how they feel about the Amigos program and what it has meant to them and their school.

*"[Amigos] affected me because it has allowed me to interact with students in the school who without the program I may not have interacted with. Amigos has also broken me out of my shell because before the program I was a rather shy guy and now you can hear me from a mile away." Daniel L.*



**L - R: Holley M., Robyn D., Daniel L., Catherine F., Beth M., Scott S.**

# A program where everyone is seen as 'gifted'

An excerpt from a letter nominating the Amigos program for the Ruth Atkinson Hindmarsh Award...

**Sarah didn't have many friends in school.** She ate lunch in the Art room. Since she and Jane became Amigos, she is not afraid to eat lunch in the cafeteria because Jane is with her.

**Paul loves music.** Kelly was too shy to play the guitar in public but now Paul encourages her with his enthusiasm and laughter and she plays in the hall like she's the next Joni Mitchell. Paul and Kelly are Amigos.

**Ellen always feels good when she is with her Amigo Shawn.** His smile lights up the room whenever he sees her.

**Zoë discovered her own patience and empathy when she was with Mathew.** It helped her focus her energy (she has ADHD) and she now knows that she wants to work with children like Mathew in the future.

**Mike loves to walk around the school today-** even if he is

not with his Amigo. Just like a self-appointed "ambassador of good will" he says hi to everyone, and they respond and call him by name, instead of looking the other way like they used to.

*Through Amigos I have witnessed authentic, respectful relationships between people who treat each other as equals. This provides security, allowing for growth, personal development and freedom to become more fully the people we all want to be. Most importantly, mutual relationships foster the acceptance of each person as a unique and valuable individual, whatever his or her abilities or disabilities. It is a program where everyone is seen as "gifted". This acts as a model for the entire school community.*  
Micky Renders, Visual Art Teacher, Thomas A Stewart S.S.

## The Amigos Program is Hiring!

We are of two minds as we post this opening at Amigos; we are sad that we will be losing our beloved Catherine Foster as she pursues her dream of doing community development work in Africa. Catherine will be here until the fall to support our next Amigos facilitator in their role. However, we are optimistic that we'll gain a special new team member to continue the progress we've made with Amigos.



**Catherine Foster** has been the coordinator for the Amigos Program for three years. Working hand in hand with Lucinda Hage, she has grown the program into 7 different schools and matched over 600 Amigos! She organizes all special events and Spirit Days, works with teachers, students and partners to make the Amigos program happen seamlessly. She's also become

quite famous! Catherine has eloquently provided outstanding sound bytes as the spokesperson for Amigos at various occasions this past year. We will all dearly miss Catherine when she leaves but wish her all the best and thank her from the bottom of our hearts for all she has done for Amigos and her on-going crusade for inclusion.

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Imagine a job where you can positively influence attitudes toward youth with intellectual disabilities and bring about social change. Heads Up for Inclusion is a leader in this field in Canada.

### Relationship Facilitator

We're looking for a dynamic individual with superior relationship development skills to sustain the Amigos program in Peterborough area high schools and evolve the model into the community.

- You are a hands-on leader passionate about the inclusion of youth.
- You have lots of initiative and can work efficiently from a home office.
- You have demonstrated you can work with people with diverse abilities.
- You are a conceptual thinker with good organizational skills.
- You like independence and want to work 20-30 hours a week.

For a job description, please visit our website: [www.HeadsUpforInclusion.ca](http://www.HeadsUpforInclusion.ca). The application deadline is May 12/08 with a start date of Aug. 25/08.



Heads Up for Inclusion promotes **connections** in our community leading to the development of **relationships**, so people with intellectual disabilities can lead **meaningful lives**.

### Heads Up for Inclusion and the Amigos Program

Lucinda Hage, Founder  
Tel: 705-745-2318  
Email: [headsups@sympatico.ca](mailto:headsups@sympatico.ca)  
[www.headsupforinclusion.ca](http://www.headsupforinclusion.ca)

## Strengthen our community by investing in youth leaders.

Sponsorships are available in varying financial and commitment levels. Donations welcome in any amount. Tax receipts provided for donations of \$20 or more.

*Amigos are building friendships, growing leaders and changing attitudes.*



## Notes and News

### AMIGOS ANNUAL BBQ

Mark your calendars!  
**Thursday May 29**



**Beavermead Park**

**10:00 am—2:00 pm**

**BBQ lunch and drinks provided**

**A day filled with fun!**

Each school is asked to plan a fun activity station. Please contact Catherine with your ideas.

[amigosproject@gmail.com](mailto:amigosproject@gmail.com)  
or call 705-740-2252

### AMIGOS ON THE MOVE...

**We are planning an extension of the Amigos Program**—from inside high schools out into the community. Naturally, as students become more inclusive, they want to continue to build relationships outside of school. For example, in sports clubs, social groups, and other community involvement activities.

We are looking for groups who would like to model Amigos values. Stay tuned!



### SATURN DAYS

TASS students appeared on CHEX TV and in the newspaper as they visited Saturn and accepted the sponsorship cheque. Thanks Saturn!



**Saturn of Peterborough**  
**Official sponsors of the Amigos Program at Thomas A. Stewart**