Rooted in Faith - Learning in Love - Dedicated to Excellence

the Eagle's View

Rooted in Faith - Learning in Love - Dedicated to Excellence

November 2025
Volume 18 Number 1

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Academic Awards Night

We celebrated the achievements of our diverse group of learners. This event provided an opportunity to recognize students who live our mission statement,

Rooted in Faith · Learning in Love · Dedicated to Excellence.

Family, friends and staff gathered to celebrate students who during the previous school year:

- earned **the highest mark in their class for each subject**
- were in the **top five percent of their grade level**, or
- were in the **top 10 percent of their grade level.**

Thank you to all family and friends who attended, and to the staff who helped organize this celebration.

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMIN TEAM

To Our St. Mary's Students and Families

My name is David Jaeger, and I am honored to again serve as the proud principal of St. Mary's High School.

I am happy to say that the admin team remains unchanged: Mr. Remberto Roque, Mr. Michael Ambeau, Ms. Luisa Vona, and Ms. Anne Masojc returning for another amazing year.

The 2025–2026 school year is off to a fantastic start as students embrace our advice: be in class, be in uniform, be kind, and get involved. The enthusiasm and energy that comes with a new school year are contagious, and we share that excitement with you.

Our school year began with incredible energy during the Grade 9 Link assembly. As a faith and social community, we celebrated together at our opening Mass and assembly—both beautiful ways to gather and set the tone for the year. Grade 9 students enjoyed a week of transition activities, culminating in a BBQ where students and staff connected over delicious food prepared by our hospitality department.

We've already had many celebrations, starting with Academic Awards Night on October 2, where we recognized the outstanding achievements of our students. We are so proud of their hard work and dedication! On November 15, several staff and students participated in the Kitchener Santa Claus Parade, and SMH was featured on CTV—how amazing is that?

Looking ahead, we will gather on December 4 for our Community Christmas Dinner, a wonderful pasta meal prepared by our hospitality teachers and students. We also look forward to welcoming Grade 8 students and families on November 25 for our Grade 8 Student/Parent Night, where future Eagles can explore our school, meet staff and students, and learn about the incredible opportunities SMH offers.

This year, we renew our commitment to fostering an environment that promotes academic achievement, personal growth, and social development. We believe in the unique potential of every child and are devoted to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive atmosphere where all can thrive.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us at any time.

Sincerely, David Jaeger Principal, St. Mary's High School

FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH...

Greeting Eagles Community

As the leaves turned and the school bells rang once again, our St. Mary's high school joyfully opened its doors to a new academic year. The excitement was palpable as we welcomed our incoming Grade 9 students—bright-eyed, full of promise, and ready to begin their high school journey. Staff and senior students alike worked together to ensure a warm and supportive transition, fostering a sense of belonging and community rooted in our shared faith.

This fall also brought a special opportunity for spiritual and leadership growth. A group of our students attended the When Faith Meets Pedagogy (WFMP) Leadership Conference in Toronto, held at the Delta Marriott Airport on October 23. The theme, "Stewards of Hope: Sharing our Time, Talent and Treasure," inspired young Catholic leaders to reflect on how their gifts can be used to build God's kingdom. Keynote speaker Danielle Campo McLeod, a celebrated Paralympian and mental health advocate, shared her powerful story of resilience and faith, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

Workshops explored topics ranging from Indigenous perspectives in art to the integration of Catholic values in mathematics and even the ethical use of AI in education. Our students returned energized, with new insights and a deeper commitment to living out their faith in everyday life.

In a momentous development for our local Church, Pope Leo XIV has appointed Bishop Joseph Dabrowski, C.S.M.A., as the 10th Bishop of the Diocese of Hamilton. Bishop Dabrowski, formerly of Charlottetown, brings a wealth of pastoral experience and a heart devoted to service. His appointment marks a new chapter for the Diocese and is especially meaningful for us here in Kitchener, as we look forward to his leadership and presence in our schools and parishes.

We give thanks for the faithful service of Bishop Douglas Crosby, O.M.I., who led the Diocese for 15 years, and we pray for Bishop Dabrowski as he prepares to formally take possession of the See in February 2026.As we continue through this school year, may we all be inspired to be Stewards of Hope—sharing our time, talent, and treasure in service to one another and to God.

Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

Deacon Ed

View From the Learning Commons

Insights from your school librarian

Fall 2025 Issue

The World of AI

How OUR School Library is Navigating this new Technology

1. How is AI Being Used?

Copilot is the AI tool currently used across the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. Students must log in to access it, ensuring a secure and private experience.

AI can serve as a "study buddy," helping students refine their questions and focus more effectively on their topics. It can also act as a "coach," supporting skill development in writing, career exploration, idea generation, translation, and prompt creation.

Ultimately, AI is a tool—just like a calculator or dictionary—that students can use to deepen understanding and enhance their learning.

One of AI's strengths is its ability to assist in the editing process. It can quickly identify and correct typos, grammar issues, punctuation errors, and inaccurate word usage.

Current Student Uses of AI Include:

General brainstorming

Creating outlines for research papers

Generating metaphors for complex concepts

Translating text for ESL learners

Breaking down complex assignments

2. What Are the Ethical Concerns?

"In formulating our guidelines for GenAI, it is crucial to anchor our ethical considerations in our existing Catholic teachings." — Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB)

The WCDSB has developed comprehensive guidelines and policies to help navigate the responsible use of AI: WCDSB AI Guidelines.

View From the Learning Commons

continued

Key Ethical Concerns Include:

Misinformation and disinformation

Potential harm to marginalized populations

The rise of deep-fakes and fabricated sources or citations

Students must be taught how to:

Protect their privacy

Ensure legal compliance

Avoid copyright infringement

Identify outdated or inaccurate information

3. What Are the Benefits?

Preparing students for post-secondary education includes helping them understand how AI is used in various fields—such as medicine and engineering—to enhance research and innovation.

AI also supports "deep learning" by encouraging students to focus on the process and critical thinking involved in developing their work.

4. Conclusion

The library remains committed to protecting privacy and providing accurate, unbiased information. This is the next chapter in information literacy. AI presents both a challenge and an opportunity for educators and librarians—and we are ready to meet it.

FROM THE GUIDANCE WING

Counsellors by Alpha

Ms. Mandich	**Students with last names A-Bo + International (ext. 5638)**
Mr. Taranto	**Students with last names Br-Gam (ext. 5635)**
Ms. Arruda	**Students with last names Gan-Lan (ext. 5634)**
Ms. Galloway	**Students with last names Lao-N+Active and Community Living(ext. 5636)**
Ms. Coates	**Students with last names O-Sn (ext. 5637)**
Ms. Arkell	**Students with last names So-Z + International (ext. 5639)**
Ms. Mage	**ELD students (ext. 5628)**

Youth Care Workers
Available to students through referrals from Guidance, Administration, or Program Support
Ms. Agundmadu
Ms. Elliot

Here's a brief summary of some of the happenings in guidance over the last few months:

Grade 9

- **Take Your Kid to Work Day:** Held on November 5th, with Grade 9 students across the country participating.
- **Grade 9 Presentations:** Guidance counsellors conducted large group presentations to welcome students and explain the roles of guidance, along with guidance processes. The presentation is available on the school website.

Grade 12

- **Post-Secondary Planning Presentations:** Guidance counsellors presented to Grade 12 classes about post-secondary options and answered questions. The presentation is accessible on the school website.
- **Post-Secondary Planning Presentation for Parents:** Guidance counsellors presented to parents about post-secondary options and answered questions during Parent, Student, Teacher Interviews on October 23rd.
- **Scholarship Presentation:** Held on October 2nd, and the presentation can be viewed on the school website. Check the Guidance D2L for upcoming scholarship opportunities.
- **Post-Secondary Fair:** We hosted a half-day post-secondary fair on October 22nd. The event featured 32 post-secondary institutions, including apprenticeships, colleges, and universities. Grade 11 and 12 students attended with their classes.
- **Lunch-Time Drop-In Sessions:** Held December 3 and 4, these sessions offer assistance for students applying to post-secondary programs and provide an opportunity to ask questions.
- **Application Writing Workshop**— On October 30th a representative from the University of Waterloo offered an application writing workshop. It was suitable for all students who may be completing an application such as an AIF (additional information form) or scholarships, etc. It was well attended.

All Grades—Ongoing meetings with students and parents.

Grade 8

- **Grade 8 Information Night** is taking place on Tuesday November 25th from 6:30-8:30pm.
- **Grade 8 Visits** - We will be visiting our feeder schools to present to grade 8 classes about their transition to high school. We will answer all questions and have some time to assist with course selections in myBlueprint.
- Please visit our Future Eagles tab on the school website. There is a wealth of information including FAQs, a virtual tour and course selection information.

FROM THE GUIDANCE WING

Course Selections for 2026-2027

- Presentations and information for all grades will start the beginning of January.
- Course selections for the 2026-2027 school year are due the end of February for all grades.
- All students are encouraged to enter their 2026-2027 course selections into *myBlueprint*, after their guidance presentation. If your child needs help, please have them book a guidance appointment.

Reminders

Grade 12

- In order to graduate, Community Service hours must be completed and handed in by April 25 (see the "Everything you Need to Know about Community Service Hours" section that follows.
- Ensure that you have the prerequisite courses for the post-secondary program(s) you apply to. Make an appointment with Guidance soon in order to make necessary changes for second semester.
- College applications are due **February 1, 2026** for equal consideration. Apply at www.ontariocolleges.ca. Apply early to avoid disappointment.
- University applications are due **January 15, 2026** for equal consideration. Apply at https://www.ouac.on.ca Applying before Christmas is strongly encouraged.

All Students

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

- Please see "Everything you Need to Know About Community Service Hours" on next page.

COMMUNICATION

- **Eagle Vision**—updated daily
- **Guidance Announcements** - are posted on the Guidance D2L page.

LEARN CREDITS

- Two e-learning credits are a graduation requirement. Students interested in opting out of this requirement may do so by completing this form: https://lf.wcdsb.ca/Forms/PS002F

SCHEDULES

- Students are able to log on to Aspen and see their schedule at any time. When a guidance counsellor makes a change to a student's schedule, the change shows immediately. If needed, instructions on how to log in are on the St. Mary's website banner.

COURSE CHANGES

- Due to our large student population, many course changes to current student schedules may not be possible. Guidance counsellors will always try, but there are limiting factors. This said, students are encouraged to request an appointment with their guidance counsellor if needed through the 'Book a Guidance Appointment' tab on the schools homepage.

*** Important Reminder ***

Students must check their wcdsbcloud email frequently as Guidance Counsellors may reach out to students.

FROM THE GUIDANCE WING

Everything you need to know about community service hours

- 40 community service hours are a graduation requirement to achieve the OSSD
- Students may begin accumulating hours on the first day of July after they leave Grade 8.
- Community service hours are due by the end of April in your graduating year.
- To submit your community service hours, complete this link:https://lf.wcdsb.ca/Forms/APO015-01F
- If you are unsure if an activity will qualify, please check with your Guidance counsellor.
- Volunteer hours are non-paid and out of class time, and not part of a course requirement.
- www.volunteerwr.ca is a great place to look for volunteer opportunities

Examples of Eligible Activities

- **Fundraising for Non-Profit Organizations**: canvassing, walk-a-thons, celebrity games, gift wrapping, gala events, flower sales
- **Sports/Recreation**: coaching, Special Olympics, leisure buddy, summer games, pool assistant
- **Community Events**: winter carnival, summer fair, seasonal events
- **Environmental Projects**: community clean-up, flower/tree planting, recycling program
- **Senior's Residence**: serving snacks, helping with crafts, visiting, reading
- **Committees**: advisory board, neighborhood associations, regional associations, student trustee
- **Community Projects**: food banks, support services for seniors or the house bound, seasonal events
- **Religious Activities**: babysitting or assisting with children's programs during liturgy, assisting with Eucharistic ministries, lector, choir, alter serving, visiting elderly or sick parishioners, missionary work
- **Clubs and Youth Organizations**: volunteering activities organized by these groups, membership alone in not eligible
- **Children/Youth**: drop-in centers, breakfast programs, after school programs, March break programs, leaders in training, summer playgrounds and camps, child care centers
- **Office/Clerical for a non-profit organization**: reception, computer work, mailings, newsletters, pamphlet delivery
- **Animals**: animal care, horse back riding program
- **Arts/Culture**: galleries, playing music, library, museums and heritage sites
- **Activities for Individuals Requiring Assistance**: home maintenance for needy seniors (refer to ineligible activities list), shopping for shut-ins, recreational activities designed for those with special needs, babysitting
- **Organizing and assisting with school events**: Grade 9 welcome, school arts show, sports events, drama festival, fundraiser, food drive, science fair, guide for Parent's night

Examples of Ineligible activities

- Is a requirement of a class or course in which the student is enrolled (e.g., Cooperative Education, Job Shadowing, Work Experience, or any portion of a course).
- Takes place during the time allotted for the instructional program on a school day. However, an activity that takes place during a student's lunch break or "spare" period is permissible.
- Takes place in a logging or mining environment, if the student is under sixteen years of age.
- Takes place in a factory, if the student is under fifteen years of age.
- Takes place in a workplace other than a factory, if the student is under fourteen years of age and is not accompanied by an adult.
- Would normally be performed for wages by a person in the workplace.
- Involves the operation of a vehicle, power tools, or scaffolding.
- Involves the administration of any type or form of medication or medical procedure to other persons.
- Involves handling of substances classed as "designated substances" under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
- Requires the knowledge of a tradesperson whose trade is regulated by the provincial government.
- Involves banking or the handling of securities, or the handling of jewelry, works of art, antiques, or other valuables.
- Consists of duties normally performed in the home (i.e., daily chores) or personal recreational activities.
- Involves the activities for a court-ordered program (e.g., community service program for young offenders, probationary program).

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) students are getting ready for another great semester of certifications, training sessions, and ways to explore and learn more about future careers. Students involved in SHSM have been busy planning to earn their Red Seal designation on their diploma. This is done through course completion and attending training sessions to earn certifications.

At St Mary's, we have 236 grade 12 students who could potentially earn their SHSM Red Seal designations this year. There are also 329 grade 11 students involved in the program.

St Mary's has 12 sector majors to choose from. Majors are chosen based on courses taken, courses in their schedule, and future career goals. The Majors are as follows:

- Arts & Culture
- Business
- Construction
- Energy
- Health & Wellness
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Information & Communications Technology
- Justice & Community Safety
- Manufacturing
- Non-Profit, Education & Childcare
- Sports
- Transportation

Students involved in the program will need to follow through on SHSM expectations before they graduate. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. Take the courses needed to complete their Major
2. Sign-up for a 2-credit co-op
3. Complete certifications

SHSM students should be proud of their accomplishments related to this program. It shows they are a responsible student who has given extra thought to their future.

See highskills.ca for more information.

Contact: Mrs Byrne (Lead SHSM Teacher) christine.byrne@wcdsb.ca to further discuss the options of this program.

Save the Date
ST MARY'S
CONVOCATION
THURSDAY,
JUNE 11, 2026
7pm
Kitchener Memorial
Auditorium

ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL DECA

DECA ONTARIO

The DECA business club offers a series of competitive events where students apply their knowledge of business, marketing, finance, and management. Participants engage in activities such as developing detailed business proposals and responding to real-world scenarios through timed role-plays. These experiences help students sharpen their professional skills and gain practical insights into the business world, preparing them for future career success.

From September to November, the St. Mary's DECA Club was hard at work preparing for their Regionals competition. Their preparation included mock role-plays, studying for multiple-choice tests, and memorizing performance indicators. The Regionals competition consists of two components: a 100-question multiple-choice test and a role-play scenario. Students completed the written test during the first week of November. On November 8, they participated in the role-play competition held at Sinclair Secondary School in Whitby, competing against over 2,200 other DECA members from across Ontario. We are incredibly proud of the professionalism and dedication our St. Mary's DECA students demonstrated throughout their Regionals journey.

List of students who placed at Regionals in their event:

Top 10 for Exam:
Kira Boterman
Sherwin Croos
Sean Mendes

Top 10 for Roleplay
Kira Boterman
Sean Mendes
Anam Sameer

Top 10 Overall
Kira Boterman
Sean Mendes
Anam Sameer
Brayden Thompson

Top 3 Overall
Sean Mendes

Student Activities Council

Check out what SAC has been up to! BEGINNING OF FALL

Grade 9 BBQ & Dance

September 18, 2025

The Niner's Dance was an unforgettable and successful night for all of those involved. Our new Eagles really lit up the dance floor with the 'Glow-in-the-Dark' theme. Thank you to all of the incredible people who made this night possible, especially the DJ!

The annual Grade 9 BBQ took place on September 19th. It was a delicious event organized by SAC and the Hospitality class, where the new Eagles were welcomed into the nest. Thank you to all of our student volunteers!

Camp Kintail

September 25-26, 2025

Our Student Council team went on their annual retreat to Camp Kintail at the end of September. It was a busy two days of team building, bonding, event planning, and strengthening our leadership skills so we can make this school year a memorable one for our Eagles!

Opening Assembly

October 2, 2025

The opening assembly was a long awaited event completely designed by our SAC. We got to watch our very talented Dance Team and Teacher Band perform some super catchy songs, got our first installment of ENN, introduced our year-long Grade Olympics competition, and played fun and silly games. Special thanks to our tech crew and the co-presidents for working tirelessly to make this event the success that it was!

Senior Sunrise

October 3, 2025

Senior Sunrise has become an annual favourite event of our upcoming graduating classes. We had another absolutely beautiful morning where our seniors got to watch the colourful sunrise. Although a little chilly, our seniors warmed our hearts with their cozy outfits and future aspirations. Hospitality generously provided lots of hot chocolate and coffee for such an early October morning.

Halloween Week

October 27-31, 2025

SAC's spirit committee put in all of their efforts to make this halloween the spookiest and most exciting week yet! We started the week off with a special movie night in Alumni Hall. There was also 'guess the candy', Halloween colour spirit day, a pumpkin painting competition and, of course, trick or treating and a Kahoot to end our week. Congrats to the grade 9s & 10s for taking home the win & the Grade Olympics points from their stylish pumpkins!

OSLC

November 2-4, 2025

The 47th annual Ontario Student Leadership Conference was an educational and exciting 3-day conference in Niagara Falls. We got to listen to inspirational messages from two-time Olympic gold-medalist Heather Moyse, and CFL legend Michael 'Pinball' Clemons, while also participating in a variety of workshops. Our SAC went all out with spirit wear: rocking blue tutus, sparkly cowboy hats, and their finest blue outfits. Our students are excited to implement their new knowledge in planning some more great activities and events at the nest!

Halloween Fun

Marcia Aultman's period 1 and 2 Gr. 10 Hairstyling & Aesthetics class es created Halloween hairstyles and makeup. In both classes everyone voted for their favourite. The photo to the left were the top three winners in period 1.

Michelle Porowski's Gr. 11 Hairstyling & Aesthetics class practiced Halloween hand art.

Students at the Nest decorated cookies and pumpkins!

Athletics Corner

WATERLOO REGION (October 21, 2025) – On Monday at Fountain Street Soccer Fields in Cambridge, St. Mary's needed extra time and a shootout to secure the District 8 championship over an equally talented Resurrection squad.

The first half saw a great scoring chance at both ends of the pitch, but Resurrection's Evan Jones and St. Mary's Zachary Barradas shut the door, pushing a no-score draw into halftime.

Jones continued his clean sheet performance to the end of regulation for Resurrection, whereas St. Mary's switched goal keepers at the half, passing the net over to Filip Homa. Homa was equally impressive throughout the second half and overtime. Both keepers staved off attacks in two 10-minute overtime periods to send the scoreless draw to a shootout.

After nine kicks, and the shootout tied at three goals, Eagles' Matthias Fairthorne stepped up and buried the championship winner in the bottom left corner to secure the school's twelfth straight District 8 junior soccer championship.

Athletics Corner

The junior District 8 Championship was almost settled in regulation with St. Mary's holding a one-point advantage and Resurrection marching down the field. Resurrection's Autin Burton kicked a rouge out of the endzone with zeros on the clock to push the game to a shootout overtime.

The first four periods yielded no scoring, while in periods five and six, each team score unconverted touchdowns to push the game to a seventh shootout. St. Mary's Alekej Tanaskovic scored his third overtime touchdown, and fourth of the game to take the lead. The Eagles' defence took over and shut down Resurrection to secure the first District 8 football championship for St. Mary's in school history.

Junior Girls' Basketball won the D8 Championship with a tenacious victory by a score of 52-49 over Pere-Rene-De-Galinee. The girls are D8 Jr. Champions for the first time since 2019!

Dates to Remember

November 21
Report Card Distribution

November 25
Grade 8 Parent Night

November 27
Dress Down Day

November 28
Full Disclosure

December 2
Catholic School Advisory Council

December 4
Community Christmas Dinner

December 8-19
Grad Photos

December 10
Christmas Coffee House

December 12-13
SMH Basketball Tournament

December 18
Christmas Assembly

December 22-January 4
Christmas Break

December 25
Christmas Day

December 26
Boxing Day

January 1
New Year's Day

January 6-8
Course Selection Presentations

January 15
Dress Down Day

January 20-22
Quiet Days

January 23
Period 1 Evaluation

January 26
Period 2 Evaluation

January 27
Period 3/4 Evaluation

January 28
Period 5 Evaluation

January 29
Credit Rescue/Exam Snow Day
Semi-Formal

January 30
PD Day

February 2
Semester 2 Begins

February 6
2026-2027 Course Selection Opens

February 11-12
D8 Championships

February 11
Grade 12 Grad/Convocation Presentation

February 13
Semester 2 Course Change Requests Closes

February 16
Family Day

February 17
New Student & Staff Photos
Catholic School Advisory Council

February 18
Ash Wednesday

February 20
Report Distribution

February 25
Pink Shirt Day

February 26
Dress Down Day

February 27
2026-2027 Course Selections Due