

Sr. Theresa Nagle
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March 22, 2011

Ms. Judith Bishop - Chair
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.
100 Main St. West
Hamilton, ON L8N 3L1

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Dear Ms. Bishop

I am writing as a member of the Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits Committee (CAWDB) in Hamilton. This group is comprised of people who experience poverty and others who support them and work for change.

Our concern is the possible closure of Parkview Secondary School on Balsam Ave. We realize that many schools have to close because of declining enrolment.

However, we believe that this school is very unique and deserves special treatment. It is more than a school and has a positive impact on the community.

I am also writing as a member of School Sisters of Notre Dame. We've had a special connection to this school, through our finance and Justice departments.

For about six years we have been donating funds and goods to the school and have been at their Christmas dinner as guests. I have left each time feeling very impressed with the staff and students.

What makes this school so special is that most of them are poor and some extremely poor and yet for the most part they are very polite, work together and are learning life skills. This is helping them to have a better future.

Most, if not all the teachers want to be there because they know they are making a difference in lives of the students and not just the academic one.

The School It also runs a credit granting Vocational Pathways Program that prepares student for the transition to the workplace.

There is great concern about the welfare of these students, because this school has had a positive impact on them. Perhaps there is a creative way to keep it open and also use it for something else or for another use.

Steve Buist of the Hamilton Spectator has had several articles written about this school and this has helped me to appreciate the uniqueness and value of the school.

Here are some excerpts from the articles

1. Parkview gives city's poorest children hope. June 17, 2010

- There are about 300 students at Parkview, all of them with some degree of learning difficulty, all of them from the lower inner city.
- Last fall, Parkview began offering a free lunch program for its students
This semester, the program was expanded to include breakfast and lunch.
Beattie points discreetly through the cafeteria window at a slight boy standing near a pop machine.
"See him?" Beattie asks. "We discovered that was the only meal he was getting in a day."
Now he will have two.
- When you see kids come in here in the morning and they're lying on the floor in the hallway, curled up in a ball on the floor and they're starving – they're literally starving – it's heartbreaking," said Beattie.

2. Donors come forward to aid inner city school – June 22, 2010

- Principal, Paul Beattie has a simple message for the generous people of Hamilton:
Thank you
- One retired man handed Beattie a cheque for \$20,000 to help fund the school's breakfast and lunch programs next year. One woman walked into the school and gave \$50.
- In between, Beattie said he's received dozens of e-mail messages from people offering to donate clothing and toiletries or whatever help is needed.
- "It just did great things for the pride of the Parkview community, knowing there are so many people out there who care and want to help in Hamilton."
- It just gives the kids so much hope to see that they're important people and people want to help and support them to become even greater people than they are.
- One particular boy who is graduating this year read the paper with his mom that morning and she had tears in her eyes reading it
- "I think they're feeling really proud and really positive about being part of Parkview," he added

3. Danny's No Frills helps Parkview students concentrate on learning

September 20, 2010,

I am just referring to this article which was in the Hamilton Spectator because it has a photo of the students helping to stock the shelves. The Hamilton Spectator, Danny's No Frills and the staff and students worked together to gather \$1,000.00 worth of food for their breakfast and lunch programs and items for their bakery. Teachers and staff at Parkview run the programs and senior students do the cooking to earn a credit and gain valuable experience. The article went on to say, that despite what many people may think, these students are good kids.

(I have been there often enough to attest to this.)

We hope the Board can find some way to keep Parkview School open to continue serving these very needy students, helping them to grow up to be contributing citizens, rather than forgotten people who may continue to need the city's medical and social services resources for the rest of their lives.


original to Mr. John Malloy

cc Judy Bishop
cc Tim Simmons
cc Paul Beattie

Sincerely
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School Sisters of Notre Dam
 + staff - Waterdown

C A W D B

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Rosemarie Chapman
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Sincerely Yours,

S. Theresa Nagle

William Timothy Butten

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Edna Whitman

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