



# THE EXCHANGE

June 2022

STUDENT NEWSPAPER

Issue 2

## POP TABS FOR MARCH OF DIMES

Twitter: @ACS\_Justice



## ENVIRONMENTAL CLEAN-UP

Twitter: @ACS\_Justice



## TREE PLANTING TRIP

Twitter: @ACSSTEM



## CULTURAL DAY

Twitter: @assumptionlion



## AN EDITORIAL LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

*Areebah Khan (she/her)*

"...people in general are divided by a law of nature. ...those who are gifted...They call for the destruction of the present in the name of something better" (Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*). Amid moral questioning and punitive guilt, *Crime and Punishment* tells a tale of crime, quite literally. Those who wreak havoc on society in order to change it are, in a sense, committing a crime against the present society. So, why do we accept change? Change is social progress. It takes leaders, the gifted, the capable and courageous, to initiate change with their actions – to "transgress" the boundaries

of society (rather than the law). But change must begin somewhere. It must begin with an idea. According to Descartes (1596-1650), ideas are knowledge of the outside world. So, why is knowledge so important? Well, through knowledge we gain experience and ideas that can impact the world around us. By sharing knowledge we can change someone's perspective, we can introduce new ideas, and we can try to change society for the greater good. Knowledge is a distinctly human privilege because with intellect and ideas we have power. Whether it be for good or bad, change in any form can make a lasting impact. As we put into words the knowledge of our surroundings, this issue of *The Exchange* is also a part of change within our community at Assumption College School.

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## IMPORTANT DATES

All June – Indigenous Heritage Month  
 All June – Pride Month  
 June 10 – Cultural Day  
 June 17-22 – Gr. 12 Exams  
 June 23-28 – Gr. 9-11 Exams  
 June 29 – Gr. 12 Graduation



*first in-person liturgy in 2022*

## CHANGE AFTER THE PANDEMIC

*Jyothi Kakani (she/her)*

It's been a whole semester since we were finally set free from the gilded cages that are our homes and pushed back into our old lives that seem frenzied after a long phase of online academics. The verdict on whether or not the cruel disease plaguing the world disappears is undecided, but we can confirm with pride that students of ACS have been adapting to the ever-changing situation with marvellous avidity. As we take a walk through the past, the quad to semester change isn't the sole contender in our lives, it is also a hundred other things, two predominant ones being the removal of the mask mandate and the reopening of the school cafeteria.

The dichotomy of the quad and semester system is high, if not notoriously blatant. One is more relaxed and boring, with tons of breaks and free time (both given and taken). The other is much more demanding, both physically and mentally. It was a sharp turn of events for teachers and students alike right after major COVID-19 scares, but as we near the end of the semester, the result is anything but. We've received a great amount of support from our teachers, staff and friends in this difficult yet riveting journey.

On a much brighter note, we saw an astronomical rise in school spirit this semester! The sports seasons opened up to seasoned and prospective athletes alike, and, most importantly, the school cafeteria reopened, and it increased to full capacity. The Hogwarts-like placement of tables can house everyone's gossip and fun for the first time in a long time. STEM programs started back up for the science connoisseurs and the library hosted many LEAP-related competitions for the literary enthusiasts.

The hallways are filled with our joyous uncovered faces after a few years of masking for our own protection. Now, whether this change will be a detriment for the student body in the future is still a rousing debate that seems to have its devil's advocate side winning.

Nevertheless, the removal of the mask mandate, most students say, has given them back a sense of freedom, changing up the previously mundane motions of existing.

This is only the beginning of the adventure. As our seniors graduate with loads of interesting and comical stories of a hard yet rewarding year, the juniors await their chance to finally experience the last of high school, in all its mask-less and eventful glory.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL: THE FIRST DANCE IN FOREVER**

*Blossom Dhillon (she/her)*

For the first time in two years, Assumption College School has had a school dance: the Glow Dance. The Student Council's Glow Dance has not happened in the past three years; lockdown protocols were put in place before the dance could ever take place in the 2019-2020 school year. This year, the dance was 80s themed, led by the slogan "dress in white or bright."

With over 200 attendees, the dance is considered to be a major success. Students had a blast while dancing to some fun 80s tunes and lots of classics. The night was filled with many dance circles and conga lines. Many students also took the liberty of bringing their own glow sticks, which added some needed flare to the "Glow" Dance.

We look forward to next year's school dances with the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions and the students of ACS can enjoy a proper dance. But, for now, we will take what we can and celebrate a successful first dance in three years.

And finally, a special thanks to all the students who helped organize and run the dance and the staff who helped chaperone!



*Photo Credit: Jordan Raftery*

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## **CHANGE WITH THE PREFECTS**

*Harman Randhawa (she/her)*

Keeping up with high school courses can sometimes be a challenge. Homework assistance is useful when it is received from an individual who understands the course from experience. Our school Prefect Program is dedicated to assisting students who may find themselves struggling with certain courses or have difficulty navigating the school. It's a way for students to seek assistance from their peers who they would be comfortable with. This welcoming and resourceful program grows each year, which means the program can assist more students.

Recently, there are 40 new recruits who will receive their lanyards and training on how to be a prefect on June 13th. Currently, there are 143 prefects available to aid in daily operations around the school and provide homework help. What is even more exciting is that our Prefect Program is looking to expand to our sister high schools: St. John's College and Holy Trinity for the 2022-2023 school year. Not only is this exciting news for students across these three schools, but this expansion is also in the best interest of our prefects. Prefects will be able to receive more volunteer hours due to greater pairings throughout the year. There is no doubt that the record of 100+ scheduled weekly sessions, which include tutoring and mentorship,

will likely double with the expansion of the program. Currently, there are 275 active pairings which include in-person and online sessions of which 1,729 sessions have been managed.

Regardless of the situation, the ACS Prefect Program is there to guide students to success and assure what is best for their interests!

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## STEM AND SOCIETY

*Tahiyah Syeda (she/her)*

Recently, the Associate Dean of Research & External Relations at McMaster University, Dr. Juliet Daniel, visited our school to talk both about her contributions in cancer research, but also about various professions within the STEM field.

Dr. Daniel is the individual who found a gene that seems to exacerbate triple negative breast cancer, Kaiso, which she named after her favourite type of music, Calypso. At first, Daniel and her team did not know the effects of such a gene, but after further research, they found that people who express this gene more undergo metastasis that is faster and more widespread. This means the cancer that began in their breast spread to their vital organs, such as the heart, brain, or liver earlier on, and much more of their healthy tissue was replaced with cancerous tumours.

The worst part? Since it is especially prevalent in triple negative breast cancer, it has none of the three hormonal markers of other types of breast cancer, so there are no current treatments. Her team is now focusing on a way to somehow inhibit this gene in order to prevent its effects.

## Introducing a new change in the Prefect Program:

If you are not aware yet, The ACS Prefect Program is introducing Music Mentorship. Whether it be theory or instrumental mentorship, our musically inclined prefects are willing to assist students in enhancing their musicianship during the 2022-2023 school year.



*Photo Credit: Jaron Nix of unsplash.com*

Another important question she raised was about the issues that can arise when politics becomes mixed in with science.

Kaiso is a gene predominantly found within young Black women, which is also the demographic with the highest incidence and mortality rate for breast cancer. How did the team find this? Through demographic data collected in the U. S. since Canada does not collect race-based data. Our country's reasoning for this is that Canada is *such* an inclusive nation that it does not see race, and therefore it does not see the need to collect race-based data. Sound reasoning, if you ask me. This issue even came up when Daniel was applying for grants to conduct her initial research on how it

predominantly affects Black women. One of the people on the panel apparently said that this is “not a Canadian issue,” even though this research was going to be conducted on an international scale and Canada has Black women within its borders that might be susceptible to the effects of this gene.

However, there is some hope. Enough scientists have protested against this that the Canadian government has just given permission to its schools and hospitals to collect demographic-based data. But the question remains: just because they now have permission, will they? After so many years of not doing so? In addition, this data must be analyzed over a long period, meaning that nothing can be done with the data we are currently collecting for approximately the next five years. This is what happens when people without a background in science try making scientific decisions.

Consequently, Daniel is a large advocate for people to take an interdisciplinary approach to their careers, such as by becoming a bioethics lawyer. These are people who evaluate how ethical a medical decision is from both a moral and social viewpoint and argue in court if a decision is deemed to be unethical. Many bioethics lawyers simply have a degree in law, with no background in science, which means when they evaluate a medical decision, it is with relatively little

information and understanding in most cases. One can see how problems may arise from this. So, it is essential that we have more people with interests in a broad range of subjects, people who can make informed decisions as bioethicists, people who can be talented medical illustrators who make drawings that are both accurate and comprehensive, people who can bridge the gap between the Arts and the Sciences.

Lastly, during her presentation, Daniel left us with a few pieces of advice: when one is taking too long to make a decision, sometimes it is best to just flip a coin (your answer will come to you while it is still in the air – go with the answer you know is right but are just unable to admit); base all professional decisions upon how many opportunities a choice affords, and going away for school does not mean that a person or their family loves the other any less.

STEM is an incredibly engaging program with speakers that come in from all different professions, trips that go all around the world, conferences, and workshops that can help a person discover their passion for science, narrow down their interests when trying to choose a subject for further study, and that are just simply interesting. If interested in joining the STEM Program, contact Mr. Page at [dpage@bhncdsb.ca](mailto:dpage@bhncdsb.ca) or visit him in room 3005.

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## CANADA'S LGBTQ+ ACCEPTANCE

*Mackinley Markell (she/her)*

June is a time for rejoice, celebration, and remembrance. We rejoice in who we are, we celebrate with those we love, and we remember those who paved the way for the LGBTQ+ community. And in case you do not know, the LGBTQ+ community stands for those who are lesbian, gay,



*Photo Credit: canva.com*

bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning. If you would like to find out more, I would suggest doing your own research or using one of our own resources here at Assumption, i.e., the GSA club. Furthermore, what better time is there to enlighten yourself on this topic than in this very month!

Canada is renowned as a very accepting and tolerant country. However, it is important to note the struggles, sacrifices, and challenges that we had to endure to make it this far. America had its Stonewall Riots, Britain had its Gay Liberation Front, and the Canadians had "Front de Libération Homosexuel." All of these were organized groups that advocated for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. The point of this is, we have fought to get here. June is the month where we recognize the arduous work we have done to get where we are and acknowledge how much more effort we need to get where we want.

But before we can hope for the future, we need to recognize our past. For a long time, Canada banned sodomy between men, looked down upon homosexual tendencies and strongly discouraged homosexual relationships. Many men who acted on their preferences would be

punished via imprisonment. Later, these laws named the "Gross Indecency Laws" (1890), were passed that made it easier to condemn men who engaged in sexual acts with other men. Men's privacy could be intruded on if they were suspected of engaging in sexual acts with another man. Then in the 1950s, women would be included in the Gross Indecency Laws. This criminalization of both sexes ended in 1969 when Everett George Klippert was given life in prison for being a homosexual man. This caused public outrage and eventually led to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1969 which would partially decriminalize sexual acts between members of the same sex.

The public opinion of the LGBTQ+ community would shift in the 1970s, when more people began to accept the community and fight for it. On August 28th, 1971, the first major gay-rights demonstration occurred on Parliament Hill. This protest would be called the "We Demand Rally." It was an event organized by Toronto Gay Action and Community Homophile Association of Toronto. This demonstration included a 13-page document that outlined 10 major requests for the federal government to complete on behalf of Canada's LGBTQ+ community. Some of these 10 requests included: allow for LGBTQ+ members to serve in the military, equal rights for the LGBTQ+ members, etc. Since then, all requests have been fulfilled and the demonstration serves as a reminder of how far Canadians have come.

After much fighting, LGBTQ+ Canadians were able to reap the fruits of their labor. On August 1st, 1971, LGBTQ+ Torontonians gathered around for a "Gay Day Picnic," organized by the University of Toronto Homophile Association, Toronto Gay Action, and the Community Homophile Association of Toronto. This was a pivotal moment in Canada's LGBTQ+ history because this event allowed for gay visibility, it led to more



Photo Credit: Denin Lawley of unsplash.com

pro-LGBTQ+ events such as Pride Week in Toronto, and it brought the LGBTQ+ community closer.

Overall, June is the month of acknowledgement, education, and celebration. It is the month when we can appreciate the challenging work that the LGBTQ+ community has done to get here. Additionally, it is when, along with any other month of the year, Canadians should acknowledge the homophobic past of their country, educate themselves on the LGBTQ+ community, and when they should show their support the most. This is not to say that you cannot do these things in any other month. You should support and learn about the LGBTQ+ community whenever you can! To conclude, June is a time of reflection for how far we have come, and a time of contemplation for how we should proceed.

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## SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE SCHOOL

*Rachel Hastings (she/her)*



*Photo Credit: @ACS\_Justice on Twitter*

When we wake up in the morning and try to map out the entirety of our day, we don't consider the impact our schedule or actions have on others. Actions such as these could be as little as keeping the tap off while you brush your teeth and hum happy birthday. Actions in which we think to ourselves have no impact on individuals other than ourselves, while in reality could lead to a greater cause.

Due to our growing population, individuals tend to think their position in society gets smaller each and every day when this is quite the opposite. Troubling social injustices occur from left to right, and the power to help is held within the students who walk through our halls. Issues around the globe are slowly getting more recognition by social media platforms and informing society of what is going on in different parts of the world. Media coverage for social injustices and issues can be beneficial to those who fall victim or are personally affected by them and opens an opportunity for others to

create a change, whether that may start with an online petition, rallies or other activities that may raise awareness.

The war that has greatly impacted Ukraine was quickly recognized, and countries and their communities moved accordingly to how they could provide support in the form of funding, supplies etc. Within our school, recognition of the brutality of war and its impact on the citizens of Ukraine does not go unnoticed, as there are art pieces displayed around the school by one of our social justice classes. The Ukrainian flag can be found beside the entrance of the student parking lot and the guidance counsellor's office. The Ukrainian flag is displayed to show our school's support for this struggling country. As immigrants from Ukraine struggle to adjust to new environments after solemnly leaving the place they once called home, children who are part of these families still require education but may not have school supplies due to their unfortunate circumstances.

A student who has transferred to our school under these conditions was provided school supplies by our fellow students and teachers at Assumption College. If you have an extra binder or unused school supplies from last semester, these items could be put to better use. Every ACS lion is encouraged and possesses the power to create necessary and progressive changes in our community! The recognition of the impact we hold as students is crucial to our steps in reviving humanity and embracing the change, we can see in not only the community or future but in ourselves.



Photo Credit: Ms. Torto

The little steps students can take to make a difference could even start with an idea in the classroom. The Gr. 12 social justice class is a perfect example of creating a change within the community. Their CCA was to develop a community initiative project to help our community and realize the change we can create in our environment and each other. One of the initiatives from this class was associated with Nova Vita. The students decided they would revolve their initiative around creating packages or bundles filled with essential items for the local shelter nearby, Nova Vita. Nova Vita is a place for those dealing with or experiencing domestic violence. This organization provides shelter, security, and resources to ensure individuals feel safe and protected. This group's initiative involved contacting businesses for aid and donations for the shelter and packaging the bundles with necessities while also raising awareness by hanging brochures around the school regarding the organization.



Photo Credit: Sam Edwards

Since this school year is soon coming to an end, there are still ways that you, as a student can create a change in our community. There are many non-profit organizations, activities and services throughout our community that would love your help! Be the change you want to see in the future! Some opportunities are listed below:

- Tutoring fellow students
- Picking up trash within the environment
- Offering services to fellow neighbours
- Tree Planting
- Contacting neighbourhood associations
- Volunteering at the Brantford Food Bank or other local services

Volunteering throughout the summer is also a chance to gain volunteer hours and create a difference within the community!

For more opportunities go to:

<https://www.brant.ca/en/resident-services/volunteer.aspx>  
or  
[https://www.brantford.ca/en/your-government/your-government-volunteer.aspx?\\_mid\\_=24570](https://www.brantford.ca/en/your-government/your-government-volunteer.aspx?_mid_=24570)

## THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CLASS: HSE 4M1

*Photo Credits: @ACS\_Justice on Twitter, Ms. Torto*

The Social Justice class at Assumption is a hands-on course on community equity and justice. The course, which is run by Ms. Torto, involves student-led initiatives where the students themselves plan projects to make an impact in the community.

The Social Justice SHSM is also welcome for anyone who wants to make a difference in the world and is interested in pursuing the social sciences!

This year's class carried out seven initiatives to target social change within the local community.

### Save the Bees



### Youth Lodge Backpacks



### Migrant Worker Care Packages



### The Ronal McDonald House

*Marisol Pech*

A student group raised over \$500 to help support the Ronald McDonald House in Hamilton. The Foundation helps families have shelter and food while their child is sick in the hospital. The students funded the program by selling cupcakes and cookies in the cafeteria from May 4th to 7th. The sales were used to buy gift cards for the families in need.

Gr. 9 students raised \$1,100 for schools in Haiti run by the Sisters of the Cross

Twitter: @ACSchaplain



The Social Justice class collected 2,600 books in one week through the St. Vincent du Paul book drive.

Twitter: @ACS\_Justice

Ms. Nuhu's Community Living class planted a garden at the entrance of the school

Twitter: @assumptionlion



## SHAKESPEARE DEMYSTIFIED

Jyothi Kakani (she/her)

June 14, 2022

As the lunch bell rang, students tentatively drifted into the lecture hall, forecasting a long rerun on the greatness of Shakespeare we'd all heard from our English faculty. A few quotes, tidbits and maybe some interesting facts were expected, but the product of only a 30-minute seminar with Mr. Marvin was anything but lacklustre. The former teacher, who has quite a vast knowledge and experience in literature and the theatre arts, started off like any good speaker should, with a joke. He then went on to address the problems with the current mindset of students and faculty alike towards Elizabethan playwrights, more specifically, Shakespeare. A name both revered and feared in the literature world internationally was given a new meaning to the 30 or so students in each audience that chose to attend. He emphasized Shakespeare's clever usage of context, subtext, punctuation and word choice to convey emotion to the readers by demonstrating all of them practically. After all, in the speaker's words: "Shakespeare was not meant to be read, but performed!"

Students who volunteered got to experience first hand how each lines words encapsulated a world of meaning of their own and shared laughs along the way. We discerned then that Shakespearean works transcended just their academic value, in teaching us about the many shades of human nature, both the wonderfully glorious and utterly horrifying. They teach us to think critically, act astutely and most importantly, look at a the world with an imaginative eye. Like all good things, after a spirited Q and A round, the seminar came to an end. All in all, I think I speak for everyone that "Shakespearience" left all of us with a new understanding of ourselves and the Bard of Avon



Photo Credit: Mr. Nagler

## BOOK REVIEW: *THE GOLDFINCH*, DONNA TARTT

Arebah Khan (she/her)



Photo Credit: The Guardian

I thought *The Goldfinch* was just another bildungsroman (coming-of-age story) about some kid, but it is so much more. Everything about how Donna Tartt executes this novel and all the characters and details we get to glimpse is significant to the storytelling. Most books you can read and enjoy, but some books really leave an impression. They get you thinking and before you know it your fingers are typing away words and ideas from a newly discovered well in your mind... *The Goldfinch* is that type of book. It's an extraordinary thought-provoking read that changed how I view and critique contemporary fiction.

Tartt depicts a traumatic event at the exposition of the novel, so as a reader we get to experience the fallout of that event with the characters. It completely immerses you within the world of the characters. As a contemporary fiction novel that takes place in the real world, it retains elements of escapism, yet it tethers us to the present as well. From the beginning, the protagonist, Theo, is

narrating the story. Characters are introduced by the influence and impact they have on his life – the grief from his mother's death that haunts him through his life, the PTSD of surviving a traumatic event, accessing drugs and alcohol at a young age, his father's misgivings, feeling removed from childhood, socializing, and life. In the end, Theo reflects on his life, and life in general. The plot concludes well because the progression of his growth is perceptible. He is introspective, but his tone is vastly changed by the end. There's an underlying hope to the narrative overall.

With the emergence of grief, comes the emergence of Theo's past. Near the climax of the novel, characters from the protagonist's childhood reappear. Boris—who remains a stolid friend, introduces him to drugs, and plays an important role in the plot—rekindles Theo's past in a new light. The struggles in the past, which Theo barely acknowledges, the grief he barely acknowledges, ultimately coalesce in his drug abuse. The repression of his past irrevocably changes his persona. Through Boris' brief point of view, we realize that Theo, being an unreliable narrator, was severely depressed. There was a side of him we did not get to glimpse but that Boris did – and it must have unsettled him too. Theo (unconsciously we assume) pushed away many of the people in his life. Displaying anxiety from socializing, refusing to exert himself, and withdrawing into a drug-coloured haze, are all issues which did not become apparent problems until adulthood when Theo himself realized the reality of his situation.

Tartt expertly uses dashes and question marks often throughout the text. The syntax expresses the emotions of all the characters—not just Theo—and highlights their uncertainty with life. The scattered question marks communicate how Theo is inquisitive about the meaning of life, and how we are all, as transient human

beings, struggling to grasp some understanding of life and faith and love. Nothing makes sense, yet we have to make sense of it or risk going insane. Tartt communicates the urgency and necessity of needing to understand life in simply the structure of her words.

Also, the discourse on art is illuminating. I personally enjoy literature because words give such clear, discernable meaning to thought. However, art is wholly different. It is ambiguous and concealed and mesmerizing in its beauty or unsettling in its gore. Art portrays feeling. Tartt says that art (and all magic) exists between reality and "where the mind strikes reality." It is the space of possibility. Much like books, art is persevering, and it carries history. It's a way to "speak to each other across time." *The Goldfinch*, with its nuance on artwork, has substance which is much more complex than any other work of fiction on 'the meaning of life.'

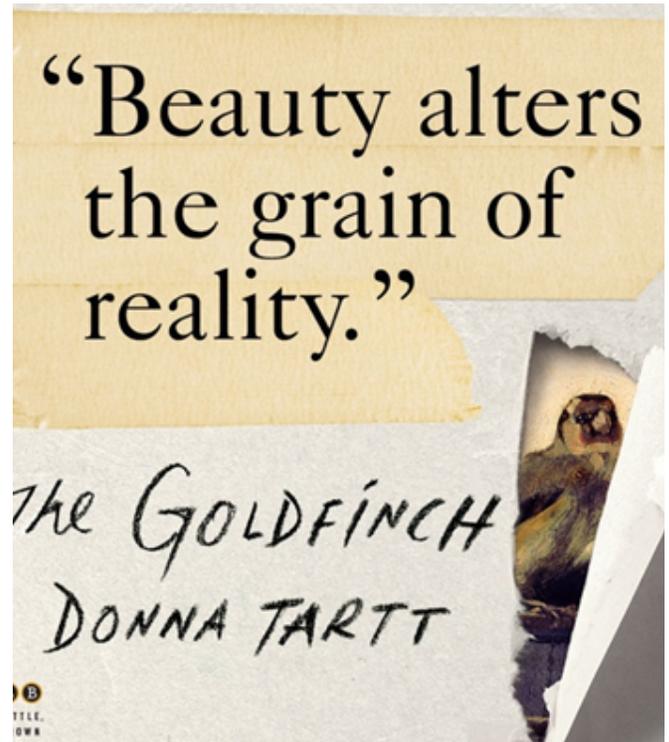


Photo Credit: Goodreads.com

## SPORTS SECTION

*Prabhroop Kaur (she/her)*



Photo Credit: Conner Coyne of unsplash.com

The school year is coming to an end as the final month has arrived. The girl's and boys' tennis, track, and soccer recently came to an end. Boys' soccer achieved highly by winning district championship and advancing to CWOSSA for the finals. For boys alone, sports that just ended include lacrosse and baseball. No new sports are going to start but all sports athletes attended the athletic awards banquet on June 8th. It was a great night and congratulations to all the winners for their achievements! Many sports had to be compromised due to COVID protocols last school year. However, as the year progressed and the semester system came back, sports played in teams could be played without masks. Parents and other students are now allowed to come watch and cheer our lions on in their games, which is a big change from last year. So, be sure to look forward to next school year for an opportunity to participate in the school's athletic extracurriculars!

## THE LAURIER STEDMAN PRIZE COMPETITION

*Isabella Bertrand (she/her)*  
*Janelle Orleans-Lindsay (she/her)*  
*Kevin Hoffmann (he/him)*  
*Tahiyah Syeda (she/her)*

The Laurier Stedman Prize competition, hosted by Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus's Faculty of Liberal Arts, is one of the most prestigious writing competitions in our area. Any secondary-level student living and studying within the geographic boundaries of the Grand Erie District School Board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board is eligible to enter. Each year that it runs, hundreds of students enter; however, there is only one first place winner with a prize of \$3,000, two second place winners with a prize of \$2,000 each, and three third place winners with a prize of \$1,000 each.

This year, Assumption was able to nominate four students, of which one went on to win second place in this year's competition. To celebrate these young authors, we've included a sample of each of their stories, and the full story of our second place winner. If you'd like to contact any of the authors to keep reading, we've also included their emails.

If you would like to learn more about the competition and how to enter, please contact Ms. Braga at [sbraga@bhncdsb.ca](mailto:sbraga@bhncdsb.ca).

### ACS Nominee "Scars" by Isabella Bertrand

To keep reading:  
[ibertrand0105@bhncdsb.ca](mailto:ibertrand0105@bhncdsb.ca)

The bright tinge of the sun melting into the far-off horizon should leave me in awe and render my body motion-less as I take

it all in. However, the golden orange glow only opens a door in my mind that I so badly wish would remain closed, locked, sealed. The memories of the extreme heat, so vivid, have the estranged effect of making my scars tingle as though I were enduring them again.

I still remember the noise. The sound of an ear-splitting beep, a sound so irritating that it only takes a few moments before any form of cacophony would be gladly accepted as a substitute. Groggy from deep sleep, I had bolted upright with my nightgown damp down my back. I was familiar with the noise. But only because it acted as a warning, a way to alert those of the danger that was manifesting in the very building. The acrid scent was enough of a giveaway.

My next steps did not need to be thought out; my actions were choreographed, as though I was awoken every night by this alarm. As my feet hit the floor, the shocking sensation of warmth flooded through my toes and the soles of my feet. The floor was not cold, as it always was in the dead of night.

My feet brought me to my bedroom door. Bracingly, I felt for it.

I could not manage to touch the wood, for the heat radiated through it so much. My hand snapped away with lightning speed and I held it close to my chest, breathing heavily, as the truth of my situation settled onto my young shoulders. I was trapped up in my room whilst a fire raged beneath me.

Images of wretched orange flames bloomed in my mind, a merciless monster who had waited eons to feast. As it grew, it destroyed. The furniture and the family photographs and my mother's magazines, all ablaze in its fury. My home in its entirety being enveloped by that monster, the walls licked by its tongues, the remains being excreted as nothing more

than ash. By morning, there would be nothing left of either the house or the beast that ravished it.

I soon realized that standing, immobilized, next to a feverish door could only result in my own engulfment.

The air around me was rapidly shifting from uncomfortably hot to unbearably so. It became thick and weighted, as smoke filtered in through the cracks of the door. One inhale and I heaved in desperation to get the sickly air from my chest. I backed away from the door.

I tried to cough out the smoke, to clear my lungs. It was futile; the smoke cloaked my bedroom like a dark storm cloud. Wheezing between each harsh cough, I began to cry. The heat must have evaporated the droplets because I never felt them roll down my cheeks. All I felt against my body was heat. I curled up in a ball and burrowed my head deep within.

When it felt as though I were walking through the darkest pits of Hell, I knew that the fire had reached my bedroom. In that moment, I remember thinking about my mother. Somehow, I knew, deep down, that she had not abandoned me, that she was fighting fiercely to save me. I had begun to take comfort in my memories with her when pain erupted against my arm.

*...To be continued*

**ACS Nominee**  
**"Alister" by Janelle Orleans-Lindsay**

To keep reading:  
[jorleanslin0105@bhncdsb.ca](mailto:jorleanslin0105@bhncdsb.ca)

Petunia Albrecht was not a social person, and as she approached the hospital door, she knew she was losing one of her only friends. She stepped through the half-

opened door and set down a handmade bouquet of night-blooming jasmine. "Hi Nona," she said, reaching for her grandmother's hand. Her grandmother's gaunt face smiled back at her.

"Petunia, I want you to listen close." Nona's voice was gentle but sombre, and Petunia pulled her shoulders back, collecting herself.

"Yes, Nona?" Petunia inhaled deeply, the scent of jasmine swirling past her nose.

"You have a heart of gold, you know that?" Nona squeezed her granddaughter's hand, her frail fingers encapsulating the young girl's. "Don't let anyone rip out the garden that is blooming in your heart."

Petunia fluttered her eyes, blinking back the tears that threatened to spill onto the linens. She reached across the hospital bed, hugging her best friend as hard as she could. "I won't. I promise I won't." She walked towards the door, pausing at the sound of Nona's voice. "Take care of the gardens and say 'hi' to Alister for me."

Petunia strolled out of the hospital, tucked under her father's arm, as Nona slipped into the sweet jasmine night.

\*\*\*

For Petunia's parents, Saturdays were spent with other socialites, retelling the stories of soirées in Paris, beach vacations in Cabo, and anything else that would stir up envy. They could not appear inferior, of course. This meant for Petunia, Saturdays were a day with no expectations at all. As Petunia's parents brunched at 11:15, she would just be rolling out of bed. She could trade her pleated skirts for overalls, and pull wildflowers from the clearing behind her house, which her mother had been trying to get rid of for years.

"I don't understand why you insist on

having this eyesore grow behind our home," she would say with a grimace. "Do you think your grandmother wanted these weeds? For goodness' sake, we have a landscaper; we look less than."

But that did not stop Petunia from placing them in the white speckled vase that had sat beneath the kitchen counter since she gifted it to Mrs. Albrecht three Mother's Days ago. As Petunia arranged the blue gilia's and Queen Anne's lace and set them in front of the stained-glass window, she felt her mood brighten a little. She almost forgot that by the time she sat down for dinner, the vase would be returned to its home under the sink. The gilia's and Queen Anne's lace would lay in the trash. And her mother would never admit that it was her doing, but Petunia could never quite recover from the sting of the empty windowsill, the yellow light beaming through the stained-glass serving as a reminder of what once was.

She almost forgot.

At 11:29, Petunia walked over to sit on the porch steps, which, though covered in dust, were the most comfortable place in the house. The comfort was heightened with the presence of her only companion, Alister. The calico cat who wandered the neighbourhood, Alister appeared at the most opportune times, as if he sensed negative energy and appeared to whisk it all away. From the time he was a kitten, Alister would accompany Nona and Petunia on their walks to the park and he had created a routine of showing up on the back porch at exactly half past 11 every Saturday. Even when it rained, he braved the weather to get to the Albrecht home, knowing that upon arrival, a fluffy towel would be waiting for him on the windowsill. When the weather was nice, Alister and Petunia would sit on the porch in silence, as she scratched the top of his head. And sometimes, Petunia would be compelled to talk.

*...To be continued*

## **ACS Nominee "The Son of James" by Kevin Hoffmann**

To keep reading:  
khoffmann0305@bhncdsb.ca

I heard the birds chirping as my eyes slid open to reveal the glistening sun beaming through my bedside window. Blissfully, I was welcomed by the smell of breakfast as I slipped on each pant leg one at a time.

I thought today would be a wonderful day, all while in the comfort and safety of my backyard tree house, alongside my favourite knight action figures. My tree house was built six years ago by my father - a kind man, who I wish I knew better - on the grandest tree in my backyard. I named the tree after him: James.

I made my way down the stairs, drifting around the railing and speeding down the stairs like a steam engine, the red fire in my stomach only forcing me to go faster. I landed on the black wood floor with a thud and rounded the corner to see my mother and her unsought friend, Chester.

"Good morning, Mother!" I said with an excited tone.

"Well good morning my love," Mother said harmoniously.

Mother always had a way with words. Whether it be on phone calls, or in the living room with friends, she always expressed exactly what she was thinking. Granting this, I have always found comfort in her words, as I knew they were the utmost truth. Even her white dress glistened in the streams of light through the kitchen window - clearly the Heavens reflected my enthusiasm. She was my knight in shining armour.

Hey Tim," Chester added in a growly voice behind his newspaper. He was in his dirty work clothes, sitting indignantly at the kitchen table with a plate of food split

in two – he was a fussy eater. Chester was our landlord, yet he visited so often I had a tough time believing that he was *merely* our landlord.

“Hello Chester,” I spoke reluctantly. It hurt to say his name.

“Timothy, your plate is already inside your tree. I delivered it moments ago, and James put it right inside,” Mother said as she bent down to pinch my cheeks.

“Why do you keep calling that damn thing James? It’s just a lifeless plant,” Chester spat, although, I paid no attention to what Chester said for I was arrogantly focused on my soon to be battles and victories.

I glanced into Chester’s eyes; they seemed cold.

“Do not speak to my son that way!” Mother swiftly rebutted.

A deep chill ran down my spine as I slid open the back door and the piercing cold air swam around my body, a chill that left the hairs on my arms a standing battalion. Yet, just as I flew through the door, I heard Chester croak once more.

“You see Lilian, that’s what you’re encouraging. Absolute garbage!” But his words were silenced by the shutting of the backdoor. I ran and gripped James’s smooth wooden ladder and entered the one place where I was truly in charge: my tree home. My kingdom.

I sat on my plastic yellow chair within the coziness of my four walls. Aside from the grey clouds on the horizon, the sun still peered through the small cracks between the old wooden planks and the smell of oak and cedar welcomed me with open arms.

I reached down.

*...To be continued*

## **2nd Place Winner** **"A Day at the Store" by Tahiyah Syeda**

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I scan the aisles right to left. Everything is stocked differently here. Where I used to live, the grocery store by my house had their fresh produce to the right, then their grains, their meat, and their dairy.

Everything is wrong at this one.

Rather than being separated into blocks and sections, the products seem to spiral inwards. Vegetables line the outer wall, then lead into fruits, then breads and pastries, then the cured meats, and so on.

I start heading towards the vegetable section, pulling my little sister along with me. I still don’t know why my parents made me bring her. ‘She’ll help keep you safe,’ my mother said, pressing the house keys into my hands. Theoretically, I know that there is safety in numbers, but practically, I don’t see how a four-year-old girl will be able to put up much of a fight if we actually encounter a kidnapper.

My parents would have come with me, but my father can’t afford to miss a shift at work, and my mother has to take care of the newborn twins. Plus, the store is only a minute walk from our new house, so it’s not like I’m going far.

My sister walks with her thumb planted firmly in her mouth. One hand clutches mine while her other arm holds her beloved stuffed rabbit. Her little legs waddle along, incapable of keeping up with mine. I reluctantly slow my pace to match hers.

It’s been five minutes since we left our house. I want to go back home as fast as I can to begin working on my project. Everyone thinks Rashid Munir will get first place because of his baking soda and

vinegar volcano, but I would rather eat a bucket full of dirt than let him win. My project is going to be a potato powered light bulb. Let's see his coloured foam try to outshine my light.

I don't see any potatoes along the walls, so they must be in one of the aisles. I suck in a breath when I see how many there are. There have got to be hundreds of shelves, all towering above my head. I think about Rashid's smug face as he told everyone at recess that his dad, a professional artist, was going to help him paint the mountain.

I pull my sister into one of the aisles.

As I scan the different items, I hear footsteps behind me. The other shoppers that were browsing along with us seem to have disappeared. Dread begins to pool in my stomach. I pull my headscarf more securely around me, almost hiding my face with it. Slowly, I turn around, and my heart stops.

I want to pick up my sister and run, but my feet remain glued to the floor. My hand trembles as I reach for the keys in my pocket, fitting each of them between my fingers, just like my dad showed me. I want to cry out, but fear steals my voice.

The man walks ever closer.

From this distance, I can see that the man looks just like him. He wears the same smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes. His stride is sure and confident, as if he has all the privilege in the world. He looks down with the same patronizing tilt to his mouth.

Memories begin to superimpose reality, almost eclipsing it.

*My mom and I on the street. His loud, piercing voice. 'What kind of a parent are you, that you would force a child to wear that?'*

*My dad and I just catching the subway. Only one open seat left. A nose wrinkling as a hand refuses to move a carrier bag. My dad telling me to sit while he remains standing.*

I can feel another memory approaching, the most recent, but I flinch against it. I don't want this one to come back. I've spent so long trying to forget. But memories don't work like that. It comes anyways, slamming into me with the force of a freight train.

*Me, alone. A door opening and closing. A lock clicking. Hot breath against my cheek. Muffled screams and hissing threats. Pain. So much, unimaginable pain.*

I blink the memories away, dragging myself back to the present. My breathing is shallow and ragged. I think I might be hyperventilating. Is this what it feels like to go into shock? My fingers have turned into a vise around my sister's hand. I know I must be hurting her. She looks like she's about to cry, but so am I, and I just can't seem to make myself loosen my grip.

Her thumb drops from her mouth and her face begins to go red. I know she'll start wailing any second. All I want to do is join her in her sobs, but I can't. I have to remain alert. For her. For my parents. For myself.

Unaware of my tumultuous thoughts, the man keeps walking. He's closer than I anticipated, only a mere three metres away. He'll need to take just five more steps to reach us.

It's too late. There's nowhere to run. Nowhere to hide. The aisles press in around me while the ceiling crumbles. The wall behind me rushes forward until I can feel the cement when I reach back. My gaze darts around, seeking any possible path, but all I can see are bags of onions and rice.

He's three steps away now. I finally release my fingers from my sister's palm. I can see red markings where they used to be. She begins to quiet almost immediately and cradles her fingers against her chest. My other hand grips the keys even more tightly. I pull her behind me, using my body to shield her from his view.

One step away, and I begin to notice some other details. His shirt is the same colour as the sign outside of the store. He wears a walkie-talkie clipped to his belt. His name tag reads 'Manager.'

My racing thoughts decelerate as I ingest this new information. He's the store manager. He wouldn't want anything bad to happen at his store, would he? But if he did do something, would anyone be willing to stand against the boss?

His smile is even brighter when he stops in front of us. "Hi there! Can I help you find anything today?"

I look up at him for a few seconds, unable to say anything. I search his eyes, looking for any trace of ill intent. He seems harmless enough, but so did the others. His eyes crinkle at the corners, and he gives a small wave to my sister. She wipes her tears and snot with her rabbit and releases my hand to wave back at him. She places her thumb firmly back in her mouth.

My breathing begins to slow, and my heart starts beating again, though its rhythm is still erratic. I straighten, but make sure to keep a tight grip on my keys.

At last, I nod hesitantly. "Yes. Thank you." My voice sounds like I'm speaking underwater, or like someone else is speaking from far away. I feel as if I'm watching the scene unfold from afar, like I'm floating while my body remains on the ground. "I'm trying to find the potatoes."

"Yes, of course. Follow me." He smiles and starts leading the way.

I grasp my sister's hand again, lightly this time, and move to follow him. My feet feel leaden, but I push myself to keep up with his long strides. Each step becomes a little easier to bear.

"So, is your family new to this neighbourhood? I've never seen your faces around here before."

I nod once more, not trusting my voice to sound normal yet.

Undeterred, he keeps speaking. "Me, I've been here all my life, and I love the people here. We're always happy to have new families in the neighbourhood."

My sister leans her soft cheek against my palm. I run my hand over her hair, thinking about what our mom told us before we left. Perhaps there is a kind of safety that comes from being comforted.

He stops after a couple more seconds and gestures at a few sacks of potatoes. "Here we are! Is there anything else I can help you find today?"

I shake my head and thank him once more. I even manage to speak the sentence aloud without my words shaking.

He wishes us a nice afternoon, then walks away.

My fingers finally release my keys as I watch him turn the corner, feeling strangely empty without them. The tension eases out of my shoulders, and there's a hollowness in my chest that I cannot begin to describe. But the space leaves me room to breathe again.

I exhale and crouch down to my sister's eye level, gesturing at the potatoes. "So, which ones do you think we should buy?"

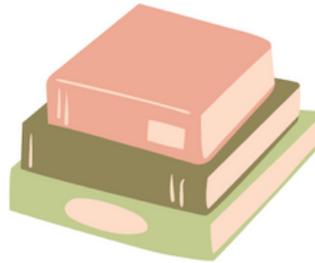
# The Library in Numbers

2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR



**2,376**

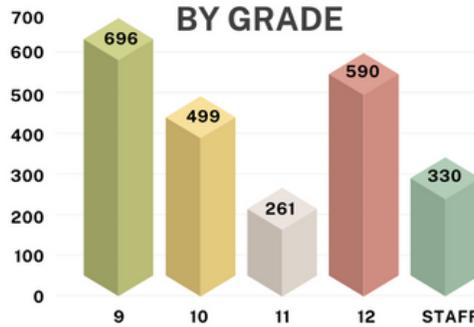
books checked out this year



**371**

new books added to the library collection

BOOK CHECKOUT BY GRADE



**939**

new e-books & audiobooks added in Sora



Classes visited the library for research, book checkout and more

**545**



## TOP 3 USES OF THE LIBRARY

\*OF THOSE POLLED

Study

**90%**

Class visit

**77%**

Borrow a book

**75%**

Twitter - @acslionslibrary  
Instagram - @assumption\_library

# Just for Fun

## CHANGE-THEMED WORD SCRAMBLE

EHNGCA  
BIGSEINNNG  
IUULCRMUCR  
SSASNEO  
STISANMOPU  
IITOISLSPBESI  
SCSOSRRODA  
EROINPNHSEAP  
ENTMWNEODR  
RPUNAEPERD  
AHIFT  
MEEDNDTIRE  
CEIERF  
LNEAC LASTE



## SUDOKU

8		3	4		5		1	
7		9		1				8
1		5	7			3	2	9
4			1		9		3	
9			3	4				
	3			8	6		4	1
3	7							6
5	8			3			9	4
6		2		5		1		

# Answers

CLEAN SLATE	LNEAC LASTE
FIERCE	CEIERF
DETERMINED	MEEDNDTIRE
FAITH	AHIFT
UNPREPARED	RPUNAEPRD
WONDERMENT	ENTMWNEDR
APPREHENSION	EROINPNHSEAP
CROSSROADS	SCSOSRRODA
POSSIBILITIES	IITOSTSPBESI
ASSUMPTION	STISANMOPU
SEASONS	SSASNEO
CURRICULUM	IULCRMUCR
BEGINNINGS	BIGSEINNG
CHANGE	EHNGCA

6	9	2	8	5	4	1	7	3
5	8	1	6	3	7	2	9	4
3	7	4	9	2	1	5	8	6
2	3	7	5	8	6	9	4	1
9	1	8	3	4	2	7	6	5
4	5	6	1	7	9	8	3	2
1	4	5	7	6	8	3	2	9
7	6	9	2	1	3	4	5	8
8	2	3	4	9	5	6	1	7

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## **NOTE:**

*Thank you to all staff and students for contributing works to this student-led issue of the Exchange. Because of length restrictions, not all submissions can be published. We look forward to the possibility of including your piece in the next issue. If you would like to submit a piece for the future issue, please do so in the Library D2L / Brightspace page.*