

Trip moratorium unfair to students

Editors note: Following is an open letter to the trustees of the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board.

Dear trustees:

As you know, your senior administrative officials have placed a moratorium on student field trips outside Canada. This includes the Dominican Republic project scheduled for April, 2002, which involves several schools in fundraising, learning Spanish and ultimately meeting and providing help to some of the poorest people in North America.

As a parent, I appreciate the concern of the board for the health and safety of its students in the wake of Sept. 11. However, the moratorium which was couched as a minor administrative decision to which you have lent your support, goes to the very heart of what education is about and effectively precludes you from even considering or approving a field-trip unless and until the moratorium is lifted. Many school principals, realising the debilitating effect of uncertainty, have simply cancelled projects while a few have tried to maintain enthusiasm while awaiting the lifting of this moratorium. Meanwhile, the responsible officials are not prepared to lift it or say when they might consider lifting it or under what condition it might be lifted. The original

decision is being justified lately on the basis on an insurance advisory from the company that provides coverage to school boards, as well as on "consultations" with school principals undertaken in the days following Sept. 11, and on a general legal opinion relating to liability that has little to do with the events of Sept. 11.

The insurance advisory... can be obtained at osbie.on.ca/english/rms/s2p rint.html. I certainly support it, since it is hardly intended to preclude travel to destinations where there is no political unrest, war or insurrection. In fact, the advisory states that insurance covers the board in suits related to liability and recommends that boards obtain a signed consent form from parents. Thus it is the board of trustees that seems to have decided that there is world-wide insurrection and unrest (except in Canada, of course). You do this despite the unanimous opinion of political leaders... that we will not allow terrorism to change our values and our activities. It is unacceptable for elected board members to have allowed their senior administrators, in collaboration with insurance companies, and lawyers, whose only interest in money to subvert (under the guise of due diligence) values, like initiative and social justice.

Gary Levy
South Gloucester



Students at Osgoode public school third annual Operation Christmas

True meaning

By Colleen Cameron
Messenger staff

The students/humanitarians of Osgoode public school put together more than 75 boxes of goodies, to help the millions of less fortunate boys and girls worldwide have a merrier holiday season.

As part of the school's third annual Operation Christmas Child, the students at Osgoode public were invited to take a decorated shoe box home and fill it with items that would make a child's Christmas brighter.

"(This operation) is to help kids in need of fun," said Grade 5 student Neil Piper.

Mary Blaney, who collects the boxes and helps arrange for their transportation, says most of the kids jumped at the opportunity to put the boxes



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