

Newsletter October 2026

Administrators' Message

A Season of Gratitude

As we enter the Thanksgiving season, we are reminded of how much we have to be grateful for. At Good Shepherd, we have so many blessings to celebrate, from the joy and energy of our students to the incredible support of our families and the dedication of our staff.



Our school community is truly something special. We are thankful for the many ways our families partner with us throughout the year—through your encouragement, involvement, generosity, and continued support. Your partnership helps create a caring and faith-filled environment where our students are able to grow both academically and spiritually.

We are equally grateful for our staff, whose compassion, dedication, and commitment to our students make such a difference each day. Together, we strive to create a school community where every child knows they are valued, supported, and encouraged to become the person God is calling them to be.

We warmly invite all families to join us for our Thanksgiving Mass on Friday, October 9, at 1:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Parish. Coming together in prayer gives us an opportunity to pause, reflect on our many blessings, and give thanks to God. All families are welcome to join us at the parish.

Please note that there will be no school for students on Monday, October 12, in observance of Thanksgiving.

May this Thanksgiving be a time to slow down, appreciate the blessings around us, and enjoy precious time with family and friends. From our Good Shepherd family to yours, we wish you a Thanksgiving filled with joy, peace, gratitude, and God's abundant blessing





~Jennifer Dimas
Principal



~ Beth Pecson
Assistant Principal



~Sonia Schultz
Assistant Principal

Office Hours



Our school office is open from 8:15 am to 4:00 pm. Parents who call the school after these hours are asked to leave a clear message and we will return your call as soon as we are able to.

Please remember that we will be happy to give your child or a staff member a message during the lunch break or at the end of the day. We thank you for your understanding of our wanting to protect learning time for all students and teaching time for teachers by not interrupting classes for messages.

Our School Charism: “Inspired by our Good Shepherd, Jesus, to Love, Learn and Lead.”



Like most people today, chances are you do not know any shepherds. For the first Christians, who were familiar with shepherds, the Good Shepherd was a favorite image to associate with Christ. In fact, the earliest Christian art depicts Christ as the Good Shepherd, not the crucified Savior. Often, he was portrayed as a beardless youth. Surprisingly, the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is still popular. In fact, early childhood education experts tell us that young children find the concept of a shepherd and his love for his sheep enchanting.

According to the Gospels, Jesus referred to himself as a shepherd. He said, “My sheep hear my voice; I know

them, and they follow me” (John 10:27). A shepherd knows his sheep well. There is a personal relationship between Jesus and his followers. Jesus knows each of us by name. On the other hand, we respond to his voice and do not follow the voice of strangers who may lead us to harm. Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Unlike a hired hand who flees to save his life, Jesus saved his flock from the wolf even though it meant sacrificing his own life.

The parable Jesus told about the lost sheep is a story about Jesus' concern and care for us sinners. He is the loving shepherd who goes to great lengths to search for his lost sheep and when he finds it, carries it back on his shoulders rejoicing.

When Jesus gave Peter the responsibility of leading his Church, he again used shepherd imagery. He told Peter, “Feed my lambs. . . Tend my sheep. . . Feed my sheep” (John 21:15-17).

Knowing about shepherds sheds light on the image of Jesus as shepherd. The shepherd uses a staff with a hook on the end to guide the sheep and pull back the stray. Today Jesus guides his flock through bishops, who are known as *pastors*, the Latin for shepherds. Bishops carry staffs called crosiers. The shepherd has a rod to fend off wild animals that might harm the flock. Jesus saved us from evil.

Jesus restores our souls. Shepherds feed their flocks. Jesus feeds us with the excellent bread of the Eucharist and brings us to living waters: baptism and the Holy Spirit.

The image of shepherds is that they are kind, loving, patient, strong, and self-sacrificing. They are a good image for Jesus. And sheep, who can be rather stupid and foolish creatures, are a good symbol for us!

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want!

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/scripture-and-tradition/jesus-and-the-new-testament/who-do-you-say-that-i-am-names-for-jesus/the-good-shepherd/>

School Council/Parent Advisory Association

The School Council and Parent Advisory Association is off to a wonderful start this school year!

We began the first full week by stocking the staff room with supplies and treats to show our appreciation for the amazing teachers and staff. Our first event, Get the Scoop, was a hit. We loved seeing so many families come out and join the fun!

At our AGM meeting on September 23, the following positions were filled:

Chair: Nataly Jarrar

Vice Chair: Melissa Stoklosa



Treasurer: Sara Mueller

Secretary: TBD

Casino Chair: Judianne Walls

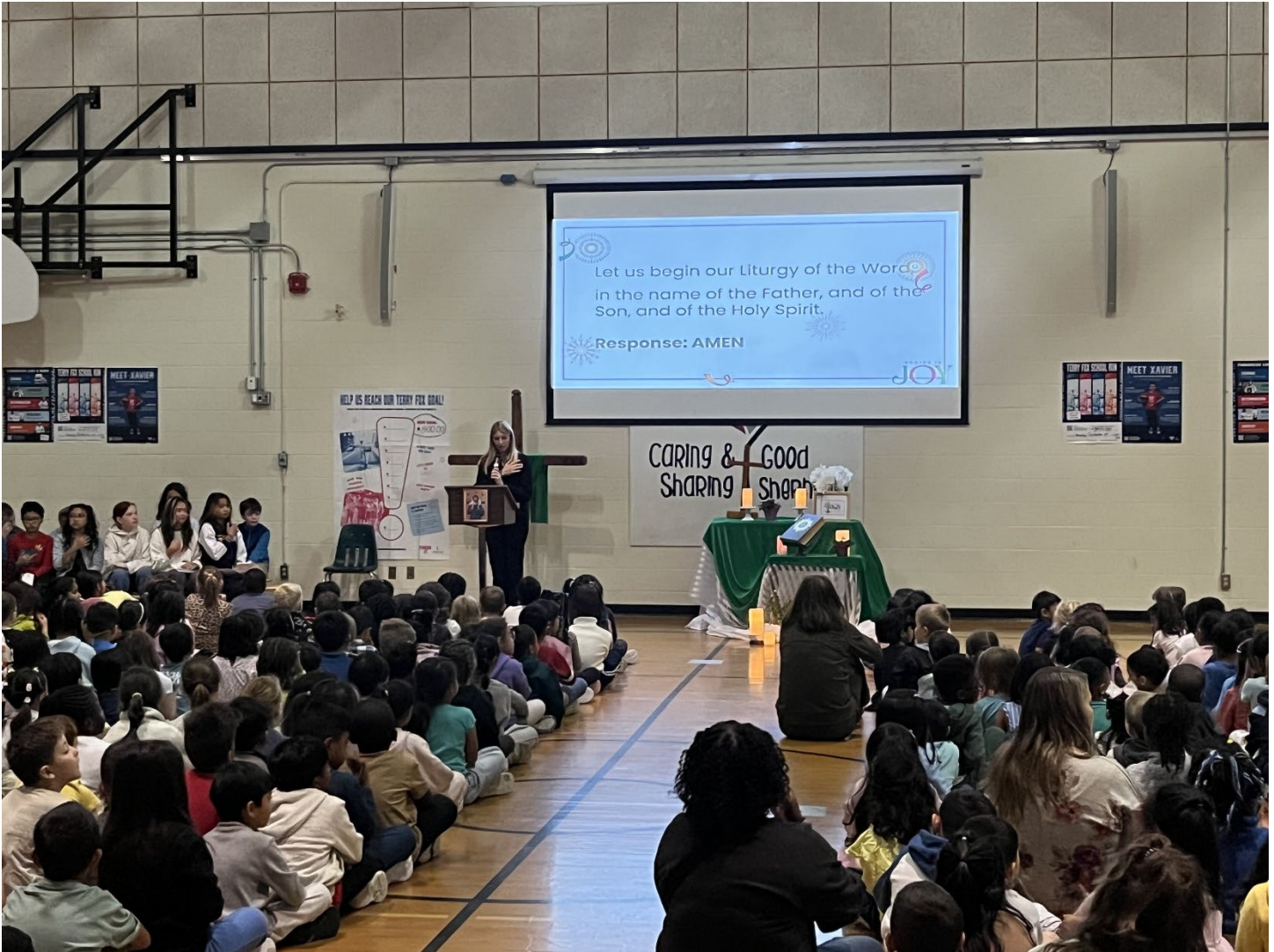
The next meeting for school council and parent advisory association will be on October 21, 2026 at 6:30 pm; please join us! All meeting minutes and documents are posted to the school website.

Stay informed and be sure to follow us on Facebook: Good Shepherd School Parents and Instagram @goodshepherd.community

Good Shepherd School Celebrates a New School Year!

On Tuesday, September 15, the students and staff of the Good Shepherd School community came together to celebrate several meaningful occasions. We marked the start of a new school year, the forging of new friendships and relationships, and reaffirmed our commitment to this year's Division theme, "Rooted in Joy." Thank you to Mrs. Pecson, Mrs. Schultz and Mrs. Szorenyi for organizing the beautiful celebration!





The BusPlanner Delays App

Stay up to date with your children's transportation. The BusPlanner Delays mobile app is free and easy to use. It helps mobile users view notifications more quickly and easily.

Just like the BusPlanner Web Delays & Cancellations page, the app will display:

- Delay and cancellation notices for specific routes or runs
- General notices for all subscribers.

Users can download and access the BusPlanner Delays App via the [Apple](#) or [Android](#) app stores.

For instructions on how to download the app, please access the following ECSD link:

<https://www.ecsd.net/page/34228/transportation-services-bus-delay-notifications>

Bus Payments

Just a reminder that bus pass payments need to be paid online through PowerSchool by October 5.

Current Enrollment at Good Shepherd

Currently, Good Shepherd enrollment is 689 students, which is about 70 students more than last year.

Grade	Enrollment
Kindergarten	93
Grade 1	102
Grade 2	79
Grade 3	84
Grade 4	129
Grade 5	105
Grade 6	97
Total	689



Reporting Absences Through School Messenger Safe Arrival

Our school use SchoolMessenger SafeArrival, a convenient tool that allows families to report absences 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Once submitted, the information is sent directly to the school. Reporting absences in advance helps ensure attendance records are accurate and allows the school to quickly follow up on unexpected absences. Learn how to report an absence online by visiting ecsd.net/reportingabsences.

After School Plans

If the after-school arrangements are going to change for your child and you do not want them to take the bus home after school, please ensure that you write a note in your child's agenda or call the school. If no note is written in the agenda or a parent has not called the school, we will send the child on the bus as is the usual arrangement. Many times, a child will tell us that they are not supposed to take the bus home because they are getting picked up, and then we cannot get hold of parents and the bus ends up leaving very late as a result while we are trying to reach parents. This ends up making every student on that route late getting home and worrying many parents.

In addition, students will not be allowed to use the office phone to arrange play dates for after school. They must make these plans with their parents beforehand.

Therefore, **if there is no note or phone call, the child will be placed on the bus. The office will not be phoning parents after school to confirm if a student states that there is a change in after-school plans.**

Emergency Communications

In the Edmonton Catholic School Division, the safety of our students is always our first priority and students are well supervised when they are on school property. When situations occur that warrant emergency procedures to ensure the safety of all students, we will provide parents with accurate and up to date information. One way to keep parents informed about an emergency and the safety procedures that have been put into place is by posting the information on the school website. Information will be posted and updated as required when a school is experiencing an emergency. We also need to keep phone lines available at the school during

an emergency, so we ask that you do not call the school. This will enable the staff at the school to keep in touch with emergency providers and Division personnel. Thank you for your support and help in ensuring our students remain safe.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a potentially dangerous situation, we have a Crisis Management Plan in place. Depending on the type of potential emergency, there are three possible responses. On Alert is called when it is important that hallways are clear for a medical emergency or there is an external threat. Students do not leave the building but all classroom and school activities continue as usual. Lockdown is called when there is an immediate threat to the occupants of the building. Evacuation would occur if there is a fire or other danger to safety within the building. If students would need to be outside the building for a length of time, they would proceed to S. Bruce Smith School. We practice our procedures for Lockdown and Evacuation through the school year so the students are well prepared in the event of an emergency.



Halloween Activities at Good Shepherd

We are excited to share that Good Shepherd Catholic School will be celebrating **Halloween** with a fun-filled afternoon on **Friday, October 30!** To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all students, please review the guidelines below:

- **Costume Parade:** We are delighted to host our annual costume parade this year! Parents, guardians, and family members are welcome to join us in the gym at **1:15 pm** to watch the students parade through. Doors will open for guests at **1:05 pm**.
- **Costume Guidelines:** Costumes should be respectful, appropriate for a Catholic school setting, and free from cultural appropriation.
- **Arriving in Costume:** Students who wish to dress up should arrive at school already wearing their costumes.
- **Keep It Simple:** Costumes should be comfortable and allow students to fully participate in learning activities. Please avoid inflatable or oversized costumes due to limited classroom space.
- **Hygiene:** Costumes must allow for easy handwashing and sanitizing throughout the day.
- **No Weapon-Like Accessories:** Costume props or accessories that resemble weapons are not permitted.
- **Snacks:** Only teacher-approved, pre-arranged snacks that meet our school's nutrition guidelines will be shared. Please do not send food items unless coordinated directly with your child's homeroom teacher. Our **Nutrition Guidelines** are attached for your reference. [Good Shepherd Nutrition Guidelines.pdf](#)

- **No-Costume Option:** Students who prefer not to wear a costume are welcome to wear orange and black or a Halloween-themed shirt instead.
- **Privacy Reminder:** In accordance with Alberta's Protection of Privacy Act (POPA), guests are **not permitted to take photos or videos** during the event.

Additionally, we will be **commemorating All Saints' Day which takes place on Sunday, November 1**, and **All Souls' Day which takes place on Monday, November 2**, with school-based reflections and activities to honor these important celebrations in our Catholic tradition.

Thank you for your cooperation and support in making this a safe and joyful day for our students. We look forward to celebrating together and wish everyone a Happy Halloween!

Read In Week 2026 ~ October 5-9

Theme: Let Stories Soar!

When we read, we open doors to new adventures and discoveries. This year's Read In Week theme, Let Stories Soar, celebrates how stories can take us to amazing new worlds and open our minds. Whether you're reading a book, diving into a comic or listening to a story, you can let your imagination soar. The magic of storytelling is always within your reach, ready to take you anywhere you want to go!

Monday, October 5 - Read In Launch

- 9:15 AM: Live Read-Aloud with Mrs. Dimas
- Kick-Off: Reading Superstars Program during morning announcements
- Reading Strips: Students can take home reading strips (some classes have already started)

Tuesday, October 6 - Dress Up

- Dress up as your favorite book character.

Wednesday, October 7 - Read-A-Shirt Day

- Wear shirts with words or phrases to promote reading
- A fun way to 'read what you wear'!

Thursday, October 8 - Teacher Exchange

- Teachers swap classrooms with grade partners to do a read-aloud.

Friday, October 9 - Go Digital

- Listen to an online read-aloud with subtitles
- Explore how technology enhances reading.

Ongoing All Week

Daily DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) Time

- Will not be announced school-wide, but rather implemented at an appropriate time that works for each teacher daily.
- Guest readers may visit various homerooms.
- Students will receive a bookmark of their House group (based on the Seven Sacred Grandfather Teachings).

A special thanks to Ms. Melo and Mrs. Werzun for their work in organizing the entire event at our school.

Custodian Appreciation Day ~ October 2

This year, Custodian Appreciation Day falls on Friday, October 2. We want to express our heartfelt thanks to our dedicated custodians, Mr. Reinerio Almazan and Mr. Ronald Arenas, for everything they've done to keep our environment safe, happy, and healthy. Their hard work ensures our school always looks its best!

World Teachers' Day ~ October 5

Teachers are some of the most important members of any country's society. According to UNESCO, teachers help to educate global citizens, and so they are global leaders. Thus, teachers have earned an international day called World Teachers Day during which their efforts are recognized and applauded, and during which they can work together to further educate themselves and others.

Teachers have what is most certainly one of the most difficult professions of any available. On any given day, a teacher is expected not only to educate at least twenty – more often 25-35, and even more in developing countries – children in one classroom, but also do it with limited resources.

Teachers often face the challenge of educating average, gifted, and special needs students in the same classroom using versions of pre-approved methods. Some of their students may not speak the language most common to their country. Others may come from fractured or abusive homes. The increase in high-stakes testing around the world also means teachers face even more pressure than is already inherent in their jobs, to get the children in their care through classes and on to the next course or grade.



In order to raise awareness of these and other issues, and to show appreciation to teachers, we have World Teachers Day. This day was first created by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Foundation (UNESCO) in 1966 and remains a holiday today, celebrated every year on October 5th.

This is a wonderful time for us to pause and be thankful that we have a sustainable, high quality educational system and to thank our teachers for living out their vocation to Catholic education. Their commitment to our children is so important to building their futures, and to building a strong society.

Thank you to our teachers, support staff and custodial staff for their commitment and excellent work in contributing to the education of all of our students and building a better future for all!

Terry Fox Run

Terry Fox often reminded us that it would be young people who would carry on his dream of working toward a world without cancer. Each year, millions of students across Canada participate in the Terry Fox School Run, raising vital funds for cancer research. It has become one of the largest fundraising events in Canadian history and a powerful display of unity and hope.

This year, Good Shepherd proudly joined more than 9,000 schools across the country in celebrating the 46th anniversary of Terry's Marathon of Hope.

As we walked and ran together, we remembered Terry's incredible message and example of courage, strength, perseverance, hope, and compassion.





Inspired by our Good Shepherd, Jesus, to Love, Learn and Lead.

Student Water Bottles

It is extremely important that children stay hydrated throughout the day, and it is for this reason that water bottle filling stations were installed at our school site. All students are strongly encouraged to bring a water bottle to school each and every day.

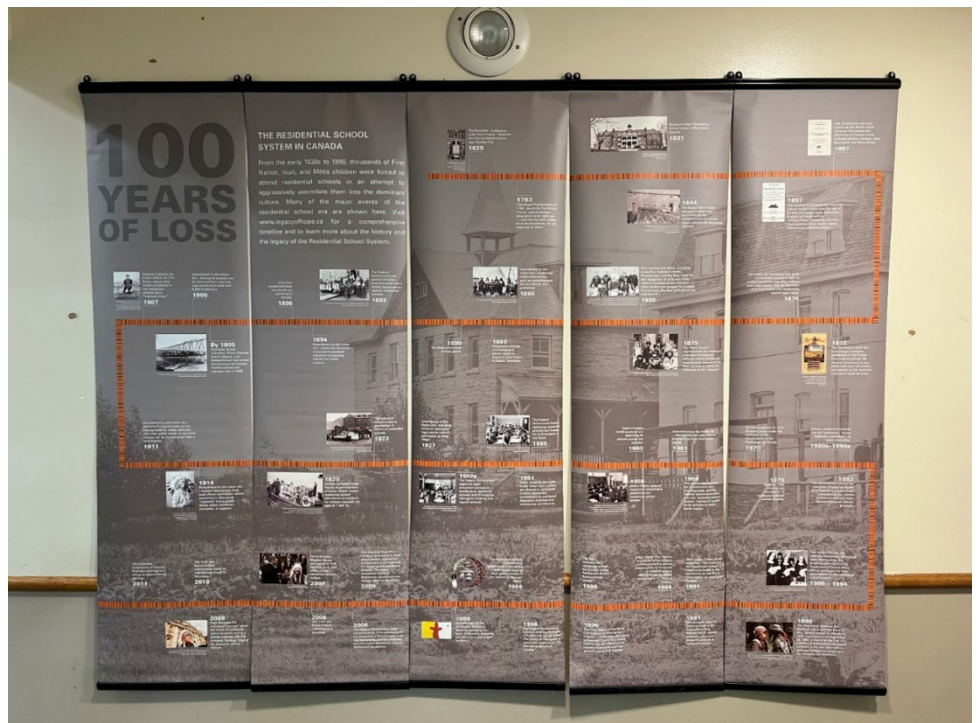
For hygiene purposes, water bottles should be brought home at the end of every single day and washed out. Water bottles will become moldy if left at school, and children can become very sick from drinking water from a moldy bottle. **Please remind your child to bring his/her water bottle home each and every day.**



Orange Shirt Day

This year, September 30 marked the third annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation — an annual commemoration honouring the children who died while attending residential schools and the survivors, families and communities still affected by the legacy of the residential school system. September 30 was chosen as the date to commemorate what occurred because it falls during the time of year when Indigenous children were taken away from their homes and brought to residential schools.

Since September 30 was a holiday, all Catholic schools in the Division commemorated Orange Shirt/Truth and Reconciliation Day on Tuesday, September 29. It was so wonderful to walk into each classroom and see a sea of orange fill almost every little seat. During this time period, classes participated in events to commemorate Truth and Reconciliation Week and Orange Shirt Day.



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Running Team News

Over 80 of our Running Team members participated in the Edmonton Catholic Schools 35th Annual Cross-Country Run at Rundle Park on Monday, September 21, competing alongside students from 30 other elementary schools across the Division. Students 8 years and younger ran 1.2 km, while students 9 years and older tackled the 2 km course.

Our Running Team members trained every morning for almost two weeks leading up to the race, and their hard work, determination, and team spirit really showed! We are incredibly proud of each and every one of our runners. Go Saints!

A few notable races results include:

- Riley T. (4B): 1st place in the Girls 9-Year-Old division
- Victoria W. (3C): 2nd place in the Girls 8-Year-Old division
- Aurelia L. (6B): 2nd place in the Girls 11-Year-Old division
- Ajong N. (4A): 4th place in the Girls 9-Year-Old division
- Denzel I. (5B): 5th place in the Boys 10-Year-Old division
- Alessio V. (5A): 6th place in the Boys 10-Year-Old division

A special thank you to our Running Team coaches, Mrs. Odediran and Ms. Lynn, for their dedication and for giving up their mornings to help our students prepare and build their confidence. A huge thank you also goes to our parent volunteers who supported the coaches and students throughout the event. And, of course, we are so appreciative of all of the parents and families who came out to cheer our Saints on. There were many enthusiastic supporters along the course!



Inspired by our Good Shepherd, Jesus, to Love, Learn and Lead.

BREAKING NEWS: Tabletop Hockey Season Is Coming!

Dear Good Shepherd Families,

 THIS JUST IN FROM THE GOOD SHEPHERD SPORTS NETWORK (GSSN)!

We are excited to announce that Tabletop Hockey is officially returning to Good Shepherd! 

Starting Monday, October 5, and running until Friday, December 18, students in Grades 4-6 will have the opportunity to hit the tabletop ice during lunch recess for some fast-paced hockey action, friendly competition, and plenty of fun!

Leading the charge this season, we have an all-star coaching team:

 Mrs. Huang

 Mr. Kay

 Mrs. Mazer

 Mrs. Nielson

 Ms. Rich

A HUGE thank you to these incredible teachers for generously volunteering their time to make this opportunity possible for our students. Your dedication and enthusiasm help make Good Shepherd a fantastic place to learn, play, and grow!

So, students, sharpen those shooting skills, get ready for some tabletop action, and bring your love of hockey to the mini rink! 

School PD Day ~ No Classes for Students

Thursday, October 29

On October 29, our staff will be engaged in professional learning focused on **Optimal Learning**, an important area of focus within Edmonton Catholic Schools' new Three-Year Education Plan. Optimal Learning is about creating the conditions that allow every student to learn, grow, and thrive. It includes areas such as clear learning intentions, purposeful instructional design, responsive teaching, meaningful assessment and feedback, and supportive and welcoming learning environments.

This work connects closely with our **Good Shepherd School Education Plan** and our commitment to providing learning experiences that support the whole child. Our professional learning will help us continue to strengthen classroom practices, respond to student needs, and ensure that students experience both **joy and rigour** in their learning.

Inspired by our Good Shepherd, Jesus, to Love, Learn and Lead.

Good Shepherd Book Fair ~ November 23-27



We are excited to let you know that the Scholastic Book Fair will be back from November 23 to November 27. During this week, the students will come in and preview or purchase a selection of books and merchandise for sale. The actual sale of books and merchandise for our families will be during our student-led conferences on Thursday, November 26. What a wonderful opportunity to promote your child's reading journey by coming out and supporting this important literary event here at Good Shepherd!

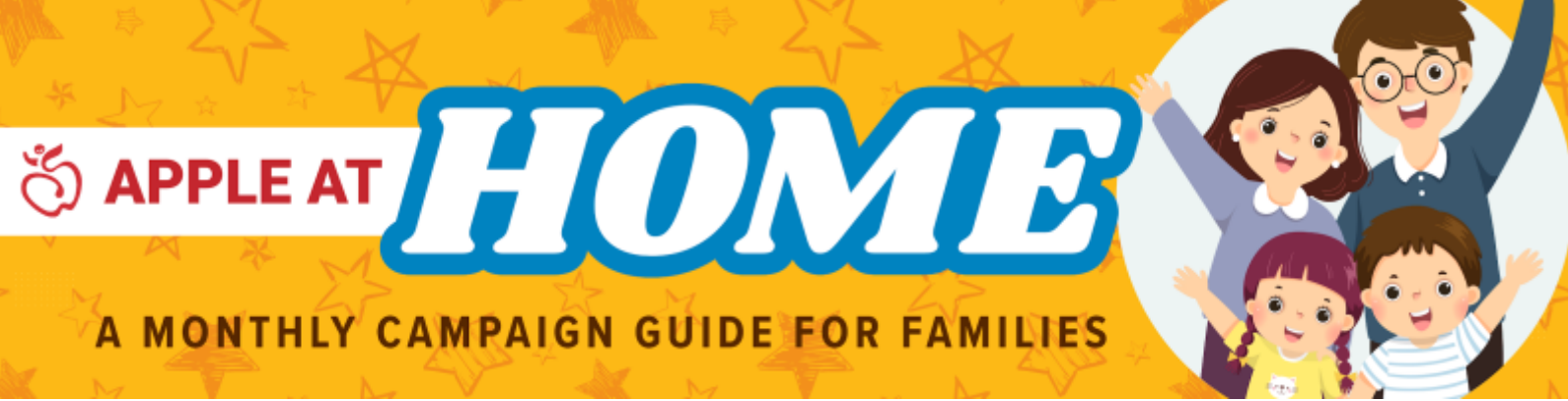
We invite your entire family to come out and purchase the latest children's books and build your own home library. Your support for this important literary event is key to helping us obtain new books and resources for our library and classrooms. With every purchase at the book fair, our school earns scholastic reward dollars which can be used to purchase much needed resources.

To help make this event great, parent volunteers are needed for the following:

- Setting up the fair
- Decorating
- Helping shoppers
- Checking out
- Packing up the fair
- And more!

If you are interested in helping with this exciting event, please contact Erin Strelkov, our Good Shepherd media resources personnel, at erin.strelkov@ecsd.net.

Do not forget to mark the Book Fair dates on your calendar! We look forward to seeing you at our Scholastic Book Fair and thank you in advance for supporting this great literary fundraiser. Most importantly, thank you for believing in the importance of reading!



Bone Bounce Blitz

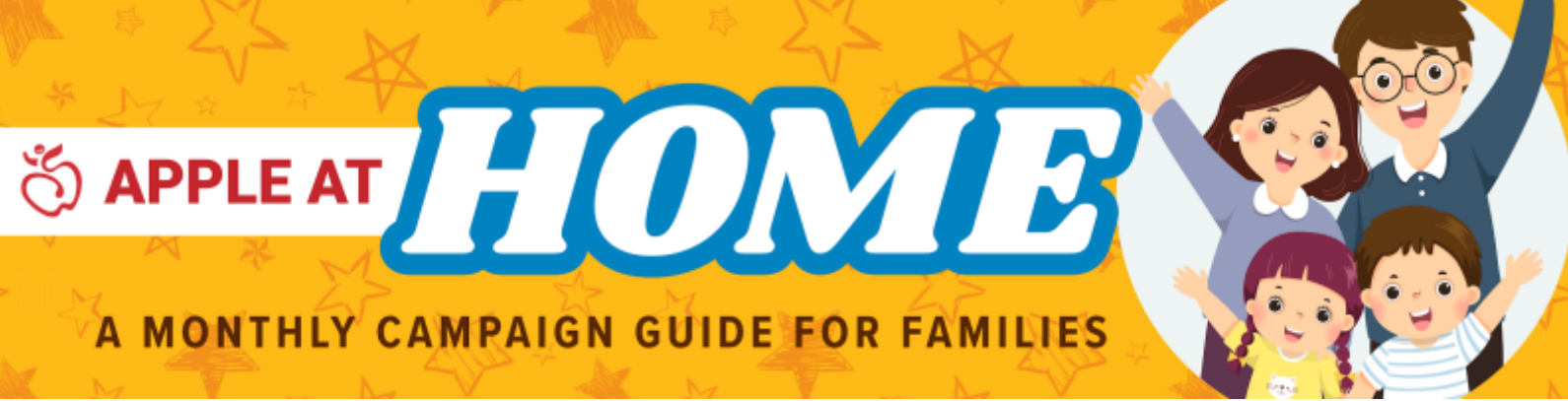
Bones have many important jobs- they support and protect organs, help muscles work, and store calcium.¹ Building and maintaining healthy bones should continue throughout a person's life. Calcium helps build strong bones, and vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium.² Activities like jumping and running (called weight-bearing exercises) also help make bones stronger.³

Fuel Your Bones: Calcium and Vitamin D

- Children aged 4-8 need 1000 mg of calcium each day.
- Youth aged 9-18 need 1300 mg a day.
- Adults aged 19-50 need 1000 mg a day.
- Examples of foods that contain calcium include:
 1. Dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese
 2. Dairy substitutes like soy or almond milk
 3. Vegetables like raw cabbage, cooked spinach, rhubarb, kale, white beans, bok choy, broccoli, pinto beans, red beans
 4. Sardines
- If you do not get enough calcium from food, you can take a calcium supplement.⁵
- Did you know that everyone needs 600 IU of Vitamin D a day? Vitamin D is added to milk and other dairy products, and your body naturally gets it from the sun.²
- Even in the winter, it is important to spend time in the sun so your body can make enough vitamin D.

Practical Bone Building Tips for Nutrition and Physical Activity

- Engaging in weight bearing exercises helps maintain bone density, preventing osteoporosis (weaker, brittle bones) as an individual ages.⁴
- Additionally, for youth (age 5 to 17), activities that strengthen muscles and bone (ex. running, dancing, jumping rope, climbing stairs, lifting weights, squats, push-ups) should be incorporated at least three times a week.⁵ In adults, these activities should be incorporated at least twice a week.⁵



Resources

- Alberta Health Services (Primary Care Alberta): [Healthy Bones](#)
- Alberta Milk: [Dairy Recipes](#)
- MyHealth Alberta: [Weight-Bearing Exercise to Maintain Healthy Bones](#)
- Ottawa Public Health: [Fueling Strong Bones and Teeth: Nutrition Tips](#)
- Province of British Columbia: [Nutrition and Healthy Bones](#)

References

1. <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/>
2. School Milk Foundation of NFL and Labrador
3. Petit MA, McKay HA, MacKelvie KJ, Heinonen A, Khan KM, Beck TJ. 2002
4. <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=hw131353&lang=en-ca>
5. <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-healthy-bones.pdf>