

Shalom and welcome to Blog 4. Today our staff will be taking part in Professional Development devoted to understanding more about Indigenous people in Canada. We will be starting with a traditional smudge ceremony followed by a presentation on Truth and Reconciliation. Later in the morning we will take part in a blanket activity that will help us learn more about the history of indigenous people in Canada. We are looking forward to these presentations. In the afternoon our staff will be having their monthly staff meeting.

Last week volleyball teams were formed at the senior level. Congratulations to the senior girls who managed to win their tier at the U of A Tourney. We had a huge turn out of students to try out for senior and junior teams. Good luck to our senior teams as they are off to Stony Plain to participate in a tournament there over the weekend. Junior teams are close to being finalized. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. McKinnon, Mr. McCormack, Mrs. Debski and Mrs. Hood who has volunteered to coach our Volleyball teams this year.

We completed Fire Drill #2 and we ran an On Alert and Lock Down Procedure Drill last Wednesday. We will always notify students and staff when we are doing a drill. Our grade seven students completed the CAT IV Achievement Tests during the week. We use these tests to look at strengths and weaknesses of students. Teachers can use the information in their planning. I would like to thank the Criss Cross Youth Ministry Team for their Welcome Back celebration to students in grade seven on Wednesday. I would also like to welcome Stephanie Renaude to our school. Stephanie is a member of the Criss Cross Ministry team and will be spending one Wednesday a month at our school. Her role is to work with schools to help students grow in their faith.

Last night we celebrated excellence and achievement in academics, sports, the arts, CTF, leadership and faith for the 2015/16 school year. It was good to see many of our grade nine students. Our VJM kids achieve in so many ways. What a great event, we are so very proud of our students and their many accomplishments. The gymnasium was full; it was good to see you all! Special thanks to our Educational Assistants and Mr. Pedersen who did so much work to prepare for our Annual Awards Night. As we are almost at the end of two full school weeks we have finalized all class placements from grade seven to nine at our school. We currently have 463 students registered at VJM.

This Monday afternoon our students will be participating in the Terry Fox Run. Results from this event will be used to select students to participate in the District Cross Country Run, which will occur on Thursday, September 22. We ask you to please remind your kids to do their best, it is part of the Physical Education program and it's also for a great cause. We hope to take our group student shot for our school website after the run. Be sure your kids have comfortable running gear. Let's hope for good weather! Volleyball teams will continue to practice and the gym will be used at lunch for intramurals. Currently Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Rawcliffe are supervising intramural volleyball at lunch. The gym is a popular place. On Thursday, the top students from the Terry Fox Run will have the opportunity to represent VJM at the District Cross Country competition. On Friday students will be allowed to wear their hats to school. Sometime this week and early next week students in all of our grades will be participating in the MIPI Math assessment. This is a new tool that we will be using to assess the strengths and weaknesses of our students in math. The assessment will be delivered during a math class sometime this week or next.

This coming week begins our first round of the Choice Excel Blocks. All students will be able to choose from a menu of offerings from staff. There are a variety of sessions. Some are extra help, some are challenges, and some are designed to give extra time to complete homework and extra time for assignments. I am very fortunate to work with a staff that are willing to try new and exciting things in education that provide more choice and opportunities for kids. Students register for these offerings through Powerschool. Excel blocks occur on Tuesday and Thursday morning right before lunch. A reminder to any students in grade nine that are interested in taking part in a great opportunity to participate in a faith retreat being planned by the Criss Cross Ministry team at Camp Encounter. Permission forms are due on Monday morning. We are almost finished the planning and approval of the schematic concept for the Modernization of VJM. Plans will be taking to the Board of Trustees for approval and then shared with our parents of our community. It is likely we will be able to share information with you in early October.

We are now taking nominations for School Council. You can nominate an individual by calling the school. Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 27 at 6:30 pm, followed by the regular September meeting. Wishing you all a wonderful fall weekend. Go Canada and go Blue jays!

Greg Lamer

*" Love God, serve God: everything is in that."*

*St. Francis of Assisi*