

# Elora road CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



## UPCOMING EVENTS:

April 23 - Grandparents  
Day and Celebration of  
Learning, Pizza Day  
 April 27 - 29 - MAP testing  
 April 28 - Gr. 5&6 trip to  
River Run Centre  
 April 28 - JK/SK trip to the  
Garden Centre  
 May 1 - Tuition Assistance  
Deadline  
 May 6 - Parent Council  
 May 8 - ERCS Track &  
Field  
 May 19 - CAASO Track &  
Field  
 May 21 - Pizza Day  
 May 23 - Community Fun  
Day

## WHY COMMUNITY MATTERS

by Cindy Westendorp

As I watch children arrive at school each morning, I am continually reminded of the importance of community in a child's education. God did not create us to live alone. It's a simple truth, but one that feels increasingly countercultural in our modern world. As parents, we're navigating an unprecedented landscape, one where our children can have hundreds of online "friends" yet still feel profoundly lonely. Where they can access unlimited information, but struggle to form meaningful connections. Where screens offer constant stimulation, but genuine community feels harder to find than ever.

This year, as I've reflected on what makes education truly transformative, I keep coming back to one essential element: community.

## WHY COMMUNITY MATTERS (CONTINUED)



### THE ISOLATION EPIDEMIC

Study after study reveals rising rates of anxiety, depression, and loneliness among young people. Despite being the most digitally connected generation in history, this generation often feels disconnected from what matters most: real relationships with real people who know them, challenge them, and care about their growth.

The fragmentation of modern childhood is real. Between packed schedules, screen time, and the loss of neighbourhood play, many children move through their days interacting with age-segregated groups in isolated pockets of activity. Sports team here, academic class there, online gaming community somewhere else entirely. Few experiences invite them into an authentic, multi-generational community where they can see themselves as part of something larger.

### THE FAITH FOUNDATION

In a Christ-centered school, this commitment to community isn't just a nice educational philosophy; it's a reflection of who God created us to be. We're made in the image of a relational God, designed for connection with Him and with one another. When Jesus summarized all of God's commandments, He distilled them into two imperatives: love God and love your neighbour.

This foundation changes everything. It means every interaction becomes an opportunity to practice the values that reflect Christ's heart: acting respectfully, accepting responsibility, pursuing growth, and serving others. It means children learn that they are members of a body where each person matters and has unique gifts to contribute.

It also means when children stumble, they're met not with harsh judgment but with grace and guidance toward growth. They learn that making mistakes is part of the journey and that our communities become stronger when we help each other improve.

“IT'S A  
REFLECTION OF  
WHO GOD  
CREATED US TO  
BE.”

### PRACTICAL WAYS COMMUNITY SHAPES LEARNING

Lynn E. Swaner and Andy Wolfe, in their book *Flourishing Together*, explain what a school looks like as it becomes a real community through enduring relationships. Students can develop a relationship of safety and trust with educators. We experience making mistakes or

being let down, and learn to repair relationships in grace and truth. At ERCS, this isn't just abstract philosophy. Community-centered education shows up daily in concrete ways:

**Cross-age connections** create natural mentorship. Older students develop leadership and empathy by helping younger ones. Younger students gain confidence from the attention and example of older peers. Everyone learns that their actions impact others and that they have something valuable to offer.

**Shared experiences** such as team sports, group projects, and school-wide events teach children to work through challenges together, celebrate each other's successes, and push through difficulties for the sake of the team. These are the crucibles where character is formed.



**Family involvement** reminds children that education isn't separate from life, it's woven into the fabric of who they are and who they're becoming. When our parents and teachers partner together, our kids receive consistent messages about what matters, and they see the adults in their lives united in purpose.

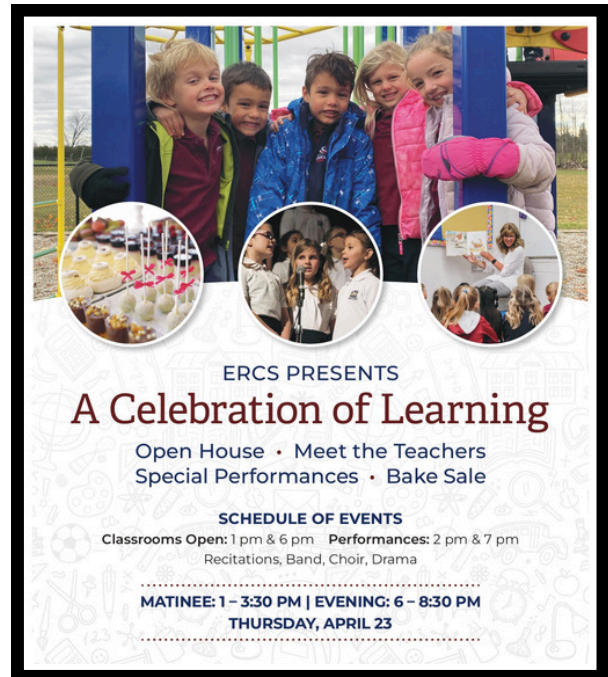
**Service opportunities** shift children's focus from "what can I get?" to "what can I give?" This outward orientation is perhaps the most powerful antidote to the self-focused anxiety that plagues so many young people today.

## AN INVITATION

God did not create us to live alone, but to grow, learn, and develop to become more like Him each day. This growth can only happen in communities; in real, messy, grace-filled communities where we practice loving our neighbours even when it's hard, where we learn to serve even when we'd rather be served, where we discover that our greatest joy comes not from what we accomplish alone but from what we build together.

If you haven't yet become involved in the ERCS community, I encourage you to explore ways to get to know us better.

- Our **Parent Council** meets once a month and is a great place to connect with other parents and become involved in our community-building activities.
- On **April 23**, our **Celebration of Learning** showcases what our students have learned, and our **Grandparents Lunch** provides an opportunity for some of the older members of our community to get to know our school a little bit better.
- Our **Community Fun Day** is on Saturday, **May 23** and is geared towards blessing not just ERCS families but also families in our community. This free event requires many volunteers to be successful. Perhaps consider how you get involved.



*If you would like to know how you can contribute to the ERCS community, please contact the school, and we will be happy to help you get connected.*

## FUNDRAISING UPDATES

### JD SWEID CHICKEN & MACMILLAN'S FOODS

Thank you to everyone who supported our JD Sweid and MacMillan fundraisers this year. In the fall, we raised \$2,334.50, and in the fundraiser last month, we raised \$1,299. Our top seller was the Walton family! Congratulations, and thank you for your support.

### UPCOMING MAY FUNDRAISER - FRESHBOX

We're doing another FreshBox fundraiser for the month of May! Stay tuned for the promo code, which you can use for a discount on their large or small produce boxes, or individual items. All orders placed using our promo code will also raise money for the school!



## ERCs LIONS

### CAASO BADMINTON

~ COACH BAUMAN

Despite the cold and windy weather, we had a great day at the Badminton tournament in Kitchener on January 22nd. All the athletes did a great job of keeping a positive attitude and trying their best on the court. All of the teams won at least one game. Our boys' doubles, made up of Cade Martin and Samuel Oruchukwu, won silver, finishing second out of 14 schools. Way to go! Our player award for this tournament went to Cade Martin for his athletic skill and encouraging attitude. I want to send a special shout-out to Brianna van de Pol for her help in keeping track of upcoming games and outcomes. It was a pleasure to spend the day together with these students.



### CAASO BASKETBALL

On February 19th, our students competed in the CAASO basketball tournament. This year, the tournament was in a beautiful facility at the Conestoga Doon Campus. It was a fun day watching all nine athletes compete. Everyone tried their best, had lots of playing minutes and played hard. We won all of our games and finished first! The banner is hanging up in the school. Congratulations to our MVP, Samuel Oruchukwu, as he was unstoppable!!

# CHRISTMAS

Christmas was a busy season at ERCS. For the first time in many years, our school had a float in the Fergus and Elora Santa Claus parades. Thanks to Miss Annette for spearheading this! Everyone had a great time.

Leading up to Christmas, our Crews collected a mountain of food for the Salvation Army. We capped the season with a wonderful Christmas program, with a reminder to keep our focus on the manger.



## Family Skating



ERCS hosted a family skate on Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, with skating, free hot chocolate and donuts at the Fergus Arena. Everyone had a great time!

## PARENTS' NIGHT

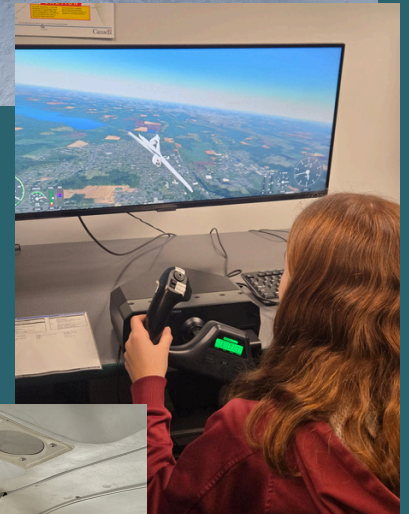


In January, we hosted our first Parents' Night. It was a chance to relax, connect with other parents, and receive some helpful support. A winter blizzard meant we had to postpone it by a week, but we are grateful for those who were still able to come.

Cindy spoke on building resilience in our children. If you missed it, or want to go a bit deeper, you can read an article Cindy wrote on our website, <https://www.eloraroad.ca/blog/nurturing-courage/>. We hope to continue to have Parents' Nights periodically through the year as we continue to build on our mission of **partnering with parents** to educate, equip and empower our students.

# THEORY OF FLIGHT FIELD TRIP

The grade 5 & 6 class was thrilled to learn about flying at the Waterloo Wellington Flight Centre.



# HOCKLEY VALLEY SKI TRIP

