

A Cup of Coffee... with Liz Thompson by Roger Varley

Goodwood Public School principal Liz Thompson accompanied two of her students as they made a presentation to Uxbridge council Monday night. They weren't asking for anything; just reporting on the school's programs to make all students feel safe and included. We decided to ask Ms. Thompson to join us for a cup of coffee; we joined her in her office.

Liz, since you didn't ask council for anything, what was the purpose of your visit?

A few months ago, we were invited to breakfast with the mayor and I know the mayor likes to have ongoing discussions with the youth in our community so she can keep abreast of what's happening and what needs to happen. At that time, the mayor invited all the schools who attended to come and meet with council if they had any concerns or anything they were interested in asking of the council. We didn't have any concerns and we still didn't have any concerns when it was our time (to visit council) so the students and myself decided we were going to use the

opportunity to present all the wonderful things that are happening at Goodwood.

You have a number of programs at the school, all apparently with one aim: to eliminate bullying and to promote inclusiveness. I know other schools have such programs but your presentation indicated these programs are ingrained in everything you do. Where does this come from?

Well, I'd like to say it's grown organically, but certainly it's part of my vision for the students and the school and the community. I think that having a safe, welcoming, inclusive and accepting environment is pivotal to anything else that happens in education and it was one of my goals when I was made principal of this school. To continue the work that had already been started and take it even further. All of these initiatives have come from our board improvement plan. None of this is new, none of it is unique to Goodwood. Perhaps it's the fact that we are a small com-



munity school, the fact that everyone has bought in - teachers, parents and all of the students in our school - that makes it so special.

I get the sense that, even if there were no directives from the school board, this is something that is close to your heart.

You're absolutely correct. I have a passion for inclusive education, I have a passion for all students, I have a firm belief that all students can learn if given the right conditions. And part of those conditions is to have every student feel safe, feel welcome, feel represented, feel included all day every day.

What in your background makes you so passionate about this?

I don't know that I can answer that. It's just who I am. It's how I was raised, it's how I've lived my life, it's how I raised my kids. I have five children and 10 grandchildren. It's in my inner core that I believe everyone needs to be valued, that everyone needs a chance.

Everyone is unique and we need to celebrate that uniqueness.

Although this is an elementary school, I see your programs address homophobia and gender issues. Is it unusual in an elementary school to touch on those particular subjects?

I would say not and I would hope not, because talking about global issues, whether we're talking about anti-homophobia or gender issues or racial issues, all fall under human rights. Obviously it's going to look very different in an elementary school than it looks in a high school, but addressing those kinds of issues - sometimes through the books that are read, sometimes by celebrating days such as Pink Shirt Day - are the ways we do that in an elementary school.

Tell me about Pink Shirt Day, because I noticed pink everywhere when I walked into the school.

Pink Shirt Day is a day we celebrate - all schools across Durham will be celebrating Pink Shirt Day tomorrow (Feb. 27) - to send out that message for bullying prevention, so all students know how important it is that there is no bullying of any kind taking place in our school of any nature, whether it is homophobic slurs, whether it's racial slurs, whether it has to do with classism or social class, whether it has to do with abilities. It's very important for all of our students to be accepting of all other students.

Is it working?

Absolutely it's working. It's evident in our schools: it's evident in this school with the way students treat each other. It's evident in the way teachers interact with the students. It's evident the way teachers and parents interact. It's evident in the fact that I don't deal with a lot of office issues: i.e. incidents that have happened or suspensions and the awful things that you sometimes hear of.

If I can play Devil's advocate for a minute, a school like Goodwood in a small community would not necessarily find that much bullying or ostracization as you would in a city school. Am I right or wrong?

I don't think that's necessarily true. I think that we're very fortunate here at Goodwood because it is a small community school, because it is very well supported by parents and all who are involved. But I would say that it does happen anywhere.

When did all these programs come in? Is it recent or . . .

No, none of these things are new. All of these initiatives are not programs, they are just a part of what we do in education. They are imbedded in everything we do every single day.

But the way you institute these programs or initiatives, is it your own take on the programs? For example, the bucket program.

They are not unique to this school. There are two books written by wonderful authors that are out there for anyone to access. They just happen to be two books I was incredibly familiar with and felt would lay a good foundation for the students. It's something everyone can relate to and we can put out concretely. We can actually have the buckets hanging up in the hall and it's something the students can easily buy into.

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THE TOWNSHIP OF UXBRIDGE

SUMMER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

The Township of Uxbridge is accepting applications for a Summer Student placement within the Clerk's Department. An applicant should be currently enrolled in a post-secondary education program and returning to continue their education in September, 2013.

Position Summary:

- Assists with File maintenance, including laser fiche scanning & index up-dating
- Provides main receptionist relief, including mail processing
- Completes various tasks as assigned by the Clerk and Deputy Clerk

Minimum Qualifications:

- Excellent oral, written and communication skills
- Superior customer service skills & ability to deal with the public & staff in a courteous & tactful manner
- Proficient in the use of computers & current related software
- Self-starter with demonstrated strong time-management and organizational skills
- Must possess valid Driver's Licence
- An interest in Public Administration

Interested candidates are invited to submit a cover letter together with a detailed resume outlining experience and detailing how the minimum qualifications are met, identifying the position being applied for and marked "Confidential" to the attention of: pshipway@town.uxbridge.on.ca or the undersigned no later than 4:30 pm, Thursday, March 28th, 2013.

Township of Uxbridge

ATTN: Paul Shipway, Deputy Clerk
P.O. Box 190, Uxbridge, ON, L9P 1T1

We thank all applicants for their interest, however only those being considered for an interview will be contacted.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

We are looking for an accounting student for our Treasury Department to help out in accounts payable and our tax areas from May 1st, 2013 until August 30th, 2013. Applicants should be currently enrolled in a post-secondary educational institution and returning to continue their education in September. Preference will be given to those studying in related fields. Please ensure that the position being applied for is clearly marked on the application. Please direct resumes to the attention of Gayle Gregor, Supervisor of Accounting no later than Thursday, March 28th, 2013.



TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE EVENT PROMOTION GRANT

The Tourism Advisory Committee is actively looking to support Events that promote Tourism in our Town. A small grant is available for "New Events" or "Free Not for Profit Events". The main purpose of this grant is to help advertise to a larger audience and successful applicants will demonstrate an understanding of all available "free advertising opportunities". Please email aferaro@town.uxbridge.on.ca for an application or further details.

CAMPS, CAMPS, CAMPS!

MARCH BREAK CAMP!

Come and join us this March Break for our 1 week and day-by-day programs! We have a variety of Camps for ages 5-13! Swimming everyday included! March 11th-15th

• Jr. Variety Camp!

- M: Crafty Kids!
- T: Superhero Day!
- W: Daring Detectives Day!
- Th: Jr. Whiz Kids Camp!
- F: Adventure Day!

• Sr. Variety Camp!

- M: Bowling and Game Day!
- T: Cooking Club!
- W: Bowling and Sr. Whiz!
- Th: Cooking Club!
- F: Bowling and Skating!

• Jr. AND Sr. Sports Camp! - Variety of gym Sports, PLUS bowling everyday!

• Dance and Cheer Camp! 1 week program, with Dance/Cheer performance on Friday!

For more detailed program information, please see Page 12 of the NEW 2013 Spring/Summer Uxbridge Community Guide, pick up a flyer at the Uxpool, or visit www.town.uxbridge.on.ca

UXBRIDGE SUMMER CAMPS!

The Town of Uxbridge Summer Camp flyer is hot off the press! Get your copy at the Uxpool, or see the centre fold of the NEW Spring/Summer Community guide! Registration starts March 2nd. Register before May 31st and receive a FREE Camp T-shirt AND a 5% discount per registration! NEW this year: Skateboard Camp and Soccer Club! "UX CAMP ROCKS!"

Questions?

Camp Coordinator: Rebecca Harman
camps@town.uxbridge.on.ca
905-852-7831

The Township of Uxbridge is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

If you require accommodation at any time throughout the employment activities process, please contact us at: 905-852-9181 ext. 209, accessibility@town.uxbridge.on.ca or by visiting www.town.uxbridge.on.ca and we will make every effort to provide appropriate assistance pursuant to the Township of Uxbridge Employment Activities Accommodation policy.