



# PTP West Fall Highlights

## Financial Literacy

In November, PTP started to teach all students about financial literacy. Staff were recently trained in financial literacy at a two day workshop.

Each class is taking a different approach, but the main issue is managing money. We have learned that when you budget you can actually see how much money you spend every month. By doing so, you can teach yourself better ways to save money, such as eating breakfast at home, taking a lunch to work, or cooking one big dish and freez-

ing it for the rest of the week. We've also learned that it's important to shop around, in order to get the most value for your money. We've found out that different types of bank accounts have different fees for things such as using ATM machines, making withdrawals, receiving a monthly statement or maintaining an account. Bank accounts also have different interest rates, depending on the type of account.

The financial literacy classes have already started to have an impact. Here are

some of the things students are doing differently:

- 'SMART' goal planning—working towards long term goals by starting off with smaller steps and focusing on making positive changes;
- Thinking more about spending before buying, especially when it comes to non-necessities like eating out or buying coffee;
- Recognizing what's a 'need' and what's a 'want' when shopping;
- Writing down expenses to get a better idea of how much we're spending.

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## Harvest Potluck

On Wednesday, November 3, PTP West held a successful potluck lunch to celebrate Hallowe'en and the harvest season. Students and staff contributed a wide variety of tasty, homemade dishes. Main dishes included lasagne, chilli, meatballs, curried chicken and tuna casserole. People also brought salads, breads, rice and vegetable dishes, beverages and chips, and an assortment of desserts. The Food Team prepared a delicious Squash Soup and one of the math classes made 'Spider Cookies' (chocolate macarons).

A week previous to the potluck each team was given a large pumpkin to carve. On the Monday before the

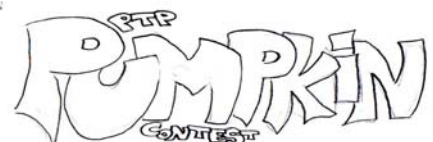
potluck teams participated in carving their pumpkins for a pumpkin carving contest. Each group had to create their own unique jack-o-lantern for the contest.



The results were very distinctive. Some teams added creative accessories such as a hairnet, a plastic insect, a paper clip earring and a paper cup

hat. Other teams found and used templates from the Internet. Each pumpkin was lit and displayed on the day of the potluck. Everyone voted for their favourite pumpkin using ballots. After lunch and the clean-up the votes were tallied and the Food Team was announced the winner. For their efforts the team received a bag of goodies to share among the team members.

The success of this lunch was due to everyone who participated by bringing food and helping with the organization and clean up.



## Mock Election at PTP

The Advocacy and Events Planning Team decided to hold a mock election at the school on Monday, October 25. Before the election, students from the Team were assigned different jobs, such as making ballot boxes, printing enough ballots for everybody, and getting maps of the wards from the Internet so students would know what ward they are in. Once the Advocacy and the Events Planning Team decided on a date for the election, announcements were made in every class to let students know when the mock election would take place.

On Election Day, students from the Advocacy and Events Planning Team were assigned to work in the polling station. Students who didn't know how to vote were told what to do. The ma-

majority of teachers and students cast their votes at the mock election. The major candidates for mayor were Ford, Pantalone, and Smitherman, but there were many others on the ballot too. The mock election was a great opportunity for students who have never voted to have a chance to learn how to vote.

The polling station closed at 2:00 p.m. Then the Team counted the ballots, and counted how many people showed up at the election. The results of the election were as follows: Joe Pantalone 33%, Rob Ford 29%, George Smitherman 24% and other candidates 14%. Out of 51 students, thirty-six students voted at the Mock Election. That was 71% of PTP students.



*The mock election was a success.*

## Barbara's Blogging Experience

I first started to blog when I was encouraged by my instructor at PTP. She told me that it would help me with my writing. First, I thought "Yeah right! she might be pulling my leg," but then I decided to create a blog just as she had suggested. My first blog was about myself and my kids.

Then I came up with the idea to create a blog for the Bits and Bites Team that I am involved in at PTP. I decided to write about the different activities we do every week in the Bits and Bites store. (This store serves as a 'learning laboratory' for us to apply what we have learned from our team activities.) On my blog, I have written about the Employee of the Month and why I and others were chosen. I also write to let everyone know what sandwich specials we have in the store every week.



My newest blog post is about our trip to Kensington Market and China Town with the Food Team. I found with this post that everything my instructor had told me about blogging came through for me. I found that just the way I had taken the extra time to plan what I was going to write made it 100 percent better. I noticed that my punctuation and sentence structure is getting better as well. The blog turned

out so well that it inspired the Food Team to create one of their own.

As I continue to write on my blogs I find it easier than before to write and I also see that it has helped me with the writing that I have to do for my GED prep course.

So for those of you who think you are not able to write a blog, I suggest give it a try. You might surprise yourself — I did!

If you would like to check out the Bits and Bites Team blog go to [www.ptpbitsandbites.wordpress.com](http://www.ptpbitsandbites.wordpress.com)

*Happy blogging!*

**"For those of you who think you are not able to write a blog, I suggest you give it a try."**

## Accessing Parks and Recreation Programs

In early September, students in the Advocacy and Events Team at PTP learned how to use The Fun Guide magazine that is available at community centres, libraries and online. The Fun Guide is a magazine that contains information about a variety of programs at local recreation centres. It comes out in four editions; each one is for a specific area of the city. There are many Parks & Rec programs for adults and children of all ages to join. They are free with a Welcome Policy application. The Welcome Policy is a fee subsidy program for individuals and families with a low income, to allow them to register for a program free of cost. If you are on OW or ODSP, a Welcome Policy letter can be requested from your worker to present at the recreation centre.

Recreation centres have great programs that offer a chance to learn something new, to keep fit and stay healthy. By getting children involved in programs they make new friends and participate in activities they're interested in. You can choose which program is convenient and fits into your schedule.

Students in the Advocacy and Events Team also shared information with the other students at PTP who were interested in the programs available at their recreation centres. Students



from the team went to each class to tell about the programs and explain how to use the Fun Guide.

What we did to help the students in the other teams was to google their major intersection on the internet to locate their nearest recreation centre and found out which program they wanted to join.

Parks and Rec programs start again in January. Registration began on Dec. 4. It's not too late to enrol yourself or your child in a class, but you should do it soon if you want to make sure you get a spot. For help with the Welcome Policy application, call 311.

## Living with Alopecia

In the afternoon on Monday, December 6, 2010, classes joined together in the meeting room for a presentation by Patricia on Alopecia Areata, a disease that Patricia's son has. Patricia recently found out that her son has Alopecia. She showed a 7 minute video about other children who also have also lost their hair from Alopecia. After, she talked about how she is in a support group for children who have this disease, and their families. She told us how she helps her son cope with this disease, and how she also helps herself to cope.

We learned that Alopecia is a disease of the immune system. According to the Canadian Alopecia Areata Foundation, "Alopecia is the loss or the absence of hair. Alopecia Areata is an autoimmune disease, which can also involve hair all over the body. In simple terms, the immune system, for

unknown reasons, attacks the hair root and causes hair loss." Patricia told us that you cannot pass this condition to other people. However, it may run in the family. She told us that people with Alopecia may lose some or all of their hair.

The children in the video talked about how they felt about having Alopecia. They said they didn't want to be bullied. They wanted to be treated like other children. The video showed a girl who lost all of her hair and wore a wig. There was a boy who lost his hair too and wore hats to cover his head. Patricia would like for us to be informed about this condition because her son was being bullied at school. She wants to make people aware of children who might be embarrassed about losing their hair. And she wanted us to know about giving children encouragement to cope with



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this disease.

Patricia also told us people with Alopecia may develop related illnesses, such as Celiac disease. People who have Celiac disease cannot tolerate gluten, a protein in wheat, rye, and barley. Her son is going to have a test to find out whether he is allergic to gluten. For now, Patricia and her son are avoiding foods with wheat, such as bread.

## News from the Inventory Team

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, some students from the Events Team at PTP East Centre came to visit us here at PTP West. After they introduced themselves to us, they explained what they were going to do and then they began the process of training us how to perform the Health and Safety Inspection for the school.

They took four students around to different rooms - both offices and classrooms - and showed us how to do the inspection properly. They showed us how to check the rooms one by one for anything that was unsafe and to record problems correctly on the checklists. They explained to us that

after we complete the checklist, we would have to prepare a report to document all of the problems. This report is kept on file in the Administrative office.

The students from the East gained valuable experience in training us and we learned valuable new skills and knowledge so that we will now be able to do the Safety Inspection here at PTP West and complete the report accurately. So, instead of seeing Patricia checking wires and lights in your rooms, you will soon be seeing students from the Inventory Team doing the checking!

We'd like to thank Khadra, Claudia, Jackie and Dinah from PTP East for all their time, patience and understanding and for sharing with us their knowledge and skills. We really enjoyed meeting them and spending time with them and hope we will be able to meet with them again.

As we thought about this experience while we were writing about it, we began to think it would be nice if we could visit PTP East some time to see some of the things they do in their teams over there. We're hoping we'll be able to plan for this in the New Year when we come back from our Christmas vacation.

## Numeracy Workshop



At the beginning of December, Denise, Faduma and Melissa went with math instructors Linda, Shahina and Karin to a numeracy workshop to learn what other adult programs are doing in math and to participate in math activities. Before the workshop, the three students each worked with their instructors on a math project to reflect on their learning in math. It was these students' first workshop and they are excited to share what they got out of it.

Faduma says, "We learned different ways to do math and discovered there is a lot more math out there to learn

about. I would like to go on and do another workshop if I can. The students can learn more stuff and it would be an education and fun for students and staff. When we were in the group talking and introducing ourselves I really saw how people learn math differently and how they struggle with it. Now I know how important math is. If you don't know math you can't do your tax, go shopping, read your paycheque and pay your bills. I did not like math before because I thought it was boring but now I know it is fun. I learned I am not the only one who struggles in math. In the workshop I saw a lot of different ways to do math that were interesting. The workshop helped me with my communication skills. It helped me open up to other people in the workshop. I was scared at first but later on

I was fine. I had fun."

Denise says, "It was a very good experience for me as well. I saw how everyone learns differently. I was nervous but by getting to know everyone I felt confident and fit right in. Everyone exchanged ideas. We got to know where everyone came from and how everyone learns math. It was fun and if I get another opportunity, I think I would go and learn more."

Melissa's favourite part of the day was, "being with my friends and the instructors. It was a good experience for me as well. At first I was a little nervous, then I was fine when I saw my friends there at the workshop. I thought it was going to be boring, but it was fun!"

**Newsletter Contributors:** Angela, Ashley, Barbara, Bill, Brian, Denise, Faduma, Jason, Jenny, Karin, Melissa, Richard, Sohail, Susan, Vince and the members of the Inventory Team.

**Illustrations** were done by Chris Brearley. To view more drawings by Chris go to: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/56279730@N03/>