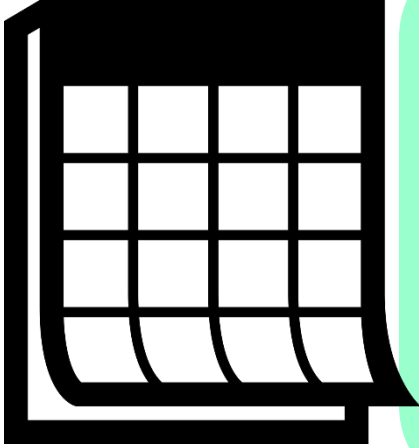


Gratitude and Mental Health

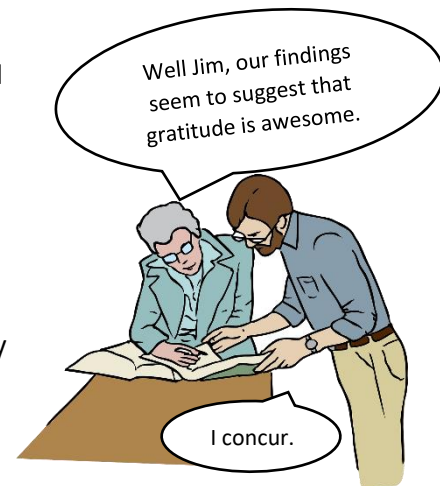


Why Does Our Board Focus on Gratitude in December?

Our board, and our Well-Being Committee focuses on Gratitude each December, and has for the past several school years. There are a number of reasons for this. During the Christmas season, we may often feel a renewed energy and be filled with warm feelings. It may also be a time where we can take stock of our many blessings and truly appreciate them. By cultivating gratitude, we maximize these positive experiences. With gratitude, we intentionally raise our own spirits. We also become much more appreciative of those around us. Each year, we engage in the Gratitude Challenge, where we let those around us know how much we appreciate them. We also host our board's Gratitude Draw where we are able to nominate our colleagues who deserve to be recognized and celebrated for their hard work and dedication to this board community.

Is Gratitude Worth Our Time?

Yep. Gratitude is a very well researched phenomenon. Studies have demonstrated that those who practice gratitude more often can expect a host of mental and physical benefits. According to the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, "Research has shown that consciously practicing gratitude can reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. In fact, studies have found that a single act of thoughtful gratitude produces an immediate 10% increase in happiness, and a 35% reduction in depressive symptoms" (2022). Mental Health First Aid, as presented by this council, also lists practicing gratitude as a protective factor against being adversely affected by circumstances and disorders. Making a conscious effort to cultivate feelings of gratitude has been shown to have very positive effects in our lives, even if we are not the most naturally optimistic or grateful people.



How can We Practice Gratitude?

Keep a gratitude journal.

Tell someone you love and appreciate them.

Watch an inspiring video.

Place quotes and images as reminders.



Gratitude and Catholicity

"Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5:20)

"But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear." (Matthew 13:16)

Gratitude is not about having a perfect life. It is well within reach of anyone, even those in difficult situations. The Bible encourages all to take stock of the many blessings we enjoy, and to give thanks for them.

Take the HSCDSB Gratitude Challenge!



Each day, members of our board show up to work and give their best to support our students, families and school communities. They work tirelessly, all for the benefit of others. These employees serve some of our community's most vulnerable and needy students and families. Many staff also work very hard to maintain our board's infrastructure and ensure that our front-line staff are empowered to do their work to the best of their abilities. All of these efforts directly impact our students and their families. Put gratitude to work for you and take the challenge of sending emails or letters to your colleagues! Let them know why you appreciate them and the many gifts they bring to our board. Sending these messages will let the people receiving them know they are valued and appreciated and taking the time to write the messages will fill you with positive feelings as you immerse yourself in an outlook of gratitude. Take the challenge and put the idea of gratitude into practice! It is well worth our efforts to honour the coworkers that make such an impact in their work.

Enter them in our Draw!

For the third time, our board will be running an employee appreciation draw! This draw is being organized by our board Well-Being Committee in an effort to thank our wonderful staff for their contributions. Submit the names of the colleagues you'd like to nominate by using the google form created by Sister Pat. Include a few lines about why you have chosen to put them forward. Those making these nominations will be kept anonymous, but each person who is nominated will receive an email informing them of the nomination and will be entered into our draw for great prizes! The link for the form can be found [here](#) and will also be provided to all employees in an email.



It's a One Step Process!

Participating in the draw and getting your nominations in is not a complicated process. All you need to do is submit the names of coworkers and a couple lines about why you have nominated them [here](#)! The names of those completing the form will be kept anonymous.