



## Parting Message from the Executive Director

### *Calling All Angels:*

It has been an incredible experience leading this amazing organization for the last four years as the Executive Director. As a former student, this unique journey has also been the dream of a lifetime to return to the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), first as the official spokesperson in my role of Chief of Communications and Government Relations, and most recently, guiding the Foundation through its transformative evolution during the COVID pandemic emergency.



Leading the official charity of Canada's largest Catholic school board is difficult at the best of times, with its unique, multi-dimensional responsibility to respect and represent the divergent needs of all our students and their families. I am profoundly grateful for the incredible efforts of the new AFL team who were able to embrace and surpass this challenge during my tenure. Whether it is overseeing the delivery of more than 1.2 million meals per month that feed 61,000 students or, providing \$1,000 daily in direct assistance to the most vulnerable in our school community, we are ensuring no student is left behind, and all are empowered to soar.

Thank you for helping us put the FUN back into fundraising and contributing to our unprecedented success (over \$9 million in each of the past 2 years) to meet the growing needs of our Toronto Catholic community. As I retire and return home to Ottawa, my profound appreciation goes out to the legions of Angels in our midst for your inspirational support and kindness.

Wishing all AFL supporters a joyful and peaceful Christmas season, and continued health, happiness and success in the new year. God Bless you all,

**John Yan**



**At the December Board meeting, TCDSB thanked John for his years of leadership and service.**



## Thank You for Continuing to Help Us to Help Students

It is no surprise to us that so many Canadians, and particularly Torontonians are struggling more than ever to make ends meet, and more adults and children are relying on food banks and other charities to help them with every day basic essentials. Thankfully, with the support of our generous donors and corporate partners, during the period of September to December 2023, we were able to provide students with assistance with the following:

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| • Arts Fund \$1,600  | Camp Fund \$1,470                         |
| • Extreme Needs Funds \$12,935   | Loretto Fund for Newcomers \$3,450        |
| • Reliable Life Fund \$602   | Social Work Emergency Fund \$40,497.79    |
| • Peggy Project \$31,280 (to offset the cost of application fees to Ontario colleges and universities) | \$10,000 in vouchers for school uniforms. |
| • School Allocation Expense \$6,445  |   |

## Welcome to AFL's New Executive Director

Continuing our critical mission ensuring no student is left behind and empowered to reach their full potential, we are pleased to announce the appointment of John Wujek, as our new Executive Director.



John brings an extraordinary record of academic leadership and achievement to the Foundation. An inspiring and passionate educator throughout a 33-year career with the Toronto Catholic District School Board, he has left a deeply felt impact in each of his roles as a teacher, principal, and school superintendent. Most recently as a Supervisory Officer, John managed the key portfolio as the Superintendent of Parent Engagement where he forged a legacy of excellence leading Board-wide community-based initiatives, including the critical position as the Director-designate to the Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (CPIC). With parent voice and accountability at the forefront of his efforts, he guided access to obtain "PRO" (Parent Reaching Out) Grants for local school initiatives funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education. In addition, John collaborated closely with TCDSB Trustees as the Superintendent of Policy and Governance overseeing the priorities of this vital Board committee.

As Principal of the TCDSB's Monsignor Fraser College, John supervised the various campus sites that provide alternative education to some of our highest risk students. His creative utilization of the Ministry's Urban Priorities Grants to help these students overcome diverse challenges is an example of the compassionate experience he will contribute to the Foundation's ongoing mission. This is backed by his extensive involvement working with a variety of community partners from the Ontario Ministry of Education (EDU), Toronto Police Services and the Toronto District School Board. John Wujek officially begins his duties effective Monday, November 20, 2023.

John will lead the Foundation as it continues to deliver on its core business overseeing a \$9 million budget that funds the serving of 1.2 million meals per month in 186 nutrition programs across 166 TCDSB schools, and the many major initiatives under our Guardian Angel Programs that currently averages \$1,000 daily in direct assistance to TCDSB students and families in need.

## We Believe in Angels

As if we needed another reason to Believe... The Angel Foundation for Learning was delighted to welcome Olympian Sarah Wells and students from 16 secondary schools to the Catholic Education Centre in November for the official launch of this year's A-Team Believe initiative.

Toronto (TCDSB) secondary school students who are passionate about creating change and helping others in their schools and neighbourhoods are invited to participate in the A-Team Believe Initiative which empowers them to take a leadership role in exploring innovative ideas to help bridge any gaps that exist within their communities. The A-Team Believe Initiative is designed to provide hands-on experience that helps youth develop essential skills that can be applied to all aspects of their lives.

Over a series of leadership sessions, they identify a need or problem that aligns with their passions and develop solutions that can make a real impact in their school or community. The program focuses on building leadership skills, gaining confidence and developing storytelling skills. The culminating pitch day will provide an opportunity to present these innovative solutions and showcase their skills and ideas to a panel of judges. All schools who fully participate in the project will receive a small amount of funding to help bring their ideas to life, and the top three projects will receive additional funds to support the full implementation of their projects/initiatives.



The hope is that these A-Teams will become a permanent fixture in TCDSB schools, with students leading in the effort to encourage their peers to participate in a wide variety of community service projects throughout the year. We can't wait to see what the 16 A-Teams come up with: Bishop Allen, Father John Redmond, James Cardinal McGuigan, Loretto College, Marshall McLuhan, Monsignor Fraser, Msgr Percy Johnson, Notre Dame, Neil McNeil, St. Joan of Arc, St John Henry Newman, St. John Paul II, St Joseph's College, St. Joseph's Morrow Park, St Mary and St. Mother Teresa.

## Win Big in the New Year

### The Jackpot is Growing Quickly

Don't let winter get you down. Your chance to win the jackpot in our latest 50-50 Raffle (Licence #RAF 1352125) is right around the corner. The draw for 50% of the pot happens January 22nd. The last winner received over \$25,000. That kind of cash is sure to shake off those post holiday blues.

Get your tickets online: <https://angelfoundation.rafflenexus.com/>





## Once An Angel, Always An Angel

We invite everyone to stay in touch. Follow us on our social media platforms:

- <https://twitter.com/AFLToronto>
- <https://www.instagram.com/angelfoundationforlearning/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/angelfoundationforlearning>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/83950371/admin/feed/posts/>
- <https://www.threads.net/@angelfoundationforlearning>

**Recently retired?** Join our email distribution list:

<https://form.jotform.com/231783703488061>

**Are you a TCDSB graduate?** Sign up to receive updates:

<https://form.jotform.com/231863499523062>

You can opt in to receive only the information that is of interest to you whether that be volunteer opportunities, raffles, contests, special events or quarterly newsletters. We will only send you the information that you request and you can notify us at any time if you change your mind and no longer want the information.

## Let's Make 40

### the New 20

Did you know that currently just 20% of all eligible staff have opted in to Cents Off their pay cheques in support of The Angel Foundation for Learning?

Let's double that to 40% so we can help twice as many students every the year.

**What is Cents Off?** Opt in, and literally just a few pennies will be deducted from each pay cheque throughout the year, which can amount to as little as 2 cents, with an occasional maximum deduction of no more than 99 cents. You won't even notice the difference in your take home pay, but our students will definitely notice as all those pennies will add up to huge support for those who need assistance.

**You could win a prize** every two weeks just for signing up. AFL is continuing the tradition of bi-weekly draws for a prize pack, and we will also be holding up to three grand prize draws annually. You have to be signed up in order to automatically be entered into the bi-weekly draws as well as the grand prize draws. **Already signed up? Check your pay stub. If you don't see the deduction, please sign up again.**

Never has your help been needed as much as it is today. Opt in by scanning the QR code and **Let's make 40 the new 20!**



**40 IS THE NEW 20**



The need for funding is greater now than ever before. Only 20% of TCDSB Staff are signed up for CENTS OFF. At 40% we would double the number of students we help every year. Sign up now with the QR code for a chance to win.

[angelfoundationforlearning.org](http://angelfoundationforlearning.org)

## Need to Get Rid of a Junk Car?

To coin a phrase, one person's junk is another person's treasure. Your junk car can be turned into dollars and cents that will help feed hungry students.

The Angel Foundation for Learning has partnered with Donate a Car Canada to accept your car donation. You will be provided free towing, or you can drop off your vehicle to maximize your donation.



When you donate your car, truck, RV, boat, or motorcycle to The Angel Foundation for Learning through Donate A Car Canada, it will either be recycled or re-sold (depending on its condition, age and location). Your vehicle may not be a junk car, and they can help with that, too!

Donate a Car Canada will look after all the details to make it easy for AFLToronto to benefit. You will receive a tax receipt after your vehicle donation has been processed!

Ready to donate? Or need more info? Visit [Donate A Car Canada](https://www.donateacar.ca) for details.



## Calling All Sports Lovers! Catch Your Toronto Marlies or Raptors905 this Season and Help AFL

Thanks to MLSE for their continued support of The Angel Foundation for Learning. They are once again offering a promo code to AFL supporters to purchase discounted tickets to any home game this season for the Marlies and Raptors905, including some widely sought after games played at Scotiabank Arena.

Save up to 40% on the regular ticket price, and \$3-\$5 from every ticket purchased will be donated to AFL. Get all the details here: <https://angelfoundationforlearning.org/discounted-sports-tickets/>

A similar promotion with the Toronto Argos brought in more than \$400, and MLSE is in discussions with AFL about additional fundraising opportunities with the Argos and TFC in the coming season.

## Angels Among Us

Staff, students and parent volunteers across the Board continue to do their part to help others and nurture compassionate and caring communities. The following are just a sampling of the many amazing acts of kindness that have happened in recent weeks:

Many schools, just like St Eugene (right) help to warm up the winter with their mitten and hat trees.



St Augustine was among the many schools who participated in this year's ShoeBox campaign, helping to bring joy to children around the world. (Below left) Students at St Patrick made cards to lift the spirits of seniors in the community (Below centre). St. John's Catholic School's grade 8 students initiated a Fresh from the Farm Fundraiser, which enabled them to donate much needed food to the Grace Pascoe Care Centre. (Below Right)



The Chaplaincy Team took to the streets to deliver food to unhoused individuals in Toronto's downtown area during their annual Faith Day. (Below)



A huge shout out to Francesco Ferrigno (left) from Father Serra Catholic School, a true #AngelAmongUs. He created this unique and beautiful nativity set and donated it to the Angel Foundation's auction to help us raise funds for student needs.



St Clare collected Halloween treats from students and staff to donate to Canadian Food for Children. (Left)

And then there were these angels from St Mary Catholic Academy, who volunteered at The Good Shepherd Refuge and helped serve food to unhoused people. (Right)



THANK YOU!



Interested in Volunteering?  
GOODSHEPHERD.CA/VOLUNTEER





## More Angels Among Us

Kudos to Angels Ethan and Daniel for their leadership in gathering gently used hockey equipment to donate to Indigenous youth in Northern Ontario.

### USED HOCKEY EQUIPMENT

**DONATION DEADLINE DRIVE**  
**NOVEMBER 24**

Goalies Ethan Kowatsch OHL/OJHL and Daniel Berton, formerly of the GTHL are partnering up once again to collect used hockey equipment for Indigenous youth in multiple Northern Ontario communities. Since 2018, they have collected and shipped over 700 bags full.

Volunteers from the OPP will be delivering the equipment to the communities once collected.

We appreciate your continued support. Thank you, Ethan & Daniel

All types of equipment welcome:

SKATES	PROTECTIVE GEAR
HELMETS	STICKS
PANTS	GOALIE EQUIPMENT
GLOVES	(NOT ACCEPTING SOCKS OR JERSEYS)

Email: [UsedHockeyDrive@gmail.com](mailto:UsedHockeyDrive@gmail.com) to organize your donation drop off




A huge shout out to the ICT Team for once again collecting donations during their Christmas luncheon and donating the proceeds of \$1,115 to AFL.

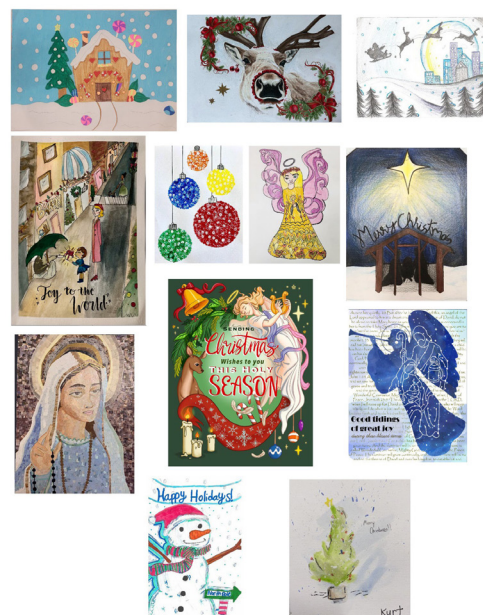
Grade 10 students from Loretto College embraced the chance to help out at the St Francis Table as part of their retreat.



St Raphael held a popcorn fundraiser and raised more than \$950 to support the student nutrition program.

Our sincere thanks to the more than 300 students who submitted original artwork for consideration in this year's Christmas card design contest. We could only choose 12 for this year's collection, but we were blown away by the amazing creations that we received.

Thank you for sharing your talents to help students across the TCDSB (right).



Our sincere thanks to Michael Zerbager who presented AFL's new Executive Director John Wujek with \$220 that he received as part of his retirement gift (left).

AFL is truly blessed to have so many Angels Among Us who make it possible for us to help thousands of students each and every year.



# The Return of the Snow Ball Gala--An Evening to Feed Dreams

It's been four years since our last Gala, and we were more than delighted to welcome over 450 sponsors and guests (including over 40 students and nutrition program volunteers) to celebrate the start of the holiday season with us at a new venue, Chateau Le Jardin. We are truly grateful for the incredible generosity of our sponsors and donors, and all who participated in the raffle and auction, which helped us raise record funds to support student needs. We are particularly grateful to MayStar, Poetry Living and AEC Group for donating tables so that some of our amazing SNP volunteers and student leaders could attend. Check out a few of the highlights below:



Dancers from St Mother Teresa Catholic Academy, under the leadership of Wendy Jones (left), guest violinist Sofia (centre) and the string quartet from Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts under the direction of Daniela Gassi (right) delighted the crowd with beautiful performances.



Registration area (left) and a portion of our silent auction (right).



Retiring Executive Director John Yan (left) marked his final Gala as head of the Angel Foundation.  
A look at the seating at this year's venue (right) before guests arrived.

We invite you to visit our website to check out all the amazing sponsors and donors who, together with our volunteers, helped to ensure the success of this hallmark event.

<https://angelfoundationforlearning.org/gala-sponsors-and-donors/>