



Executive Director's Message

Faith, Hope and Charity and the Angel Foundation: Focus on HOPE

For the next few newsletters, I am going to briefly comment on the purposes of AFL through the lens of one of the Spiritual Virtues. Faith, Hope and Charity have been central to our School Board's ethos since the beginning – just look at its logo. A simple symbol that says so much about its classrooms, schoolyards and hearts of those who serve. Let's have a look at hope.

The Angel Foundation is honoured to be entrusted as an agent that matches financial goodwill with true need in the system. As individuals and corporations give in kind, purchase 50/50 tickets and attend fundraising events; all of those forms of generosity have HOPE at the core of the intention. As part of the TCDSB logo, hope is shown through the anchor. The anchor is such a strong symbol in the English language, in that it has evolved to a verb form of what the noun (a boat's anchor) actually does. Anchors, provide stability to a vessel in windy and stormy seas. One anchors a boat in harbour so it remains constant and still – ready for us, if we disembark and need it when we return. As human beings we become "anchored" in the tried and true, in those we love and with our core beliefs. All this being said, the anchor becomes synonymous with stability. However, stability is not the same as hope.

I would argue that hope requires a certain amount of trust. When the sea-captain orders the crew to release the anchor, it vanishes from his sight; he trusts that somewhere below there is a bottom that the anchor will eventually land, and he hopes his rope is long enough! Those of us who are familiar with boats know that when the anchor strikes bottom, the rope becomes taut and we need to "tie off". However sometimes, the rope loosens and we may be unsure if the anchor holds, and our vessel may become adrift. Hopefully the anchor takes hold. We need to trust what we cannot see.

And so it is with HOPE and the generosity of people like you toward the Angel Foundation for Learning!

You do not know exactly when or how your generosity will be used. You give your gift in hope which like an anchor, finds its way to its grounding destination and is a source of stability for kids and families we serve. Thank you for believing in hope – thank you for supporting the Angel Foundation.

Wishing you the many blessings of Lent.

*John Wujek
Executive Director
Angel Foundation for Learning*



Join Us for Our 3rd Spring Fling Pub Night

Enjoy a great night out with live music by Toronto favourites *Sugar Rush*, strike a pose at the free photo booth courtesy of Clear Images School Photography, sample some tasty treats prepared by Chef Stav and enjoy your first locally brewed or distilled alcoholic beverage on us courtesy of Nickel9 and Samara Brewing. We will also have plenty of door prizes and a silent auction as well.

So eat, drink and dance the night away for a good cause. Special pricing for couples and youth.

Reserve your spot now:

<https://pci.jotform.com/form/260045430248247>

Sincere thanks to our event sponsor Nickel9 Distillery, and supporting sponsors Samara Brewing and Stav's Corner.

Our appreciation also to the many donors who provided items for the auction and door prizes.

Come to the Junction on April 24th from 6:00 to 10:00 pm for a fun night out with family and friends.

Last Chance to Sign Up for Tennis Fundraiser

Sign up by March 15th for a chance to compete or simply have fun playing tennis during the March break.

See poster (right) for details about this fundraiser initiated by Jonathan Grossi from St. Rose of Lima Catholic School and Beyond the Baseline March 19-22nd.

Options: singles or doubles tournament play, or rally play.

Sign up here: <https://app.utrsports.net/events/352897>.

THE ANGEL FOUNDATION FOR LEARNING **bib** beyond the baseline

TENNIS TOURNEY

DOUBLES \$60
SINGLES \$90
RALLY \$55

MARCH 19-22, 2026
4:00 PM - 11:30 PM

- Flexible and Accommodating Scheduling
- Unique Prizes and Trophies
- Positive Community Building
- Competitive and Fun Match Play
- 50% of Proceeds Donated to the AFL

VENETO TENNIS CLUB
7465 Kipling Ave, Woodbridge ON, L4L 1Y5

admin@beyondthebaseline.ca or (647)-204-0485



50-50 Raffle Tickets on Sale Now

A great way to help students while also having a chance to win some cold hard cash. Our last winner took home a prize of more than \$23,000.

There are also three early bird prizes to be won. Each prize is \$100 in cash. Early bird draw dates are March 20th, March 27th and April 10th.

Get your tickets online: <https://www.rafflebox.ca/raffle/angelfoundation>



Last Chance to Secure Your Spot!

Family Bowling Event is Around the Corner

Sign up now to reserve your spot for our Family Bowling Event March 28, 2026, 1-3 pm at Markham Bowl. Just a few spots left for 5-pin lanes.

Included: free photo booth courtesy of Clear Images School Photography, bowling shoe rental, 2 hours of bowling, a chance to win team prizes as well as door prizes, pizza and other snacks as well as non-alcoholic beverages.

Get your family and friends together and book a full lane for a discounted price. Just a few 5-pin lanes left. Don't miss out!

<https://pci.jotform.com/form/252803756954265>

A huge shout out to our event sponsor Trento Kia, as well as our supporting sponsors TSU and TECT and our hosts at Markham Bowl.

See you soon!

Give it Your Best Shot AFL Charity Golf Tournament Coming Soon at a New Venue

Come out to AFL's charity golf tournament at Richmond Golf Club on July 2nd. Shotgun start 8:30 am. Save the date! Ticket price includes round of golf, bucket of balls to warm up at the driving range, grab and go breakfast, on course beverages and snacks, barbecue lunch, plus chances to score some great items in the silent auction, win a prize in our raffle, or take home one of our door prizes. All golfers also receive a photo courtesy of Clear Images School Photography. Mark your calendars and plan to come out for a great day on the greens. Details and ticketing info coming soon: <https://angelfoundationforlearning.org/charity-golf-day/>



Believe in Angels Week Coming the First Week of May

This includes the popular civvies day fundraiser, May the 4th Be With You. We have other ideas for how to celebrate the week as well, with suggested themes for each day of that week.



Be an angel and help us celebrate the week and make a positive impact on the lives of students who need our help.

Year End Grand Prize Draw For All Who Support AFL Throughout the Year Through Payroll Deductions



Become an Angel Advocate, an easy way to donate through payroll deductions. You're in charge of how often and how much you wish to give. We will be doing a random draw from among all who are signed up, and awarding three gift cards to the lucky winners. Details for signing up are on our website: angelfoundationforlearning.org/angel-advocate/

We are Ready for the Next Waterfront Marathon October 17th

If you are interested in walking/running in support of the Angel Foundation for Learning, please register as soon as possible. <https://raceroster.com/events/2026/111134/2026-tcs-toronto-waterfront-marathon> as spots are filling up fast.

Donations to our team are also welcome. <https://raceroster.com/events/2026/111134/2026-tcs-toronto-waterfront-marathon/pledge/team/266>



Student Nutrition Highlights

Good News for Student Nutrition

The Angel Foundation for Learning is pleased to confirm that starting in 2025-2026, through the further expansion of funding for student nutrition programs from the City of Toronto, an additional 4,158 students are receiving a nutritious meal or snack every day. Funding has been extended to support student nutrition programs at: Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother Cabrini, Our Lady of Peace, St. Anselm, St. Antoine Daniel, St. Clement, St. Elizabeth, St. Gerald, St. Margherita of Citta di Castello, St. Norbert, St. Pius X and Transfiguration of Our Lord.

Starting in April 2026, 9 additional schools have received municipal funding to start student nutrition program: All Saints, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Agnes, St. Cecilia, St. Cyril, St. Denis, St. Francis of Assisi, St. John and St. Michael's Choir. This means an additional 3,044 students will benefit, bringing the total to over 74,000 students who have access to a nutrition program.

Celebrating SNP Heroes

Every March we ask you to share stories and photographs of your amazing student nutrition program volunteers in action. We rely on these dedicated and enthusiastic individuals to ensure that students are well fed and ready to learn. Tag us in your social media posts or email us at angel.foundation@tcdsb.org to enter your SNP Heroes in the draw.



We will be visiting the winners of our random draw to present them with a token of our appreciation during volunteer month in April.

Make Happy Tummies Launch

On January 29th, AFL was proud to participate once again in the official regional launch of the Make Happy Tummies campaign with the Grocery Foundation at St. Augustine Catholic School. Our team including Chair Don Walker and Vice-Chair Marguerite Thomson, along with TCDSB's Director Dr. Brendan Browne and Executive Superintendent Shawna Campbell were among the volunteers who helped to serve a delicious hot and cold breakfast to hundreds of smiling students.

The Grocery Foundation has been helping to support student nutrition programs for over a decade. This year alone, student nutrition programs across TCDSB received support of over \$60,000 through the Make Happy Tummies Fundraiser. AFL Executive Director John Wujek presented the new Executive Director Simon Small with a certificate of appreciation (below left). Make Happy Tummies is supported by local Metro, Sobeys and Longos stores among others.



AFL is Accepting Applications for Student Bursaries and School Awards

Schools are asked to share the information with students and pertinent staff

AFL offers over \$50,000 in bursaries and awards to support literacy and post-secondary aspirations of students. Most deadlines are April 24, 2026, but please visit our website to confirm the deadlines as well as criteria for each bursary or award. <https://angelfoundationforlearning.org/bursaries-and-awards/>

- **Proudly Pinoy Bursary:** This award is part of an ongoing strategy to address this need by increasing educator representation from the TCDSB Filipino student community, who currently comprise over 30% of total enrolment. (2 awards of \$5,000 each)
- **belairdirect Bursary for Newcomers:** This bursary will be awarded to a TCDSB student who is a recent immigrant to Canada (landed immigrant/permanent resident) working to achieve his/her educational dreams through post-secondary education. (1 award of \$5,000)
- **AFL Bursary for Exceptional Students:** This bursary will be presented to a graduating student who is identified as exceptional and there is evidence of financial need and/or personal challenges. (1 award of \$1,000)
- **AFL Student Creative Spirit Bursary for Indigenous Youth AND the AFL Student Guiding Spirit Bursary for Indigenous Youth:** As part of the ongoing journey towards Truth and Reconciliation and ensuring Every Child Matters, these two bursaries co-sponsored with the Indigenous Education Department, help defray the cost of post-secondary education for First Nations, Inuit or Métis students. (2 Creative Spirit Bursaries each of \$2,500 and 2 Guiding Spirit Bursaries of \$2,500 each are available)
- **AFL Skilled Trades Bursary:** This bursary is awarded each year to a TCDSB secondary student, to defray costs associated with pursuing an apprenticeship program or continuing post-secondary education in the skilled trades. (1 award of \$1,000)
- **Murdocca Family Bursary:** This bursary will be awarded annually to a graduating student who requires financial assistance in order to pursue studies in the area of English at a post-secondary institution. (1 award of \$1,500)
- **AFL Bursary for Studies in Mental Health:** AFL established this bursary in response to the ongoing commitment of TCDSB students and AFL to supporting student mental health. The bursary of \$1,000 is awarded to one TCDSB secondary school graduate in order to help defray the cost of post-secondary school education in the mental health sciences (ie. social work, psychology, psychiatry).
- **Tom Leon Student Bursary:** The Tom Leon Student Bursary is awarded to graduating students who require financial assistance in order to pursue post-secondary studies at an accredited institution. (4 awards of \$5,000)
- **AFL Music Bursary:** AFL offers a bursary of \$1,000 to help a student experiencing financial need with tuition fees to a successful applicant planning to pursue studies in Music at the post-secondary level.
- **AFL Visual Arts Bursary:** AFL offers a bursary of \$1,000 to help a student experiencing financial need with tuition fees for studies in Visual Arts at the post-secondary level.
- **Spirit of Inclusion Award for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:** Designated for an elementary TCDSB student who is deaf or hard of hearing and in Grade 8, this award provides \$500 financial support towards hearing loss management for costs such as hearing aids, batteries and FM systems.
- **AFL Literacy Award:** This \$1,000 award supports innovative programs in family literacy within elementary schools across the TCDSB.
- **AFL Literacy Award to Support Resources for Exceptional Students:** It will be awarded to an elementary school to enhance and expand literacy materials for exceptional children in the school. One award of \$1,000 will be given out annually.
- **AFL Library Award in Honour of Kathy Harding:** Supported by CUPE1328, this \$1,000 award helps to develop, improve and augment books and materials in an elementary school library within the TCDSB.



Recent Highlights

A Team Pitch Day

What an incredible day of creativity, passion and excitement as student leaders from 20 TCDSB secondary schools gathered for the annual ATeam pitch day on February 25th to present their ideas in response to what they have seen or experienced as barriers or gaps in either their schools or their communities. The quality of the submitted written and digital pitches, as well as the strength of the presentations has grown exponentially year to year, leaving our judges with the monumental task of deciding on the five winning projects.

Congratulations to all the ATeams who participated, and to the staff moderators who provided the teams with guidance and mentorship throughout the planning process.

The five winners this year were:

- **Bishop Marrocco/Thomas Merton** with their project Here as One which aims to shed light on the center of their student body about mental health. Through the connections and partnerships among the Youth Hub, PAL club, Equity Club, Workshop and Assembly groups, students work together to empower, educate, and make their peers feel safe and supported when it comes to their mental well-being.
- **St. Basil-the-Great** with their project to expand their greenhouse growing tomato plant initiative. With a focus on equity and inclusion, the initiative will involve students with special needs in the many stages of preparing, planting and caring for the plant. The funds raised through the sale of the plants will be used to support the ISP program for students with special needs, including the potential to host cooking classes for the students.
- **Notre Dame** with their project Be a Lead-Her, a mentorship initiative connecting the Grade 9 and Grade 11 and 12 students by providing guidance and setting an example through monthly engagement events from September to January with activities and lessons to build bonds, practice teamwork and learn from each other. Students are matched based on shared interests - such as sports, arts, culture - making it easier for them to build bonds.
- **St John Paul II** with their project Hearts and Halos focusing on making connections among existing clubs in their schools with a common goal--to support a local charity, Juliette's Place, a shelter for women and children escaping domestic abuse. Seeing that this organization is severely underfunded and in need of support, the Gaming, Comics, Anime and Film Club, the Crochet Club, the Art Club and Eco Club are working together to support the clients at Juliette's Place.
- **Senator O'Connor** with their project Lift a Life, which is expanding an existing program to discretely support families in need within their own community with gift baskets throughout the year, not just at Christmas. The students have already been doing incredible work fundraising for this cause and will use the funds to expand the initiative.

All ATeams receive seed money of \$1,000 to help with their projects, and the 5 winners of pitch day receive an additional \$1,000. Each winning team also received additional prizes such as a DJ or a photo booth for an event, pizza for their school, ice cream for their school or a motivational speaker thanks to sponsors belairdirect, Focus on Youth and Food for Good.

(See more photos on next page)





ATeam pitch day is coordinated by AFL's Shay McNall and TCDSB Student Leadership's Mike Consul.



Thanks to our judges (left to right) Pastor Q (Toronto Impact Church), TCDSB's Bruno Pileggi, Food for Good's Jack Terzian, Glen Reyes (H4Community and Breaking Canada), Food for Good's Mike Rizzo, Silvana Simone (Our Lady of Sorrows Church) TCDSB's Tania Carducci, AFL's John Wujek, SickKids' Annie O'Leary, MLSE's Kaitlin Hickey, TCDSB's Roy Fernandes, Mikey Mic (Positive Gear), belairdirect's Angela Neuman and Albert Cajilig (Standard BioTools) as well as (not in picture) Don Walker and Marguerite Thomson AFL's Chair and Vice-Chair.



Winning ATeam: (left top to bottom) Bishop Marrocco/Thomas Merton, Notre Dame, St Basil-the-Great and (right top to bottom) St John Paul II, Senator O'Connor.



AFL and TCDSB Celebrate the Legacy of the Loretto Sisters

Toronto Catholic District School Board students and staff gathered at Mary Ward Centre on January 7th for day of prayer, reflection and shared learning focusing on the legacy of Mary Ward, founder of the Sisters of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loretto Sisters). Coordinated jointly by Loretto Abbey, the Angel Foundation for Learning and the Mary Ward Centre, the student-led event featured a presentation by Sr. Evanne Hunter, IBVM/CJ focusing on the courage and spiritual leadership of Mary Ward and the impact her legacy continues to have on the education of young women today.

Other speakers included John Wujek, AFL's Executive Director, who spoke about the power of student voice and advocacy, while George Danfulani, Superintendent of Nurturing Our Catholic Community, talked about the event as a living reflection of TCDSB's pastoral plan "Growing in knowledge with justice".

Students from Loretto Abbey, Loretto College, Mary Ward and St. Mother Teresa Catholic Secondary Schools engaged in small group discussions on exploring hospitality and solidarity with newcomers, raising awareness and responsibility around human trafficking, meditation and reflection on the connection between faith and ecology, and celebrating the voices, courage and leadership of women.

Students were charged with the responsibility of returning to their respective schools to share their learning and to seek out ways to bring those teachings to life in their communities.

Participants extended sincere appreciation to Cataldi Fresh Market who sponsored the luncheon and to Concelebrants Fr. Peter Choi, Fr. Prakash A. Lohale, OP and student readers and musicians who organized the closing Mass of celebration.

This event was a precursor to the annual acknowledgement of IBVM Day across the TCDSB each January 23rd, which celebrates the enduring legacy of leadership, compassion and caring of the Loretto Sisters.

To date this year, TCDSB school communities have raised close to \$15,000 for the Loretto Fund for Newcomers.



Photos courtesy of the Mary Ward Centre:
Above left: Sr. Evanne Hunter with AFL's John Wujek.

Above right: students from Loretto Abbey who helped to organize the event.

Right: Audrey Ferrer from the Mary Ward Centre who led the organization of the event.



AFL-TCDSB-Marlies School Day Game an Overwhelming Success

There is nothing like watching hockey with 8,000 enthusiastic young fans. The Angel Foundation was delighted once again to partner with MLSE/Toronto Marlies on the annual School Day Game at Coca Cola Coliseum.

With a sell-out crowd, AFL was able to raise \$24,000 for urgent student needs through the event. The 7-4 victory for the Marlies was the icing on the cake and added to the excitement of the day.

Special thanks to Kaitlin Hickey from MLSE, who did an incredible job organizing this fun fundraiser.

Also thanks to the many sponsors and partners who were able to join TCDSB officials and AFL staff and board members at the game including belairdirect, McCarthy School Uniforms, TECT, CUPE1328, Dell, Baker Tilly and Food Good.



Cheque presentation and ceremonial puck drop: MLSE's Marc Lira, TCDSB Director of Education Dr Brendan Browne, AFL's Irene Passos-Gold and John Wujek.



Great to spend time with our many sponsors and partners at the Marlies School Day Game.

SAVE THE DATE!

**AFL's Annual Gala November 27, 2026 at Venu Event Space.
Details coming later this spring.**

Angels Among Us

There are always so many people who keep the Angel Foundation for Learning in mind throughout the year. We truly appreciate their support of the students and families we are privileged to serve through these individual local initiatives.

Celebrating a Milestone

Our own resident angel Emmy Szekeres Milne celebrated a milestone birthday and in lieu of gifts asked for donations to AFL, raising over \$1200 through friends and family (right).

Donation from Gala

For the first time since the pandemic, The Polish Orphan Society coordinated their annual dinner gala bringing together many kind hearted members of the community for an evening of celebration and friendship.

AFL's John Wujek and Marguerite Thomson were in attendance to accept a cheque for \$5,000 in support of student nutrition programs (below). The funds will be put to good use to support the new student nutrition programs that are part of the most recent expansion. AFL truly appreciates the Polish Orphan Society for their generosity and commitment to helping to feed hungry children and youth (below left).



Fun and Fundraising

The Holy Trinity Catholic School held a week of fun activities to support their own student nutrition program during the first week in March.

Kudos to the SNP volunteers, parents, and school staff and administration for coordinating and supporting this worthwhile endeavour. (right)

(More Angels on page 11)

MARCH MADNESS THURSDAYS
JOIN US FOR A MONTH OF FUN AT THT!

Thursday, March 5th
COZY AND WARM DRESS DOWN DAY!
FLANNELS, PAJAMAS, AND COZIES – OH MY!

Thursday, March 12th
HAPPY (EARLY) ST. PATRICK'S DAY!
DRESS IN GREEN AND GET READY FOR HOT CHOCOLATE!

Thursday, March 16th
SUNSHINE DRESS DOWN DAY!
ENCOURAGE SPRING BY WEARING ONLY THE BRIGHTEST HUES!

COST TO PARTICIPATE: \$7
PAYABLE ON SCHOOLCASH ONLINE

ALL PROCEEDS DONATED TO OUR SCHOOL STUDENT NUTRITION PROGRAM!



CCAA Angels Support AFL

Special thanks to Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts who presented AFL with a cheque for \$3,000 on behalf of the vocal music staff and students who performed in the community prior to Christmas.

Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Gala a Heartwarming Affair

AFL was truly honoured to be the recipient of the proceeds from the recent Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Gala. Executive Director John Wujek, AFL Chair Don Walker, AFL Vice-Chair Marguerite Thomson, AFL Secretary Irene Passos-Gold, AFL Board member Ana Radic and former long serving board member Mary Eileen Donovan were on hand for the celebrations.

The evening was emceed by Mathew Chromecki from OLS and staff member from Senator O'Connor. Special guest at the event was Bishop Ivan Camilleri, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Toronto.

Many thanks to the Our Lady of Sorrows Gala Planning Committee and particularly Fr. Chris Cauchi, OLS Pastor for his leadership.

The \$27,000 donation from Our Lady of Sorrows will go a long way to helping students and families in need.

Photos courtesy of Clear Images



Students Help with Parish Event

Student volunteers from Michael Power-St. Joseph High School assisted with the Catholic Women's League Pancake Breakfast to mark the start of Lent. They helped serve breakfast to over 160 parishioners and guests at St. Gregory Parish.

Photo courtesy of TCDSB

So Many Other Ways to Help Us Help Kids

Donate Anytime

Make a special donation for Lent or Easter. Celebrate a special occasion. Remember a friend or family who has passed away. <https://angelfoundationforlearning.org/donate/>

Discounted Sports Tickets

There are still a few home games left this season for the Toronto Marlies and Raptors905. Get your tickets at a discounted price and MLSE will make a donation for each ticket sold to AFL.

<https://angelfoundationforlearning.org/discounted-sports-tickets/>

Donate Your Car

Ready to toss out an old clunker? Consider donating your vehicle (car, truck, RV, motorcycle) through Donate a Car Canada and receive a tax receipt for the in kind donation to AFL.

<https://angelfoundationforlearning.org/donate-your-car/>

Clean Out that Closet

Sign up as a vendor on GiveRise, the online buy and sell marketplace that supports charities, and designate AFL as your charity of choice to receive a portion of your sales. <https://giverise.ca/>

Say hello to exclusive savings on car and home insurance.

Get your preferred rate on car and home insurance.



Scan the QR code or call
1 833 583.3301 to get your price.

belairdirect.
car and home insurance

How Your Donations Have Made an Impact

Since our last newsletter, with the support of our donors, sponsors and partners, we were able to provide the following support to students:

- Family Extreme Needs Fund: \$11,600
- Loretto Fund for Newcomers: \$2,312.96
- Reliable Life Fund: \$1,750
- Camp Fund: \$450
- Social Work Emergency Fund: \$28,600
- School Allocations: \$4,850
- Safety Shoes for co-op students: \$675
- A Team: \$17,500
- Vouchers to offset application fees to colleges and universities: 298 student received \$45,660 in vouchers
- Vouchers for school uniforms: 112 students were assisted with vouchers for uniforms for a total dispersement of \$23,300

Thanks to everyone who helps us help students and families across the TCDSB.