Tax Receipts

Our Accounting Staff are currently preparing your 2013 receipts for income tax purposes. You may expect to receive them by mid-February. For our PCA families, the receipts may be picked up at the school. We will notify you regarding dates and location within the school. Those receipts that are not picked up will be mailed to your home before the end of February.

Child Care Tax receipt request forms have been emailed to you. Just a reminder that those forms must be submitted to the school before **January 31**.

Parent Advisory Committee

The Parent Advisory Committee acts in a supportive role to the PCA teachers and staff. They also work closely with the school administration, providing assistance and leadership in engaging parents in activities that support the overall program of the school. One of the vital ways that the PAC contributes to school life is through prayer. Every Friday they meet at the school, praying for the school's personnel and for the needs that arise within the PCA community. The PAC also sponsors a number of events throughout the year which, together, add much enrichment to the PCA culture. Parents who wish to become involved should connect with this year's President, Mrs. Yvonne Ng. She may be contacted via email through pac@pca.ca

Annual General Meeting

The AGM of Peoples Christian Academy (PCA) Inc. will be held on Tuesday, **February 11, 2014**, at 7:30 p.m., in Room 300 at 245 Renfrew Drive, Markham, Ontario. The meeting is open to all parent and alumni members. You are encouraged to be present as updates will be presented by the Board of Directors as well as by the Director of Operations and Ministry. There has been one nomination for parent director – Mr. Kevin Yan has been approved by the nominating committee to let his name stand for another term of office.

As always, there will be time devoted to Q & A. So, if you have questions about the future of PCA, be sure to be present at this year's meeting.

Middle School Parent Dinner

On **Thursday, February 13**, PCA administration will be partnering with the Middle School Student Council (Grades 6 - 8) to put on a special dinner for all Middle School families. From the students' perspective it will be an opportunity to express love and appreciation to their parents on Valentine's Eve. School personnel will also be participating in the program to congratulate and encourage parents in the educational choices they make for their children. When you receive your invitation be sure to respond by the stated deadline since it is very important for the school to know the number of attendees.

The cost of the meal will be $10.00 for the entire family! Please note that, immediately following the meal, child care will be provided for children Grade 5 and younger.

Prayer Breakfast

On **Thursday, February 20**, we will be hosting a prayer breakfast at the school – 245 Renfrew Drive, Markham. Dr. Robert Patterson from Tyndale University College and Seminary will be sharing on the subject of **"Faith and Technology"**, majoring on today's challenges and opportunities related to technology and the Christian young person. Dr. Patterson will also conduct a Q & A session.

The breakfast will run from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. and is free of charge. (A freewill offering will be received to help defray expenses.)

If you are interested in attending, all you need to do is email Mrs. Bewley (hbewley@pca.ca), on or before Friday, February 14, and let her know that you'd like to attend.

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PCA Takes Top Honours in ACSI Spelling Bee

For the second year in a row PCA has captured top honours in the ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) Spelling Bee. The competition took place on November 21. The PCA team, under the leadership of Mrs. Andrews, was represented by our top spellers from Grade 1 to Grade 8.

We, of course, are proud of the diligence of our students in preparing for this event and for their very notable accomplishment for PCA.

Re-Registration

It's hard to believe, but we are already in re-registration season. Our PCA families have received the re-registration packages. Please remember that re-registration should be done right away. Wait lists of new students are already forming for a number of grade levels and new student registrations will begin to be processed early in February. The deadline for re-registration is **February 7**.

If you know of families who may be considering enrolling their children in PCA for the 2014-2015 school year, please let them know that now is the time to register.

Dates to Remember

February 7
Deadline for Re-registration

February 11
Annual General Meeting

February 13
Middle School Family Dinner

February 17
Family Day Holiday

February 20
Prayer Breakfast

February 20
Senior School
Drama Presentation

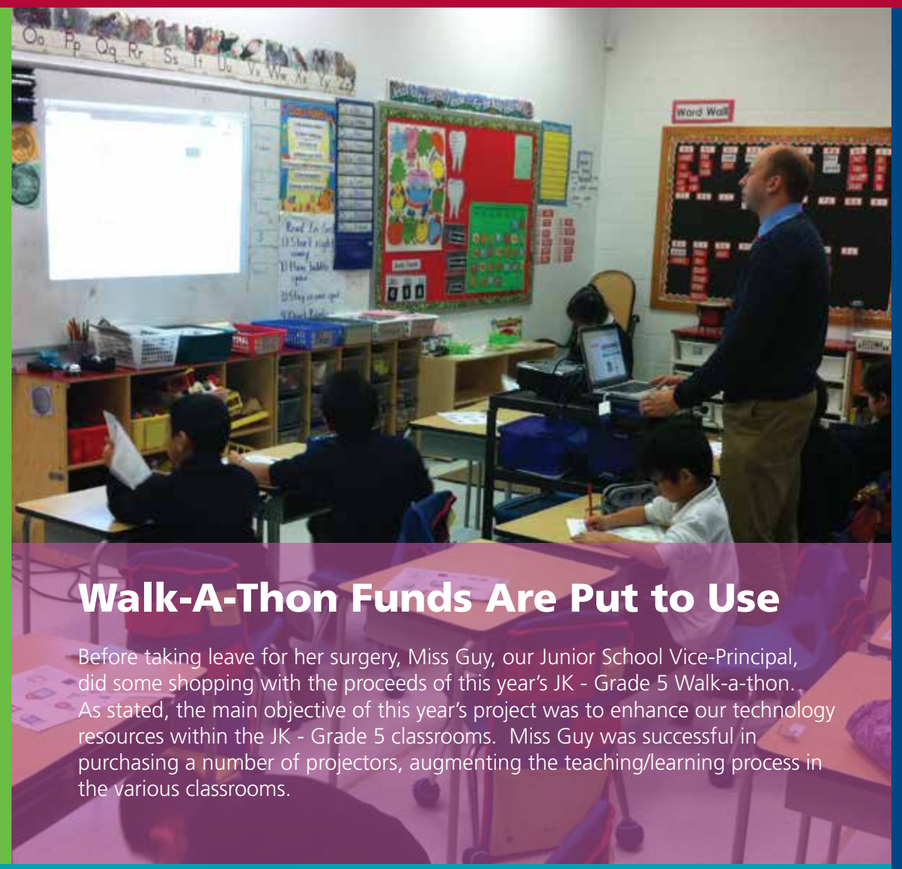
February 23 - March 1
Senior Missions Trip

February 27
ACSI Speech Meet

Canadian Achievement Testing

For many years now we have administered the Canadian Achievement Test to our Grade Three and Grade Five students, showing consistently high ratings. Again this year we are pleased to announce that the results are in and we again see our students performing at anywhere between one and three years ahead of the national norms in grade-equivalence ratings. Since the vast majority of those students have spent all of their developmental years at PCA, it serves as a reliable measure of how we are doing as a school in enabling our students to achieve performance targets that exceed national levels in core subjects.

The Programme for International Student Assessment of 15-year-olds is a similar form of testing conducted worldwide. Recent results show that Canadian students are slipping in the math computation skills. We are pleased to note that the PCA Junior School has just adopted the ACSI math program as its core math curriculum. The ACSI program emphasizes math computation and will be supplemented by additional problem-solving exercises, giving our students a well-rounded math curriculum. (Read more about this in the "Editorial Comment" in this issue.)



Walk-A-Thon Funds Are Put to Use

Before taking leave for her surgery, Miss Guy, our Junior School Vice-Principal, did some shopping with the proceeds of this year's JK - Grade 5 Walk-a-thon. As stated, the main objective of this year's project was to enhance our technology resources within the JK - Grade 5 classrooms. Miss Guy was successful in purchasing a number of projectors, augmenting the teaching/learning process in the various classrooms.

Miss Guy Sends A Greeting

Miss Guy has been recovering at home since her surgery. Here's an update from Miss Guy, herself! Please continue to remember her in your prayers.

Thank you so much for your faithful prayers while I have been away for open heart surgery. I am feeling much stronger and am able to go out for walks and even drive a little.

My sister has been a wonderful caregiver and has been by my side since the surgery. I thank God for giving me such a loving and caring sister. I also thank God for the kindness of the JS parents who have been supplying me with dinners every Thursday and Friday.

The surgery took place on December 2, 2013, and took many more hours than expected. Following surgery my heart would not beat on its own. As a result I now have a permanent pacemaker. I also have atrial fibrillation and am on strong medication to control that. I have experienced anxiety as a result of these unexpected complications and would appreciate your continued prayers for healing and peace.

I begin cardiac rehabilitation in February. Proverbs 3: 5, 6 has been a real comfort to me through this difficult time. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths."

Thank you, again, for your continued prayers. God bless you!

Editorial Comment

In early December the global Organization for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) released the latest results of its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) – a triennial survey of the academic performance of 15-year-olds in the areas of reading, mathematics and science. The PISA rankings have become a closely watched indicator of the success of the educational policies and practices of a particular nation. Politicians and business leaders ascribe considerable weight to the PISA results.

Andreas Schleicher, the OECD's Deputy Director for Education and Skills, was interviewed by The Globe and Mail and asked certain questions about what the PISA results reveal. Here are a couple of things worth noting.

1) Schleicher stated that students in high-performing countries consistently say that achievement is primarily a product of hard work. For a small, independent school like PCA, this is affirming. We may not be able to compete with the mega dollars spent by the public system on facilities and resources, yet, hard work is a core value in our overall programming.

CNN reported on students from China, the nation that led the world in performance in mathematics: "In China and Shanghai, you have nine out of ten students telling you, 'It depends on me. If I invest the effort, my teachers are going to help me to be successful.'" The same can be said by all of our PCA students. Those who are unwilling to apply themselves cannot expect to score well at PCA. While we give each student every opportunity to succeed, the highest success comes through hard work.

2) Another observation that Schleicher makes is that it is the quality of teaching, not class size, which most strongly affects student performance. While we have relatively small classes at PCA, we are more concerned with staffing those classes with the most qualified, energetic and committed teachers. We are thankful to God for the professional and spiritual depth of our current instructional team.

Schleicher, in his comments, said that the high-performing countries may have high student-teacher ratios but they are careful to adequately pay teachers, ensuring that they attract the highest calibre educators. This is a critical question for PCA. Three years ago I sat with a young innovative teacher who shared with me that, as a young parent, it was becoming increasingly difficult to bear the cost of teaching for a less than livable wage. We must find ways to increase revenues. To do this, we have to broaden our donor base while increasing our student population.

This is an immense tension – maintaining academic excellence while keeping our tuition rates reachable for the average family. For this reason we have come to our stakeholders for two years in a row now with our **Firm Foundation** appeal.

Give us the ability to position high-calibre teachers in our classrooms and we will continue to ensure that PCA student achievement rivals and exceeds national and international norms!