

SEAC NEWSLETTER

First Edition

January 2023

Dear Partners in Catholic Education,

Welcome to the first edition of the YCDSB's **Special Education Advisory Committee** (SEAC) newsletter. Our hope is that this newsletter will become a regular communication tool to highlight the incredible work that is happening in our schools, celebrate student successes, and keep you informed about SEAC and our partner associations.

This inaugural edition introduces ourselves, shares who we are and what we do, and highlights some of the important work of our partner associations.

Jennifer Wigston
SEAC Chair 2023



What Is SEAC?



The **Special Education Advisory Committee** (SEAC) provides important advice on special education to the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB).

Members include representatives from the Board of Trustees, local agencies and associations that further the well-being of exceptional students in the YCDSB.

Many of our members are also parents of exceptional children.

SEAC helps ensure that the Board is aware and keeps pace with changing community and professional views and concerns.

Student Successes - page 3

Upcoming events - page 4

Easter Seals Profile - page 5

We meet once a month in a hybrid format, meaning some people come in person to the YCDSB Board Room in Aurora, and others join virtually via Google Meet.

Parents and guardians are welcome to attend either in person or virtually. It's a great way to learn about the resources available within YCDSB.



The agenda and a link to view our meetings online can be found [here](#)



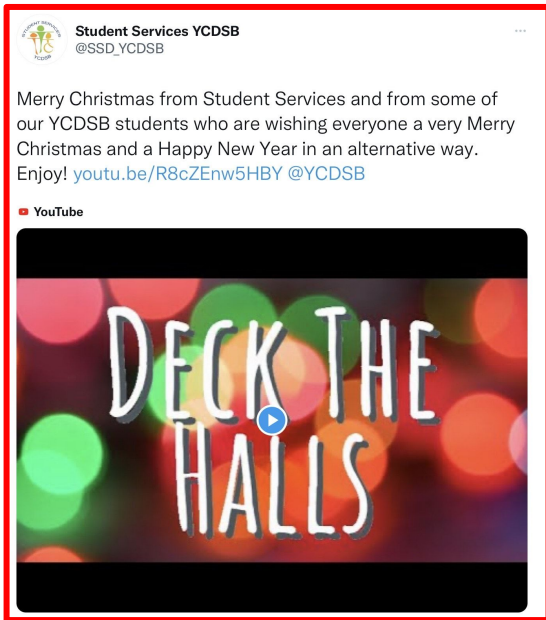
**Meet some of our
Spectacular Student Services Team Members!**

L-R: Michelle Prinzo: Mental Health Lead, Ellen Miceli-Bush: Special Programs Consultant (Elementary), Dr. Diane Lood: Manager & Lead of Psychological Services, Diana Candido: Superintendent of Education: Exceptional Learners, Jane Lee: Supervisor of Behaviour Resource Services, Cindy Mong: Administrative Officer.

Student Success Stories

One thing we love to do at SEAC is share the success stories of our YCDSB students. Each SEAC meeting begins with a “Moment of Inspiration”, where we celebrate students’ achievements and learn about the many people and programs instrumental to their progress.

Below are links to a few recent stories. Interested in seeing more? You can [follow the Students Services Department on Twitter: @SSD_YCDSB](#)



CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO showcasing how we can be inclusive and support all students to participate in a fun holiday activity in their own special way. See how our different communicators use their 'voice' to sing along:

let's normalize total communication!

[Deck the Halls YouTube Video](#)



Originally posted on Twitter:
December 23, 2022

In September 2022, YCDSB had the opportunity to partner with Community Living - York South and the City of Vaughan in the Project SEARCH pilot program. Project SEARCH is a one-year Transition-to-Work Program for students aged 18-21 with intellectual or developmental disabilities or autism in their final year of high school. We are pleased that 8 YCDSB students are participating in the program in its inaugural year. Students are able to experience multiple internships in conjunction with instruction and training, all in a workplace setting.

CLICK BELOW to see our students' experience:

[Video - Project Search](#)

CLICK BELOW to read the press release:

[Project SEARCH Press Release](#)



Originally posted on
Twitter:
December 19, 2022

Our Valued Partners

Our members are representatives of the following organizations and bring a wealth of experience to the table.

Autism Ontario - York Region Chapter

<https://yssn.ca/autism-ontario-york-region-chapter/>

Community Living York South www.communitylivingyorksouth.ca

Down Syndrome Association of York Region <https://dsayr.ca/>

Early Intervention Services, York Region www.york.ca/specialneeds

Easter Seals Ontario www.easterseals.org

Inclusion Action in Ontario <https://inclusionactionontario.ca/>

Learning Disabilities Association, York Region www.ldayr.org

York Hills Centre for Children, Youth and Families www.yorkhills.ca



Upcoming Events

Our SEAC partners offer many workshops, webinars and group meetings on a variety of topics. Below are just a few upcoming presentations and programs:

Many Faces of Anxiety: Understanding and supporting children who live with worry.

Wed. Feb. 15. 6:30 - 8:30 pm Online

FREE

<https://www.yorkhills.ca/services/workshopsandwebinars/>

Understanding The Brain and Behaviour Development in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Tue. Feb. 28. 6:30 - 8:30 pm Online

FREE

<https://www.yorkhills.ca/services/workshopsandwebinars/>

The **Social Skills** program assists in the development of social skills and social problem solving strategies. It also helps to promote self-esteem and self-confidence.

****First time participants must provide a copy of child's Psycho-educational Assessment****

Children must have a primary diagnosis of LD and/or ADHD to be eligible.

For more information, visit:

<https://ldayr.org/social-skills/>

Spotlight on Easter Seals: Hoor Ulain's Story

Imagine having limited mobility and growing up believing and constantly being told you can't take part in the same fun activities as your able-bodied friends. Now imagine you discover a magical place in the middle of nature where all those limits disappear, a paradise where you can kayak across a serene lake all by yourself, explore a thrilling high ropes course, rock climb, and meet countless other kids your age who deeply relate to you and your experiences.

For Provincial Easter Seals Ontario Ambassador, Hoor Ulain, discovering and experiencing Easter Seals Camp for the first time was truly life-changing. Hoor Ulain was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when she was one year old and has used mobility equipment for most of her life. You might think that would prevent her from taking part in summer camp, but at Easter Seals camp, everything is possible.

"I want every kid to go. It's amazing! I'm so happy. I'm so happy it's reopening."

Camp Woodeden has played an important role in not just Hoor Ulain's life, but in the lives of her family members, who attended family camp with her in 2018. Hoor Ulain's mom, Rahaf, shared what it was like to bond with other parents at Camp Woodeden, "speaking, sharing experiences, you know you're not alone."

"You're not the only one in this world facing this type of difficulty. It's good for the kids and the parents. It's good to see other stories," she said. **The impact that fully accessible camps like Camp Woodeden have on the lives of kids with physical disabilities and their families is immeasurable.** In Hoor Ulain's words, "it's important to have fully accessible camps so that no kids feel like they want to do it, but they can't. So, there's no limits to what a kid can do at camp and the kinds of memories that they're able to make. And so that they don't question why they're disabled or wish that they weren't disabled because there's something they wish they could do but can't because of the limitations of the environment."

Rahaf shared the impact that she has seen Camp Woodeden have on her daughter's life. "Looking at my daughter before and after the camp shows how kids gain more confidence and happiness which helps them to do better in their lives.

Hoor Ulain and Rahaf are grateful for the support of Easter Seals donors. "Thank you for being a part of the existence of Easter Seals camp," expressed Hoor Ulain, "and thank you for being a part of spreading more smiles on little kids' faces, making their laughs a little louder, making them feel included, and making them feel like there's no specific boundaries on their dreams..."

