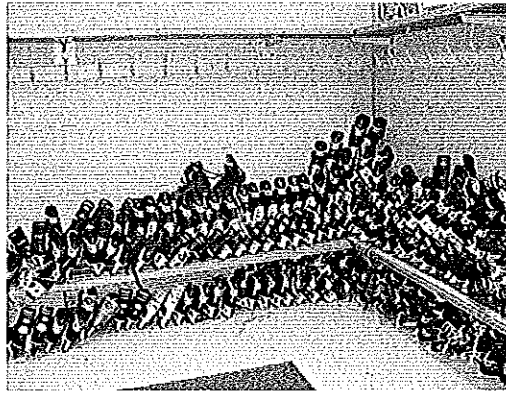


Queen Victoria Skates in January !

On Tuesday January 12, five classes of students from Grades 1 to 8 at Queen Victoria Public School will leave pencils, paper, books and computers behind to lace up for the first of 3 mornings of skating on the outdoor rinks of west end Toronto. By the end of January, almost 700 students will have had their turn on the ice, as three busloads head out every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning and afternoon. Classes are paired so that older students share a rink with younger ones – helping with the lace-up, encouraging each other to get up from the inevitable early falls to try new moves, and showing off the considerable progress they make over their three days of practice.



For more than 15 years the school has rallied teachers, parents and community volunteers to give the students an opportunity to participate in one of our most Canadian experiences - skating. For many students, Queen Victoria is their first stop after immigrating to Canada. Few of the parents in our community have the resources to purchase equipment and clothing needed to skate safely and many are unaware of rink locations or of the age-old Canadian tradition of skate exchanges for growing feet.



Generous donations from community and corporate donors have allowed the Queen Victoria to build up a collection of over 500 pairs of skates and helmets so that each student can be sized and fitted to ensure that their introduction to Canada's national sport is safe and comfortable. Parents, teachers and community members volunteer hundreds of hours each year - sorting, packing, unpacking and repacking skates, sorting helmets, booking rinks and buses, and, throughout the month of December, fitting 672 students with the "just right" pair of skates.

Is all this effort worth it? Each year, the joy on the faces of children as they wobble, slide, fall and glide on their borrowed skates renews the school's commitment to this initiative – and attracts new volunteers to assist in the effort.

A special thanks goes out to the Dr. Tom Pashby Sports Safety Fund that, over the past two years, has provided more than 200 new helmets to ensure our students and staff skate safely.

For further information, contact:
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