

In the Spotlight!

Calderstone Middle School

Peel District School Board, Mississauga, Ontario

The *Guidance and Career Education Program* at Calderstone Middle School is a coordinated system of programs, activities, and learning experiences that connect school and the workplace. The program provides opportunities for ALL students to choose career-related coursework and workplace experiences that will advance them from school to the post secondary world.

Students are more likely to succeed when they see a purpose to their studies. By linking academic lessons to real-world activities and situations, the program improves student motivation and academic performance, and prepares students to choose careers they are interested in.

The main components of the Calderstone *Guidance and Career Education Program* are:

- Career awareness through the elementary Advisory Program
- Systematic Career Curriculum for Grades 7-8
- *All Grade 7 students (17 classes) play The Real Game*
- Leadership opportunities in the school and in the community
- Career fair at the school
- Career Cruising is available to students school wide
- ['Making My Way'](#), Peel's Guidance and Career Education initiative
- Trips to post secondary destinations
- Workplace trips for all students in Grade 8
- Creating school/community partnerships to build student success

Grade 7 teachers play *The Real Game* with their classes. *The Real Game* allows students to imagine the future, reflect on lifestyle choices and explore various career and educational pathways. All of our 450 Grade 7 students play *The Real Game* once every week. Jyoti Dhillon, a Grade 7 teacher enjoys playing the game with her students because they are able to find connection and meaning when playing. Jyoti explains:

"My students have enjoyed exploring various avenues and paths that lay ahead of them in the near future. The students find The Real Game fun and are energized to play it!"

Other Calderstone teachers share Jyoti's enthusiasm. For instance Lori Scott, another Grade 7 teacher says:

"The students love coming to advisory since we have started playing The Real Game program. It teaches students skills that they will need in the future such as budgeting, resume writing, and career information."

The Grade 7 program sets the framework for Calderstone's Grade 8 *Guidance and Career Education Program*. Students in grade 8 work with their teacher-advisor on weekly lessons that help students connect school, post-secondary and the work world. Career Cruising is another component of the career education program that is integrated into other curriculum strands. There are also regular meetings and assemblies at the school for both students and their parents to make them aware of the various educational and career pathways that exist for students.

Having professionals in their area of expertise available to students is another great way that Calderstone gets students excited about the future. A career fair is held at the school at the start of the school year to allow students to explore their various career interests. Approximately 40 different companies and organizations visit Calderstone to share their knowledge and information about the different careers and educational pathways available at their organization. The day-long event allows students to learn about different careers that they are interested in pursuing in the future. These range from careers that require an apprenticeship to those requiring college or university.

Later in the school year, a series of workplace trips are held. Students have the opportunity to visit 1 of 14 different workplaces. Companies such as ScotiaBank, Rogers, Honda, Toyota and East Side Mario's are visited by students. Public organizations including the Toronto Police Service, William Osler Health Centre, Canadian Forces, Ontario Legislative Assembly and City Hall are also workplace destinations. Calderstone staff work collaboratively to ensure each student is able to make informed decisions about their own pathway for success. The Calderstone school and community have created a relationship that fosters student growth and allows students the opportunity to become leaders of the future.

For more information ...

Calderstone Middle School: **Parm Bhatthal**, Guidance Counsellor, Calderstone Middle School (Tel: 905 595-1144 ext 406 Email: parm.bhatthal@peelsb.com)

Peel District School Board: **John Lavelle**, Instructional Coordinator, Curriculum and Instruction Support Services (905 890-1010 ext 2551 Email; john.lavelle@peelsb.com) or **Susan Stavin**, Instructional Resource Teacher, Student Success/Learning to 18 (Tel: 905-890-1010 ext 2165 Email: susan.stavin@peelsb.com)