

May 26 Press Release

## John Paul II Collegiate Greenhouse Project

Food sustainability, the ability to grow one's own food, and healthy menu planning is critical for our community where 14.3 % of our population live in poverty and 13.8% of children live in poverty. Even though agriculture provides one of the largest sources of employment in the area, most students who attend our schools do not grow their own food. Teachers, Jeff Kardynal and Rhea Good identified this gap and have responded! With the support of Carlo Hansen, Principal and the LOCCS Board of Education, John Paul II Collegiate plans to build a greenhouse to plant, grow and cultivate produce to be used, donated or sold by students. This project was unattainable without seeking external funding. Today, we are pleased to announce that the following companies and organizations have committed over \$12 000 to support the construction of the greenhouse and purchase of supplies, seed, and tools:

\$7000 - Cargill Ag Horizons & Cargill Animal Nutrition

\$3978 - TD Friends of the Environment

\$1000 - SIGA

\$ 500 - Discovery Co-op

Total: \$12 478.00

Research demonstrates that students who think critically, ask questions, and manipulate, sort, test, and investigate materials learn better. The chance for students to construct a greenhouse and garden space, the resulting product selection and cultivation of produce, and the life skills for our Functionally Integrated students is key to developing knowledge, interest in agricultural practices, and a commitment to food and environmental sustainability. The Agriculture Club will create renewed interest in agriculture and environmental science. Long term we believe that more students will choose pursue studies in environmental science and agriculture and, as a result, remain in Saskatchewan for future employment.

We anticipate that other teachers from other Light of Christ schools will be interested in bringing their students to the greenhouse specifically for the study of life sciences. The Saskatchewan curriculum includes outcomes related to:

- Needs and Characteristics of Living Things
- Plant Growth and Changes
- Exploring Soils
- Structures and Behaviours of Plants
- Diversity of Living Things
- Interactions within Ecosystems
- Cells, Tissues, Organs, and Systems.

Currently, there is no greenhouse learning space available to students unless they travel by bus to the city greenhouse or to a commercial greenhouse. This costs considerable money for busing. JP II is within walking distance of 3 of the 4 elementary schools located in LOCCS in North Battleford. Additional benefits will include better community relationships, improved student engagement and interest in life sciences, improved life skills, and better decision making regarding healthy eating habits.

The greenhouse will be located on the west side of the school.

