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Finir l'année scolaire en chantant



Travailler la grammaire, la structure de phrase et l'argumentation, ça peut être ennuyeux... sauf quand on écrit une chanson. Billel Djerir, Dania Proulx, Alix-Olivier Rigaud, Klaud Xhaferi, Kamba-Mukulu Katchewela et Cynthia Létourneau-Bélanger, élèves de l'école secondaire Honoré-Mercier, entouraient le reggaeman Buntin Neil lors du lancement de leur CD, hier
Photo: Alain Roberge, La Presse



Marie Allard
La Presse

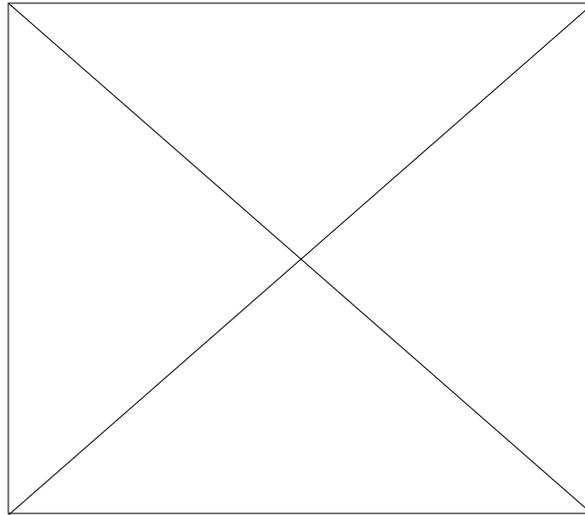
C'est officiellement cet après-midi que les grandes vacances commencent pour le million d'élèves que compte le Québec. Mais des jeunes de l'école secondaire Honoré-Mercier, dans le sud-ouest de Montréal, ont fait la fête dès hier. Et pour cause: c'était le lancement du CD de chansons qu'ils ont eux-mêmes écrites, composées et interprétées, avec l'appui d'artistes de Nuits d'Afrique.

Élection de Barack Obama, prostitution juvénile en Thaïlande, suicide chez les adolescents : les paroles écrites dans le cours de français de 4^e secondaire sont d'un sérieux à faire rougir Lady GaGa. «Ma chanson raconte une tuerie dans une école, parce que je trouve que c'est important d'en parler, a témoigné Sara Lapalus, 16 ans. Si on est méchant avec un élève, ça peut mener à ça.»

Alix-Olivier Rigaud, 17 ans, a chanté avec aisance un rap dénonçant la violence conjugale. L'histoire d'une femme qui cache «des bleus sur ses bras et un coquard sous ses lunettes Dolce & Gabbana». Quant à Klaud Xhaferi, 15 ans, il a abordé la dure réalité des enfants de Palestine sur un air reggae. «Je suis fier de moi : c'est un gros projet, pour lequel on a beaucoup travaillé», a dit le jeune homme d'origine albanaise, après sa prestation.

Étudier la grammaire dans la joie

Écoutez un extrait de la chanson «Barack Obama»



Écrire des paroles de chansons a motivé les élèves à travailler l'argumentation, la structure de phrase et la grammaire, a indiqué Julie Patenaude, l'enseignante instigatrice du projet. Le parrainage d'artistes bénévoles, comme le reggaeman Buntin Neil, a aussi valorisé ces jeunes issus d'un quartier défavorisé. «Beaucoup d'élèves n'ont pas d'hommes auprès d'eux, alors c'était significatif que des hommes d'autres cultures leur disent: "T'es capable!"» a souligné Mme Patenaude.

Au total, une cinquantaine de jeunes ont participé au projet, allant jusqu'à proposer des illustrations pour la pochette du CD intitulé *Un chant d'espoir*. «Vous êtes les mêmes élèves que dans les écoles privées», a dit l'enseignante aux adolescents, hier. «La différence, c'est qu'ils manquent de confiance en eux, mais ils ont le même potentiel», a-t-elle assuré.

Pas de problème de cohabitation

L'école Honoré-Mercier - et ses élèves - en ont marre de faire parler d'eux négativement. «Nous, on va là et on sait qu'il y a plein de beaux projets, a fait valoir Sara Lapalus. On n'a pas envie que les gens voient Honoré-Mercier sur notre CV et disent: "Ahhhh..." avec déception. C'est une bonne école!»

La clientèle de l'école a rapidement changé ces dernières années. «Il y a 10 ans, il y avait deux élèves noirs dans toute l'école», a dit Fouzia Sahrane, enseignante de français. Aujourd'hui, l'école est multiculturelle «et il n'y a pas du tout de problème de cohabitation», a assuré Bruno Charreyron, directeur d'Honoré-Mercier.

Peu importe leur origine, tous avaient un mot en tête hier : vacances. «On se sent libérés, a dit Alix-Olivier Rigaud. C'est l'été, il faut beau et on va en profiter.» Son répit sera de courte durée : dès lundi, l'adolescent travaillera pour le ministère de l'Immigration, grâce au programme Valorisation Jeunesse. «Je vais faire des photocopies», a-t-il expliqué avec l'enthousiasme de la jeunesse.

Bon été à tous!

Crédits chanson :

Texte : Nadine Al-Yafie, Tehmeena Susan Rajput

Musique : Amar Fall

Interprétation : Dania Proulx, Cynthia Létourneau-Bélanger

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Publié le 22 juin 2009 à 19h53 | Mis à jour le 22 juin 2009 à 20h03

En raison d'un affaissement mineur

Un pont fermé d'urgence dans l'Est ontarien



Archives, LeDroit



Jean-François Dugas
Le Droit

Le pont Bélanger, situé entre les villages de Casselman et de Bourget dans l'Est ontarien, a été fermé d'urgence tard vendredi soir dernier en raison de problèmes structuraux.

« Il y a eu un affaissement d'environ cinq centimètres du côté nord-est du pont et nous avons fermé le pont par mesure de précaution », a souligné hier Marc Clermont, directeur des travaux publics aux Comtés unis de Prescott-Russell (CUPR).

« Le pont n'est pas en train de tomber. » - Marc Clermont

Des ingénieurs devaient évaluer l'ampleur des dommages en début de journée, hier, pour tenter d'estimer la durée de la fermeture du pont du chemin de comté 8 (près du chemin de comté 16). Cette période est toujours indéterminée.

« Le pont n'est pas en train de tomber, a rassuré M. Clermont. La pire chose qui pourrait arriver serait que le pont s'affaisse un peu plus. »

Réparations temporaires

Pour éviter une telle éventualité, les employés des CUPR ont effectué des réparations temporaires au cours du week-end pour supporter le poids du pont.

« Il faut trouver une solution à court terme pour ouvrir le pont et une solution à long terme si le besoin se fait sentir. Nous ne voulons pas fermer ce pont indéfiniment. »

Si les CUPR veulent rétablir le flot de la circulation, c'est qu'ils ont entrepris, hier, des travaux de réparation majeurs au pont de Riceville, situé à moins de 20 kilomètres du pont Bélanger.

« Deux ponts fermés dans le même coin, le même jour, ce n'est pas idéal. Mais nous avons décidé d'être prudents. Vaut mieux prévenir que guérir », a indiqué M. Clermont.

L'accès au pont de Riceville sera bloqué pendant quatre mois.

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Teens charged with attempting to poison children with Tylenol

BY TIM SHUFELT, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN JUNE 23, 2009

Two teenagers are accused of trying to poison school children in an incident at a Carleton Place elementary school last week.

According to police, a group of teens was spotted walking by the fenced yard of Caldwell Street Public School during recess last Wednesday.

Two of the males then allegedly tossed handfuls of Tylenol pills into the playground of the school. A red bottle was found and the pills were gathered and removed from the playground.

An overdose of acetaminophen can cause liver damage or failure and a dangerous dose of the drug for young children is far less than it would be for adults.

Acetaminophen is also the second most common cause of accidental poisonings in children.

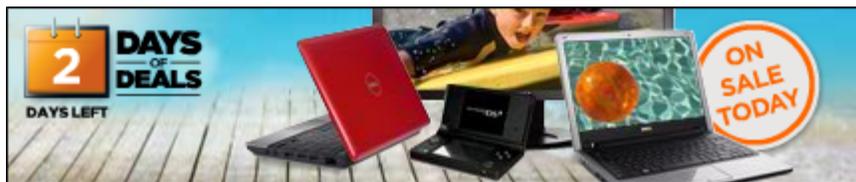
The principal of the school called Carleton Place OPP. Two teens who are known to police were arrested the day after the incident.

A 15-year-old Carleton Place boy is charged with two counts of attempting to administer a noxious substance, two counts of mischief, two counts of breach of undertaking and two counts of breach of recognizance of bail. He was held in custody and will re-appear in Smiths Falls youth court on June 24.

A 16-year-old boy is charged with two counts of attempting to administer a noxious substance, two counts of mischief and three counts of breach of probation. He was released from custody and will re-appear in court on July 15.

Police say the investigation is continuing and additional charges are pending.

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Ottawa overhauls student aid

By CHRISTINA SPENCER, NATIONAL BUREAU

Last Updated: 22nd June 2009, 7:20pm

OTTAWA - Student groups gave the federal government a robust "A" Monday for its overhauled system of post-secondary loans and grants, which takes effect in September.

"There's a huge challenge for students and their families right now," said Arati Sharma, national director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. Because of the tough economy, "students are looking more toward loans and grants."

The program, a 2008 budget promise whose details were fleshed out by Human Resources Minister Diane Finley, follows on from the Millennium Scholarship Foundation set up by the former Liberal government, which winds up this year.

The government says the new Canada Student Grant program and Repayment Assistance Program will direct grants to 100,000 more students than the program they replace. In addition, students in danger of missing loan payments will have an opportunity to renegotiate how they pay their debt.

Average student debt is about \$25,000, said Katherine Giroux-Bougard, chairwoman of the Canadian Federation of Students.

She said she was pleased the program was being administered through Finley's department and not as a stand-alone foundation. In the past, Canada's auditor general has expressed concern that arms-length foundations are not sufficiently accountable to Parliament.

Asked her advice to young people trying to decide whether to continue their studies or find a job in a difficult economy, Finley said, "There's no question that going forward, most jobs are going to require some post-secondary education.

"I think in these difficult times this may be a good opportunity for students to take advantage of these two new programs."

Giroux-Bougard said 70% of new jobs require at least two years of post-secondary education.

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Ontario girl with swine flu dies

By THE CANADIAN PRESS

Last Updated: 22nd June 2009, 3:26pm

TORONTO - A six-year-old girl from Peel Region west of Toronto is the first child in Ontario to die after contracting swine flu.

However, health officials are still not sure exactly what role the H1N1 virus played in the girl's death.

It's also not clear yet if she had other underlying medical conditions that could have contributed to her death.

Since the swine flu outbreak started, three other people in Ontario who had the H1N1 virus have died, but all three had chronic medical conditions.

Twenty people who have the virus were in Ontario hospitals as of last week, a number of whom have underlying medical conditions.

There have been more than 2,500 confirmed cases of swine flu in Ontario, but most are considered mild with symptoms very similar to an annual seasonal flu.

Globally, H1N1 has been confirmed in nearly 45,000 people in more than 90 countries, with about 180 deaths attributed to the virus.

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Summer camps brace to battle the flu

Ask parents to keep sick children at home to limit possible H1N1 outbreaks

BY PAULINE TAM, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN JUNE 21, 2009



Public health officials are gearing to deal with potential outbreaks of the H1N1 virus at summer camps attended by children.

Photograph by: ., Canwest News Service

OTTAWA — With outbreaks of the H1N1 swine flu a real possibility this summer, directors of youth camps across Ontario are urging parents to be straight with counsellors about any medical conditions their children may have, and to keep their young ones at home if they develop flu symptoms.

In many cases, camp directors are taking extra precautions to screen campers for signs of illness -- coughing, fever, diarrhea, vomiting -- in the hope of minimizing the spread of the virus.

"I would hope that logic would prevail, and parents would not send their children to camp if something has developed," said Jeff Brown, director of Camp Otterdale near Perth, which hosts up to 600 children every summer.

The camp is prepared to send those who are sick back home, said Brown. Those who fall sick while at camp would be referred to onsite medical staff, who would determine whether they should be isolated or sent home. "We would treat it like any other flu," said Brown.

Meanwhile, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, poised for a surge in flu patients, is developing a plan to ensure it has enough staff to deal with what has traditionally been a summer lull.

"Summer is typically a quiet time and the hospital's staffing levels go down," said Dr. Isra Levy,

Ottawa's medical officer of health. "I know that they've been starting to think about whether there needs to be a disruption to previously planned vacation scheduling."

The novel strain of the H1N1 virus has tended to infect large numbers of otherwise healthy children and teens, meaning CHEO's emergency room has been busier than expected with an increased number of patients exhibiting flu symptoms.

"CHEO, more than any of the other (Ottawa-area) hospitals, has really been at the brink of needing to bring forward different kinds of plans to deal with the surge and demand, especially in the emergency room," Levy said.

And as the school year winds down and children prepare to spend weeks in the wilderness, public-health officials are gearing up to deal with potential outbreaks at summer camps.

Levy said while his staff are prepared to track the virus by relying on reports from camps, it's unclear what the numbers would reveal. "What's going to be very hard to know is, is this pattern really different than other years, when no one got around to telling us?"

The Ontario Camps Association, which represents day and overnight camps attended by 350,000 children annually, has sent an e-mail to its 350 members warning that summer camps have the potential to be a "breeding ground" for the virus.

"Most kids who get sick at camp haven't gotten sick because of something they caught at camp. It's something that they've already brought in," said Aruna Ogale, the association's executive director. "Somebody comes to camp ill and then, it gets spread around."

As a result, the association has urged its member camps, such as those run by the YMCA, B'nai Brith Ottawa, Christie Lake Kids and Camp Otterdale, among others, to report to the association and to public-health officials any time they see three or more cases of the flu within a four-day period.

"One of the things that we would start doing is issue alerts to other camps in the province and track if other camps have it," Ogale said. "When you think about the fact that camps are getting kids from out of area, you could be importing the illness from one area to another."

Camps accredited with the association must follow provincially-recommended guidelines to ensure they have on-site nurses, doctors and first-aid staff, as well as facilities to isolate campers and staff who fall sick. Beyond that, extra infection-control measures are expected to be enforced this summer, including installing more hand-sanitizing stations, ensuring common areas such as bathrooms are cleaned regularly and screening campers for flu-related symptoms.

This is particularly important for children who have underlying medical conditions that could either weaken their immune systems, making them more susceptible to the virus, or increase their risk of

developing life-threatening complications if they get sick.

"Sometimes, parents aren't as forthcoming as they could be about their children's health conditions because they think that maybe they'll be turned away," said Ogale. "So this year, more than any other time, it's really important to be straightforward about any medications or any underlying conditions that camp directors should know about."

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Swine flu forces CHEO to call up staff

Number of patients with H1N1 symptoms has put considerable strain on resources

BY MOHAMMED ADAM, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN; WITH FILES FROM CITIZEN NEWS SERVICES JUNE 23, 2009 7:55 AM



Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Ottawa.

Photograph by: Rod MacIvor, The Ottawa Citizen

The number of patients going to the emergency department of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario has jumped 17 per cent in the past few weeks because of the H1N1 swine flu, forcing the hospital to call up more staff to work extra shifts.

CHEO's emergency department typically sees about 160 patients a day, and during the summer months staff numbers drop as fewer patients are expected. This year, however, the rising number of children showing up at the ER with H1N1 flu symptoms has forced the hospital to increase staffing to cope. While the situation has not developed into a crisis, hospital officials say it has put considerable strain on workers and resources.

"It is impacting all staff and physicians and they have done what needs to be done and worked extra shifts when needed," said Dr. Lindy Samson, CHEO's chief of infectious diseases and head of pandemic planning.

"What we've done is increased the number of nursing staff that are available each shift at the emergency department, as well as increase the number of support staff. We've returned to what we usually have to do during our peak viral season in the middle of winter."

The financial strain is also significant.

The hospital has been dealing with additional costs not only for increased staffing, but also for supplies such as gowns, gloves and masks, as well as putting patients in isolation and doing laboratory tests for the new flu virus. The hospital's laboratory, which serves the Champlain health region, is not paid by the number of tests it does -- it gets a lump sum to cover its costs. With the large number of tests being done, the hospital is likely facing a budget shortfall. Numbers are being crunched and exact figures won't be known for weeks, spokeswoman Ann Fuller said.

The H1N1 flu, which was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization two weeks ago, has spread to 100 countries and territories. More than 52,000 people have been infected and more than 230 have died. According to the WHO, the global infection has risen by nearly 8,000 cases and more than 50 deaths since last Friday, indicating it's a fast-spreading virus.

The U.S. led the world in the number of new cases over the weekend -- 3,594, taking the number infected to 21,449, with 87 dead. Scientists are particularly worried about the spread of the virus into southern-hemisphere countries entering their winter seasons. Chile, the latest of such countries, has been hard hit, with nearly 1,200 new cases, bringing the total to more than 4,300 and four deaths. In Australia, the other southern hemisphere country being monitored by experts, there've been 237 new cases for a total of 2,436 and one death.

Canada has seen an extra 805 cases, taking the overall toll to 5,710 and 13 deaths. On Monday, authorities confirmed the first death of an Ontario child with the flu, in Peel region outside Toronto. A six-year-old girl died on June 15 outside hospital, said Ontario's chief medical officer of health, but it wasn't confirmed she had H1N1 flu until June 19.

As of Monday, 261 cases of the flu have been confirmed in Ottawa, with half of those among children under 16, though health authorities say they're no longer keeping a close count. No deaths have been reported in Ottawa.

Samson said many children have shown up at CHEO's emergency department with flu-like symptoms that their parents suspected to be H1N1, but was not.

Others were clearly infected.

"We've definitely had children that both have come into the emergency department and been sent home that have been confirmed with H1N1 virus, and also several that have required admission to the

hospital," Samson said.

CHEO wouldn't say how many patients have been infected with H1N1 or hospitalized with the virus, but Samson said the hospital has "risen to the occasion" throughout the outbreak and provided appropriate care.

Pat Elliott-Miller, the hospital's vice-president of patient care and chief of nursing, explained that during the peak flu season from December to May, key sections such as the intensive care unit or the emergency department would staff about nine nurses during the day and the same number at night. In the summer, this number is ordinarily reduced to about seven each day and night, but now the staffing levels are back to peak-season service. Spread across the hospital, the numbers required to cover the extra hours suddenly become large.

"When you multiply that across the number of patient care units we have, that becomes a bit of a big deal. That's about 40 nurses per 24 hours working extra shifts, extra hours," Elliott-Miller said.

Samson said parents can help ease the pressure by dealing with flu-like symptoms at home and going to the ER only in a true emergency.

"When children get sick at home with fever and cough, parents should really manage the fever at home, making sure the children drink enough fluids to stay hydrated," she said.

"If they develop any breathing problems, or severe headache, or the children are sleepy and can't be woken up, that's the time when you come to the emergency department."

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