



December 1, 2008

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Season's Greetings from ETFO Niagara

December seems to come upon us faster every year. We recognize that you have been working harder than ever with the multitude of educational initiatives you are faced with, as well as serving the unique needs of your NON-standardized students. Unfortunately, this time of year often magnifies the challenges many children and families in our community face. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to students and their overall well-being. As the festive season quickly closes in, we hope you will take the time to shift your focus from word walls to Yule logs and from PLC's to your families.

May all of the joys of the season be yours!

Our Most Vulnerable Kids Need Your Help

This is a reminder that our Status of Women committee is again looking for the support from all of our generous teachers for our **"Christmas Stockings for Shelters"** program. The stocking stuffers will help spread joy to women and children, who otherwise would not experience cheer during the holiday season. The donations we receive will be divided between Women's Place of South Niagara (Welland Centre and Nova House), Gillian's Place, the YWCA, and the Women's Resource Centre.

We ask that donations be dropped off at the ETFO Niagara office or to one of the drop off sites listed on the flyer (in your school) no later than **Dec. 8, 2008**, so that items can be sorted and sent to the shelters in time for distribution for Christmas. If you are unable to get items to one of the drop off sites, please contact the office and we'll make arrangements to have the "stockings" picked up. Please do **not** send stockings in the courier.

November 30th Deadline and the Provincial Discussion Table (PDT)

The November 30th deadline is not part of the local collective bargaining process. It is important to realize that this PDT process was outside the bounds of our collective bargaining process, so we will continue to move ahead locally based on the preliminary submission you ratified in the fall. Within the framework of the PDT there are a number of areas that ETFO viewed to be problematic for all elementary teachers and therefore, ETFO would not agree to the framework as a whole unless they were addressed. For more information on the PDT we encourage teachers to read the **Collective Bargaining Bulletins** in your school. Please note that **Bulletin #4 and Bulletin #5** were distributed to Stewards at the General Meeting on December 1st. While no one is expecting an overnight quick fix to the current inequitable funding situation across the province, local ETFO bargaining teams are at the negotiating table working to achieve collective agreements that address the serious workload issues elementary educators' face. With the passing of November 30th, you undoubtedly will

have questions about the status of negotiations and the progress of the campaign to close the gap. Some ETFO members may be especially anxious about bargaining in light of the current economic climate. It is important to allow the normal bargaining process a chance to unfold. We will keep teachers up to date on development as they arise.

Hamilton Tiger-Cats Christmas Ticket Offer for Niagara Teachers

ETFO Niagara

**2601 Hwy. 20., East, Units 5 & 6, R.R. #1, Fonthill, ON L0S 1E6
905-892-2917 or 1-866-419-9484**

2009 Hamilton Tiger-Cats Season Seats are now on-sale for a special rate. Employees of the Niagara District School Board have traditionally been a stronghold for TigerTown supporters and to thank you for your past support we would like to provide a special Season Seat offer. You can purchase Tiger-Cats Season Seats at a 10% discount from standard season seat prices if you pay for the entire season by January 23rd. In addition to this discount, your school will receive a pair of tickets to the Tiger-Cats 2009 home opener for every pair of Season Seats purchased.

Ticats season seats start from as little as \$112.50 for all 10 home games, a 43% savings over individual game prices. Don't wait, purchase your Tiger-Cats season seats by contacting the team at 905-547-CATS (2287).

Steward Training on Performance Appraisal of Experienced Teachers

With the roll-out of the new performance appraisal model for experienced teachers (PAET) came training for school administrators as well as ETFO Niagara Stewards. The decision to also train Stewards with respect to the performance appraisal processes aligns with the philosophy of the new program. The PAET is a collaborative and collegial process that gives teachers a great deal of ownership for their ongoing professional growth. The process should not be seen as being done to a teacher, but rather, it should be viewed as a vehicle for dialogue and demonstration of teacher excellence.

Although the summative appraisal can raise anxiety in even the most experienced teacher, understanding all of the nuances and steps in the process can help to minimize a teacher's angst. Therefore, Stewards can help teachers understand the PAET process based on the knowledge they received from the voluntary training session or by directing colleagues to the binder and DVD materials that each school steward received.

ETFO Niagara would like to extend thanks to Jim Morgan and Sue McNeil for putting on the training and we would also like to thank the Stewards who took the time out of their busy teaching schedules to be part of the interactive training module. For those Stewards who wanted to attend the sessions, but could not find the time, please watch for future sessions to be offered after you have received the Binder of resource materials.

Winter General Meeting

Your Winter General Meeting is scheduled for February 18th at John Michael's Banquet Centre. Among the items of business that are conducted at the General Meeting are the discussion/debate of proposed local Constitutional Amendments (*due to the ETFO Niagara office by Jan. 20th*) and proposed resolutions to the Provincial Annual General Meeting (*due to the ETFO Niagara office by Jan 20th*). There are submission forms in your school that outline the process and purpose of these types of business motions. If you have any other questions, please contact Todd Rimmington at the ETFO Niagara office.

Did You Know You Have Travel Insurance?

Please be reminded that the Extended Health portion of your benefit plan includes Out of Province Emergency and Travel benefits. In case you face an emergency while on your travels, you will need to contact the 24-hour help line (phone number on the Medi-Passport Travel Assistance card) **IMMEDIATELY!** Therefore, it is imperative that you have your Sun Life Benefit Card and the Medi-Passport card along with your provincial health card with you whenever you travel outside of Ontario. It is also important that travel companions know where to locate these cards if, due to circumstances, you are not able to make the call yourself. If you would like more information pertaining to out-of-province coverage or you would like to print out a Medi-Passport card, you can get the information from the member's area of the Sun Life website at www.sunlife.ca.

Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

December 9 th	Pregnancy and Parental Leave Workshop
December 22 nd -	Winter Break
January 2 nd	