

the ACORN

Landmark East School Newsletter • Winter 2023



Welcome to The Acorn!

This year's theme of our newsletter and Giving Package is "Thank you for Changing Lives!" This was inspired by our annual Thank You Day where students identified and gave thanks to people and organizations within our community. Our Thank You Day message this year was "You Rock!"



Educating the Community

Our Literacy and Elementary Coordinators, Moira Taylor and Dana Caulfield, have taken the Landmark East show on the road! This year they were invited to give a presentation titled *Literacy Education and Working with Students with Learning Differences* to pre-service teachers at St. FX and Acadia University Education programs.



Introducing Landmark East Mighty Oaks Spirit Wear!

At Landmark East School we have a mantra that "from little acorns, mighty oaks grow". So, when it came time to choose a school mascot, our committee of staff and students decided that naturally we should be known as the Landmark East Mighty Oaks!

We then held a design contest for the new Mighty Oaks logo. The two winning logos (by student Breanna Mailman and Literacy Coordinator Ms. Taylor) were merged into one by Sam Archibald of Shortstop Agency in Halifax. The baseball hat was designed by Mr. Thomson.

Our spirit wear has been very popular so far, with more coming this winter! Items are sold at cost plus \$3/item. All profits go to the Landmark East Bursary Foundation.



Student Focus: Evan Rogers

Evan Rogers is a Grade 10 student at Landmark East School, taking courses that include Academic Math, Music, and Physically Active Living. Evan and Mr. Hayes sat down for a chat; here's what they talked about!

What is your favourite part of a normal day at Landmark East?

Evan: I'd say SPARK - getting out, moving, being active. My favourite activities are playing football and ultimate frisbee at the Acadia field.

What is your favourite class?

E: English, I like writing short stories.

What subject do you like more since being at Landmark East?

E: Math - it's less stressful, and I'm understanding it way better.

What goals do you have?

E: My goal is to own my own electrician business. I also want to be one of the best mountain bikers in the province.

What is your favourite special event that happens at Landmark East through the year?

E: I like Winter Carnival - going to Martock and spending the day there snowboarding with friends.

What did you struggle with the most before coming here? Do you feel you've improved?

E: Math and English. I've definitely improved in both, more in English especially with spelling and getting my thoughts out onto paper. Read Live Naturally with Mr. Aalders in Intensive Support really helped.

Starting at a new school can be tough. What advice would you give a new student at Landmark East?

E: It was challenging not knowing anyone at first, so it makes it easier to have someone to show you around. Everyone has been in your shoes, so they understand if you're shy and don't know what to do or where to go. You have to just ask someone if you have a question, they'll know how to help because they were once the ones asking the same question.

What was your experience when you started at Landmark East?

E: When I started I just felt better coming to the school, I wanted to come. That happened a few weeks into school. Once I got to know people and how things worked it became easy.

How was your experience running in your first X-Country event?

E: I never did track or X-country before, my longest race was 4k. The meets were stressful at first, performing and doing your best is stressful around all those people but once you start running it all goes away.

Note: In his first year running X-Country, Evan finished 5th in the region and 20th in provincials!



A Note from Evan's Mom, Jeri-Lynn Rogers

My son started school in French Immersion. In grade one he was placed in resource. He continued along this path for a long time with little progress. When Evan was finishing grade three, we decided to switch him out of French Immersion, obviously all the extra effort and resources were not working.

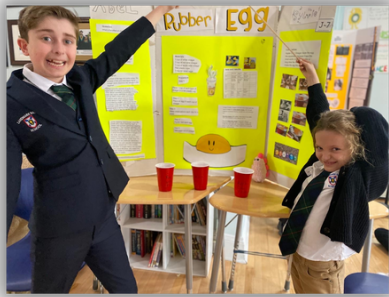
Evan continued with resource and we got him an after-school tutor to help get him caught up in the English he missed from primary to grade four. We still believed that everything was going to be ok, so we were taken by surprise when the school wanted to do Psych Ed testing with Evan at the end of grade five. With the shock of the outcome of the testing we were more determined than ever to pour our efforts into extra resource and tutors all year long, even through summer break. **Continued on next page.**

A Note from Evan's Mom, Jeri-Lynn Rogers, Continued

At the end of grade seven, a friend Evan had gone to school with told him that he was going to go to a different school. He said he was going to go to a school that helped him with his reading and other things he struggled with. This sparked a thought for Evan as well: *if my friend is going to a school that is going to help him with his reading, why can't I go to that school too?* We realized this was a pretty profound ask - not only was he asking for an opportunity to go to a school that could help him, but that he was also demonstrating self-awareness, recognizing he needed help and then asking for it.

On the first Thursday of grade eight in September, we dropped Evan off at his new school, Landmark East. Evan was greeted by the staff with great enthusiasm and was guided to the campus play pad. He never looked back. It was then I realized it was going to be okay.

Every day we saw progress, little by little we saw his growth. Being in an environment that is truly caring, respectful, and helpful has allowed Evan to gain self-confidence and self-esteem. It is a place where other kids treat each other with that same kind of respect and kindness. We see the growth in him not only in his educational progress but as a total person. Landmark East School has changed Evan's life, and it has changed our family's life as well.



Science Fair 2023 had our creativity and brilliance on full display!

We Never Stop Learning!

This year our staff continued their mission to best understand and support our unique learners by getting trained in On Cloud 9 Math Program, Mental Health First-Aid, psychological assessments, and more!



Camp Day and the Ice Cream Social were great ways to build new relationships early in the year!



Giving Back

Every year our students give hundreds of volunteer hours to programs like our Thank You Day and The Great NS Pick-Me-Up (pictured), as well as their efforts in Bursary Foundation fundraisers.





Clockwise from top left: Holly Meuse teaching students about dreamcatchers, reading in the literacy centre, student art, building birdhouses, hatching chicks.



The 2023 graduating class continued a recent tradition of our graduation celebrations - the Grad Gala! This year it was held at the Old Orchard Inn and featured a student MC, a great meal, and some surprise guests!



Some of our Student Bursary fundraisers this year included the 21st Annual Walkathon (sponsored by Rafuse Home Hardware), the 14th annual golf tournament (sponsored by Mackay Real Estate), and the Kentville Pumpkin Walk.



Parent Association Formation

This year we were very lucky to have parent volunteers come together to form the Parent Association. They work hard on fundraisers, school events, and making Landmark East a welcoming place for families!

