

A Meaningful Advent at St. John Paul II School



The staff and students at St. John Paul II School in Ottawa recognize that many people have a difficult time getting through the Christmas season, including families in their own school community. That's why they've been working hard throughout the season of Advent to make this season a meaningful time for everyone in their community through acts of kindness and mercy.

St. John Paul II School gathered for a Christmas meal to celebrate the birth of baby Jesus on Wednesday, December 16th. "We've been organizing this event for about six years now," said Office Administrator Helen Featherston. "For some of our students, this is their Christmas dinner, so it's a very special time for our community."

The school gym was decorated to the nines featuring a beautiful Nativity scene created by grade 1/2 teacher Rebecca Pereira that included a garland of stars decorated by every student in the school and a life-sized manger with strips of hay made out of construction paper.

The students kicked off the Jubilee year of Mercy, declared by Pope Francis on

December 8th, by demonstrating the mercy of God to others in simple and effective ways. "During the season of Advent, students were encouraged to perform acts of kindness and mercy to others and write down what they did on these strips of hay" said Pereira. "The strips of hay were meant to soften baby Jesus' bed with kindness and mercy."

With kindness and mercy in the air, the mood was set for a Christmas feast! Moments after Principal, Sean Crookshank made the announcement for students to come down to the gym, the halls were buzzing with joyful students eager to share a delicious meal with their classmates. It was a truly heart-warming event as the kindergarten students led the whole school in saying grace. Special guests and volunteers including City Councillor Tim Tierney and OCSB Director of Education Denise Andre were on hand to serve the students their Christmas meal. It was a truly wonderful event as the whole community gathered to share in the blessing of a delicious Christmas feast.