

## Aurora school puts French spin on Terry Fox Day



**By Jake Courtepatte**

It was a cause for celebration at Ecole secondaire catholique Renaissance last Thursday, as staff and students came together to commemorate both their Franco-Ontarian heritage and the accomplishments of Manitoban Terry Fox.

‘We really wanted to bring it all together into one big day,’ said Martyne Laurin, Principal of the French Catholic school located in Aurora.

The day began with a relay to commemorate Terry Fox, as the school was split into four ‘houses’. A splash of colour was added to the day as each house wore different brightly-coloured t-shirts, grouped as one of the four suits in a deck of cards.

For a more personal effect, each student wore a tag bearing the name of those they were running for.

‘We wanted everyone to run for a person they knew, who had been affected by cancer or had passed away,’ said Laurin. ‘Everyone knows somebody.’

Thursday also marked Franco-Ontarian Day, an annual tradition marked each September 25.

Adopted by the Legislature in 2010, the day officially ‘recognizes the contribution of Ontario’s Francophone community to the cultural, historical, social, economic and political life of the province.’

Staff at ESC Renaissance saw the opportunity to celebrate the school’s French culture through fun and entertainment, rather than simply in the classroom.

Friendly competition was had between the four houses on the athletic field, as groups cycled between different activities such as a three-legged race, tug-of-war, and beach ball volleyball.

‘Everybody with a French background will celebrate it differently,’ said Laurin. ‘But we are all proud of our culture, and our heritage, and we wanted to do activities related to our own backgrounds.’

With Franco-Canadian music playing in the background, students could bring points to their house by speaking French, winning activities, and embracing the school’s French culture.

And spirits were high on the beautiful September afternoon.

?It's good for them to be outside of the classroom like this,? said Laurin. ?It's still a learning experience.?

The school planted its roots six years ago with only 115 students, and has since grown to a population of 650. Laurin says the school continues to grow.

?Our students come in from everywhere?Newmarket, Markham, Woodbridge, Maple, Richmond Hill. We're a unique school.?