



Hillcrest High School's Steelpan Band performing for concert attendees at the National Arts Centre. PHOTO CREDIT NEERJA MALHOTRA.

HILLCREST HAPPENINGS

MUSIC, COMMUNITY, AND ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

BY RICHARD SWANDEL | TEACHER-LIBRARIAN AT HILLCREST HIGH SCHOOL

STAFF AND STUDENTS at Hillcrest High School continue to do great things through the cold of the winter months. Our Hawks accomplished a lot!

Mr. Hugo Whitfield's Grade 10 Civics class organized a Student Vote connected to the Ontario Provincial Election. Student Vote is run with the help of materials from CIVIX, a registered charity dedicated to strengthening democracy through civics and citizenship education for school-aged youth. Students go through the same experience of voting as they will as adults. Mr. Whitfield's students played the roles of poll clerks, deputy returning officers, and scrutineers. The students at Hillcrest elected Morgan Gay of the NDP with John Fraser of the Liberals a close second. These same results were obtained from all of the schools in Ottawa South who participated in the Student Vote.

Grade 12 student Rebecca Doherty was featured on the TSN broadcast of the Scotties Tournament of Hearts. Rebecca was a recipient of the Fran Todd All Heart award from Curling Canada in recognition of her work to give students at the school an experience of curling who might not otherwise ever play. Rebecca brought curling activities into our gym classes and then organized a day on the ice for a diverse group of students that included students from new Canadian families, our Autism program and DDP program. Rebecca ensured there were accommodations on the ice so that all students could participate regardless

of their physical ability or experience level. Great job, Rebecca!

This winter was a busy month for our music program. Teacher and Music Director Melanie Reeks has our students sounding fantastic on all of their instruments! The Hillcrest String Orchestra earned gold in the Capital Region Musicfest. The gold rating indicates an ensemble has achieved excellence in all areas of their performance. It also comes with an invitation to Nationals.

Many of the same students from our string orchestra also play in Ottawa's only high school steel pan band. Once again Melanie Reeks is providing an amazing opportunity to make joyous music on instruments they wouldn't find anywhere else. The Hillcrest Steel Pan band had an amazing experience performing in the lobby at the National Arts Centre for attendees entering the concert by acclaimed Pan Fantasy Steelband. The next day members of Pan Fantasy came to Hillcrest to provide a workshop for our students. It was a great day of learning and beautiful music flowing into the hallways!

The music kept going at our Black History Month assembly. Our Black Excellence Club organized an educational and entertaining assembly celebrating the arts in Canadian Black History. The assembly culminated with a performance by Juno award winner Kelly Lee Evans and her band. Kelly Lee spoke to our students about her own journey and the challenges that she has had to overcome. Her message that we don't have to be fearless, we just have to fear less everyday, resonated with our students.

Steven A. Neal
 Lawyer
613-737-4140
steven@payetteneal.com

1719 Bank St.
 Suite 305,
 Ottawa, ON.
 K1V 7Z4



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