

FROM ME TO YOU

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 3

FEBRUARY 2017

Sunil Mattu's Newsletter

MOVING THROUGH 2017 AND INTO THE FUTURE!

In my last newsletter, I extended to the entire Third Academy Family the message of hope in the tradition of the Christmas Season. Now, in the second month of a new year, I am filled with optimism.



The Chinese calendar marks 2017 as the Year of the Rooster. 'Rooster's auspicious gifts are forward thinking and solid self-confidence'. My friends have told me that this is a year to succeed through hard work. I believe that we all will achieve success this year 'with a little help from our friends'.

I have written in previous *From Me To You's* about the dream to build a new school for our children. I am calling it our 'dream school'. I see a school building larger than our existing space on Blackfoot Trail. We will have ample space for classrooms, washrooms, labs, break out spaces, music/drama rooms, and offices for specialized services (psych, speech, OT,

etc.). Our purpose built dream school will not be a palace, but more than functional and constructed to the same building standards as newer public school buildings. And yes, we will have a real gymnasium. And yes, we will have playing fields and playground structures on site.

We will, all of us, need to engage in a conversation that ultimately will inform how our dream school is designed and built. Parents, students, and staff are all key stakeholders and, over the next two years, we will establish a process so that your ideas will become part of this dream. I want to 'move in' by 2022.

As the development of the southwest Ring Road is now a reality, two potential sites for our dream school have been identified on the western edge of Calgary. Developers, architects, builders, and financial institutions have expressed interest in helping us build our dream school. I have begun to 'reach out' to the thousands of families, students, staff, directors, patrons, and Friends of Third Academy who have been 'touched' by what we do at Third Academy and are 'willing and able' to help make our dream school a reality. Yes, I am asking for

everyone's commitment to 'pay it forward' for our children, families, and staff now and for the next 50 years to come.

Critical to the successful launch of this dream school project is a successful 2017 Annual Gala. Please mark your calendars: Saturday June 10. I will contact all of you shortly to ask how you can help.

I do hope you share my enthusiasm as to where we are heading. I know it's a big dream. But we can do this folks! All it will take is 'a little help from our friends'.

Best wishes for Family Day!



Sunil Mattu
Executive Director



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FROM ME TO YOU

GALA 2017: LET'S BUILD THE FOUNDATION FOR A NEW SCHOOL!

Our Annual Gala is approaching:

When: Saturday, June 10, 2017 evening

Where: Gasoline Alley, Heritage Park, Calgary

Why: To Celebrate 20 Years of Third Academy serving families with children with special education needs

This year we will hold a very special Gala. For 20 years, Third Academy has been offering Alberta families *hope*. For 20 years, Third Academy has helped children with special educational needs *heal*. And, for 20 years, Third Academy has been providing an environment

in which children can experience success. And indeed, our former students have succeeded. We are inviting them to join with us for a special evening to recognize the accomplishments they have achieved because of Third Academy.

Our goal for the immediate future—over the next five years—is to acquire a new site for Third Academy and, on that property, to build our dream school. We want a modern facility, one better suited to meeting the needs of our community. Let's imagine what our new school will look like.

Gala 2017 will kick start our

capital building campaign. We need to raise money to cover the pre-development costs. We also need to bring Friends of Third Academy together to build the momentum in our capital building campaign that will get us across the finishing line. Please join me in ensuring that Gala 2017 is the most successful Gala in Third Academy history. Together we can build a foundation for our dream school.

“For 20 years, Third Academy has been offering Alberta families hope. For 20 years, Third Academy has helped children with special educational needs heal. And, for 20 years, Third Academy has been providing an environment in which children can experience success.”



FROM ME TO YOU

ACCOUNTABILITY PILLARS: MEASURING SUCCESS

Success can be measured in many ways. You will have received the annual Accountability Pillar survey from Alberta Education in the mail. It is important for all our families to take the time to fill the survey out and send it back in the mail.

I am hoping you will agree with me that Third Academy strives to provide our students with the best programming possible. We think “out of the box” to discover ways to provide quality programming to your child to best help him or her succeed.

What does success look like? Foremost is that the child feels that he or she has succeeded. This can mean simply having a good day at school. Our students struggle with many different subjects: some have difficulty with math while others consider it impossible to read. We can overcome these challenges. But it takes time, dedication, and support. And I emphasize support.

To overcome difficulties, we must praise our students for what they do well and provide further assistance in those areas in which they find challenging.

Three areas in which Third Academy excels are (1) providing a broad program of studies, (2) promoting students to take on the responsibility of active citizenship, and (3) continuously improving our school. But just as measuring success with our students must be placed into context of the individ-

ual student, so too must we be sensitive to context when we consider how our Elementary and Junior/Senior High Schools succeeds in these three areas.

THREE PILLARS FOR SUCCESS

1. *Broad Program of Studies*
2. *Active Citizenship*
3. *Continuous School Improvement*



FROM ME TO YOU

ACCOUNTABILITY PILLARS: MEASURING SUCCESS (CONTINUED)

I. Broad Program of Studies

Third Academy Teachers integrate a wide variety of cross curricular activities in their daily classes. They use highly innovative ways to incorporate material to motivate your child. Our students get creative- excelling at music, drama, and art, programming streams that are not typically available in small schools. Let's not forget how we have kept our kids physically active whether it be Jasper/Icefields Camp Trip in September, Swim to Survive in January, or planned Camp Horizon trip in April.

We believe in using technology to enhance learning. While our students do earn time to play computer games as a reward, they spend most of their time in the computer lab engaged in learning activities involving literacy, numeracy, research, and learning more about the world beyond their classroom walls.

We continue to incorporate more technology in our educational programming. This includes a recently purchased 3D printer. Students are learning to code and program. We have acquired a site license for Adobe Creative Suite (CS). Soon our students will have the opportunity to edit images using Photoshop, create vector images through Illustrator, and produce digital animations and movies using other CS programs. We have purchased 16 new iPads with the help of a generous donation from 100

Men loaded with educational software. We also help establish safe internet practices this year through the highly recognized Telus WISE (Wise Internet and Smartphone Education) program.

Third Academy makes effective use of various forms of media. Our teachers carefully select movies and documentary films for presentation to their classes. While these might appear entertaining, they also include valuable lessons about social studies, life skills, career planning, drama studies, social skills, and citizenship. Our school theme for the 2016-2017 School Year is The Beatles. Our students are learning about the "Fab Four" and in turn seeing how The Beatles used multi-media to share their art.



FROM ME TO YOU**ACCOUNTABILITY PILLARS: MEASURING SUCCESS (CONTINUED)****2. Active Citizenship**

Third Academy encourages our students to display what we call “active citizenship”. Active citizens take pride in their communities. They demonstrate this pride by helping to make their communities better. Our students do this regularly at school by assisting their peers and younger students and going outside the school to benefit the larger community.

Service is at ‘the heart’ of active citizenship. While your child might not excel at cleaning his or her room, she or he is making a difference in the larger community! Third Academy Junior High and High School students participate in Alberta’s “Adopt a Highway Program”. Our students and staff are responsible for the roadside cleanup of a stretch of Highway 22X (eastbound, slightly east of Priddis).

There are many other ways your child demonstrates the characteristics of active citizenship. Our Junior High School students develop leadership skills by working as mentors with Elementary students. Third Academy students help the needy by contributing food for the Calgary Food Bank as well prepare nutritious lunches for our own students through our Brown Bag program. We write postcards to the elderly and recognize through our Remembrance Day programming the sacrifices made by members of the Canadian Forces.



FROM ME TO YOU**ACCOUNTABILITY PILLARS: MEASURING SUCCESS (CONTINUED)****3. Continuous School Improvement**

Finally, success can be measured through continuous improvement.

Third Academy made a number renovations to the campus this past summer including improvements to our sensory room. We added an office, upgrading our flooring, and painted the school throughout. New chairs are refreshing our classrooms and offices. Even a simple thing like the installation of new planters to make our front entrance more attractive is, for me, a demonstration of continuous improvement.

Literacy and Numeracy skills are the academic foundation for learning. Our literacy program and numeracy program have been fully implemented with the recent professional development activities and purchase of new KeyMath and TAP Math programs. We want all Third Academy students to become literate in the sense of being able to process information through reading and writing, we also want them to develop mathematical numeracy. This involves more than executing mathematical procedures. We want our students to be able to develop their 'math minds' and apply their skills in the real world.



FROM ME TO YOU

ACCOUNTABILITY PILLARS: MEASURING SUCCESS (CONTINUED)

There is as well much school improvement that is going on behind the scenes that you might not be aware of. My hope, with *From Me To You*, is to share how dynamic, vital, and forward thinking Third Academy is every single day. We are never 'standing still' rather always on the 'path to greater success through constant improvement'.

When children succeed, they thrive. They look forward to going to school where they develop knowledge, skills, and self confidence they will need to succeed as adults in a complex world.

When you're thinking of your child's success, please do as we do: think out of the box. Third Academy provides your child with a broad program of studies, we promote active citizenship, and we are constantly finding new ways to improve our school.



FROM ME TO YOU
SUNIL MATTU'S NEWSLETTER

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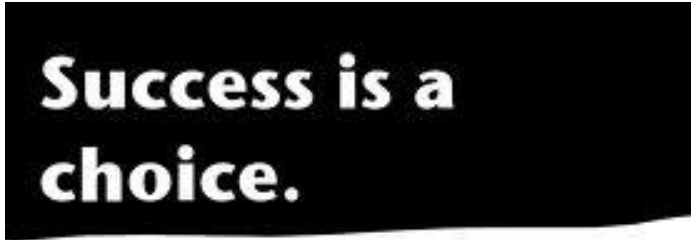
Need More Information?
Contact Sunil Mattu
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- Fully Accredited by Alberta Education
- Two schools serving students from Grades 1 through 12 at one central location
- A non-profit, charitable organization
- Doing whatever it takes to help your child succeed

We believe that how a person thinks, affects how they feel, and hence how they act.



We're on the web in full color: Visit us at:
www.thirdacademy.ca



It's mine.

“Third Academy gives hope... hope for kids, families, and our collective futures.”

Dr. S. Lal. Mattu
Third Academy Ambassador-at-Large

FOLLOW US ON THE WEB!

Be sure to visit Third Academy's website at thirdacademy.ca for up-to-date information about our school. Here you will find a calendar of activities, posts about what is happening at Third Academy, staff profiles, archived newsletters, and much more. Visit thirdacademy.ca often to see what's new!

