

# Collegiate reunion steering committee helping to ensure student success

Collegiate reunion steering committee raised money during their reunion to ensure students have access to better educational equipment

By Matthew P. Barker Standard Reporter

Tuesday, November 7, 2023



The St. Catharines Collegiate reunion steering committee met to announce their donations raised during their reunion celebration in May. Steering committee members left to right: Carla Piovesana, school principal; Judy Pula, John Pula, co-chair; Ken Gill, administrator; Alec Mikitzel-Spera, Keith Siren, co-chair; Yvonne Mikitzel-Spera, Ashley Scriver, Kelly Mossman, Erin Tenhoeve.

Matthew Barker / Torstar

The St. Catharines Collegiate reunion steering committee announced its fundraising total for its 100th anniversary celebration, Tuesday at the school. More than \$25,000 was raised during the reunion held on May 20, which saw about 1,250 people attend the event on school grounds at 34 Catherine St. Proceeds from the event went to help revitalize the school, ensuring current and future students have access to better facilities for success.

The committee considered funding several projects across the school including a new greenhouse, providing new gym equipment, or even updating the cooking range in the school's teaching kitchen.

Ken Gill, reunion administrator, said many people helped make the weekend a reality to give back to the community and provide continued support for the school and students.

“Without their efforts and support, we would not be able to do this,” he said. “We’re doing this for the kids here currently and in the future where we supply educational funds, scholarships, new equipment and we pitch in and help out.”

Gill added the decision for the upcoming project is still undecided, but that should be worked out within a few weeks. “We’ll announce it on our own (social media) sites, as the principal has to do a needs analysis and if it’s not the greenhouse, there will be some sort of equipment,” he said.

“We’ll definitely spread that out and spend the majority of money on that and we’ll hold back a bit so we can give graduates scholarship money.”

For the committee, providing access to a quality education is paramount for student's success and helping to provide that through donations is the best way they can do that.

“The key is the students, it's the opportunity to have the best equipment they can have to succeed the best they can. As a former teacher here at collegiate, it's about the students and how to make them best go forward,” said Gill.

Gill gave an example of a current student whose life had been changed through involvement with reunion programs.

“The student was so in awe he's now joined many clubs, and he's pushing forward to do better all the time academically, socially, and that's the win, that's making them be positive for themselves,” he said.

Keith Siren, co-chair of the committee, said many long days and nights went into pulling off the event saying it was a way to celebrate a school that has brought the community together throughout its 100 plus year run.

“It’s not just an educational institution, this school, this facility has been the fabric of this neighborhood and the city for over 100 years,” he said.

“When you go back to the original school, there’s a connection with almost the entire city, to a lesser extent now than it used to be. At one point, this was the school, so, everyone came to this school.”

Carla Piovesana, St. Catharines Collegiate principal said she was honoured to recognize the work the dedicated alumni have done for the school and wider community.

“We are humbled by the generosity that has poured in to support our school community,” she said.

“From establishing scholarships and expanding our extracurricular and educational programs to purchasing new equipment for our many tech programs, the funds raised will have a significant impact on both current and future students.”

“We are deeply thankful to our alumni. This is a wonderful testament to the enduring spirit of St. Catharines Collegiate as we continue to shape the future of our students.”

[mbarker@niagaradailies.com](mailto:mbarker@niagaradailies.com)

**Matthew P. Barker** is a St. Catharines-based general assignment reporter for the Standard.