

# Chalk Talk

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**PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES!!!**

**Letter from the Editor**

Dear Subscribers,

The great film director, Frank Capra, used to make movies about how one individual could make a difference if they had the courage to stand up and fight for what they believed in. In his 1939 classic, "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington", James Stewart portrays a small town everyman who gets his chance to make a big difference and help the 'little guy'. His essential humanity is spurred on by the belief that his voice has the right to be heard and that ultimately power lies in the hands of the citizens of a country.

I have visited our nation's capital several times since the first occasion as part of an end of year school trip in high school. It seemed to me then, as a student, and since, that the air in Ottawa is permeated with discussion about the issues that matter to this country. The desire to be heard and to be involved in making decisions that will impact on the everyday lives of Canadians is palpable. Whether on Parliament Hill, at the Byward Market or at the Museum of Civilization, you hear all kinds of people — politicians, teachers, students, store clerks — talking about the concerns and the hopes of Canadians. There, surrounded by the history and the institutions that constitute who we are as a nation, one can easily be inspired to want to learn more, understand more and to want to participate.

There is nothing like a school trip for expanding a student's world-view while creating life-long memories. These forays out of the classroom can be wonderful learning opportunities and loads of fun. This week's **Chalk Talk** features information on resources to help you plan a school trip that will bring your students up close and personal with our nation's capital.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing classroom resources on a range of topics. We invite you to visit our website at [4edu.ca](http://4edu.ca) to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[Let us know your thoughts.](#)

Mary Kovack

**By showing kindness to a stranger  
Taking a moment to care  
It will show  
That in your Heart and Soul  
You made a difference there.**

— "Crazy" Dave Dessler, Homeless Poet, featured in the video "It Will Show", on the

**A Capital Idea — A Field Trip to Ottawa**



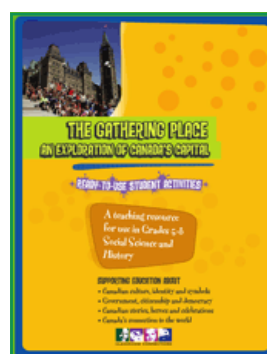
Ottawa, Canada's Capital, is more than a city; it is an expression of the country in general and a gathering place for its citizens. Canada's Capital Region belongs to all Canadians. Even more importantly, it represents us as the seat of government, a place of national symbols. It is Canada's face to the world and provides a cultural showcase for Canada's diverse talents.



[The National Capital Commission](#) (NCC), a Crown corporation created by Parliament, is dedicated to making the Capital accessible to all Canadians. The NCC endeavours to support learning in young Canadians about the richness of Canada's Capital, through various activities and resources.



The NCC's new downloadable pre-visit kit **Get Ready for the Capital** is the perfect tool to excite students about an upcoming visit to Canada's Capital Region. The kit holds four self-contained activities that are designed to prepare students for what they'll see and do in Canada's Capital. To view this kit, [click here](#).



In addition, the NCC offers a teaching resource for use in grades 5 to 8 Social Science and History, entitled, **A Gathering Place: An Exploration of Canada's Capital**, which will provide comprehensive information on Canadian culture, identity and symbols; Government, citizenship and democracy; Canadian stories, heroes and celebrations; and Canada's connection to the world. To download this

## Website of the week

### 1857 – A Capital Choice

The NCC is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the choice of the Capital in 2007. This anniversary, which commemorates the year 1857 and the events that led to the historic decision by Her Majesty Queen Victoria on the choice of the Capital, is marked by events and celebrations held by federal partners, the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau, as well as festival and tourism partners in the Capital Region.



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For more information on the 150th celebration and related activities, contact the NCC at **613-239-5000** or **1 866 774-1857**, or visit the website at [www.1857.gc.ca](http://www.1857.gc.ca). TTY (text telephone for the hearing impaired) is available at: 613-239-5090 or toll-free 1 866 661-3530.



NCC's **1857 — A Capital Choice** website offers an array of educational resources for teachers and students. To view and download these resources, [click here](#).

[Source: NCC — '1857' online]

## Youth Forum: Flash Drive — A Capital Assignment



**They came, they saw, they produced!**

From October 16 to 18, 2007, the National Capital Commission held a youth forum in Ottawa. These journalists (aged 14 to 17) worked with professional photographers and documentary filmmakers to develop thought-provoking multimedia pieces on the environment, living together and youth culture. Curious to hear what they have to say? Click to the left to view a montage of all the clips (28 minutes), or navigate through each theme to see the individual clips.



[Environment](#)



[Living Together](#)



[Youth Culture](#)

These student journalists deal with issues of interest to youth that will spark classroom discussion on a variety of topics from diversity, growing pains, and artistic expression, to how young people feel about the future of their generation, their country and the planet. The videos are thoughtfully crafted and thought-provoking laced with hope, humour, music, and lots of creativity. It is clear that they want to be heard and to have their ideas taken seriously. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to view all of the presentations. For complete details, [click here](#).



### Education News

[Fewer jobs for newly graduated teachers; Declining school enrolment, fewer retirements and more graduates mean just 41% in Ontario get jobs](#) — Kristin Rushowy, Education Reporter, TheStar.com, November 26, 2007

Teachers are graduating into a "brutally competitive" job market where it can take years to find a permanent position, says a new report. Just 41 per cent of 2006 grads found regular employment by this spring, down from 51 per cent one year prior. While the situation is slightly better for those in Greater Toronto – with about half landing a job after graduation – in some areas of the province it's a dismal 20 per cent, says the report from the Ontario College of Teachers. "Teachers may be competing against hundreds of others for a job opening," said Frank McIntyre, manager of human resources for the college, which oversees the province's educators. Just six years ago, when the college began its annual survey of fresh graduates, they reported no troubles finding work because a lot of older teachers were retiring. But two years ago, the survey began to show that "more and more of them were having difficulty finding a job in their first year," said McIntyre.

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[Catholic board to try year-round classes; Alternative calendar pilot at selected elementary and high schools will target at-risk children](#) — Kristin Rushowy, Education Reporter, November 16, 2007

Students at four Toronto Catholic schools will be attending classes year-round as the board pilots an alternative calendar that has shown to benefit at-risk children the most. Trustees this week approved a plan to implement pilot programs at two elementary and two secondary schools for the 2009-2010 school year. The schools will be chosen after extensive consultations with both staff and families, although the board is aiming to open them in the city's so-called "priority," or most needy, neighbourhoods. Students would still be in school the same number of days – 194 – but instead of a two-month summer break, they'd be in school 50 days followed by a 15-day break. "I think there's a recognition that there are different ways to do schooling – everything from a 10 a.m. start in the morning, because that, too, is an issue, but we'll start with year-round schooling," Carroll said, referring to a plan by the Toronto public board to open a late-start high school. Durham and Peel regions already have a handful of year-round schools, and they are popular with both families and teachers.

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