

John De Graff School to open next September

A new school will open next September in the River East School Division - John De Graff School, which is currently under construction at 1020 Louelda Street, just north of Tu-Pelo Avenue.

~~The Public Schools'~~ Finance Board has approved a tender of \$1,214,655 for the school, with Taubensee Construction as the general contractor.

At capacity, the school will accomodate 600 kindergarten to grade six students. Some of these students are now attending existing area schools, including Bertrun E. Glavin, Salisbury, Sherwood, Neil Campbell, and Valley Garden Junior High School.

Hired as principal of the

school is John Melynk, who formerly served as principal at Princess Margaret and Lord Wolsely Schools.

"In the first year of operation, there will be about 450 students, and it should reach capacity within about two years," predicted Mr. Melynk.

In each grade there will be one closed classroom and two semi-open classrooms, which will share a half-wall between the two rooms. Other facilities will include a large library, gymnasium, two kindergarten areas, and a separate music area.

Concerning the functioning of the school, "stress will be placed on the needs of the individual students, and the

development of basic skills," he said. "A great number of parents ... all across this country are saying their children can't read, write, or spell well, and sometimes have poor social skills and work habits."

"We plan to stress academic skills and acceptable social behaviours. My philosophy is that a student should be guided through all his endeavours in school. That is what the teacher is there for."

In November, interviews will be conducted and nine teachers will be chosen to act on a planning committee for the school. They will decide, for example, what type of

Getting Involved

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by Marlene Klassen

John de Graff School, 1020 Louelda, was officially opened last Tuesday evening, with members of the de Graff family present in the crowd of about 600 people.

Everyone who toured the school agreed that it is a beautiful new facility, and one which is obviously the pride of students and staff.

The school was named after a pioneer in the community who had served as a trustee for many years. Frank de Graff spoke on behalf of the de Graff family, and later unveiled a portrait of Mr. de Graff which will remain in the school.

Principal John Melnyk lamented that while there were so many members of the de Graff family present for the official opening, not one de Graff child is enrolled in the school.

The one thing most often mentioned by the many guest speakers was the community aspect of the school: it will serve as a school by day, and be open for community use in the evening. Allen Rouse, school board chairman, noted that the school already has close to maximum use in the evening.

Councillor Norm Stapon (Springfield Heights) commended the school division as being "second to none" in its joint use of school facilities, "so that those who pay for it can also use it."

Bob Ashuk, director of the East Kildonan Parks and Recreation Department, told the audience that free use of the division's schools has allowed the department to offer more extensive programs. The school board chairman, in reply, said the school division receives free use of the swimming pool and arenas.

The Hon. Peter Fox brought greetings from the province; John Potter extended congratulations from the superintendent's department; and the architect, G. Macdonald (of Macdonald, Cockburn, McLeod, and McFeetors), and J. Taubensee, of Taubensee Construction (the contractors) agreed that it had been a pleasure to work on the school.

Other special guests included Sharon Daher and Jennifer Hill, representing parents, and two members of the student body — Marilyn Dudck and Ken Mykietowich.

Highlights of the evening included a ceremonial key presentation; placement of the cornerstone, and the sealing in place of a copper box containing various mementos; the unveiling of Mr. de Graff's portrait; and finally a ribbon cutting ceremony, after which the school was declared officially open.