

## NEWS YOU CAN USE

# THE FIRST BLACK SCHOOL IN TORONTO: A STEP FORWARD?

Toronto, Canada is widely **considered** one of the most successful multicultural cities in the world. Many groups of people from different races and cultures call Toronto home – it is **estimated** that close to 50 % of the city's 5.5 million inhabitants were born outside North America.

However, this year, the Toronto **District School Board** took a bold step by approving the first ever publicly funded afro-centric school. The term "afro-centric" simply means that the curriculum will be taught more from the point of view of the black community and their **collective historical experience**.

So what is the big deal? Well, many Torontonians, including a large part of the local black community, **voiced** their negative **opinions** about the idea. Many argue that such a school should be completely privately funded and not **funded by tax money**; others say that creating a separate school type



The reason for founding a new black-focused school is the high drop-out rate among students of Afro-Caribbean origin in Toronto's secondary schools. John Campbell, the chair of The District School Board, believes that students will be more motivated "to come to school every day" in the new school.

for a specific **interest group** could lead to other requests by other interest groups.

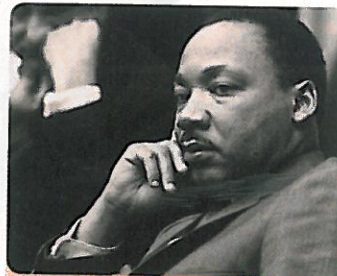
However, those who **are in favour of** the school argue that the Catholic school board has also been receiving public tax money for years. They also say that there is nothing to stop non-blacks from attending the school; the only point is that non-black students will receive an afro-centric education.

Loreen Small, the mother of a 15-year-old black boy

who was shot to death in his Toronto school in May 2007, believes that the approval of the afro-centric school is actually a step backward for society. She told BBC News, "Martin Luther

King and so many of our fathers **fought to come together** so black and white can be together, for us to sit in the front of the bus together. What we're doing is all segregating each other. We should be one."

**Jeff Gulley (Canada)**



After the American Civil War ended in 1865, the African-Americans of the South were still not allowed to do the things that white people could do. For example, there were separate seating sections for the blacks and the whites on the buses. In 1955, Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968), a leader of the American civil rights movement, led the black boycott of segregated bus lines. It lasted for 381 days and resulted in the victory ensuring the black passengers were allowed to sit anywhere they wanted.

**CD** Listen to a recording to learn about one of the best multicultural places in Toronto, Kensington Market. (Task - BT, p. 1)

## your turn

1. Should special interest groups like the black community be allowed to create their own schools and curricula using public tax money?
2. Do you agree with Loreen Small when she says that creating the school will actually help segregate the blacks from the other races and cultures?

## MULTICULTURALISM IN CANADA

Most newcomers to Canada settle in the major urban areas of Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Since the 1990s, almost all of Canada's immigrants have come from Asia. Asians have a long history in Canada mainly **coinciding** with the building of the Canadian National Railway. Many Canadian cities, and Toronto is no exception, have a "China Town". Some Asians live their entire lives in such areas without ever learning either English or French, Canada's two official languages.

Toronto also has a "Portuguese street", and Spadina Avenue, one of the prominent streets in Toronto where European specialities are sold, is mainly Polish. There is also a large Jamaican community.

Hana Škrdlová (Canada)

## VOCABULARY

**to consider** [kən'sɪdə] - považovat  
**to estimate** [ˈestɪmeɪt] - odhadovat  
**District School Board took a bold step by approving the first...** - schválením první...  
 okresní školní rada učinila smělý krok  
**publicly funded** [ˈpʌblɪkli ˈfʌndɪd] - financované z veřejných zdrojů

**collective historical experience** [kəˈlektɪv hɪˈstɒrɪk(ə)l ɪkˈspɪəriəns] - společné historické zkušenosti  
**voiced opinions** [ˈvɔɪst əˈpɪnjənz] - vyslovilo názory  
**funded by tax money** [tæks] - financovaná prostřednictvím daní  
**interest group** - zájmová skupina

**to be in favour of** [ˈfeɪvə] - být nakloněn (čemu)  
**fought to come together** - bojovali za to, aby se mohli sblížit, usmířit

**CAPTION**  
**to coincide** [kəʊn'saɪd] - spadat (časově)

## GLOSSARY

**curriculum** (pl. curricula or curriculums) - the group of subjects studied in a school or a college

# THE PARALYMPIC GAMES

## UNITED IN SPORT



Frenchman Joel Jeannot competes during the men's marathon, Athens 2004

Hospital, England. Four years later, competitors from the Netherlands joined the games and an international movement was born. The first Paralympic Games took place in Rome in 1960 and up to 400 athletes from 23 countries participated.

### DISCIPLINES

Originally, only athletes in wheelchairs participated in the Paralympic Games. Gradually, as the Paralympic movement developed, athletes with other kinds of disabilities joined in and more sports were added. The XIII Summer Paralympic games will be host to 20 sports such as **archery**, athletics, cycling, judo, **rowing**, swimming, table tennis, wheelchair basketball and others. Some games have been specifically invented for the disabled. The Czech Republic will be represented at the games as well. 56 Czech athletes will be competing in the Paralympics in Beijing. Let's keep our fingers crossed for them and remember all the special athletes who not only struggle so hard in their daily lives but have achieved so much in the world of sport as well.

**Justin Osswald (USA)**

**The spirit of Summer Olympics is not over in Beijing. There is another series of games taking place from September 6 – 17. Athletes will be competing in some of the same sports and at the same venues. However, there are two big differences. The athletes in the Beijing Paralympic Games have disabilities and most of the world won't be watching.**

### "ONE WORLD ONE DREAM"

The slogan for this year's Paralympics, "One World One Dream," sums up very well why disabled athletes compete. Sport and the spirit of competition **are rooted** in all of us, therefore we are of one world. The health benefits of sport are **evident** and it allows people with disabilities not only the chance to rehabilitate, but to join people without disabilities in the spirit of the games. Being together or accepted by others is a dream everyone shares. Furthermore, sport teaches independence and creates **public awareness** of people with a handicap.

### ATHLETES WITH DISABILITIES

Who can participate in the Paralympics? Officially anyone who has a physical or intellectual disability or is **visually impaired** can compete. The physical disability category is subdivided into four groups: athletes with

**spinal injuries**, those missing arms and legs, people with diseases of the nervous system and people with irregular body development.

### HISTORY OF THE PARALYMPIC MOVEMENT

Sports for athletes with disabilities have existed for over a hundred years. After World War II programs were needed to help **wounded** soldiers **adjust** to their new disabilities. In 1948, Sir Ludwig Guttmann organized a sports competition for World War II veterans with **spinal cord** injuries in Stoke Mandeville

### DISCUSS

- Do you think the Paralympics are a good idea? Why or why not?
- Would you like to see the Paralympics televised? Why or why not?
- Do you think sponsors should pay or donate more money to games that help people with disabilities?
- Do you think public awareness of the Paralympics should be increased? How can this be done?

### VOCABULARY:

- venue** ['venju:] - místo  
**disability** [dɪsə'bilɪti] - handicap  
**to root** - zakořenit  
**evident** - zřejmý, jasný  
**public awareness** ['pʌblɪk ə'weɪnɪs] - povědomí veřejnosti  
**visually impaired** - zrakově postižený  
**spinal injury** ['spain(ə)l 'ɪndʒəri] - zranění páteře  
**wounded** ['wu:ndɪd] - raněný  
**to adjust to** [ə'dʒʌst] - zvyknout si na  
**spinal cord** ['spain(ə)l kɔ:rd] - mícha  
**archery** ['ɑ:tʃəri] - lukostřelba  
**rowing** ['rəʊɪŋ] - veslování



# PLASTICS ARE FOREVER

The  
Plastic  
Planet

Plastics, rubber-like materials produced from **petroleum**, have modernized our life in many ways. Just look around and count how many plastic things surround you: a keyboard, a toothbrush, a Barbie doll. We benefit from their light weight, easily cleaned surfaces, and **durability**. But the side-effect is that we cannot **dispose of** them. Plastics don't **break down** as natural products do and stay in **landfill sites** for thousands of years. What is more, if burnt at low temperatures, they **release toxic fumes**.

## THE EVER-PRESENT PLASTIC BAG

The plastic shopping bag is the most common object made from plastic. This plastic container is ideal for carrying shopping and serves as a convenient form of advertising for shops, which place their logo on them. However, the truth is that most supermarket plastic bags complete only one shopping trip before they are thrown away. In Britain 13 billion plastic bags are given away each year and 8 billion are disposed of in landfill sites. Where do the other 5 billion go?

A huge number of bags blow around our cities, towns, villages and countryside, while others end up in the sea. They are often mistaken for **jellyfish** and swallowed by turtles, whales, large fish and sea birds. Many of these animals eventually die because their **digestive system** gets blocked.

Also very worrying is that microscopic pieces of plastic, the raw material of the plastics industry, regularly get into the sea. They are then eaten by animals and passed along the **marine food chain**. In this way the concentrated chemicals can end up on our dinner plate.

## THE PLASTIC LEGACY

A striking example of this **excessive** use of plastic can be seen on the surface of the Pacific. For years plastic items have been thrown into the sea from ships and **oil rigs**, or simply washed down rivers to the sea. **It is estimated that** there are

100 million tons of plastic waste floating in an area twice the size of the United States in the Pacific Ocean.

This area, known as “The Great Pacific Garbage **Patch**”, consists of two huge areas of rubbish on either side of Hawaii. The **currents** in each area move very slowly, accumulating the plastic litter in the centre. There, among other things, you can find gloves, shoes, kayaks, lego blocks, carrier bags, **syringes**, cigarette lighters and toothbrushes. When this collection comes close to Hawaii, the beaches are covered with plastic litter.

## ALTERNATIVES

What can people do to stop this endless plastic pollution? As for plastic bags, the answer is simple, use an alternative. Before the rise of plastics, people normally used paper bags to package fresh fruit and smaller items in shops. **Hessian** or **hemp** bags were also used to carry heavier items. These were made from natural **plant fibres** and break down quickly like paper when **discarded**.

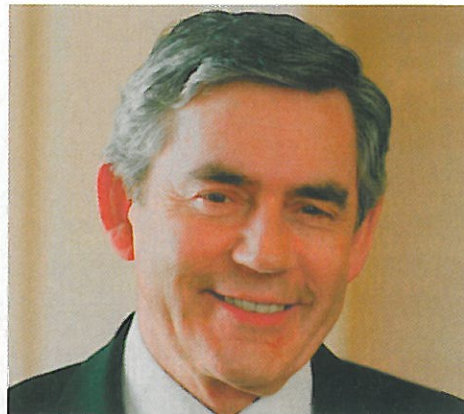
In this time of **growing environmental awareness**, Hessian bags and **fabric** bags are making a comeback in Britain and generally around the world. They sell for between £1 and £4 but can be used over and over again. **Cotton** bags are similarly popular and **cornstarch** is also being used in bag manufacture.



## THE FUTURE

Plastics are here to stay; too many essential things exist because of plastics to simply stop using them altogether. However, to avoid “plastic pollution” we must not use plastic bags where there is a **cost-effective** alternative. So when you go shopping next time, don't forget to bring your fabric bag, and don't use a plastic bag everytime you buy something. If you must use a plastic bag, try either to reuse it or recycle it.

**Nigel Haward (Great Britain)**



Politicians support the plastic cause too, Gordon Brown, the British prime minister, has declared that supermarkets must reduce the number of “one-use” plastic bags or he will introduce a charge per a bag next spring.

## DISCUSS

- Are people concerned about the use of plastics in your country?
- Are fabric bags becoming common?
- What kind of bag do you use when you go shopping?
- Does your supermarket give out free plastic bags?

## VOCABULARY

- petroleum (petrol)** [pɪ'trəʊlɪəm] - ropa  
**durability** [dʒʊərə'brɪtɪ] - odolnost, trvanlivost  
**to dispose of sth** [dɪ'spəʊz] - zbavit se něčeho  
**to break down** ['breɪk daʊn] - rozložit se  
**landfill site** ['lændfɪl saɪt] - skládka odpadů  
**release toxic fumes** [rɪ'li:z 'tɒksɪk fju:mz] - uvolňují se jedovaté plyny  
**jellyfish** ['dʒɛlɪfɪʃ] - medúza  
**digestive system** [dɪ'dʒɛstɪv 'sɪstəm] - trávicí soustava  
**marine food chain** - mořský potravní řetězec  
**excessive** [ɪk'sesɪv] - nadměrný  
**oil rig** [ɔɪl rɪg] - ropná plošina  
**it is estimated that** ['estɪmeɪtɪd] - odhaduje se, že  
**patch** [pætʃ] - místo, skvrna  
**current** ['kʌr(ə)nt] - proud  
**syringe** [sɪ'rɪn(dʒ)] - stříkačka  
**Hessian** ['hesɪən] - pytlovina  
**hemp** - konopný  
**plant fibre** [plɑ:nt 'faɪbə] - rostlinné vlákno  
**to discard** [dɪ'skɑ:d] - zahodit  
**growing environmental awareness** ['grəʊɪŋ ɪn,vaɪrən'mentl ə'weɪnɪs] - rostoucí povědomí o životním prostředí  
**fabric** ['fæbrɪk] - látkový  
**cotton** ['kɒt(ə)n] - bavlněný  
**cornstarch** ['kɔ:nstɑ:tʃ] - kukuřičný škrob  
**cost-effective** - cenově přístupný

## Expensive litter

Imagine you drop a candy wrapper on the ground and immediately a police officer confronts you and fines you £50. If you refuse to pay, you will be asked to do community work. This is not a scene from an ecological thriller but reality in Glasgow and many other cities.

Students in Glasgow are facing very high fines as part of the city's clean-up campaign. These students, aged 12 to 16, will be watched by law enforcement officers monitoring schools.

But what 12-year-old comes to school with £50? Glasgow City Council plans to send

the bill for students' anti-social behaviour home along with a letter to their parents. A spokesman for the council hopes that the number of fines issued will be very low.

A similar measure has just been introduced in Prague. Starting 1st July 2008 you might get up to a 30,000 CZK fine for littering in the city; on the spot the fine amounts to 1,000 CZK. Spitting out chewing gum or throwing a cigarette away might become very expensive. We are yet to see if these eco-lessons will make our cities cleaner.

**Hana Škrdlová (Canada)**

## LANGUAGE POINT

English has many expressions related to waste and things we no longer need: **rubbish** (BrE) x **garbage/ trash** (AmE) are most common informal expressions. **Litter** describes things lying on the streets. **Refuse** is a rather formal word for rubbish or waste. **Dustman** (BrE) x **garbage man** (AmE) both refer to people who collect waste from **dustbins** (BrE) x **garbage cans** (AmE).