

# A Note from your School Council

Dear Parents,

Last week the Archdiocese announced that casino fundraisers for Catholic schools in Edmonton will soon be banned. This decision will have devastating impacts. Because of the continual reduction in government funding, Catholic schools have come to rely on this casino money. At Our Lady of Victories, fundraising dollars from casinos have purchased or funded the following:

- field trips, Grade 6 Camp Warwa, and skating, swimming and skiing programs.
- Smart Boards, computers and cameras for the classrooms.
- Artist in Residence program and Christmas and spring concerts.
- computers and accessories for the computer lab.
- library upgrades and reading material.

We as a community would never be able to raise the tens of thousands of dollars we receive from casinos. The bottom line is that our children's education will greatly suffer. Please let the Archdiocese know that we, as parents, are very concerned about the consequences of this decision.

You can contact the Archdiocese by phone or mail:

- **780 469-1010**
- **8421 - 101 Ave Edmonton T6A 0L1**

Listed on the other side of this page are several statements concerning the impact of the loss of casino funding; you are welcome to use these in your correspondence. These statements will also be available on our website: [www.ourladyofvictories.ecsd.net](http://www.ourladyofvictories.ecsd.net)

Thank you very much for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, comments, or ideas, please feel free to contact Caroline Cuffe at 780 481-3981 or by email at [cuffefamily@shaw.ca](mailto:cuffefamily@shaw.ca)

As a parent of children in Catholic elementary school, I am discouraged to find out that the archdiocese is considering the elimination of financial support from casinos.

Casinos have become a vital way for our schools to raise additional funds. Technology, music, sports, field trips, library, and playground projects are all valuable elements that make a good school a great school experience. Without casino funds, the education and school experience for our children will suffer.

If the archdiocese decides to ban funding from casinos, Catholic schools will be at a huge disadvantage to public schools.

All the preservation of our Catholic identity will be irrelevant if we don't have playgrounds, technology, or library resources to enhance our schools.

Where will we raise \$85,000 every two years to support and supplement our Catholic schools? And at what cost will it be for the future of Catholic education? Unfortunately we will be unable to raise that kind of money and more people will turn to the public school system.

Money from casinos goes toward computers, music/band activities, and field trips. Without these funds, students will suffer. Does the Church plan to make up for this lost money?

What incentive will there be to send your children to a Catholic school when the public school across the street has access to so many more resources?

This is a societal problem, not a religious one. Poor, vulnerable people will still gamble regardless of who is working the casinos. The decision to ban casino fundraisers deprives Catholic schools of scarce resources, rather than attacking the root of the problem. Before making such a drastic decision, have an alternative plan in place to offset this loss of funding.

How will our schools get compensated for this loss of revenue? Silent auctions, coupon books, and sausage sales can raise only so much money. Families may have less money donate to our Foster Child, Sign of Hope, MS read-a-thon charities, as parents may have to pay more for field trips and sports programs.

The reality is that casinos will continue to operate. While some of the people who go to casinos are less fortunate and vulnerable, not allowing Catholic schools access to these funds does nothing to help solve people's gambling problems.