

Communication – The Key to a Close-Knit Community – “A Sign of the Times”

The Need:

A digital display sign that is reflective of and responsive to the needs of the members of the community.

Communication and Community are linked by more than their Latin roots. To create a strong Community, there must be vibrant Communication. Community volunteers, and social service groups and agencies, must make people aware of the many valuable services they provide. A school can become the focal point in the community for the sharing and exchange of news and ideas.

Communication takes on many forms, each one having its advantages and disadvantages. Newsletters from the school, newspaper ads, radio and TV ads, Public Service Announcements, posters and signage, flyers, email and websites, are all effective – to a point, and only for certain groups. We need to take a lesson from business: digital display signs are being installed at an astonishing rate, because people read them! Another advantage businesses see to the digital sign is the ease of changing the message – one can quickly post time-sensitive messages. A recent drive down Henderson Highway, within 1.5 kilometres of John Pritchard School, revealed a number of digital signs (see pictures). John Pritchard School attempts to post as many community messages as possible, but the logistics of changing the plastic letters limits those possibilities.

Whom It Would Help:

John Pritchard School has connections to many aspects of community life. Evidence of some of these relationships can be seen in letters of support, from ACCESS River East, Gateway Recreation Centre, Adult and Continuing Education Centre, Good Neighbours Active Living Centre, and Community Initiatives of River East Transcona School Division. These letters can be viewed at <http://schools.retsd.mb.ca/jp/Pages/DigitalDisplaySignProject.aspx>. Some examples of programs and services which could be advertised on a digital sign are: positive parenting programs, parent-child preschool programs, transition to school programs, youth programs, supports for new Canadians, flu/immunization clinics, Healthy Baby sites, recreation events and leagues, the many continuing education programs offered for adults, youth summer camps, and, last but not least, programs and events for the rapidly growing older adult segment of the community. This type of sign also has the capability to become a part of the Child Find and Amber Alert notification systems.

Goal:

To provide a communication vehicle that is effective, will reach a large majority of the members of the community, and will carry content that is relevant to the health and well-being of the community.

The Project:

The grant money would be used to install a digital display sign to replace the current manual, plastic letter sign on the grounds of John Pritchard School. Installation would take approximately 2 weeks, and would be completed by the grant deadline. The benefits of the project will be long term and sustainable.