



# Grade 9 students blast into school

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SMITHVILLE, ONTARIO — Grade 9 students at Smithville Christian High School blasted into their new school year Friday, with a day-long orientation session called the Grade 9 Blast, designed to make sure they “own” the school.

The new students took over the building for the day, for a full schedule of food, fun and learning activities designed to make their transition to high school a success. Students in older grades were assigned a reading day.

“This is a real opportunity for the staff and Grade 9 students to get to know each other,” said Linda Booy-Korvemaker, the school’s head of student services and one of the organizers of the event. It focuses only on Grade 9 students, so there is no initiation or hazing as sometimes occurs in other schools, she said.

The day started with a breakfast buffet cooked and served by the teachers to the Grade 9 students and their parents. Parents were invited to the breakfast so they can meet each other and their kids’ new friends, said Booy-Korvemaker.

After breakfast, the teachers’ praise team led the students and parents in a time of worship, and then History teacher Dave Giesbrecht shared an opening devotion on the topic of fear. He told the students that some fear is healthy if it stops them from doing dangerous or irresponsible things, but he also said that the Bible has many verses telling them not to be afraid. He said it’s common to be afraid of new things, of appearing foolish, or of failure, but he urged them to conquer their fears and to try new things. Giesbrecht said their high school experience will be better if they tackle it with an attitude of “no fear.”

After the parents were dismissed, the students played games, did a school-wide scavenger hunt and attended workshops on study skills, on how to use the library, on how to use the computer lab and on the school’s anti-bullying program.

Booy-Korvemaker said it’s obvious both teachers and the students enjoyed the day, and students from previous years are still talking about the Grade 9 Blast in their graduation speeches “so it’s a great memory they have of our school.”

Parent Andrea Thompson said her son, Calvin, has thoroughly enjoyed his first week of high school, saying Smithville Christian High is “amazing.”

Parent Scott Purser said his son, Nygel Washington-Purser, is also thrilled with his first week of high school, and can’t wait to go each day.

Booy-Korvemaker said that’s the goal of the small, independent school – to make sure all students know that they belong to a caring community of students and teachers, and that they all succeed at school.



Members of the Blue Team race through the front lobby during Friday’s 2009 Grade 9 Blast scavenger hunt.