



## **Sensory Room and Learning Lab Provides Learning Opportunities for Special Needs Children.**

St. Gabriel Elementary officially opened their new Sensory Room and Learning Lab this morning after receiving a grant of \$25,000 from Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Canada.

The ‘Snoezelen’ Room originated in Europe and is a combination of the Dutch words “snuffelen” meaning to seek out or explore and “doezelen” which means to relax. The room’s environment provides a space and opportunity to engage all senses and can either increase or decrease alertness and arousal level so that all children benefit.

“The concept of the room will additionally support children in our school with mild, moderate or severe needs in our District programs as well as within the inclusive setting,” said Assistant Principal Jackie Flynn. “It will allow students to engage in activities such as touching various textures, listening to music and sounds at various volumes in a low light environment and playing specialized computer games,” Flynn added.

The Sensory Room and Learning Lab would not have been possible without a grant from Ronald McDonald House Charities. The school applied for the grant and received \$25,000 which has paid for all of the specialized equipment in the Snoezelen Room as well as the entire set up of the room. “We are extremely grateful for this grant from Ronald McDonald Charities as it will bring so much joy and additional learning opportunities for our students,” Flynn went on to say.

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The specialized equipment provides stimulation and relaxation through the following ways:

- Touch: varied textures that students can explore, massage mats and slippers
- Colour and light: examples include a projection of fish and kittens on the wall, flashing lights of various colors, a spinning disco like ball on the ceiling, a plastic tube with fish of various colors surging through it and multi-colored plastic eggs which change colour when you hold them
- Sound: multi-colored lights that beep when you touch them

The room helps all students regardless of their ability level to enjoy active play and relaxation at a rate that all students can feel comfortable with and regulate.

### **About Ronald McDonald House Charities®**

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Canada (RMHC) is a registered charity that is dedicated to helping children with serious illnesses or disabilities, and their families, lead happier and healthier lives. RMHC achieves this by supporting each of the 12 Canadian Ronald McDonald Houses, the Ronald McDonald Family Room® Program, and by awarding grants to many other children’s charities across the country. Since its inception in 1982, RMHC Canada has awarded nearly \$60 million in grants benefiting thousands of children and families in more than 600 communities. For more information, visit [www.rmhc.ca](http://www.rmhc.ca)