

# ***School News Release from the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario***

**School: St. Mary CHS**  
**Date: April 11, 2008**  
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## **Third Annual St. Mary CHS God Squad Walk Against Poverty Draws Large Crowd**

**Brockville, ON** – More than two hundred students from the four Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario Brockville schools (St. Mary CHS, J.L. Jordan Catholic School, St. Francis Xavier Catholic School, and St. John Bosco Catholic School) recently took to the streets around Brockville City Hall to send a message of support for those dealing with poverty.

The event, organized by the St. Mary CHS youth group, the God Squad, is held in conjunction with the school's Thinkfast - 25 Hour Famine. The famine sees participants explore social justice issues through various activities, including the walk.

Leading up to these events, members of the St. Mary God Squad visited the local Catholic elementary schools to share statistics about poverty, and to explain to the students that they can help make a difference.

Grade 10 student, and God Squad Member, Chris Walasek, helped organize the event. "The walk is a way to mobilize the Brockville community to take action against poverty. To me, it shows that small towns like ours can still have a voice. The most important thing we told the students in the elementary schools is that no matter how small you are, or how old you are, your voice can still be heard, and today gives them that opportunity."

Students marched around the block surrounding City Hall chanting anti-poverty slogans. A group of high school students stood by the road with signs encouraging people to honk their horns in support. "I was amazed at how many people were honking. I know they're hearing what we have to say," said Chris.

St. Mary Chaplaincy Leader, Cathy Cavanagh, said the students have a number of concerns. "The statistics worry them. They know that nearly 50 per cent of elderly Canadians who live on their own, are living in poverty. They know that more than 40 per cent of Aboriginal children live in poverty as well. I am so proud of how our students give of themselves and take this message to our community year-after-year."

The seventy-five St. Mary students who are taking part in the 25-hour famine collected pledges and raised more than \$1,700 to donate to the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. “The money donated is going directly to help those who are in dire need. We hope that this donation will be a call to action that the entire community will respond to. We hope the message is heard in other communities and we see this movement grow even bigger across our country,” added Ms. Cavanagh.

For more information, please contact CDSBEO Communications Officer Bob Perreault at 613-258-7757 or 1-800-443-4562 ext. 206 or 613-859-0678 (mobile).

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario operates 40 elementary and 10 secondary schools across 8 counties. The CDSBEO offers excellence in Catholic education through provincial-leading programs to approximately 15,000 students.

**Attached Photo: Poverty Walk** – St. Mary CHS students take their poverty awareness campaign to the streets gaining support from Brockville citizens as they walked around City Hall

