

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

**School: St. Mary CHS, Brockville**  
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## **Making a Wish for Peace: St. Mary CHS Student Folds 1000 Paper Cranes**

**Brockville, ON** – Inspired by the Japanese legend that says anyone who folds 1000 paper cranes will be granted a wish, St. Mary CHS student Abigail Smeath decided to fold 1000 cranes as a wish for peace.

The Grade 12 student set out on the task after hearing the story of Sadako Sasaki, a young Japanese girl born in 1943.

Sadako contracted leukemia 10 years after the atom bomb was detonated in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. She had heard of the crane legend, and began folding the paper birds. The 12-year-old girl had been a successful track and field athlete and was going to wish for perfect health.

As time went on, Sadako realized that she was not improving and kept folding the cranes as a wish for peace so that no other children would have to suffer her fate.

After her death, Sadako's friends continued folding cranes hoping their friend's wish for peace would be granted. Her friends successfully lobbied for a statue of Sadako holding a paper crane to be built as a monument to her wish for peace. In 1958 the statue was unveiled in Hiroshima Peace Park and has been visited by hundreds of thousands who share her wish. Today people around the world fold paper cranes to help keep Sadako's dream for peace alive.

With the help of some of her fellow students, Abigail brought several baskets holding 999 folded cranes in to the school's Remembrance Day Mass on November 9. She folded her 1000th crane in front of the students as she told Sadako's story.

Abigail said not only is folding the cranes a wish for peace, but it is also a metaphor, "As you work towards your goal you find some folds are simple, while others are complex. Sometimes people tell you that your work is pointless and sometimes the task seems too large. But we have to remain dedicated to the goal and work to achieve it."

St. Mary CHS Principal Tom Whelan stated, “Abigail’s work has been an inspiration to her fellow students, the staff at St. Mary, and to anyone who hears about it. Our entire Catholic school community is incredibly proud of how she has chosen to share this wish for peace.”

The cranes are going to be hung in the chapel and placed around the school. “Our entire school has been inspired by Abigail’s story and we hope that having the cranes around the school will be a dramatic reminder of the importance of working for peace,” said St. Mary CHS Chaplain Cathy Cavanagh.

For more information, please contact CDSBEO Communications Officer Bob Perreault at 613-258-7757 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: Abigail Smeath.jpg** – St. Mary CHS Grade 12 student Abigail Smeath holds a basket containing some of the 1000 cranes she folded as a wish for peace

