

NEWS RELEASE FROM THE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO

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Subject: St. John Catholic Elementary School
From: Bob Perreault, Communications Officer
bob.perreault@cdsbeo.on.ca



Box 2222, 2755 Highway 43, Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0
613-258-7757 or 1-800-443-4562 ext. 206

St. John Elementary Catholic School Honoured by Catholic Education Foundation of Ontario

Perth, ON – The students and staff of **St. John Elementary Catholic School** in Perth are celebrating after winning an elite award. **The Michael Carty Award from the Catholic Education Foundation of Ontario (CEFO) was presented to the school on October 28 at the Father Fogarty Awards in Toronto.** St. John Elementary is one of only four schools province-wide to achieve the honour.

The school earned the award for their proposal to implement Peaceful Schools International (PSI). In bestowing the award, **CEFO Executive Secretary-Treasurer Ann Seymour** stated, “Your involvement in Peaceful Schools International indicated that the initiatives are being taken in your school to improve, develop and enhance aspects of Catholic education that contribute to the whole person. As part of the central curricular program it reflects the mission and goals of the authentic Catholic school.”

Peaceful Schools International was established in 2001 by Dr. Hetty van Gulp following the death of her son Ben as the result of a bullying incident in 1991. Dr. van Gulp has devoted time and energy towards supporting schools that have declared a commitment to creating and maintaining a culture of peace. PSI has over 200 member schools around the world. In these schools students, teachers and community members work together to ensure that everyone feels safe, respected and valued.

St. John Principal Theresa Lalonde Pankow collaborated with **St. John Student Support Worker Kate Wing** on the award-winning effort. “We are so proud to receive the Michael Carty Award for promoting leadership and Catholicity in our students,” said Ms. Wing.

As a result of winning the award, Dr. van Gulp will be visiting the Perth school on Tuesday, November 7, 2006 for a day of workshops that will benefit not only the students and staff at St. John, but also the entire community.

Ms. van Gulp will speak to a group of students during the day. Those students will then share what they have learned with their peers. Later that evening, Ms. van Gulp will speak to family members and other members of the community.

“So many people will benefit from this visit,” said Ms. Lalonde Pankow. “It’s wonderful to see how this project has grown. Bringing this message of peace and respect for others out of the classroom and into the community is a perfect example of the fundamentals of Catholic education.”

CDSBEO Superintendent of Education Dr. Donaleen Hawes will be attending the evening session with Dr. van Gulp. “The students at St. John have embraced the Gospel values of Catholic education through the Peaceful Schools program. Everyone in the school should be commended for their desire to share this message of peace and respect with their community.”

Other CDSBEO schools to earn the Peaceful Schools designation include, **J.L. Jordan Catholic School in Brockville, St. Gregory Catholic School in Carleton Place, St. Joseph Catholic School in Toledo, St. Mark Catholic School in Prescott, and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School in Russell.**

Members of the media are invited to attend the evening session with Dr. van Gulp at St. John Catholic School at 7:00 pm.

For more information and interview opportunities, 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.