

TWIDDY, Carl

Excellence in teaching

BCI graduate honored by PM

By Bill Hunt

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A former Belleville resident has received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching Science, Technology and Mathematics.

Carl Twiddy, 52, was born and raised on a farm just outside Belleville and attended Belleville Collegiate Institute and Vocational School before going to Queen's University. He is now head of the science department at Markham District High School.

He was one of only 15 from across Canada to receive the award. Prime Minister Jean Chretien presented it to him Feb. 13 in Ottawa.

Some of the programs he has initiated over a 31-year teaching career include the Industrial Mentorship Program that pairs students with local industry, and another program in which students teach elementary school students for a short time. Since he began that program 24 years ago, 141 students who participated in it have gone on to become teachers.

During the last 17 years he's been holding travelling chemistry safety shows at elementary schools throughout Ontario, to break down children's fear of certain chemicals.

"We're trying to encourage girls to come in to science and math," he says.

The science teacher's students have also placed "well above the provincial average and well above the national average" in many chemistry contests they've entered, he says.

Twiddy was told four months ago he had been chosen for the award and was presented with it in Ottawa by the Prime Minister and Dr. Jon Gerrard, Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development).

Prime Minister Chretien told the audience, "The classroom, indeed the world, is a very different place today than when I was in school. Young people now face challenges and opportunities that we could not have imagined. Teachers who help their students meet these challenges, who inspire and enable them to achieve their very best, are true national heroes."

Twiddy received \$7,000 (one third of which goes to his high school), a modern, one year's subscription to the Internet, a letter from the PM and a certificate.

Asked how he felt when he received the news, Twiddy replied, "Walking on air. There's just nothing like it...It leaves you with a high."

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