

Cargill Lady Wins Prestigious Honour

by J. Brian Raper

April 08

Tracy Napper Sharp, terrific daughter of Gary and Michelle Napper, may be living in the Durham area, but to all who watched this beautiful young lady grow up, she will always be a Cargill Girl. Tracy recently received word that she was the recipient of a Premier's Award for Teaching Excellence.

What follows is the press release regarding Tracy's superb pedagogical skills and the facts behind her achievement of the award.

"Tracy Napper Sharpe may be a new teacher, but she is a master at creating integrated learning experiences. When teaching about global communities, she transformed her classroom first into an African hut and then into an Arctic landscape. Students learned about these communities and could connect them to global media events and to their own lives. And she freely shares her plans with other teachers.

The school board asked her to create and present a literacy workshop for other teachers during the two-day Summer Institute program. Her first remarks were "as educators, I think that the best way that we can help our students to be the best that they can be, is to help each other be the best that we can be." She shared her lesson plans and units with other teachers - ones that took her many months to create.

She took a class for an ill teacher that included many of her former students. One student reminisced about popcorn in Science class and the writer's workshop celebration. When she told him that he had a good memory and asked how he remembered everything, he replied "Mrs. Napper Sharpe, Grade One was the best year of my life - I'll remember every little thing we did with you until I'm 100."

She had a child in her class who had not spoken at school for the last two years. She made a deal that should this student speak in a voice loud enough for others to hear her, Napper Sharpe would colour her hair every colour of the rainbow. By December, this student was giving oral presentations and speaking in class, and Napper Sharpe had dyed her hair.

She has a strong ability to plan cross-curricular activities. When students learned about butterfly life cycles in science, for example, her Grade One students raised and nurtured their own butterflies through their life cycle. She used butterfly manipulatives to count, graph and solve math problems. Butterfly artwork decorated her classroom and each student had the chance to design a butterfly costume for a butterfly parade to celebrate the release of their butterflies into nature.

She is a graduate of D'Youville Teachers College, Buffalo and coaches cross country running and the school rep soccer team."

Tracy came to the teaching profession by a different route than most young ladies. She married the handsome Scott Sharp and they had three model children, Hayden 12, Jordan, 10 and Alex, 6 before Tracy decided to follow her lifelong dream of becoming a teacher. She returned to university, obtained her degree and completed teacher's training in Buffalo.

Her mother Mickey is also a teacher as is her brother-in law, Kent Campbell.

Tracy will receive her award at the Ontario Science Centre on the evening of April 30, 2008. CAN congratulates Tracy on her award. We knew she was special from the time she first bought candy at Raper's Store in Cargill. As an aside, Tracy's first teacher was Audrey Webb, who was one of the finest educators in 17 counties, including Bruce and Grey.