

SCHOOL NEWS



Students at Holy Cross School were honoured recently as their Stand Up video series against bullying received third place in a Red Cross-sponsored national Public Service Award contest. The students created various videos to show how to stop bullying in schools. Among those honoured were, (front, from left) Kayla Schumacker, Gabriela Suarez-Hondal, Thomas Davies, Joshua Emmerson, Amy DeSousa, Joshua Ivanysyn, Holly McNeil, Taylor Mallais, Shannon Weslake, Monika Nawrocki. In back, Ryan Keane, Max Mancuso, Julia McKnight, Erin Robinson, Emma Scantland, Erin Troughton, Canadian Red Cross Community Services co-ordinator Sue Fitzgerald, and Holy Cross School teacher Elaine Mulcahy.

Photo by Ted Brown

Holy Cross students get national award

Grade 5 students from Holy Cross Catholic School have won third place in a Canadian Red Cross-sponsored national video PSA contest.

This was the first year for the Canadian Red Cross contest, called Stand Up 2 Bullying that asked youth to create a 30-second video PSA depicting how bystanders can make a difference in bullying situations. The PSA will be used by the Red Cross in public education campaigns and training for its RespectED: Violence and Abuse Prevention programs across Canada.

But for the students, this contest meant more than the chance for a prize.

Elaine Mulcahy, CYC at Holy Cross Catholic School, said "The Red Cross Stand Up 2 Bullying Video PSA Contest idea was presented to me at the Halton Catholic District School Board Bullying Awareness Conference in November. I thought it would be a great initiative for our school to take on. The students in our school are great advocates of anti-bullying, and I thought what better way for them to voice their opinion and model kindness for students all across Canada.

"On the first day meeting with the interested students, I asked the question, 'why are you interested in entering this bullying awareness contest?' The majority of students answered that they wanted to enter this contest to bring about change in our school, and to help others who may not know how to handle bullying situations."

One of the winning students said, "I have liked that by making the bullying videos we are getting the message out that bullying is not okay. I will not be a bystander and I will try to help people

stop bullying." In Canada, between four to six children in a classroom of 35 are bullying and/or being bullied. Bullying incidents happen in front of peers 85 per cent of the time. Statistics show that when a friend steps in, they are successful in stopping bullying about half the time in 10 seconds or less.

"The majority of young people are neither those who bully nor those who are victimized, but the passive or participatory bystander has a significant role to play in prevention," said Sue Fitzgerald, Red Cross Community Services co-ordinator. "Often, youth who bully are seeking prestige through their actions. Peers can cheer a bully on, or they can discourage harassing behaviour by refusing to accept or applaud the bully's actions."

To stop the hurt, the first step is to ensure that young people understand what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The Red Cross program behind the Stand Up campaign, Beyond the Hurt, clearly defines bullying and harassment, and examines the impact and consequences of these behaviours. The program is delivered in schools and community groups by young people, who have been trained, mentored and are supported by adult Prevention Educators.

"Young people, like these students, can make an enormous difference in their school communities," said Fitzgerald. "If you see bullying, you can stop it by taking a stand and speaking out."

For more information on the Stand Up 2 Bullying campaign including tips for youth, parents and educators, visit www.standup2bullying.com.

Christian school to offer unique learning program

A Georgetown school will be the first in Halton Region to offer an intensive program to help students overcome their learning disabilities.

Georgetown District Christian School plans to offer the Arrowsmith Program starting in September. Principal Marianne Vangoor believes the program has achieved effective and lasting results by strengthening the weak cognitive capacities underlying a student's learning disabilities. Vangoor says the program uses specific techniques and cognitive exercises to deal with defined learning dysfunctions.

"Currently in the regular school system, we set up strategies to cope with the learning disability," said Vangoor.

Scribing stories for students who have trouble writing or allowing them to type something on the computer instead of writing it are examples of those strategies.

"Those strategies don't help overcome the disability, they just work around it," said Vangoor. "The goal of the Arrowsmith Program is to fundamentally change the capacity of the learner to learn."

It is based on the work of Barbara Arrowsmith Young, a Canadian who struggled with her own learning disabilities through school. While at graduate school at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) in Toronto, Young's investigations on neuroplasticity led her to develop exercises that she began doing herself in the late 1970s to strengthen her own learning capacities.

The foundation of the Arrowsmith Program is a rigorous and graduated program of cognitive exercises which Young has developed and which could be described as a type of physical therapy for the brain. The results led Young to offer her program through her own school which opened in Toronto. Hundreds of students have been through the program since it opened in 1980.

Vangoor said the program is ideal for

students who are of average or above average intelligence but struggle with specific learning problems.

"This is not a program for kids with severe intellectual or behavioural problems," she said.

"The program has expanded to schools in Canada and the United States and we are excited to be a part of it," said Vangoor.

Students who are considered suitable for Arrowsmith Program must provide their academic reports and participate in the interviews with their parents. These reports will be assessed at the school using procedures designed by Arrowsmith. The assessment allows Arrowsmith to create a learning profile of individual strengths and weaknesses and to design an individualized program of cognitive exercises for each student.

"It is a very intense program and kids really need to be able to focus, but the results are impressive."

GDCS principal Marianne Vangoor

"It is a very intense program and kids really need to be able to focus, but the results are impressive," said Vangoor. "I think people get to the point where they

say, 'now what, we've tried everything', Arrowsmith has shown success where conventional 'work-arounds' fail."

Students return to the regular academic program at their appropriate grade level following completion of a two-to-four year program.

Vangoor said a teacher will be hired to implement the Arrowsmith Program at Georgetown District Christian School this fall.

There are 10 spaces available in the program for the fall. To obtain more information on the program GDCS is offering this fall, and to register, call the school at 905-877-4221.

There will be information evenings at the school on April 3 and April 9 at 7 p.m. Vangoor, vice-principal George Cook and development director Tisny Braam will be on hand for questions. For more information on the Arrowsmith Program visit www.arrowsmithschool.org or www.u-can-learn.org.

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Correction Notice

On page 1 of the Shoppers Drug Mart® Flyer in effect from Saturday March 22 until Friday March 28, 2008 the Nescafe Rich Columbian Instant Coffee 150g is not available due to a manufacturer shortage.

We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY TODD

Love Mom, Doug, Chad & Lisa

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"You Know Yourself"

Happy 40th Birthday Frank!

Love, Luba, Karin, Kate & Christopher