



Champion COMMUNITY Page

E.W. Foster School's Jones nominated for Teacher of the Year in newspaper contest

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

For E.W. Foster School's Lorna Jones, learning never stops — not for the pint-sized students in her classroom and not for herself either.

The soft-spoken elementary teacher has been helping shape young minds for more than two decades now, but doesn't pretend she knows it all.

"I'm like my students," stressed Ms Jones, who attends educational workshops on a regular basis and constantly strives to better her efforts in the classroom. "I'm still continuing to learn."

That dedication as well as her caring nature hasn't gone unnoticed at E.W. Foster — not by those who directly benefit from her teaching expertise, and certainly not by their parents.

A member of the latter group recently recommended her for the Toronto Sun's Teacher of the Year Awards program. After the initial nomination, a number of support letters followed.

"Lorna's positive, friendly manner enables her students, support staff and parent volunteers to all benefit from her teaching skills and give the best possible learning environment," said the original nominator.

Wrote another parent, "Time and time again we witness her seeking out individual strengths, encouraging the children in a way that fosters autonomy, a positive self esteem, a willingness to take risks and an acceptance of self and others."

Ms Jones — who's been a fixture at E.W. Foster for 17 years now — was chosen as one of 38 finalists from among more than 1,000 nominees across Ontario.

And while that would make most teachers blush with pride, the local instructor gets much more emotional when reflecting on the kind words written about her.

"At first I was very, very surprised. Then when I could think, I felt so honoured. The parents were very supportive with their letters. I was just so thrilled. I was totally caught off guard," she said.

E.W. Foster principal Rick Kaufman described Ms Jones as a "caring, nurturing teacher who treats each learner as an important individual through their quest for learning."

Ms Jones — who comes from two "supportive and inspiring" teacher parents — said she's always tried to adopt an individualistic approach



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

E.W. Foster School teacher Lorna Jones, a finalist for the Toronto Sun's Teacher of the Year, stands beside a bulletin board showing some of her students' artwork. Ms Jones says watching youngsters gain self-esteem is the most rewarding part of her job.

to teaching, but didn't realize just how important it was until she had children of her own.

She added, "It (becoming a mother) made me aware of just how precious and important each child is and just how great an honour it is to teach other people's children."

Watching youngsters gain self-esteem, she said, is the most rewarding aspect of her job. And helping children develop this means making them understand that it's all right to fail.

"It's important to make them realize it's okay to try, and make a mistake," explained Ms Jones, who said she's been influenced by many exceptional teachers over the years. "Because each

mistake helps us do that much better next time."

Among the major challenges facing teachers these days, she stressed, is maintaining a child's interest level — which can sometimes require a lot of creativity, as well as a willingness to take on the role of student.

"I've had to take some computer workshops over the years and many of my students took to it quicker than I did," she quipped. "The idea is to think of the students' interests and needs and draw upon their strengths. That's how you keep them focused."

Among those who know this is eight-year-old Mason Whiting — one of her current second

graders — who said, "Ms Jones has really taught me a lot. We do a lot of different activities — like math, reading and spelling — and it's always fun."

His teacher echoed those sentiments, stating "I think there's a unique reward that comes with teaching primary level children. They come in unsure of what's expected, but just so open to new skills and new ideas. To see them develop as the weeks and months go by is just amazing."

Ms Jones is one of two Halton District School Board teachers who've made the Toronto Sun Teacher of the Year short list. A team of judges will choose 10 finalists for the awards in June.



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COGECO 14 Programming Schedule — May 1st - May 7th 2001.

Tuesday, May 1st	Wednesday, May 2nd	Thursday, May 3rd	Sunday, May 6th	Monday, May 7th
9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore	9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore	9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore	9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore	9am, 10am, 11am, Noon Plugged In! Encore
5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! 5:30pm Seniors Showcase	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! 5:30pm Cable in the Classroom Swap Talk	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! 5:30pm The Issue Is... 6:30pm Money Week 7:00pm Osler Health Connection	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! 5:30pm Week in Review 6:30pm The Issue Is... 7:00pm Osler Health Connection	5pm, 6pm & 7:30pm Plugged In! 5:30pm Living on the Edge 6-10:30pm Georgetown Kinsmen TV Auction
6:30pm Optimist TV Bingo	6:30pm New Life Easter 8:00pm Cantata: 'How Can I Ever Tell You'	8:00pm War Amps: "Canadian In Normandy"	8:00pm New Life Easter Cantata: 'How Can I Ever Tell You'	

Feature this week: "Georgetown Kinsmen TV Auction" - Monday May 7th, 6pm -10:30 pm