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Community Page

Teacher of the Month

Mrs. Houlihan will 'always believe in you'

Grade 4 educator is said to be a special teacher

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**
The Champion

Her nominator's words are enough to melt the hardest of hearts.

"She listens and responds and will always believe in you," wrote Guardian Angels Catholic School student Connor Brodie in his nomination letter to The Champion's Teacher of the Month contest.

"When I didn't get chosen for the speech contest she called me at home to see if I was okay and say how proud she was of me."

Just who is this special teacher? It's Leslie Houlihan, this month's winner.

Still recovering from the surprise of finding out she'd been chosen, Ms Houlihan attempted to put into words how she feels about teaching.

"I'm honoured to be in this profession. It's hard to explain, but when I see a student struggling and when a light bulb goes off and I see that shining light in their eyes, it's such a thrill," Ms Houlihan said, adding being a teacher is a responsibility she doesn't take lightly.

Connor and his classmates are a great bunch of students, she said, explaining she has some students with special needs in her class, and the students are more than happy to help them out.

"I've taught them that God's given them all a special talent. We're all created different, but we work together as a team."

Teaching at a brand new school — this is Guardian Angels' first year open — brings its own challenges and joys, Ms Houlihan said.

Since the school's located in a new area of town — near Derry Road and Fourth Line — Ms Houlihan said something unique is having new students join the class in the middle of the school year as homes are completed. It's positive though, since it provides her students with opportunities to look out for the new students and show them around the school, Ms Houlihan said.

But no school — even one with gleaming new floors and freshly painted walls — is perfect. Ms Houlihan recounted the disappointment her class felt when they had to leave their room in the school to re-locate in a portable because of an increased school enrollment.

Ms Houlihan said she handled the situation by creating a 'pros' and 'cons' list with the students



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Guardian Angels School grade 4 teacher Leslie Houlihan goes over some work with Connor Brodie, who nominated Ms Houlihan for Teacher of the Month, while the rest of the class looks on.

that included the obvious negatives of moving to a portable as well as the benefits — for example, she reminded the students they'd have more recess time since they didn't have to waste time walking through the halls to get outside.

Her well-timed optimism seemed to have worked. Connor included the incident in his nomination letter.

"She can make bad things seem good like

when our class had to move from the brand new school to an old portable," he wrote.

Ms Houlihan said she knows first hand what a great influence teachers can have. She said she'll never forget her grade six teacher, Mrs. Robinson, who patiently helped her day after day until she got the hang of long division.

She said she hopes her students take away from her a lifelong passion for learning.

If there's one thing Ms Houlihan said she hopes to leave with her students each year, it's to believe in themselves — no matter what their academic capabilities or social status.

"I always remind them to be the best they can be," she said, adding, "It's rewarding to see them become successful individuals."

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Programming Schedule — Tuesday, April 5 - Monday, April 11, 2005

Tuesday, April 5	Wednesday, April 6	Thursday, April 7	Friday, April 8	Saturday, April 9	Sunday, April 10	Monday, April 11
5:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA Osler Health Connection	3:30pm - 6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA Simply Halton	1:00pm TVCogeco Sports: Jr A Hockey - Aurora at Geo. - Game 7	3:00pm - 4:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 5:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	8:00am-4:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 1:00pm TVCogeco Sports: Jr A Hockey - Aurora at Geo. - Game 7	10:30am TVCogeco Sports: Jr A Hockey - Aurora at Geo. - Game 7	8:00am - 11:00am Plugged In! EXTRA 11:00am Osler Health Connection
6:30pm Optimist TV Bingo (Live)	6:30pm Plugged In! EXTRA	3:00pm Milton Council Mar 29	6:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA 7:30pm TVCogeco Sports: AHL Hockey: Milwaukee vs Hamilton	7:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	1:30pm - 5:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	11:30am Living Healthy: Men and Aging
7:30pm Simply Halton	7:00pm Swap Talk (Live)	5:30pm Plugged In! EXTRA	10:00pm - 4:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA		5:00pm Living Healthy: Men and Aging	12:30pm Simply Halton
8:00pm Halton Hills Council April 4	8:00pm Auto Experts (Live)	6:00pm Simply Halton			6:00pm Osler Health Connection	
10:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	9:00pm Milton Council Mar 29	6:30pm Osler Health Connection			6:30pm Plugged In! EXTRA	
	10:00pm TVCogeco Sports: Jr A Hockey - Aurora at Geo. - Game 7	7:00pm Living Healthy: Men and Aging			7:30pm Simply Halton	
		8:00pm Halton Region Council Mar 30			8:00pm New Life Church's 2005 Easter Cantata: "Believe"	
		10:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA			10:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	

Live AHL Hockey: Milwaukee vs Hamilton - Friday, 7:30 p.m.