



COMMUNITY

Teacher of the Month

Reding music teacher loved and respected

Alfano nominated by peers and pupils

By Stephanie Thiessen
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

When The Champion received word from 36 teachers and students that a music teacher at Bishop Reding deserved to be June's Teacher of the Month, we took notice.

Although the Teacher of the Month feature has been very successful, with nomination forms coming in almost weekly, The Champion has never yet received a nomination package that's been anywhere near as impressive as the one urging us to choose Nick Alfano.

One quick glance through the reams of glowing recommendations told the selection panel all it needed to know — Alfano is a teacher who's loved and respected by students and fellow teachers alike.

Needless to say, it wasn't difficult to choose Alfano as The Champion's Teacher of the Month for June.

"Mr. Alfano defines music. He represents commitment, passion and brightens our lives," wrote grade 12 music student Lauren Prisniak. "He lives as he teaches and is a role model to all students, musical and non-musical alike."

Prisniak's comments were representative of the other students', who praised the way Alfano encourages and respects his pupils, urging them to be the best they can.

"You can if you believe you can!" is a commonly used phrase for Alfano, and one it seems his students have taken to heart, if the nominations are any indication.

"He has inspired and positively impacted hundreds of students, many of whom continue to visit years upon graduating," the cover letter reads. "Mr. Alfano is so respected that he is affectionately and simply known by all his students as 'sir.'"

Grade 10 student Rachel Miller said Alfano is someone students can turn to when they need a listening ear.

"He is such a strong person — someone that students can look up to and talk to," she wrote.

Friday afternoon, Alfano took time from his busy end-of-the-year schedule to chat with The Champion and give readers a glimpse into what it is that inspires him to bring out his students' potential year after year.

Alfano has been teaching for a total of 26



BELOVED TEACHER: Bishop Reding Secondary School teacher Nick Alfano stands in the school's piazza with his grade 12 music class, one of the classes that nominated him as The Champion's Teacher of Month. GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

years. For the past 14, he's been the teacher behind the doors of the music room — doors his students say are always open.

"This room is always humming," Alfano said, explaining the music room is like a second home to many of his band and music students. "It's a safe place where they can hang out."

But, he quickly added, students know that in return they must strive toward the high standards he sets, whether playing in his music class or the concert band he directs.

Reaching out to the community through music is something Alfano said he stresses with his students. They regularly perform at

venues such as Allendale, where residents might not otherwise receive the gift of music.

"It's a growing experience — they learn how to become compassionate individuals," he said of his students.

Yearly music trips to various destinations are a highlight for teacher and students alike, Alfano said, and normally include activities that run the gauntlet from jazz clubs to symphonies to masses.

"I try to expose them to as much stuff as possible and then they play themselves," he said, adding, "Playing in a foreign environment out of town is very important."

Although it's always exciting when his

students decide to pursue music after leaving high school, Alfano said that's not what's most important to him.

What is important is that his students take from his class lessons about becoming compassionate, responsible young adults.

From music, students learn skills that go far beyond how to stay in tune and get the correct rhythm, he said. The values of teamwork and discipline are just two of the life skills imparted, he said.

"It (music) helps you develop as a person. The rewards are many-fold," he said.

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Tuesday, June 6	Wednesday, June 7	Thursday, June 8	Friday, June 9	Saturday, June 10	Sunday, June 11	Monday, June 12
1:00pm SportZONE Live 2:00pm-6:30pm Plugged In! EXTRA 6:30pm Optimist TV Bingo (Live) 7:30pm-9:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 9:00pm Halton Hills Council May 29, 2006	1:00pm Halton Hills Council May 29 2006 4:00pm-8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 8:00pm Swap Talk (Live) 9:00pm Milton Council May 23, 2006	8:00am-1:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 12:00pm Swap Talk (Live) 1:00pm Milton Council May 23, 2006 4:00pm-9:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 9:00pm Halton Hills Council May 31, 2006	1:00pm Halton Region Council 4:00pm-Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	8:00am-4:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 4:00pm TV Cogeco Sports: Flamboro Speedway Racing 7:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	10:30pm TV Cogeco Sports: Flamboro Speedway Racing 1:30pm-6:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 6:00pm Halton Hills Council May 31 2006 9:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	8:00am-1:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 1:00pm Halton Hills Council May 31 2006 4:00pm-8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA 8:00pm SportsZone Live 9:00pm-Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA