

Teacher Laura Malcolm

"My reward is the spark in their eyes"

By JIM THOMAS

How well do you know the teachers in the school where your child or children attend? How well do you know the teacher in charge of the class where your child is enrolled?

As attendance grows and staffs increase, the teacher as an individual can become a virtual nonentity, even though year after year, she or he is helping shape the lives of hundreds of young people and mould them into respected, esteemed citizens.

In the weeks ahead, The Tribune will focus attention on THE TEACHER, not only as an instructor but as a person. Each will be selected at random from schools in York and Durham Regions. Our first in the series is Laura Malcolm, Grade 7, Claremont public school.

Laura resides on a dairy farm near Sunderland, the daughter of Howard and Carol Malcolm. The Claremont community is by no means new to Laura. As a young girl she attended public schools at Brougham and Green River.

She has one brother, Rob, her father's right hand man at home. Following graduation from Brock Dist. High School, Laura enrolled in an Honors Physical Education course at McMaster University, Hamilton. She received her teacher's certificate from Nipissing University, North Bay.

Before entering the teaching profession, Laura made her mark in her own community. She was an outstanding athlete at Brock, winning Female Athlete of The Year Award in 1982. Basketball and volleyball were favorite sports.

An Ontario Scholar in Grade 13, Laura received a Merit Award from McMaster, recognition she prizes highly. She has her Grade 8 piano.



While teaching is her first love, (her mother and four aunts are teachers), Laura's roots go deep in agriculture. On weekends and holidays, she assists with work around the farm at every opportunity. She was a member of the Sunderland 4-H Dairy Calf Club and the Veterinary Science Club. She annually placed entries in Port Perry, Sunderland, Beaverton, and Lindsay Fairs.

She's a member in the congregation of Seagrave United Church.

Although a Grade 7 core teacher at Claremont, Laura's influence extends through the entire school. She teaches music in Grades 3-2 and 8, Physical Education in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and Science in Grade 8.

Laura admits she's happy with her first-year teaching role. "I always knew I'd enjoy it and I do," she says. She even appreciates the 40-minute drive home every evening. It helps her relax, she explains.

Laura sees little personality change in students today. Facilities, however, are much improved and these benefits, she says, are passed on to the pupil.

Laura's philosophy is profound: "I treat my children as I would want to be treated as a child. I want them to become the very best people possible. I try to be fair."

Joy is visible on the faces of Laura's Grade 7 choir at the school's Christmas concert is proof of accomplishment.

"When I see that spark in their eyes, the 'I've got it' response, that's my reward," she concludes.

Laura Malcolm of Sunderland is a teacher on the staff of Claremont Public School. Formerly of Brougham, Laura received her elementary education at Brougham, Green River and Sunderland. She attended Brock Dist. High School and McMaster University, receiving her Teacher's Certificate at Nipissing University, College, North Bay. Laura is shown here leading her Grade 7 choir during a Christmas concert at Claremont back in December.

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