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# *My Hero*

## **Dr. Herbert Carnegie**

*Dr. Herbert Carnegie has lived a remarkable 89 years. He has been a professional hockey player, champion golfer and philanthropist. He is also an honorary chief of the York Regional Police and founder of the Herbert H. Carnegie Future Aces Foundation.*

*Dr. Carnegie has received ten hall of fame honours and seven medals, including the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship and the Order of Canada, for his work fighting racism and giving back to his country.*

History came to life when Dr. Carnegie visited the St. Jane Frances Catholic School community in September and October 2008 to present his Future Aces program. It was inspiring for the teachers and students to meet a real community hero.

Toronto Catholic schools are focused on the importance of Catholicity and on building good character. Dr. Carnegie's visit helped staff move beyond textbooks and curriculum to concentrate on these areas. Josephine Virgilio, a junior/intermediate teacher at St. Jane Frances succinctly stated:

*We can talk about character and that has an impact. But when we introduce students and teachers to people of character and they can see the individuals and hear them and touch them, they feel what it means to be a person of character.*

Josephine Virgilio further acknowledges that as a school community, we create a place of learning that focuses on literacy, math, science, the arts and physical education. Using Future Aces, our focus is also on the development of Catholicity, integrity and the development of character or the three C's - character, compassion and communication.

Our personal journey reflects how we see the world. The Future Aces program aligns itself continuously with an inclusive curriculum. Listening to the story of Dr. Herbert Carnegie reinforces the importance of cultural proficiency and diversity in education.

Cultural proficiency is a way of being that enables both individuals and organizations to respond effectively to people who differ from them. Cultural competence is behaviour that is aligned with standards that move an organization or an individual towards culturally proficient interactions. Educational leaders who are successful in creating culturally proficient learning communities will enable students to play vital roles as they enter the global community.

Most diversity programs are used to explain the nature of diversity or the process of learning about or acquiring new cultures. The Future Aces philosophy focuses on responding to the environment shaped by its diversity.

Dr. Carnegie remembers clearly the roadblocks in reaching his goal to compete in the National Hockey League (NHL). Toronto Maple Leafs' owner, Conn Smythe, although having marvelled at Carnegie's natural talents allegedly stated that he would take him tomorrow if someone could turn Carnegie white. Carnegie recalled in his autobiography, "I can't remember exactly what I thought, but a little voice in the back of my head was kissing my NHL hopes goodbye."

Carnegie was irate that others would judge his hockey abilities based on his skin colour. He was challenged to turn his negative energy into a positive resolution. Herb established the first hockey school in Canada and called it Future Aces. He raised money and sponsorship so that boys from poorer families could participate and learn to appreciate the sport. He then created



the Future Aces Creed. This has become a guideline for good citizenship: A stands for positive attitude and action; C for character and citizenship; E for empathy and education; and S for service and sportsmanship.

Dr. Carnegie regularly says, "Make attitude your friend!" and we (staff, parents, students) have embraced his Future Aces Creed. The staff at St. Jane Frances continues to work from a Tribes perspective, focusing on mutual respect and appreciation, attentive listening and active participation. In ACES, we also consider the importance of attitude, action, courage, confidence, example, education, service and sportsmanship. Consistent with the Future Aces philosophy are our board's character and equity initiatives.

Dr. Carnegie wrote the Future Aces Creed in 1956. He still uses it to inspire self-esteem and positive character. His non-profit foundation formed in 1987 has awarded \$420,000 in scholarships to deserving youth. After having many thousands benefit from his creed, the opening of the Herbert H. Carnegie Public School in the York Region District School Board in September 2008 is a testament to the esteem in which he is held.

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For further information on the Herbert H. Carnegie Future Aces Foundation, visit the website at [www.futureaces.org](http://www.futureaces.org).