



## The Principal of the Year Awards

By **Nelly Kelders**, Member Services Director

What better way to begin an evening of recognition and celebration than by honouring the very people who daily reflect the face of God in the lives of children, parents and school staffs. The Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario was pleased to honour six of its members during the 2009 gala dinner awards presentations at the

DoubleTree Hotel, Toronto, on Friday, May 1, 2009. The *Principal of the Year* award is presented annually to colleagues from around the province. Local principal associations, on a rotational basis, are invited to select the award winners. Recipients are CPCO members who have demonstrated outstanding school and community leadership.



**Tanya Buchanan**  
Dufferin-Peel CDSB

Tanya's 31-year career in Catholic education started with the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board in 1978. In 1983 she transferred to the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. Tanya's administrative career started in 1994 as vice-principal at All Saints Catholic School. She was promoted to the position of principal in 1999. Over the past decade Tanya has been actively involved with the local p/vp association, has served as president, Personal Services Agreement chairperson, member of a variety of committees and as Dufferin-Peel elementary member to CPCO's council of district representatives. Regardless of her role, Tanya's style has always been one that encourages teamwork, professionalism, and love of learning and life.

*To receive this public acknowledgement is certainly humbling. I stand among many awesome, dedicated and caring Catholic leaders all of whom work and give of themselves tirelessly on a daily basis in the best interest of the children in their care. My winning this award is simply a reflection of our collective efforts. I have learned so much from all my colleagues having had the opportunity to work side-by-side with many of you.*



**Clara Pitoscia**  
Dufferin-Peel CDSB

Clara Pitoscia has served Catholic education and in particular the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board for the past 26 years as a teacher, department head and administrator. Thirteen of those years have been spent as vice-

principal of St. Paul S.S., vice-principal of Philip Pocock S.S., principal of Loyola C.S.S. and principal of St. Joan of Arc C.S.S.

Clara has represented the Association of Secondary Principals and Vice-Principals (ASPVP) on numerous board committees. She served on the local association executive for six years both as a vice-principal and principal and served as the association's president. She has been the ASPVP's lead negotiator for the last two rounds of contracts and has been a member of the Employment Services Working Group for the past twelve years. Clara was also the secondary co-chair for the 2002 CPCO conference hosted by Dufferin-Peel.

*The dynamic and challenging environments of our schools and communities today demand that as Catholic educators we are messengers of hope and that we provide those we interact with the Courage to Believe. To my present school community, St. Joan of Arc C.S.S., I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to everyone involved for sharing their gifts, passion and time as we established a new Catholic high school together. In our roots we find our strength and as such I would especially like to thank my son and my family, and my friends for their unwavering support and belief in me.*



**Alfie Sicoli**  
Renfrew CDSB

Alfie Sicoli's career spans nearly four decades that included: teaching/administrative duties; an evolution in educational research and pedagogy; emerging technologies; customized teaching and learning strategies; unique school communities; and staff members grounded in baby boomer, gen X and gen Y cultures. He endeavours to create schools where compassion is an obvious and primary value and where children and staff are treated with respect and justice.

As a Catholic administrator, Alfie has served in almost every capacity on board committees including school year calendar, curriculum, special education, liturgy, health/safety, TPA, NTIP, strategic planning and plant operation/school facilities review. Alfie is a gifted musician who shares his talents with his principals' association, board and parish. Most recently, he served as president of his local principals' association and as CDR for the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario.

*To give thanks on this auspicious occasion is to recognize, affirm and celebrate individuals who have had an impact on my life, decisions and professional career. It is in this spirit that I must first thank God for health, happiness and love, and for the virtues of wisdom and patience that have allowed me to stay the course for over 39 years of service in education.*



**Shawn Moynihan**  
St. Clair CDSB

For over thirty years, Shawn Moynihan has served the school communities of Chatham-Kent. As an elementary school principal for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board for twenty years, he has embraced the concept of school and system leadership with an enthusiasm, which has been infectious for students, staff and the parent communities.

Shawn is currently a system principal working with the *Leadership Discernment Program*, the mentoring of newschool administrators and other system initiatives. These new opportunities have allowed him to share his knowledge, expertise and devotion to student improvement in many schools in St. Clair. He is an instructor for CPCO's Principal's Qualification Program. Shawn has served as a board member for the Kent County Children's Treatment Centre, an organization that serves children and families with special needs, for over ten years.

*I am truly humbled to receive this esteemed award from the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario. It is my honour to share it with the vice-principals and principals of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, who commit daily, to profoundly improving the lives of the students in their care. They are noble leaders who serve with compassion and optimism.*



**Sharon Oliver**  
Sudbury CDSB

Sharon Oliver is a product of the Catholic school system in the Sudbury area. She has been in school administration for twelve years and is currently the principal of St. Paul the Apostle Catholic School in Coniston, and St. Mark Catholic School in

Markstay. She has shared her time and talents with her colleagues from across the province as chairperson of the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario's Professional Development committee and as a member of the CPCO Policy Committee. This year Sharon is teaching the liturgy component of the OECTA religion course for teachers. She has also assumed the role of chairperson for the Northern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Cooperative's board of directors. In 2008 the Sudbury Catholic District School Board honoured Sharon by naming her the recipient of the Trustees' Chairperson Award for making a difference in Catholic education in the board.

*I owe much gratitude to my colleagues, phenomenal principals and vice-principals, those still working and those retired, for it is through their shared wisdom, excellent example and gentle guidance that I have been able to grow in this vocation. I have learned so much from the teachers and support staff with whom I have had the pleasure of working, who never cease to amaze me with their dedication and love for the students they teach.*



**Ted Laxton**  
Wellington CDSB

Ted has served in the following capacities: science and religion teacher; special education resource teacher; theology department head; science and religion curriculum coordinator; secondary program resource teacher; secondary reform coordinator; chaplain; high school vice-principal; and elementary principal. This year Ted was recognized by The Learning Partnership as one of *Canada's Outstanding Principals*.

His contributions to Catholic education include: being part of a writing team for eight provincial Catholic Course Profiles in Science; author of the Foundations of Faith document for the Wellington CDSB, which was presented to the Sacred Congregation for Education in Rome; chair of the Catholicity committee; and designer of numerous workshops for teachers, principals and staff. He was also the Catholicity editor of Nelson Science texts, workshop leader for CPCO, presenter at *When Faith Meets Pedagogy* and a member of the Catholic Curriculum Cooperative.

*I have often envisioned the soul as being a canvas and each of us as artists, who in our finest moments of encounter with "another," may humbly paint one brush stroke on the spiritual landscape of their life. What a sacred vocation teaching is, where we encounter so many canvases seeking visions of love, beauty and truth, in the imago Dei. If only I may have added a single stroke of virtue to the canvas of a child's soul, that would make my vocation complete.*

The Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario congratulates its 2009 principals of the year. Thank you for your service to Catholic education, the children in your care and the communities you nurture. You truly are the face of God.