



Student organizing committee

One Step at a Time

By Sarah M. Meza, Special Education Teacher, St. Patrick Catholic High School, St. Clair CDSB

St. Patrick Catholic High School, located in Sarnia is rooted in deep tradition. Teachers, students and alumni are proud to be part of a school community that not only has a good reputation for its academics and athletics, but also a sense of responsibility for each other's welfare locally and globally.

One event that St. Patrick's is very proud of is the Irish Miracle. It started 24 years ago as a result of a brainstorming session at a student council meeting. The Irish Miracle has become a community-wide event. It is a major food drive collecting more than 6000 bags of non-perishable food for the less fortunate in Lambton County. The first Saturday in December is designated for this annual effort involving over 500 volunteer students, teachers and parents. This very important school event helps the St. Vincent de Paul Society meet their needs for the Christmas season.

Starting at the end of September, a student organizing committee and a staff committee begin the preparations to continue this tradition. Many activities are held within the school that help to promote the Irish Miracle; a homeroom challenge to collect the most canned goods, a poster contest to promote participation, a homeroom jingle contest that is used in advertising on the

local radio station and a press conference that includes the local newspaper and television station.

We understand the need is great not only in our own community, but also worldwide. For the last nine years, St. Patrick's has been involved in the Share Lent campaign through Development and Peace. Lou Giancarlo, a teacher at St. Patrick thought this was a great opportunity for students to practice almsgiving at Lent. This project also educates the students about the injustices that face the developing world daily. The challenge for Share Lent started out as a friendly one among the homerooms at St. Patrick. It has now grown to include the two other high schools in the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, St. Christopher and Ursuline College. This Share Lent challenge is another great tradition of which we are very proud.

Lou Giancarlo starts by educating his homeroom students regarding the issues that Development and Peace will be targeting in their campaign. Once his students are aware of the issues, they create a video that promotes the challenge to the other two high schools. St. Christopher's has been involved for seven years and Ursuline College for six years. They are always keen to accept the challenge.

Students at each school have embraced the challenge and do different things within their schools to raise money. At St. Patrick's, money is raised through weekly mission collections, bake sales, the sale of bottled water and hosting a European hand ball tournament. Not only do these activities raise money, they bring staff and students closer as a community. Thus far the three schools have raised a total of \$80 000. The government has matched this dollar for dollar which brings the total to an impressive \$160 000. The goal for this year is to raise \$20 000. The success of this project was featured in the Development and Peace Share Lent Challenge Newspaper, Spring 2006. Other Catholic schools in the province have taken up the idea and started their own challenges. Further information can be found on the Development and Peace website: www.devpo.org/devpme/main-eng.html.

Another initiative at St. Patrick is a social justice group called Justice, Peace and Love (JPL). This is a student-directed group that formed in response to an incident that was committed near school property. Students wanted to make a difference, but did not have any knowledge of school policy and needed some guidance in organizing themselves. With the support of principal Bernadette Gray, teachers Colin Hinds and Roy Gouveia became the mentors to this enthusiastic group of young men and women.

Justice, Peace and Love is a grassroots organization made up of 23 students in grades 9 through 12. Their executive is composed

of a leader, a scribe, and a media relations person. They have a mission statement and a website that informs people of their main objective. They want to educate themselves about bullying and take this knowledge to the staff and students of St. Patrick. JPL wants to work with other students and provide bullying workshops within the school. Being different is not a bad thing and JPL wants to explore with other students the diversity within the school. JPL wants to make the staff and students aware of the many issues that face individuals every day in the school's corridors. Justice is about compassion and the goal is to have students understand that they are all brothers and sisters connected together through God's love. Justice, Peace and Love hopes to reach out to the global village. However, like any good grassroots organization, they understand they must start at home first.

There are many ways that students, working with staff, can make a difference. Whether it is within their own school, their community or in the global village, it just takes one step to make a difference. This is best summed up in the important words of Mother Teresa, "Love never measures. It just gives."

For further information, visit our website at www.st-clair.net/schools/patrick or contact Bernadette Gray, the principal of St. Patrick's High School in Sarnia. She can be reached at bernadette.gray@st-clair.net.



experience!
outdoor education

- A Camp founded on Christian values & teaching
- Customized, year-round school program (Grade 4-12)
- Personal & group initiative activities
- Leadership development & socialization skills
- Safe & friendly environment
- Great facilities & food
- Enjoy the beauty of God's creation in Muskoka

Call the Office today to make inquiries or to book your next school experience!


camp mini-yo-we

Website: www.minigowe.com
Phone: 1.888.CAMP.MYW (226-7699)



NRSV Catholic Mission Edition

The Lowest Priced NRSV Available Anywhere!



New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition, approved by U.S. and Canadian Catholic Bishops

Only \$7.95 per copy

- Deuterocanonical books in Catholic Canon order
- Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation
- 76 Maps and Charts of the Bible
- Durable laminated softcover
- Size 13.5 cm x 20.5 cm x 4.0 cm, 1470 pages

Order online at www.saintjeromepress.ca
Call toll free 1.800.845.2648
or Fax toll free 1.800.676.1530

Distributed in Canada by:
B. Broughton Company Ltd.
1.800.268.4449
R. G. Mitchell Family Books
1.800.268.3445 x 3327