



Back row: Peter Polillo (nominator-former student and colleague), Dante Dalia (Dina's husband)
Front row: Mrs. Cupoli (Dina's mother), Dina, Premier McGuinty, Dave Levac (MPP)

Dr. Dina Dalia Receives Premier's Award for Teaching Excellence

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On May 7, 2007 Premier Dalton McGuinty and Education Minister Kathleen Wynne honoured the recipients of the first-ever *Premier's Awards for Teaching Excellence*. Amidst the splendour of the beautiful Royal Ontario Museum Glass Room, the award winners were feted for their outstanding contributions in education. Fifteen winners were selected from thousands of nominations in various categories, ranging from Outstanding New Teacher to Lifetime Achievement.

Dr. Dina Dalia, principal of St. John's College in Brantford, received the Contribution to School Leadership Award. The selection criteria outlined for this award called for leaders in education who champion a vision that creates positive change, exceeds the goals and objectives of the school or board and involves students, teachers, parents and the community. For the past 25 years, Dr. Dalia has lived her vocation as an educator by these very principles.

Dr. Dalia's extensive record of service to her community includes the coordination of mission trips to areas ravaged by natural disaster, the relocation of Kosovo refugees, the organization of North America's first student-built *Habitat for Humanity* home, New Year's Day dinners for the homeless and an ongoing service program for the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Dr. Dalia has been a leader in program development. In 2002 she instituted a mentorship program for principals, enabling new

principals to tap into and benefit from the experience of the school board's veteran principals. In 2005 she spearheaded the creation of the Code of Human Relations for the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board. In 2006 she coordinated an anti-bullying program for the secondary schools in her board and initiated a Healthy Schools and Relationships Committee for the entire school board.

Throughout her tenure as principal of St. John's College she has engaged the students, teachers and parents in creating a positive learning environment. In 2004 she involved all of the stakeholders in a revamping of the school's mission statement. Dr. Dalia is presently engaged in the development of a harassment policy for the school, using the same process of community involvement. She has increased program options at St. John's to include courses in areas such as food technology, horticulture, cosmetology and broadcasting.

Dr. Dina Dalia was the only administrator to receive this prestigious *Premier's Award for Teaching Excellence*. It is no wonder Dr. Dina Dalia was recognized for her outstanding record of service to her school and school board. As Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne remarked at the awards ceremony, "Every child you inspire with a passion for learning and every student you motivate to achieve is an individual you help put on the path to success." Dr. Dalia's efforts have made her community a better place to grow and learn; she is a model for us all.