



Celebrating Our Uniqueness

Every year the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario hosts a gala dinner to celebrate Catholic education and to honour some of its members and partners for their work and commitment to the children and communities they serve. More than 250 members and guests attended as we honoured this year's recipients on April 8, 2011.

The *Principal of the Year Award* was first instituted by CPCO in 2000. The award is made to a principal or vice-principal, who is a member of CPCO, for outstanding school and community leadership. Local principal/vice-principal associations are invited to select the award winner on a rotational basis. The associations have been divided into five areas: GTA, Western, Central/West, Eastern and Northern.

The Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario would like to congratulate the 2011 recipients of the *Principal of the Year Award* and thank them for their contributions to Catholic education.



Robert Campbell
Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB

For over 20 years, Rob Campbell has served the secondary schools of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board as a teacher, department head, vice-principal and principal. In all of these roles, Rob has demonstrated his commitment to serving the needs of students and staff. His collaborative, open-door style of leadership creates a positive and trusting school environment where all members of the school community can feel certain that their voices are not just heard, but valued.

As a teacher, Rob led six school mock trial teams to provincial championships. While Rob was principal at Assumption College School, he led the way in implementing programs targeted for the school's First Nations population, which led to increased First Nations enrolment at the school and greater student success. The

school was also recognized by EQAO with the Bette Stephenson Award for making vast improvements in student literacy.

Currently, in addition to his role as principal at St. John's College, he serves as principal of School Within a College (SWAC), a joint initiative between the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, the Grand Erie District School Board and Mohawk College. Rob has served as a mentor to numerous new administrators. In the greater community, Rob sits on the board of directors for Community Living Brant. Rob's unwavering commitment to his school community can be seen by his constant presence at school events, be it sports, drama, music, clubs or the project close to his heart, the mock trial team. Students, parents and teachers know that Rob supports them and values their extra effort. Rob's leadership through dedication, collaboration and unwavering integrity has made a difference in the lives of the students, parents and staff who have worked with him.

Rob and his wife Enza have two daughters. He is an avid curler, Bob Dylan fanatic and an expert in all sports knowledge, especially when it pertains to the Toronto Blue Jays and the Maple Leafs.

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*I am tremendously indebted to the members of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk CPCO unit for their collegiality and support. I have been truly blessed to work with outstanding principals and vice-principals throughout my career as an educator. Their collective wisdom, guidance and friendship have been invaluable to me.*  
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Andre Potvin

Ottawa CDSB

Andre Potvin has been involved in Catholic education since 1987. All but two years of Andre's time in education has been with the Ottawa Catholic School Board. Andre has been an administrator since 1996 and first became a principal in 2001. In 2003, Andre obtained his supervisory officer's qualifications.

Andre has served as a principal in three high schools, St. Matthew, Notre Dame and his current assignment Lester B. Pearson C.H.S. As a principal Andre is very student focused and wants what is best for his school, staff and students. While at Notre Dame, Andre led a team from the school that was successful in obtaining an urban priority grant.

While principal at St. Matthew and Notre Dame Catholic High Schools, he was chair of a team that held three *BearHugs*. The *BearHug* was a fundraiser for cancer research as well as an attempt to set a Guinness world record. Two of the three *BearHugs* that Andre led set Guinness world records, but more importantly raised close to 500,000 dollars for cancer research and patient care.

His concern for the people he works with is evident in his numerous activities in support of local associations. As a teacher, Andre was a staff representative, a member of the bargaining unit, and on his school's health and safety committee. As an administrator Andre continued his service to others, not only to people in his board but the province as well. At the local level, he has been the association president, vice-president, treasurer and councillor. He has also led the terms and conditions task force. In the fall of 2010 Andre became a member of CPCO's executive council in the role of secondary councillor.

Andre is the proud father of three girls, Lindsey, Jill and Erin.

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*I have had the privilege of being part of the Ottawa Catholic School Board for the past 22 years and I have been blessed to work with some amazing teachers, support staff and senior administrators. Many have truly enriched my life in so many ways; it has been a wonderful journey of the human spirit, working and learning with and from others. I would also like to acknowledge the many students I have encountered over the years; they have taught me what it means to be a Catholic educator. And of course, I give thanks to our God for blessing me with a wonderful career and allowing me the privilege through our educational vocation of serving children.*  
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Matt McCann

Simcoe Muskoka CDSB

Matt McCann was born and raised in St. Catharines where he graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas and Denis Morris High School. As a youngster, Matt would often join his uncle, Monsignor Matthew Clifford, a visionary of Catholic education, as he searched for sites for new Catholic elementary schools in the Niagara Peninsula. His parents were also avid supporters of Catholic education. Graduating from King's University College at the University of Western Ontario in 1978, Matt went on to Teachers' College, graduating as a teacher of geography and history. He felt very blessed to be hired by the Simcoe County Separate School Board in 1980, through Principal William (Bill) Murphy, at St. Joseph's Junior High School, in Barrie. Bill proved to be a lifelong mentor and touchstone of Catholic education for Matt.

Matt worked tirelessly with the St. Joseph's staff to increase the enrolment at the school and expand the school into a full secondary program, a goal that accelerated with provincial full-funding. Matt has served in a leadership capacity in four Catholic secondary school communities in the board, including Patrick Fogarty Catholic Secondary School in Orillia, St. Theresa's Catholic High School in Midland and St. Peter's Catholic Secondary School in Barrie. Matt will serve as the president of the local CPCO unit this fall. He was very proud to serve on the inaugural committee that established the Simcoe-Muskoka CPCO organization. These various community placements have provided Matt with an array of valuable experiences that have served to enhance his education career, including: Christian Island; initiating student uniforms; school additions; enrolment surges; providing support for community tragedies; school successes; co-curricular successes; and the opportunities to serve and work with tremendous students and staff.

Matt engages the learning community from the following personal precepts.

- As educators, we serve the community.
- Student care and development is our prime responsibility.
- Our delivery and philosophy of student-centred education must always be tempered and centred on the foundational components of our Catholic faith.

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*Throughout my career with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, I have worked and learned with numerous peers who have been foundational to my personal and professional growth. The dynamic school setting offers the interchange of ideas and support amongst secretaries, custodians, education assistants and teachers. Together, these various groups provide the structural support for delivering an education shaped by Catholic beliefs, ethics, morals, values and culture. I would like to indicate my appreciation to the school staffs that I have had the honour to work with as a school leader.*  
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Lise Curtis
Superior North CDSB

Lise Curtis, principal of St. Joseph School in Geraldton, has been selected by her peers as the *Principal of the Year* for the Superior North Catholic District School Board. Lise has worked as an elementary school educator for 18 years, teaching kindergarten to Grade 8 and has been a principal for eight of those years.

Her professional interests focus on curriculum and assessment as evidenced by her involvement in the Turn Around School initiative, Schools in the Middle professional development, Leading Student Achievement lead principal, Aboriginal advisory committee member and as a lead presenter at teacher professional learning communities.

Lise demonstrates a clear vision of Catholic education and brings Christ-centered service through every aspect of her school community. She initiated a social justice atmosphere in her school through monthly virtues in the program *We Light The Way*. Lise is a caring and compassionate principal who provides focus to staff to feel supported and empowered to collectively work together to enhance the education for all St. Joseph School students.

*Dear Lise,
We are so pleased that you have been recognized as Principal of the Year by CPCO. Lise, you exemplify so many characteristics of an excellent educator such as: your value of each student and staff member; your tenacity in working with them for improvement; your will to be involved in system events, even when they mean more work and less time at your school; and promoting a respectful Catholic environment. Please know everything you have done is recognized and appreciated.*

Val Pichette, director of education,
Superior North Catholic DSB

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*I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to my colleagues in Superior North Catholic District School Board for the honour of being selected as Principal of the Year. It is with gratitude and humility that I accept this award.*  
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Nadia Marson
Thunder Bay CDSB

Nadia began her teaching career with the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board (TBCDSB) at St. Patrick High School in 1984. It was an exciting year for Nadia not only because she began her chosen career, but it was also the first year of full-funding for Catholic education.

After five years of successful teaching, Nadia was encouraged to pursue a leadership position within the TBCDSB. She began her path by becoming chairperson of the business/computer studies department at St. Patrick's High School. She later became vice-principal at Holy Cross and St. Patrick's High School. Her leadership experience continued with a secondment to the Ministry of Education as an education officer. Nadia became principal at St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Paul and St. Francis School following her two-year secondment with the Ministry of Education.

Nadia continued her leadership journey becoming assistant to the superintendent with a portfolio that included Student Success initiatives, Aboriginal education, Lighthouse/Learning to 18 projects, school/college/work initiatives and MISA. Nadia is an instructional leader with the TBCDSB. She is currently the principal representative on the board's joint PD committee, board leadership development committee and a team leader for *Leading Student Achievement*. Most recently, Nadia was appointed as the lead principal for the board-wide implementation of the *School Food and Beverage Policy*. Her responsibilities include training for all principals and teacher representatives.

Through Nadia's passionate leadership, her current school, St. Francis has improved their EQAO test scores over the past five years. Her focus has always been on student achievement and helping students to achieve in a faith-based school community. Nadia is active in her home parish and works tirelessly with students and parents in sacramental preparation. Nadia is a humble and compassionate principal who very much upholds the needs of all those entrusted to her care. From family to students and from Church to the community as a whole, Nadia makes it her concern to reach each individual. She achieves a balance in the school community by leading as well as serving. By being a humble example of Christ amongst us, Nadia is able to nurture Catholicity, as well as student success in her role as principal.

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*I thank my parents for the value they placed on education, for always believing in me and inspiring me to do my very best. I dedicate this award to my father who passed away before I became a principal. He knew of my aspirations and fully supported me in whatever way he could. I thank God for all the many blessings bestowed upon me during my educational career.*  
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Mark Godin
Waterloo CDSB

Learning to enable others so that they can do their best work is the hallmark of any effective leader. A staff that feels supported and connected drives the success of any organization. This is the key strategy in the work Mark Godin does at his current school, Our Lady of Fatima in Cambridge. As principal for the past four years, Mark has seen Fatima, a 50-year-old school with strong community traditions, grow from a medium-sized school to one of the largest elementary schools in the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB).

Providing a strong supportive environment and fostering a sense of belonging within the school community can be especially challenging when 300 students are housed in portables. Striking a successful balance meeting the educational and instructional needs of a large staff and student body, with the many personal and social issues unique in an elementary school environment would not be possible without the trust and faith that exists between myself and the rest of our staff. Despite the fast growth, the school has managed to maintain its small school atmosphere.

Mark attributes this to his staff.

There are so many outstanding things going on here in so many different areas. I am humbled by the fact that I am associated with this great community and allowed to be someone that leads and helps my colleagues, staff and students. That they allow me to do this is a gift.

Fatima is Mark's fourth school as principal in the WCDSB. It is at his previous school, St. Michael, that Mark developed a passion as a committed community volunteer. There he developed strong links between the school and a neighbouring community health centre

that offered outreach and support to students and families in the area. Now in his sixth year on the board at Langs Farm Community Health Centre, Mark recently completed a four-year term as board chair.

Mark is passionate about teaching and learning, his faith and the opportunities afforded by leadership. The success of students supported by special education programming is particularly close to Mark's heart.

Working with families and their children who experience academic, social or emotional challenges is something I really like to do because I am gratified by the outcome when they succeed or even exceed expectations. I have a strong emotional attachment to them and I delight in their successes.

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*It is a challenge to express precisely in words what this recognition means to me. I share this honour with each individual who has affected my career. Without these colleagues, who have coached, mentored and supported me in my journey, I would not be the recipient of this award. Early in my career, I was blessed to work with principals who themselves represented the best our profession has to offer.*  
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