



PRESS RELEASE

Trillium North Program Experiences Successful First Year!

Timmins, September 2009: The Northeastern Catholic District School Board, in partnership with the Trillium Provincial Demonstration School program, piloted an alternative education program for the North at O'Gorman Intermediate Catholic School(OICS) in Timmins. An expansion to the program is also planned with a classroom opening this fall at O'Gorman High School(OHS) for grade nine and grade ten students. The goal of this initiative is to provide students with severe learning disabilities the skills and learning resources needed in order to reach their full potential. A number of strategies are implemented within the classroom including the PHAST program (Phonological and Strategy Training), Assistive Technology, and hands on learning opportunities

"As a teacher, a partnership with the Provincial Schools seemed far too good an opportunity to miss. When we embarked on this partnership, it was obvious to me that a significant population of students would benefit – there would be help for students living with severe learning disabilities. Now here we are, one year later. The



From left: Ryan, Grade 8 student at O'Gorman Inter. Catholic School and Katie, Grade 9 student at O'Gorman High School



From left: Beth Davies – Director of the Provincial Schools Branch of the Ministry of Education, Dan Loreto – Northern Team Coordinator, Elisa Germain – Educational Assistant at OICS, Ryan – Grade 8 student at OICS, Brenda Gagne – Teacher at OICS, Katie – Grade 9 student at OHS, Denis Murphy – Sick Kid's Hospital Learning Disability Research Program and Desiree Smith – Principal of Trillium Demonstration School in Milton, Ontario.

combination of the Provincial Schools' Intervention format, the Sick Kid's Hospital's PHAST program and dedicated educators, students and parents have proven invaluable! I am blessed to be a part of it!" commented Dan Loreto, Northern Team Coordinator, Trillium Provincial Demonstration School.

The Board looks forward to another successful academic year working with the Trillium Provincial Demonstration School program.

PARENT TESTIMONIAL:

"My husband and I had many concerns about putting our daughter Katie in the Trillium North program. We didn't want her to be used as a guinea pig without a guarantee that her academic and social needs would be met. Today, we have absolutely no regrets – only praise for the Trillium North program, Northeastern Catholic District School Board's Dan Loreto and Provincial School Board Director Beth Davies for having the foresight and commitment to bring the Trillium program to the North, and particularly teacher Brenda Gagné, who has really transformed these children. Katie is a different child this year: Her reading and writing have improved significantly; she is more knowledgeable about her learning needs, is confident and is proud of herself. In its first year, the program's success was evident as Dan and Brenda received the Community Pride award for Teacher of the Year. Katie's self-esteem improved so much that she shared in the award as Young Leader in her age group.

Trillium North gave these students the opportunity to see that they can be successful academically, that they are as smart as other kids – it's just that they have to take a different path of learning to show it. Katie seems better equipped now to meet the academic demands ahead of her. And we can't say enough about how O'Gorman Intermediate has welcomed

these students. The school was adamant about including these children in all it has to offer – clubs, teams, activities, school council. As a result, these students, who are often viewed as outsiders and marginalized by their peers, are now participating, thriving members of the OICS community. It's a very heart-breaking and arduous road for parents with children who struggle in school because of learning disabilities. We try our best to advocate for them, to make sure they get what they need, but the reality is their potential can never be realized without a specialized program like this that addresses their specific needs.

Ultimately, we've learned that the Trillium North program was what our daughter needed, and we're so very grateful for what it's given her." **Rory and Elaine MacKenzie.**

For more information, please contact:

Lynn Fecteau, Community Relations Officer
(705) 268-7443 ext. 3213