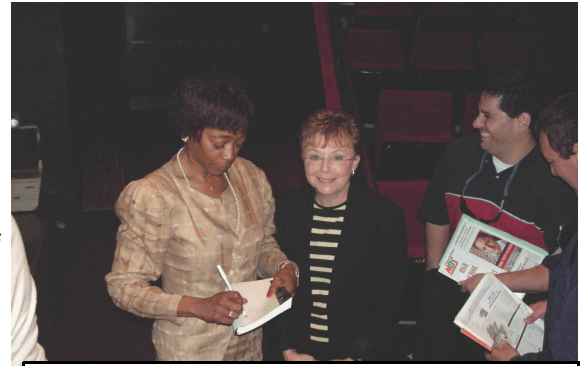


## **TEACHERS INSPIRED TO BECOME "MERCHANTS OF HOPE"**

Teachers from the Northeastern Catholic District School Board and the District School Board Ontario North East gathered in Timmins on Friday to be inspired to become "Merchants of Hope". This powerful message was delivered by world renowned speaker Dr. Crystal Kuykendall. The session was part of the Celebration of Faith Day organized by the Northeastern Catholic District School Board for their professional development day.



Dr. Crystal Kuykendall autographs a copy of her book for Principal Val Drury.

In her dynamic presentation, Dr. Kuykendall stressed the golden opportunity that teachers have on a daily basis to make a lasting difference in the lives of their students by giving them the hope that they need to achieve their human potential. "Many children are facing futures with no hope for something better," explained Kuykendall. "Here in Northern Ontario, you have the chance to help them avoid the pain and suffering, the moral decay that happens when children lose hope. But you cannot get the best in children if are not willing to give the best of yourself".

She also shared tangible teaching strategies that will make the students more confident about their abilities to succeed. "Many children come from homes where the parents did not know to teach them to read and write," added Kuykendall. "As a result, there will be children who stumble during their early years, but they don't have to fall. They need to be taught that there is a high road, and that you will be the wind beneath their wings to help them get there. Each student has some non-academic strengths: the trick is to build on these gifts that they have to make them achieve. You have the power as "Merchants of Hope" to give them C.P.R." In her version of this lifesaving technique, she explained that the 'C' stands for commitment, consistent display of caring and compassion. The 'P' stands for patience and persistence, to help them overcome the fear of failure that normally keeps them from even trying. The 'R' stands for resilience, because some kids have already reached the edge, and need to know that the sun still shines.



Principal Darren Berthier and Principal Glenn Sheculski light candles representing each school community during the mass.

The Celebration of Faith Day continued for the teachers of the NCDSB with a mass celebrating community and hope at Sacred Heart Parish in Timmins, led by Father Wayne Mills. "This afternoon we gather as a community of believers," stated Director of Education Paul Toffanello as he welcomed the group. "We are thankful for the energy and spirit that the Lord renewed in us throughout the summer. We hope that this school year will be marked by a new enthusiasm and positive outlook so that, with the inspiration of the Spirit, we may continue to help all of God's children and their families. We ask that the Lord be with us today to give us guidance as we look for new ways of seeing, understanding and



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communicating. As a community of believers we move forward with hope, following the light of Jesus Christ. Throughout the celebration today we will be reminded of the light of Jesus Christ and how we have been called to act as beacons of hope building community not only in our schools, but throughout the world. The candles on the altar represent our students and our desire to keep the light of Christ alive in our hearts, and in our schools. We offer hope to suffering families in the world with the presentation of school kits, and pray that these offerings will remind others that the light of Christ is ever present, even in the darkest of times. As we move along in both our personal journeys and on our journey in Catholic education, I invite you to act as beacons of hope, sharing the light of Christ with others."

During the offering of the ceremony, each school presented a colourful satchel containing various items to aid the children and families of Iraq. This gesture was part of the Sacred Heart Church's campaign to help them rebuild their lives.

**For more information, please contact:  
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