

Social Action: Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Project

“Called to Action: Rejoicing in Hope” and “Youth Making a Difference” Student Conferences

Board website: www.dpcdsb.org

About the project ...

The purpose of Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board’s project was to support students in developing leadership skills through learning about Catholic Virtues and character development. Two conferences were held with over 350 students at each; the *Called to Action: Rejoicing in Hope* conference was for students in grades 6 to 8, while the *Youth Making a Difference* conference was for students in grades 9 to 12. Both conferences were about students putting the Virtues into action with the vision of making a better world. Students learned about many organizations already working to create better communities and participated in small group discussions about the rights and responsibilities of all people. They discussed the importance of fairness, kindness, acceptance and conscience in regional, provincial, federal and global legislation, shared current practices at their schools and discussed ways to build upon what was already happening to ensure that their schools were safe, caring and inclusive for all students.

Impact on student learning and school culture ...

- The two conferences, involving over 700 students, increased student awareness about injustices around the world and empowered them to take action.
- Students connected with other students and organizations to create networks related to their specific interests in social justice issues.
- The leadership conferences, presentations and discussions encouraged students to make connections about social justice to themselves as individuals and to their local and global communities.

Lessons learned for moving forward ...

- Highlighting the dignity of all people and a shared responsibility for ecological stewardship are integral to creating safe, caring and inclusive schools and to focusing on issues that students care about deeply.
- Next steps include expanding student-led clubs and groups focused on local and global issues, using the Virtues outlined in the board’s system goals, such as protesting barriers to injustice.

For more information contact Patricia Dal Ben, Academic Consultant, at (905) 890-0708 or patricia.dalben@dpcdsb.org.