



NEWS RELEASE

Monday, December 3, 2007

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools teachers among Canada's most innovative educators

SASKATOON, December 3, 2007 – Three Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools teachers are among the winners of Canada's 2007 Microsoft Innovative Teachers Awards.

Kelli Boklaschuk, Darren Cannell and Maureen Romanchuk were selected for creating The Crooked, Crazy Weather Project for Romanchuk's Grade 4 students at Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual School in Saskatoon.

In the project, technology was used in various ways to keep the 22 students interested and engaged as they learned about predicting weather, a unit in Saskatchewan's Grade 4 science curriculum.

In class, lessons about topics like meteorology, precipitation, clouds and snow were taught with the help of videos, sound files and websites. Rather than taking notes from a board at the front of the room, a projector was used to enlarge and display the information – a small difference but one that made this task much more interesting, Romanchuk reports.

Students also learned about Internet searching, using key words, evaluating websites, manipulating HTML scripts and creating hyperlinks. For the lesson on learning how to set up and enter information into a blog, students were each matched with a city and assigned to answer several weather-related questions about the locale. Each of them also wrote and videotaped a weather forecast for their city. The student blogs and videos can be accessed at The Crooked, Crazy Weather Project's website:

<http://blog.scs.sk.ca/weatherproject>

Students had fun using the technology, says Romanchuk, and it helped them grasp and retain what they'd learned. "Some children were hesitant at first, but they took this on and exceeded our expectations."

"Changing the way you teach to adapt to the students is very important," says Boklaschuk. "It's obvious this is the way they like to learn."

The teachers hope the recognition the project has received will encourage more teachers to investigate how to incorporate technology into their lessons. In fact, The Crooked, Crazy Weather Project was designed as a template so other teachers within the division can easily use it to teach the same unit.

. . . more

A total of five Canadian projects were selected to receive a 2007 Microsoft Innovative Teachers Award. The winning teachers attended the International Innovative Teachers Forum in Helsinki, Finland earlier this month. All winners from Canada were also invited to attend a similar forum in Hanoi, Vietnam in spring 2008 for teachers from the Asia/South Pacific region.

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools is Saskatchewan's largest Catholic school division with 45 schools in Saskatoon, Humboldt, Biggar and Viscount. We help all students strive for academic excellence and we also teach them about themselves. Our distinctive faith-based education shows young people they are capable of reaching out to make a difference in the world.

The division is also home to the Cyber School, which offers online high school classes developed by Cyber School staff. Since 2000 Cyber School has grown to become a vibrant online learning environment. It also offers lessons for elementary students and resources for teachers.

Bishop Filevich is Saskatchewan's first Ukrainian-English bilingual school. Students are taught in Ukrainian for up to 50 per cent of the school day. Children do not need any previous knowledge of the Ukrainian language to enrol.

-30-

For further information please contact:

Kelli Boklaschuk
Instructional Team Leader
Saskatoon Catholic Cyber School
659-7088 – office
kboklaschuk@scs.sk.ca

Maureen Romanchuk
Teacher
Bishop Filevich Ukrainian Bilingual School
659-7230 – office
mromanchuk@scs.sk.ca

Darren Cannell
Administrator
Saskatoon Catholic Cyber School
221-4936 – cellphone
dcannell@scs.sk.ca