



For Immediate Release

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NPSC Turns to Students for Green Ideas

(North Bay, ON) – Young environmental leaders emerged at the first annual Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board Environmental Symposium for Youth, *Go Green*, and they are fueled to spearhead new green initiatives within their school communities.

Approximately 110 students in Grade 5 through 12 were selected to attend the full day event, which began with a keynote address by Lisa Glithero, environmental educator, University of Ottawa professor, and one of the 2006 Yves Rocher Foundation International Women of the Earth.

Throughout the day, students rotated between presentations, workshops and open discussions about big and small environmental concepts ranging from climate change, carbon footprints, ecosystems, biodiversity to watersheds, reducing, reusing, recycling and litterless school lunches.

Glithero shared photos and stories of her journeys to the Canadian arctic and Antarctica, and said the exposure to real and measurable evidence of climate change has empowered her to educate others about this shift. She encouraged dialogue among students, teachers and administrators for ways to “bring big ideas into the everyday”.

Students then broke off into workshops on topics including *protecting our drinking water, species at risk, waste reduction, ways to make an environmental difference, and connections to the land; Aboriginal teachings on traditional medicine and use of our natural resources*. The day closed with teams of students each presenting an outline of a plan to reduce their school’s carbon footprint. Some ideas included school composters and gardens, litterless lunches, enhanced recycling, discouraging plastic water bottles and promoting stainless water bottles.

Boden Brock, a Grade 6 student from John XXIII School, said the *connections to the land* workshop was an eye-opener. “The Aboriginal people used to live off the land, they didn’t have stores where they could just walk in and grab whatever they needed like we do. They worked so hard for what they had,” he said. “We have it pretty easy today and I think we take advantage of that because we waste so much stuff. I am going to go home and turn off the lights, lower the heat and I’ll stop using plastic water bottles.”

Kylie Sullivan, a Grade 5 student from St. Francis School, said the overall experience moved her and hopes it did the same for her peers. “I think most people here will think it’s important—and they should,” she said. “I’m going to talk to my teachers about making changes like recycling more things than just paper at school, but I’m also going to talk to my mom about what we can do at home.”

Joanne Bénard, Superintendent of Education, said events that bring together youth with teachers and administrators are necessary for change. “We as a team of educators and administrators have a role to make change happen, but our students are the ones who have a very powerful voice,” she said. “Part of our role is to ensure that our students have a forum to voice their concerns and materialize their ideas. Today was evidence that our youth have amazing ideas that will make a difference. We just took a giant step toward making a collective attempt to reduce our carbon footprint.”

For more information, call Josée Guillemette, Communications Officer, at 472-1201 ext. 2229. *****See photos on next page.**

