



NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday, June 27, 2007

Bethlehem Catholic High School reaching out to the world

SASKATOON, June 27, 2007 – When their new school opens in August, students at Bethlehem Catholic High School will embark on a journey similar to that of another group of Grade 9 and 10 students who will open their new school – in Kenya.

Bethlehem is beginning an official partnership with the soon-to-be-completed Kip Keino High School in Kenya. Keino, a distance runner, won Olympic medals in 1968 and 1972. Though he is a celebrated athlete, Keino is just as renowned in his home country for his ongoing humanitarian work. He established the first Kip Keino School, for younger children, in January 1999 and has raised 400 orphans.

The partnership with Keino's school is intended to help students at Bethlehem become global thinkers. Building relationships with students from another country will help young people here learn to consider the world from another perspective, said Scott Gay, principal of Bethlehem.

"We would like this to build awareness for both groups of students," he said. "These students may live in different countries, with different realities, but they will also be sharing many similar experiences at this time in their lives."

The partnership also fits with the strong social justice focus staff will cultivate at Bethlehem. Seeking opportunities to make positive change in the world is an integral part of Catholic education that students enthusiastically welcome, said Cheryl Thorson, assistant principal.

"The kids know this is important. They are going to take this into new directions we hadn't dreamed of," she said.

Much of Bethlehem's social justice work will focus on the theme of water, a meaningful choice for two key reasons. Firstly, water has a strong symbolic meaning in the Catholic faith and secondly there is a local and global need for clean, safe drinking water. To that end Bethlehem is partnering with WaterCan, a Canadian non-governmental organization dedicated to helping provide clean water to the world's poorest countries.

As well, Bethlehem is seeking status as a UNESCO Associated School. Schools that receive this designation commit to working toward UNESCO's ideals of promoting peace and international cooperation through education.

These initiatives and the Kenyan partnership were discussed and wholeheartedly accepted by parents at the school's inaugural annual general meeting held earlier this month. At that time, the first Bethlehem Catholic High School Community Council was elected.

"Parents were thanking us for taking the school in this direction," Gay said. "We have a gift with all that we have at Bethlehem. With that comes a responsibility to do more for others."

Teaching students about their responsibility to reach out and make the world a better place is one of the guiding themes at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. Specifically, the division describes itself as Rooted in Faith, Growing in Knowledge, Reaching Out to Transform the World.

Bethlehem will open in August 2007 with nearly 500 students in grades 9 and 10. It is part of the Blairmore Centre, which also includes a public high school and a civic centre that will house a 50-metre competitive swimming pool.

For more information please contact:

Scott Gay
Principal
Bethlehem Catholic High School
Phone: 659-7901 – office

Cheryl Thorson
Assistant principal
Bethlehem Catholic High School
659-7902 – office

Backgrounder

Bethlehem Catholic High School is located at 110 Bowlt Crescent in Blairmore Centre, a multi-district park and school site. Partners in the overall project include Sask Learning, City of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Public Schools, and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. The partners have developed a unique, collaborative approach to integrate their resources (land, building, programs and services) in a common location, while continuing to respect the unique mandates of the participating partners.

Bethlehem Catholic High School will have four focus areas:

- Growing in Faith
 - Opportunities for celebrating faith and respecting the diversity of others
 - Chapel at front of school
 - Symbolic Star of Bethlehem constructed above the school's Commons area

- Social Justice
 - Partnership with Kip Keino High School in Kenya
 - Ongoing work with WaterCan
 - Application to become a UNESCO Associated School

- Technology
 - Smart Board Technology
 - Media studio that allows for video production and live feed to all areas of school

- Connecting with the Community
 - Community school coordinator on staff
 - Community classroom available for local activities; ventilated to accommodate smudges
 - Second gymnasium shared with City of Saskatoon