

NHCIA Spirit of Inclusion Award given out at York River Public School



By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

York River Public School student Alice McMichael was awarded the North Hastings Community Integration Association Spirit of Inclusion Award for her school and for North Hastings overall on June 29 at the school's awards ceremony. Laurie Oram, child and family support facilitator with the NHCIA and Megan Hall were there to present the award.

The NHCIA Spirit of Inclusion Award is given to one student at each school in North Hastings, who demonstrates acceptance of all peers and students, actively includes others regardless of differences, helps to increase a sense of self-worth and belonging to those around them, helps to create a sense of community within the school and may or may not have challenges themselves.

Oram and Hall presented the NHCIA Spirit of Inclusion Award on June 29 at York River Public School's awards ceremony. The winner of the award was Alice McMichael, who not only won the award for her school but won the award for North Hastings overall.

Oram says her goal though this award is to increase student, teacher and community awareness of inclusion and recognize children and youth as leaders.

"Every year I am filled with a huge sense of pride and hope, learning about the difference these amazing students are making in creating a community where all are welcome and valued," she says.

In addition to McMichael's win, other school winners included; Jenna Boomhouer for Bird's Creek Public School, Cailinn Larade for Coe Hill Public School, Shannon Eagles for St. Martin of Tours Catholic School, Kylie Wodzak for Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School and Taylor Dynes for North Hastings High School.

In the paperwork to NHCIA nominating McMichael for the award, her teachers wrote that they believe that Alice is an excellent nomination for the award because she does not see any boundaries or barriers to kindness, friendship, or inclusion.

"Alice inspires all of us in our school community daily and exudes her positive, caring, and inclusive attitude in all aspects of her school life. From the stories that she tells us about her weekends and holidays to the enjoyment she shares in school activities, this attitude is carried throughout her life. Alice has learned the value of something we work to teach and model everyday at a very

young age and to watch her help us teach it is inspiring to all of us.?

McMichael told The Bancroft Times that she was "happy" with her award, and her father Dylan said that he was really happy to see his daughter recognized.

"She is a very kind person. It's just nice to see all this. I'm a little flustered as well," he says. "It's fantastic."