

## **Partnership Leads to a Winning Conference on Developing and Maintaining Inclusive Environments**

On October 16, 170 people interested in the inclusion of children in the education system met at the Faculty of Education for the conference “Belonging! Developing and maintaining inclusive environments”. It was an exciting day as the Centre for Inclusive Education and Coaching to Inclusion began a formal partnership to enhance the opportunities for people involved in the education of children with exceptionalities to come together and learn from others in the field. The day began with keynote speaker Dr. Sheila Bennett from Brock University who brought an inspiring talk on belonging and what that means for all of us.

Since 1999, the Coaching to Inclusion conference has presented the Champion of inclusion awards to recognize, celebrate, and highlight educators who live, breathe and implement Inclusive Education. When we partnered, we felt it essential to maintain these awards. This year the winners were:

Patricia McLeod, Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB

Sue Nugent, Thames Valley DSB

Kim Cottingham, Grand Erie DSB

Danila Aref, Joe Lukasik, Pat McAdam, Hamilton Wentworth CDSB

Penney Shore-Talbot, London DCSB

AnneMarie Lambert, Huron Perth CDSB

Sherry Hanna, Avon Maitland DSB

Nora Cowe, Bruce-Grey CDSB

Last year, we introduced a Life Time achievement award for special individuals who have gone above and beyond in championing for inclusion. The 2009 winner was Janice Strickland who chaired Coaching to Inclusion for many years and has worked on local Special Education Advisory Committees and on the Minister’s Advisory Committee for Special Education. In her humble way, she accepted the award but questioned why she would get an award for just trying to make a better life for her son. Those very words tell us why she won the life time achievement award.

The rest of the day was filled with workshops related to different areas of inclusion. Marilyn Dolmage from Integration Action for Inclusion and Jacqueline Specht, director of the Centre for Inclusive Education at Western’s Faculty of Education presented Indicators of Inclusion that schools could use to determine their strengths and needs in the important aspects of inclusion. Tiffany Gallagher from the Faculty of Education at Brock University presented ideas on literacy instruction in the differentiated classroom. Deb Dempsey and Colleen Riggan from Thames Valley Children’s Centre School Support Program brought their expertise in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorders to discuss Universal Supports

in the classroom. Joan Waringer, Mary Hickey, and Jennifer Benedetti from the London District Catholic School Board discussed a school support model that brings resource and classroom teachers together to provide common strategies throughout the school.

We look forward to continuing the partnership in the years to come and thank all for participating in the day.

## **Resources**

[Inclusion Indicators and Feedback Tool](#)

[Coaching to Inclusion 2009 Collaborative Model Powerpoint](#)

[Collaborative term by term plan](#)



**The 2009 Champions of Inclusion receive their awards at the Conference,  
October 16, 2009**



**2009 Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Janice Strickland by John Barry (L) and Wayne Hobbs, members of the Coaching to Inclusion Committee**