

## Two Ottawa area schools reach out to two rural schools in Lesotho, southern Africa

### Corpus Christi Elementary and St. Thomas Aquinas High School make a difference!

May 27, 2009 St. Thomas Aquinas students present a cheque for \$8,899 to Dr. Peg Herbert of Help Lesotho

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School in Russell Ontario presents a cheque for to Dr. Peg Herbert founder and executive director of Help Lesotho the Ottawa based NGO which has more than 9,000 orphans, grandmothers and youth benefitting from its programs.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School and Corpus Christi Catholic School have partnered for several years with Help Lesotho. Together these schools have raised **\$37,000** for two schools in the mountains of Lesotho, a country with the world's third highest incidence of HIV/AIDS and staggering poverty.

Dr. Herbert, who spends four months a year in Lesotho and knows these schools well, tells the students, *"Your friendship with these students has told them they are no longer alone, that someone cares for them and that they can have some hope for their futures. When I go to your Lesotho schools, I tell them how hard you work for their benefit and they burst with pride that they mean so much to you. You are changing the lives of so many orphans and vulnerable children. On their behalf, I say Rea leboha haholo, which in Sesotho means 'we all thank you so very much'".*

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School is well known in the community for its strong commitment to helping others both locally and internationally. Richard James principal of St. Thomas has always had a strong desire to help children and families in Africa and moved quickly to support Help Lesotho, recognizing Ottawa-based Help Lesotho as the ideal vehicle to do so.



Since 2007, **St. Thomas Aquinas** has raised over \$15,000.00 for Khethisa High School in Lesotho. St. Thomas is proud to be recognized as a Helping Hands School. With the support of Chaplain Brenda Reinkeluers, along with all of the staff and parents at the school, teachers Cindy May, Lori-Ann May-Zylstra and Kathy Mack have led the charge for Help Lesotho at St. Thomas Aquinas.

Cindy and Lori-Ann organize the annual Lenten Coin Drives. Proceeds of the Lenten Coin Drives are directed to the general needs of Khethisa High School including desperately needed new uniforms, shoes, and infrastructure repairs.

The Grads Helping Grads Program is driven by the incredible energy and compassion of Math, Science and Religion Teacher, Kathy Mack which has raised enough funds to pay all of the expenses for two very needy orphans who would otherwise be unable to attend school.

Since 2006 the generous and vibrant community of **Corpus Christi Catholic Elementary School**, Ottawa has raised over \$22,000.00 to support children in Lesotho as a result of the team work and dedication of our school principal Monica Kerwin who has consistently made the school's commitment to Help Lesotho a top priority, parent leads – Cindy May, Claire Kendall and Jane Spiteri (2005-2006), the staff, the parents and the school's parish – Blessed Sacrament. These funds helped repair a decrepit primary school in a remote mountain-top village, bought school desks for children who had none and allowed many children to obtain an education that they would otherwise not have had. Corpus Christi is proud to be twinned with Katlehong School in Lesotho.



Help Lesotho ensures these funds go to the neediest. Two Ottawa area schools, one rural, one inner city, have shown that by coming together as school communities we can make a real difference in the lives of orphans and vulnerable children who have no one else to help them grow up. Both schools, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School and Corpus Christi Catholic Elementary are dedicated to continuing to work to help improve the lives of orphans in Lesotho. Visit [www.helplesotho.ca](http://www.helplesotho.ca)