



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

ALBERTA MACKENZIE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2012

Diocesan Education and Health Chairpersons:

Calgary – Sharon M.
Edmonton – Mary H.
Grouard-McLennan – Irene B.
Mackenzie-Fort Smith – Barb McD.
St. Paul – Chris G.

Catholic Education

Catholic Schools and Catechesis

Members are trustees serving on school boards and as members on schools councils. Councils participated in Catholic Education Sunday as liturgy ministers. Members gave Bibles to grades 4, 5 and 9 students. Rosaries were presented to students who received their First Communion along with other gifts for baptism, reconciliation and confirmation. Other councils have taught students how to make rosaries and have also visited schools weekly to pray the rosary with them. One council adopted to support their school anti-bullying program. Another council donates \$25 a month to a project called "Because I am a Girl" supporting girls' rights in conflict affected areas. A number of councils held fundraising events for schools, purchased and filled backpacks with school supplies, and provided food for snacks, breakfast and hot lunch programs. Councils have fundraised for playground equipment. Councils have promoted and had educational presentations for their members and displayed Catholic information on bulletin boards and church bulletins. A point of interest: for 18 years one member continues to make unleavened bread for the grade 5 re-enactment of the Last Supper.

Rites of Christian in Initiation

Members were active in Rites of Christian Initiation for adults (RCIA) and children (RCIC) as sponsors, facilitators, leaders and prayer partners. Councils participate as catechists in the Sacramental Preparation program (baptism, first communion, reconciliation and confirmation). Members also participated by preparing and delivering programs for children during Mass (children's liturgy and Sunday school). Councils have supported their students to attend Youth Rallies and Face to Face and other events.

Literacy and Continuing Education

Members have participated in literacy programs as teachers, mentors, and volunteer readers. A few councils have contributed funds for materials and volunteers for a literacy program in their community. One diocese promotes liturgical and Bible education and adult education via speakers and special events. A few councils have members who taught English as a Second Language to new immigrants, conducting citizen preparation workshops and sponsoring students in Africa and Peru through *Chalice*. Some members coach persons with disabilities who are in a correction facility. One member volunteered with Eagle's Wings last summer teaching the Bible to children in a remote community. Point of interest: a member from one of the dioceses coordinates the "Early Learning Program" for the Catholic school system and received an award from the Prime Minister in 2012 for her **100 Voices Program**. Some members attended post-secondary schools or took courses online, such as: education, social work, religious studies, theology, administrative, business, management, fine arts, music, law, and leadership training.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Councils have established scholarships and bursaries and have presented these awards to students graduating from Grade 12 to help further their education at a university or college.

Wellness and Sickness/Disease

Councils have discussed various topics and organized speakers for their meetings to discuss – cancer, heart and stroke, mental health, euthanasia for assisted suicide, and a workshop “Silent No More” where women who had an abortion courageously spoke about the pain they suffered following the abortion. Other topics discussed: blood clots, diabetes, swine flu/H1N1 (washing hands often, coughing into sleeves), immunization, and being aware of walking on icy surfaces. Members actively volunteered in the community at blood donor clinics, mammogram clinics and breast clinics, palliative care associations, pastoral care, hospital auxiliary, cancer support groups and other health associations. Councils have made donations to help pregnant teens attend prenatal classes, donations of clothing to women’s shelters, along with donations of food, toys and books to the Food Bank. Councils use the media to research topics on health issues and bring in speakers such as nurses and pharmacists to provide information.

One rural council raised funds to provide a handivan to take individuals to medical appointments. Another council made a donation to the Edmonton Children’s Hospital in memory of Karen Tomasta. Members serve on a variety of boards—Seniors Housing and Hospice Society.

Councils have written letters to MPs and MLAs on topics such as: national organ and tissue donation, stem cell and genetic research, and end-of-life issues such as physician assisted suicide, government funding of maternity benefits to women who choose abortion, and the amendment to Section 223 regarding the definition of when an unborn child becomes a human being.

Members take an active role in their communities by visiting and taking communion (Pastoral Care) to the elderly, sick and shut-ins found in their homes, hospitals, nursing homes and senior lodges. They deliver meals on wheels, take elderly shopping, provide rides to mass, appointments and meetings, volunteer in continuing care and assisted living facilities and with feeding in nursing homes.

Environment

Councils have raised awareness on environmental issues through a workshop on the sacredness of the earth and what individuals can do to respect our environment, participated in town clean-up, and keep up with the latest information on the environment so as to be good stewards of the Earth.

At a diocesan convention a painting was shown demonstrating the need for all to monitor their carbon footprint and to be wary of contamination that affects the water supply. Mugs and bowls were used at the convention instead of disposables. Members were encouraged to use tap water instead of bottled water, along with recycling of cans, bottles and milk containers and avoid the use of disposable cutlery and dishes. Members practiced composting for vegetable gardens. Councils supported the “Turn off Lights for an Hour” campaign and promoted Earth Day (April 17, 2012). Rummage sales are great fundraisers and are environmentally helpful in recycling clothing and household items. Other environment initiatives were fair trade coffee, limiting photocopying, eliminating litter by picking up garbage, and assisting with highway and park cleanups. One diocese made two donations to their bishop’s Windmills, Wells and Water Education projects in Africa and Guatemala.

Councils and members continue to help and work in their communities and parishes to make it a better place and we thank them for their service to God and Canada.

Respectfully submitted

V.L.

ABMK Provincial Education and Health Chairperson