The Award of Distinction was established in May 2000 to annually recognize significant and positive contributions to public education.

Each year, the Award is given to approximately 20 outstanding people who have demonstrated our Foundation Principles through exemplary practices that benefit our schools, students, and staff. Candidates should also demonstrate loyalty of service, integrity, sincerity, and commitment to learning. All Thames Valley employees, volunteers, parents, trustees, and students are eligible to be nominated for the Award of Distinction.

Profiled in this program are the 23 recipients of the 2003 Award of Distinction.

Jeanette Bryant
Parent/Volunteer
Metcalfe Central PS (Strathroy)

For more than 16 years, Jeanette has been a fixture at Metcalfe Central School, participating in health and literacy programs, school fundraising initiatives, graduations, and countless extracurricular activities. She has been a wonderful resource for the school, using her community connections to arrange for experts to visit various classes, and offering her family dairy farm as a venue for class trips. Jeanette and her family also sponsor an award for grade 8 graduates. She is the ultimate parent volunteer – genuine, willing, capable, and tireless in her advocacy for Metcalfe Central School and its students.

Mavis Cowley
Volunteer
Arthur Ford PS (London)

“Grandma” has been volunteering at Arthur Ford Public School for 12 years. Having recently celebrated her 75th birthday and undergone heart by-pass surgery, she has reduced her volunteering time, limiting herself to only four visits to the school per week. Mavis spends most of her time at Arthur Ford working in the kindergarten class and the library. She frequently provides classroom materials by making or purchasing them, and often brings in treats for students and staff. She has implemented several reading, spelling, and math programs with teachers, and is always ready to provide her kids with extra instruction, a sympathetic ear, or a smile.

Paul Darosa
Teacher
Norwich District High School (Norwich)

When Paul Darosa began teaching at NDHS, he inherited a struggling music program that was in danger of being terminated. Today, that same program is thriving, and enthusiastic music students from NDHS are performing successfully at many festivals, concerts, and competitions. Bands from NDHS have performed at the Woodstock Rotary and New Glasgow musical festivals, the University of Western Ontario, the Forum and Olympic Stadium in Montreal, and Canada’s Wonderland. He is a genuine innovator in the classroom, using different musical styles and modern technology to enhance his students’ appreciation for music, and turning that appreciation into polished performance bands, exciting new programs, and high levels of achievement.

Maggie Alderson
Educational Assistant
Innerkip Central School (Innerkip)

Maggie is an Educational Assistant at Innerkip Central School. She has been with the former Oxford Board and TVDSB since 1993, and in that time has earned praise from her colleagues and students as an inspiring, passionate, and sensitive presence in the Innerkip community. Apart from her daily duties in the classroom, Maggie is active in the school’s Social Committee, In-School Health and Safety Committee, and Program Development Team meetings for students with academic or behavioural needs. She is respected not only for supporting and encouraging Special Education students, but for her sincere interest in their personal lives.

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Basil Davison
Teacher
Thames SS (London)

The late Basil Davison, “Mr. D” to his students, was the type of teacher that people remember fondly from high school. He was a legend in the Forest City program and at Thames Secondary School, where he primarily taught culinary arts, always with a big Irish smile and a bigger Irish heart. He had a special ability to work with students who were struggling at school, to help them with personal problems and to inspire self-confidence in them. Under his vision, the Thames Food Department took over operation of the school cafeteria and became a sought-after catering crew for meetings and special events. Basil passed away suddenly in October, 2002, and is missed by many.
Award of Distinction - 2003 Recipients

**Susan Grieve**
Teacher
Westminster Central PS (London)

In 11 years at Westminster Central, Susan has become an integral part not only of the school, but of the entire Glanworth/Belmont community. She is a superb classroom teacher, an enthusiastic coach for several school teams, a respected mentor for new teachers, and a valuable asset to school events and programs including graduation ceremonies, student council, fundraising, special assemblies, and track meets. Under her instruction, grade 6 EQAO results at Westminster Central have gone from below provincial averages to well above, and her Captain Whirlwind and Golden Garbage Awards programs have helped to create a student body that respects the needs of its community.

**Brenda Hopkins**
Chair, Thames Valley District School Council

As Chair of the Thames Valley District School Council Committee, Brenda volunteers an enormous amount of her time on behalf of Thames Valley students. She has held a prominent position in School Councils since the TVDSB was formed, and sat on the project team that developed governance recommendations for School Councils, Home & School Associations, and parent organizations within the TVDSB. Recently, Brenda represented school councils in a presentation to the Rozanski Commission on Public Education, and was the driving force behind the first Western Region School Council Symposium, which brings together school council representatives from 12 local boards. Her work has been an invaluable benefit to the entire Thames Valley District.

**Jim Jarron**
Charge Custodian
Sir Isaac Brock PS (London)

Jim is more than just Charge Custodian at Sir Isaac Brock. In his time there, he has become part of the school’s fabric, a smiling, generous, popular man whose work ethic and skill provide a clean, safe environment for staff and students. He is a supremely capable custodian. As one person put it, there’s no problem Jim can’t solve, and he often anticipates and responds to situations at the school before anyone knows something is wrong. More than that, though, Jim is liked and respected as a warm presence and a positive role model in the school.

**Carol Krats**
Volunteer
Princess Elizabeth PS (Ingersoll)

Carol has been volunteering at Princess Elizabeth for six years, and continues to do so, even though her own daughter has moved on to a new school. She is in the school three or four days every week, arriving before 9:00 a.m. and frequently staying for most of the day. The teachers she works with genuinely appreciate her abilities, and children respond to her teaching. Carol has a talent for teaching kids how to read and a special knack for working in conditions that aren’t always ideal, whether in the hall, the corner of the room, or even in a closet. She also contributes learning materials to the school, often providing them with her own resources. In all she does, she is a perfect model of our caring learning community.

**Barb Macaulay**
Learning Support Teacher
Southwold PS (St. Thomas)

Barb is the senior teacher in a very new Special Education team at Southwold. In this role, she is not only an instructor for students, but for a number of new teachers in an immensely challenging specialization. Barb is also a learner. She constantly upgrades her skills and knowledge so she can provide the very best programs for her students, and the most current information to parents and guardians, teachers, educational assistants, doctors, psychologists, advocates, and representatives from outside agencies. When she is not in school, Barb is active in her community, and is involved in fundraising for underprivileged children in Third World countries.

**Kyle Heffernan**
Learning Coordinator – Special Education, Program Services

Kyle is described as having a calling to work with exceptional students. Her professional expertise is unquestioned and respected, as is her dedication to increasing her own knowledge and applying that knowledge to the programs that are included in her portfolio as a Learning Coordinator. Kyle’s enthusiasm and creativity are both inspiring and infectious, and she has cultivated a special talent for building partnerships among students, teachers, parents, and staff. In all things, she is an advocate for students—a passion that earned her the 2001 Education Leader of the Year Award from the Ontario Provincial Federation Council for Exceptional Children.
Heather Manax  
Volunteer  
Brick Street PS (London)  
Over the past eight years, Heather has made seemingly endless contributions to Brick Street in various roles including parent, volunteer, Home and School member, and School Council President. Her fundraising efforts have helped to purchase choir vests, basketball jerseys, gym equipment, and many other resources for the school. Through her leadership and lobbying efforts, the school's library and staff room were renovated, and she often supplies needed food items free or at nominal cost for school events through her family’s business, Manax’s Food Basics. She consistently models the Board’s Foundation Principles as a selfless, dedicated member of the Brick Street community.

Reverend Roger McCombe  
Retired Teacher  
Ingersoll District CI (Ingersoll)  
"Uncle Roger" is more than just a teacher. He is a scholar, a mentor, and a friend to the many teachers and students who have crossed his path. His religion classes and his instruction in Latin, Greek, and the Classics, went beyond the curriculum to include lessons in life, drawn from his respected personal wisdom. He has an enviable legacy of success as a teacher and as a person. Many of his former students have returned to Ingersoll to ask Roger if he would conduct their wedding ceremonies, perform baptisms, or give eulogies in many different religious ceremonies. He remains an active member of the IDCI community, and can still be found playing cards in the staff room at lunch time.

Valerie Morrison  
Principal  
Elgin Court PS (St. Thomas)  
Valerie is a tremendously active principal in an equally active elementary school. Beyond her demanding administrative responsibilities, she makes a priority of mentoring her teachers, providing new materials, data, or articles for staff to discuss in her innovative Tuesday morning “Sunrise Sessions” in-services. She is popular with teachers and students, and at different times several of each can be found in her office to celebrate a success, to ask for advice on a problem, or just to share her company. Her upbeat morning announcements, her weekly Staff News, and her Peace Crusader initiative all contribute to a thriving learning and working environment at Elgin Court.

Cheryl MacKenzie  
Technology Deployment Specialist, Business Services  
Cheryl is the team leader in Supply Management for the TVDSB and an expert in system information technology. She has a celebrated ability to procure and distribute technology and supplies responsibly, ethically, and with a shrewdness of limited supplies budgets. Cheryl also has exceptional work habits, spending hours of her own time preparing reports on bids and tenders. She is a firm believer in self-improvement, and she keeps both her knowledge base and the Board’s systems updated with the most current information. Her colleagues appreciate that she accepts any request for help or advice, always with a smile. With Cheryl’s help, the Board has developed streamlined methods for generating contracts that are simple, efficient, and transparent.

Tracy McInnis  
Volunteer  
Nicholas Wilson PS (London)  
Tracy has been volunteering at Nicholas Wilson for almost 15 years. She has become an information technology wizard for the school, bringing a wealth of computer knowledge to the position of computer liaison. In that role, she helps maintain the school’s computer network, she logs updated account usage statistics, and she is called upon every day to fix problems with programs and printers. She was also instrumental in securing 10 new computers for the school through the Computers for Schools program. When she is not working to keep the school’s computers functioning, Tracy runs the chess club she created, helps in the library, and enthusiastically accepts whatever job needs to be completed.

Ania Nunns  
Charge Custodian  
Woodstock CI (Woodstock)  
Ania has been a custodian at Woodstock Collegiate Institute since 1985, and has been Charge Custodian for the past four years. His contributions to the school go far beyond his custodial responsibilities. He is especially noted for his work with Developmental Special Education students, whom he supervises in work placements in the custodial area and accompanies on field trips when he is needed. Ania has also used his considerable artistic talent to paint murals in Oxford County schools, and on the WCI stage backdrop. The school recycling program he started is a great success, bringing together student leaders and developmentally challenged students to learn from each other and pursue a worthwhile project.
Chris Roesch
Head Secretary
Annandale School (Tillsonburg)

Chris is described as Annandale’s organizational wizard and office guru. For 24 years, she has been the “Go To Person” at the school – a valuable source of information and energy for staff and students, a thoughtful and pleasant liaison for parents and guardians, an unfailing help to anyone who needs her. During her tenure, Annandale has experienced several difficult transitions, including being re-structured from a secondary school to a grade 7-9 school. She has been a constant through these challenges. This year, she spearheaded staff training in Trillium, E-teacher, Markbook, telephone messaging, and TVARRIS. Chris’s loyalty, dedication, and pleasant personality make her a valued colleague and a cherished friend.

Dave Swinden
School Support Counsellor
Lorne Avenue PS (London)

As School Support Counsellor, Dave’s work is vital to the learning environment at Lorne Avenue. His compassion and character, his professionalism and skill, have helped many students develop the self-confidence, patience, and tolerance they need to become better learners and better people. He has created an innovative Wellness Centre and a Leadership Camp at the school, and was instrumental in bringing the “Roots to Empathy” program to grade 1 classes. Dave is an excellent mentor for all staff members, parent volunteers and for students.

Janice Sanguine
Head Secretary
Southwold PS (St. Thomas)

People who know Janice emphasize the fact that she cares. She cares about kids and she cares about people, and it is this caring that makes her such a valued colleague and friend. Janice does everything she possibly can to make life easier for staff and students. When families around her suffer, she is there to support them, whether it’s organizing assistance for families whose houses have burned, or putting together a Christmas care package with her own money. She is a practical and efficient office administrator who has impressive knowledge of school, board, and Ministry of Education procedures. Her attitude and willingness have made her a crucial member of the Southwold community.

Joan Vandertuin
Teacher
Ashley Oaks PS (London)

While Joan is acknowledged to be an outstanding teacher, her nomination is based largely on her work with one student. She was nominated by Lisa Howe, whose daughter, Brennan, has endured courageous battles with cancer and other serious health problems. Recognizing Brennan’s potential and strength, Joan has volunteered to work with her, spending countless hours after school, and during evenings and weekends, helping her learn to read and write. Joan has taught Brennan to believe in herself, and has been a wonderful encouragement to the entire Howe family.

Carrie Van Erp
Volunteer
Edward Street PS (St. Thomas)

Carrie spends approximately 3 hours everyday at Edward Street, doing a variety of volunteer work. She is an active member of the school’s Parent Association, and is a crucial participant in the school Snack Program, various fundraising efforts, school dances, barbecues, garage sales, field trips, track and field, and hot lunch days. When the school initiated a Volunteer Reading Program, Carrie took a lead role in organizing the reading materials and recruiting a group of volunteers to participate. The project has been so successful at Edward Street that Carrie introduced it to Locke’s Public School, and helped parent volunteers organize a similar program in that community.

Scott Street School Executive
Scott Street PS (St. Thomas)

This group, comprised of Max and the late Brenda Parker, Deb and Greg Presant, and Brenda and Duayne Calvert, was nominated in recognition of major contributions to Scott Street School. Until very recently, parents had little presence at Scott Street, but the PTA executive has changed that, and the school now benefits from a dedicated, enthusiastic contingent of parent volunteers. In the past year, their work has raised $17,000 for playground equipment, money for improvements to the school library, and funds for school trips. Members of the executive are in the school almost daily, reading to students in the Volunteer Reading Program, working in the school’s skating program, and running bake sales as part of various holidays and celebrations.