



**Ordinary people
doing small things
that make a difference**

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MEDIA RELEASE

June 17, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Our Hidden Heroes 2009 Writing Contest Winner Announced

Youssef Nassar a Grade 8 ESL student at R.A. Sennett Public School has been selected from among more than 300 students from Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec as the winner, by random draw, of the *Our Hidden Heroes 2009 Writing Contest* for Grades 1 to 8. He has won an Acer Netbook donated by Staples.

Most of the participating schools are in British Columbia. There are three Quebec schools and thirteen Ontario schools using the Our Hidden Heroes Program, seven of the Ontario schools are in the Durham School District.

To learn more about the Our Hidden Heroes Program go to www.ourhiddenheroes.org.

The Our Hidden Heroes Program was developed in Nanaimo, British Columbia by former Toronto broadcaster, Bill Robinson, supported by a Doctorate of Education, two Masters of Education and a Bachelor of Education. It is a Social Responsibility/Character Education Program for Grades 1 to 8 that has been seamlessly integrated into both the BC and Ontario Curricula. The program is growing rapidly across BC and has also been introduced in select schools in Ontario (Toronto, York, Durham and Ottawa) and Western Quebec.

A Hidden Hero is a positive role model, an ordinary person who does small things that make a difference. The contest encouraged students to write about themselves or someone they know as Hidden Heroes.

In one entry, a student wrote, "I think I may be a hidden hero not to humans but to the animals. I went to the SPCA every Saturday to clean out the cat cages... I have also participated in the Paws for a Cause for three years in a row... and this past year I raised \$420 so I have contributed time, effort and money all to a worthy cause."

By acknowledging their own positive contributions, students learn that there are many more Hidden Heroes in the world than hidden crooks. They feel empowered to continue making a difference and their enthusiasm ripples outward through their families and communities.

The Our Hidden Heroes Program is a product of the Hidden Heroes Education Society, a non-profit society. The program has been proven to raise the level of empathy and compassion in classrooms, and to positively change the classroom behaviour of both students and teachers.

Although the word "bully" is never mentioned -- the program teaches the antithesis to bullying -- teachers are reporting that they are finding it to be a proactive anti bullying tool in their schools.

Our Hidden Heroes is funded in whole or part through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Development Agreement.

The Acer Netbook will be presented to Youssef on Monday June 22 at R.A. Sennett Public School, 300 King Street, Whitby.

Youssef's story is on the next page. A media package is attached.



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Youssef's Hidden Hero Is His Brother

My hidden hero is my brother Mostafa who was born in Cairo, Egypt on February 25th, 1987. He's my oldest brother and he's an amazing artist. When he was a kid, he would always make a mess with paint on the walls. When Mostafa grew up and started school, he was the best artist in his class.

Later on, when me and my other brother Yassin were born, Mostafa showed us how to draw and encouraged us to do our best to learn different styles of art. This was important to me because my whole family are artists and I want to be one too. He made me an artist and now I am on my way to being as good as him.

I think Mostafa is admirable because he's very mature and loving. He shows these traits by taking care of me when my parents are away, also by teaching me different styles of art. This is why Mostafa is very important to me and someone to be admired.

Mostafa is my Hidden Hero because he has been really caring to me. Not many people know him, but not many other people are as special as him. Because of him, I am famous for my art at my school.