

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



427 Rice Rd., Welland ON

905.735.0240

www.niagaracatholic.ca

Danny Di Lorenzo
Chair of the Board

Camillo Cipriano
Director of Education

CONTACT

Jennifer Pellegrini
Communications Officer

Office 905.735.0240 Ext. 297

Cell 905.651.3818

jennifer.pellegrini@ncdsb.com

f @NiagaraCatholicDSB

ig @NiagaraCatholicDSB

ti @niagaracatholic

We are a
CHRIST-CENTERED
CATHOLIC FAITH community
that celebrates diversity
and fosters SPIRITUAL GROWTH,
inspiring ALL to REACH
their FULL potential in
MIND, BODY, & SPIRIT

ENCOUNTERING SOULS
AND OPENING MINDS
SO that all students
SUCCEED

John Belcastro Honoured by Niagara U

Niagara Catholic is proud to announce that John Belcastro, principal of the Board's Continuing Education and Alternative Learning programs, received Niagara University's prestigious Ozanam Medal during its annual Vincentian Heritage Week celebrations.

Mr. Belcastro received his award during the university's Annual Convocation in the Alumni Chapel September 28.

The Ozanam Medal is one of four awards presented during this event and is given in to individuals who exemplify the mission and charity of its patron saint, St. Vincent de Paul.

In its newsletter spotlighting the 2023 honourees, Niagara University noted that Belcastro, a graduate of Notre Dame College School in Welland, ultimately returning there after a short stint teaching in Bowmanville.

Prior to assuming his leadership role at the Niagara Catholic virtual secondary school during the COVID shutdown, Belcastro was vice-principal at Saint Michael Catholic High School, Saint Paul Catholic High School, Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School, and Notre Dame College School. During this time, he forged connections with students entrusted to his care.

During the pandemic, he guided teachers and students through the uncertainty of online teaching and learning and found ways to unite communities spread across the Niagara region. In his current assignment, Belcastro oversees Niagara Catholic's Continuing Education program, as well as the Board's Pope Francis Alternative Learning Centre, Saint Kateri Tekakwitha elementary and secondary schools for Indigenous students and the Board's Soaring Eagles program. These alternative learning programs support the Board's most vulnerable students, including who are challenged to attend school in a mainstream classroom and young parents.

Mr. Belcastro said he was humbled to learn of his nomination and to be a recipient of the award.

"I am very honoured to be just considered for such a prestigious award and this is a reflection of the great work of my colleagues in the Niagara Catholic Continuing Education and Alternative Learning programs," said Belcastro. "While many days are challenging, these are far outweighed by the reward of helping others. In the words of St. Vincent de Paul, *We must love our neighbour as being made in the image of God and as an object of His love*. For me, my job is truly a blessing, for in each student that approaches our programs for assistance I see the face of Christ and I am able to help each one through the grace of God."

Niagara Catholic Director of Education Camillo Cipriano said Niagara University made an excellent choice in selecting John Belcastro for the Ozanam Medal.

"John Belcastro is an outstanding administrator and example of our calling as Catholic educators to encounter souls and open minds each and every day," said Mr. Cipriano. "He works with students with some of the greatest challenges, meeting them where they are on their journey, and makes personal connections with them to support them to reach their goals. On behalf of all of Niagara Catholic, I am pleased to congratulate John for this wonderful and deserving recognition."

DATE ISSUED: October 4, 2024

INTEGRITY • JUSTICE • COMMUNITY • FAITHFULNESS • STEWARDSHIP • COMPASSION • ACCOUNTABILITY