

Hall students win national award for workplace safety video

By Nick Fernandes

A group of four students from Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School gained both provincial and national attention last week, due to their contribution to a workplace safety video contest.

The members of the winning team are Vanessa DeMaria, Shandra Romanoff, Christian Arcuri and Ruby Komisar. The video was part of a class project, and they produced a work that impressed the Ministry of Labour above all others involved in a nationwide competition.

'You never think it's going to be you,' said the video. It was shot in a testimonial style, with the student actors playing the part of victims or family members of victims of workplace accidents; people who have suffered grief or injury due to incidents that could have been prevented by caution or greater awareness. It highlights the emotional toll senseless accidents can have for the victims' loved ones, and emphasizes the fact that workplace safety concerns the lives and wellbeing of real people, and is not just an issue of keeping a job. The video cuts between the perspectives of several of these victims, the testimonials melding into one another until it sounds like a constant stream.

'I'm still not sure if this was acting?' said George Gritziotis, chief prevention officer for the Ministry of Labour, as he paraphrased one of the competition judges 'or if they're remembering a real life event. It was very convincing.'

Gritziotis echoed several words of praise from the competition judges for the pure effectiveness of the video's message and its possible use for educating workers across Canada.

The video was made as part of a project in the communications technology class taught by Denise Chuck.

'It was a great learning experience for them, to learn the editing process, filming, production, and finding royalty-free music,' she said, adding the project took about three weeks, with the team receiving hands-on training with storyboarding, filming and post-production work.

The video won \$1,000 through the provincial competition. At the presentation assembly last week, it was revealed that it also won the \$2,000 purse from the national level contest.

The students were excited and humbled by the nation wide recognition.

'We worked very hard on the video,' Arcuri said, 'and it's nice to be recognized for that.'



Students Vanessa DiMaria and Shandra Romanoff, Superintendent Paul McMorro, Principal Ed McMahon, Ministry of Labour Chief Prevention Officer George Gritziotis, students Christian Arcuri and Ruby Komisar, and teacher Denise Chuck were all on hand for last week's presentation. Photo by Nick Fernandes