



Durham Catholic District School Board



# St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School

**Motto: "Believe, Achieve, Succeed"**



## **In the Beginning**

The history of a Catholic school does not stand alone. It is couched within the context of the Catholic Church, the history of the community where it resides, and the people within. This brief history of St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School in Pickering, Ontario, Canada, includes references to the political landscape, the people who founded and led the school community, and the traditions that built its wonderful story.

In 1981, Pierre Trudeau was prime minister of Canada; times were exciting, as new ideas and new technologies were emerging. The population was growing in Ontario. This was reflected in the tremendous growth in the area east of Scarborough in what

was then the small town of Pickering. The population at that time was some 37,750 people, almost 20 percent more than a decade earlier. This was also a monumental moment in Ontario's Catholic education history. Bill Davis was premier of the province and Cardinal Carter was Archbishop of Toronto. These two men would eventually come together to make Ontario history by extending Catholic rights to education.

It was during these exciting times, under the leadership of principal Jim Johnson, that St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School was opened in September 1981 to serve the needs of the growing student population living north of Highway 2 in Pickering. Even before the school opened, the 650 students warranted the addition of a six-room port-a-pac. The school was named for St. Isaac Jogues, a Jesuit missionary who was martyred in 1646.



The naming of the school after the famous Canadian Catholic martyr was perfect, given Pickering's earliest Catholic history. In 1669, M. Fenelon, a French Jesuit missionary, reached the Seneca village of Gandatsetiagon, on the shores of Frenchman's Bay. After spending the winter there, he began his missionary work. The Jesuit tradition continues in Pickering even today, through Manresa – a Jesuit spiritual retreat centre that is just a few kilometres away from St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School.

By 1982, there were 800 students at the school. Ten portables graced the large fields that surround the school. Staff members smile now as they recall the year 1982, when *Time* magazine name "the Computer" the Machine of the Year. Just a few years later, a group of enthusiastic teachers set up the first computer lab at St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School: computers with a full megabyte of memory.



Looking at the school today, it is difficult to imagine it without the church next door. The parish of St. Isaac Jogues was established in 1983. Before the church was built, Mass was held in the school gymnasium. The church building was completed in 1988 and the founding pastor was Father Bernard Canning. The students of St. Isaac Jogues have benefited ever since by having the church next to the school. In 2011, the staff and students bid fond farewells to Father John Henry, who had served the community for 14 years. It was also a retirement goodbye for the Durham Catholic District School Board, since Father John had also been a former superintendent of the Board. Father Paul Dobson succeeded him as pastor in the summer of 2011 and has continued the tradition as the school's friendly spiritual neighbour.



### *St. Isaac Jogues Church*

In 1984, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Catholic School opened in Pickering. This reduced the crowded halls of St. Isaac Jogues to 650 students. But new changes were in store as the school, under principal Pat McKinnon, again extended its welcoming spirit and housed the staff and students of the new St. Anthony Daniel School, resulting in a population of over 1,000 students.

St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School continued to evolve. In 1988, new offices were added. The next principal was Brian Vrebosch; by this time, the population of Pickering had reached 68,000 people. During the 1990s, the St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School population began to stabilize. New classrooms were added in 2002 to replace the port-a-pac, and the school prospered during this period under principals Lenore Bernard and Betty McDonald. Principal Frank Zochodne held the celebration for St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School's 25th anniversary in 2006, which was attended by Pickering and Board dignitaries.

Today, under the leadership of principal Kevin Bell and secretary Margie Currie, St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School remains true to its history of Catholic stewardship. St. Isaac Jogues C.S. has a strong and vibrant Social Justice Club and is a member of the “Me to We” charitable organization. Clothing, monetary donations and food have been collected and other outreach support initiatives have been carried out by this tireless group of students and teachers. The Eco Club is proud to have been awarded Silver designation for its continued strong efforts to promote knowledge and action to protect our environment.



The staff at St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School offer a wide variety of activities for all students. Sports have always been a central part of the school, and both intramural and competitive sports continue to be available. The school gym, also known as “The Home of the Jaguars,” was renovated in 2010. It boasts a newly designed floor, a paint update and protective matting. Sports fans had a real surprise in 2009, when the Olympic Torch Relay ran past the school. Staff and students supported this historic day with banners, Canadian Olympic clothing and cheers. Later in the year, we watched as Canadian athletes made Olympic history in Vancouver, Canada. Everyone was so proud. The Terry Fox Walk is another popular event for students.



*Students work together to promote the Terry Fox Walk.*

In 2011, the school replaced the historic “Crusaders” with a new team mascot – the “Jaguars.” The newly designed sports logo was artistically drawn by Grade 8 student Megan Capati. Also that year, a staff committee discussed and created a school motto – “Believe, Achieve, Succeed” – which reflects Catholic school gospel values and goals for student learning.

Today, the tradition of technological instruction continues as St. Isaac Jogues C.S. teachers and principal Kevin Bell have updated that same computer lab of years past. It now boasts not only computers but a large-screen monitor. Many students use laptops, netbooks and tablets, and classroom activities include the use of flip video cameras, digital cameras and voice recorders. Finally, SmartBoards and projectors are now taking the place of chalkboards in the classrooms. Other recent renovations include a library makeover, renovations to the outdoor courtyard and improved play space on the schoolyard.



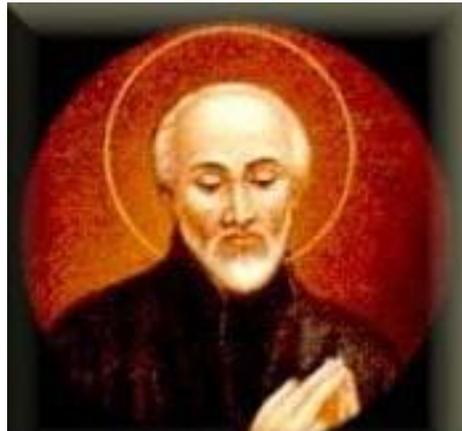
St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School has a vibrant parent community. The parents and volunteers support many special programs, trips and classrooms. The Catholic School Council is a key part of the school community's success. The long-standing tradition of healthy dialogue, positive input and student-focused initiatives continues to be an integral part of the St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School spirit. The annual volunteer tea recognizes the great work and support received from the parent community.



The staff and students at St. Isaac Jogues C.S. are the heart and soul of the school. Although the people change from year to year, the spirit and traditions live on. St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School has always been a faith-filled building that holds high expectations for student discipline and academic achievement. Graduates attend St. Mary Catholic Secondary School. Students continue to return to visit, catching up with staff, volunteering in classrooms and even teaching. Staff and students are dedicated and proud members of St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School's amazing history.



The population of the City of Pickering currently stands at 88,721 and St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School has 333 students. Two years ago, the school community celebrated its 30th year. It has been an amazing history with many more strong years of Catholic Education to come. "St. Isaac Jogues, pray for us."



### **Our Patron Saint**

Isaac Jogues was born in France in 1607. As a Jesuit missionary, he came to work among the North American Natives in the village of Huronia along the shores of Georgian Bay in Ontario. He ministered to the Aboriginal people and became well known for his devotion to God and his dedication to others. He worked tirelessly for peaceful solutions to the struggle between the Huron and Iroquois Indians for domination of the fur trade. Isaac Jogues was blamed for the sickness and misfortune that came to the Iroquois tribe. He became a martyr on October 18, 1646, when he was brutally murdered by the Iroquois. He was canonized a saint in 1930 and in 1940 he was proclaimed patron saint of the Americas and Canada, along with the other Canadian martyrs. His feast day is September 26.

### **School Prayer**

God our Father,  
Watch over us at St. Isaac Jogues Catholic School.  
Help us to use our special gifts to grow in knowledge,  
And make our school a place where  
Peace, love, caring and friendship  
Can be seen and felt  
In all of our words and actions,

So that we can be faithful followers of Jesus  
and good examples to others.  
Amen.

**Principals**

Jim Johnson (1981-1987)

Patrick MacKinnon (1987-1991)

Brian Vrebosch (1991-1995)

Lenore Bernard (1995-2000)

Betty McDonald (2000-2003)

Frank Zochodne (2003-2009)

Kevin Bell (2009 - present)

*Contributors:*

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