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Mike Paonessa to receive Newman Theological College Kevin Carr Christian Leadership Award



Evergreen Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 2 Board of Trustees is proud to announce that Mike Paonessa, Deputy Superintendent, is the recipient of the 2018 Kevin Carr Christian Leadership Award. The award, named for the first layperson to serve as president of the college, recognizes individuals whose outstanding Christian leadership reflects the values of the college and the qualities that Carr cherished and exhibited in his work.

“We are proud that Mike Paonessa’s commitment to Christian leadership is being celebrated with the Kevin Carr award. Mike has been the driver behind the implementation of the Excellence in Catholic Educational Leadership (EXCEL) Academy, which has provided opportunities for our teachers and administrators to develop in their role as Catholic leaders. This has been an important division partnership with Newman Theological College and some of our sister Catholic boards,” said Board Chair Ron McKay.

Mike Paonessa holds a master’s degree in Education Policy Studies from the University of Alberta and has worked as a teacher and administrator in Edmonton Catholic Schools and Evergreen Catholic Schools for more than thirty years. His philosophy of servant leadership extends to many roles including mentor to new administrators, lead on division Indigenous education projects, active member of the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta, and Chair of the Blueprints committee.

In nominating Mike for the Kevin Carr award, Evergreen Catholic Schools’ Superintendent Dr. Cindi Vaselenak said, “I nominated Mike because he is a role model of compassion, understanding, kindness, and mercy -the qualities we admire most in Christian leaders. Pope Francis said that our faith is revealed in how we reach out and care for the marginalized. Mike lives the philosophy that if you can’t find Christ he will bring the love of Christ to you. His ability to be a servant leader is evident in how he supports students, parents, and staff daily as well as in the compassion he shows beyond our division. On his own time, he prays the rosary with the inmates at the Edmonton Remand Centre and delivers sandwiches and hot drinks to the homeless and marginalized downtown.”



Karen Koester, Religious Education Coordinator at Evergreen Catholic Schools, said Mike keeps an open door and always has time to talk. “When he is talking with a co-worker, Mike gives the person his complete attention and he is fully present in the moment. This is a most Christ-like quality in Mike that I greatly value,” she wrote. “When dealing with a problem, Mike is a skilled diplomat who always finds a way to work things out for the common good while protecting the dignity of all parties.”

Mike is an active member of St. Charles Parish in Edmonton. He will be honoured at the 15th Annual Kevin Carr Christian Leadership Award Luncheon on October 24, 2018.

Ron McKay, Board Chair
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