

# **THE ASPER FOUNDATION**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **News Release**

*Presentation of Plaque of Recognition to  
Outstanding Human Rights Educator  
Prince of Wales Collegiate, St. John's, NL*

### **The Asper Foundation Recognizes Keith Samuelson, Outstanding Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Educator**

**WINNIPEG, MB.** – *May 5, 2005* - The Asper Foundation is pleased to announce that it is recognizing Mr. Keith Samuelson, a teacher at Prince of Wales Collegiate, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, as an outstanding human rights educator. In a special ceremony held at the collegiate this morning, Mr. Moe Levy, Executive Director of The Asper Foundation, presented Mr. Samuelson with a plaque of recognition personally signed by Ms. Gail Asper, Managing Director of The Asper Foundation. Mr. Levy commented, "Keith Samuelson is a wonderful example of how educators can make a tremendously positive difference in the lives of their students. The foundation is recognizing Mr. Samuelson for his outstanding contribution to the area of human rights and Holocaust education and for his strong commitment to The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program."

The ceremony marked the first time that The Asper Foundation has presented this plaque of recognition. Mr. Samuelson played an instrumental role in the participation of Prince of Wales Collegiate in The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program, the first school from Newfoundland and Labrador to ever be involved in the program.

Since the inception of the program in 1997 to 2005, over 4,500 students from many backgrounds in 49 cities spanning nine provinces coast-to-coast across Canada have participated in this initiative which started in Winnipeg, Canada. The program was the recipient of the prestigious 2004 Human Rights Award from the Canadian Human Rights Commission and its objectives are to promote tolerance and sensitize Canadian high school students to the consequences of racism through a specially designed education program.

U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor ever elected to Congress, has addressed program participants in Washington, D.C. for several years. He remarked, "The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program is unique in its breadth and depth. The program is to be commended for its far-reaching ability to reach out to students across Canada and teach them the historical significance of the Holocaust and the importance of tolerance and preservation of human rights for all peoples."

Past student program participants have remarked "I will remember the trip for my whole life. It gave me a different view of the world", "As I speak to people now, I realize the true meaning and importance of bearing witness", "You have no idea how much this experience meant to us all" and "By being educated about these tragic events in history, people will be more motivated to stop what is happening now."

The program became a national initiative in 2000. All students are required to take an 18-hour education program, or its equivalent, on human rights and the Holocaust with an added emphasis on American history and the civil rights movement. The curriculum for the educational component of the program was developed specifically by Holocaust and human rights educators for The Asper Foundation. After the educational component is completed, students participate in a trip to Washington, D.C., where they spend several days at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and other important monuments relating to human rights and freedom. Students are also required to volunteer in their communities on public projects of their choosing when they return.

The last component of the program is an evening graduation ceremony held to present a Memorandum for Personal Responsibility to each student. This document was commissioned by The Asper Foundation specifically for this program and written by Dr. Israel Asper, Founder of the foundation. The Memorandum aims to provide each student with a sense of the importance that they participated in the program and to remind them that they have a personal responsibility for the world community. A significant portion of the costs of the program are borne by The Asper Foundation. In 2005, the foundation is sending almost 800 participants from 26 cities in eight provinces to Washington, D.C. The trip is split into five groups travelling in the spring.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, currently under development, was inspired and motivated by the extraordinary impact of The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program. The museum has made groundbreaking history, as it will be the largest human rights institution and centre for education in the world today. The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program will be expanded in the coming years through the museum's planned national student program which will sponsor 100,000 high school students and their chaperones from across Canada to visit the museum each year.

**For further information, media are asked to contact Mr. Jeffrey Morry, Senior Program Manager, The Asper Foundation at 204-989-5539 or by e-mail at [jmorry@aspergroup.com](mailto:jmorry@aspergroup.com).**