

Educator Spotlight

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Administrator: Sister Anne Crampsie.

School: Gwynedd-Mercy Academy Elementary School in Spring House, where she is principal.

Achievement: Under Crampsie's leadership, Gwynedd-Mercy Academy Elementary recently was named a 2007 Nationally Acclaimed Blue Ribbon School. Gwynedd-Mercy was one of only 13 schools selected in Pennsylvania, and the only one in Montgomery County.

Crampsie received the Blue Ribbon award last month from U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education Raymond Simon at a ceremony in Arlington, Va. "As principal, I guided the application process, which was a collaborative effort among faculty and staff members," said Crampsie, 56.

To be named a Blue Ribbon school, Gwynedd-Mercy scored in the top 10 percent in the nation on standardized tests. Crampsie said other criteria, including a world-languages curriculum for kindergarten through eighth grade, faculty profiles, and curriculum and instruction methods, also were considered.

Crampsie, an Upper Dublin resident, has been principal of Gwynedd-Mercy Academy Elementary since 1996. Prior to that, she was director of elementary curriculum and instruction in the Office of Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and also served as principal of St. Michael the Archangel School in Levittown. She has a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Gwynedd-Mercy College, and a master's in education in Catholic school leadership from Boston College.

Pursuit of excellence: Crampsie and staff members from the school attended meetings to gather information to learn the criteria needed to achieve the Blue Ribbon designation.

"It was clear to us that we would meet the criteria and that achieving the Blue Ribbon designation would be an affirmation and recognition of the commitment to excellence that has been made over the years by our faculty, Board of Trustees, parents and students," Crampsie said. The Blue Ribbon, she added, "is a public affirmation and recognition that Gwynedd-Mercy is committed to excellence and provides a quality education that is built on the Mercy tradition and rooted in gospel values. Clearly, this information provides an objective measure of the success of our students for prospective parents."

Commitment to teaching: Crampsie said that she has always had a love for learning and that she developed a desire to instill that same love in children. "As an educator, you have an awesome opportunity to really impact the lives of the students entrusted to your care," she said. "As a Sister of Mercy, we bring the influence of an education that is rooted in Mercy values."

"We believe that the students before us today will become persons of influence in the future, and it is our hope that it will be an influence that is marked by Mercy values and rooted in justice and compassion."

Language and opportunity: Gwynedd-Mercy begins its world language program in kindergarten, Crampsie said. The program includes a half-year of French and Spanish for students in kindergarten through fifth grade for two periods per week. Sixth graders select French or Spanish for further study for two periods a week, and seventh and eighth graders study their selected language three times a week. "The earlier a child is introduced to a second language, the greater the chances are that the child will become proficient," Crampsie said. "Not only does the study of a second language develop an understanding of other cultures, it also creates an ability to communicate with more people, improve overall school performance, and enhance problem-solving skills."

What a colleague says: "As principal of Gwynedd-Mercy Academy for the past 11 years, Sister Anne Crampsie has empowered faculty and students to strive for excellence in a caring, learning environment which nurtures the whole child," said Kathy O'Neill, vice principal at Gwynedd-Mercy Academy Elementary.

"Through her leadership capacity, Sister Anne has challenged the school community, parents, students, teachers and trustees to recognize its shared responsibility to continue the legacy of Gwynedd-Mercy Academy."