



## News Release

For immediate release

### Students Celebrate High School Graduation through College Program

(Sault Ste. Marie, ON June 24, 2010)

Families, friends and guests of the School College Work Initiative (SCWI) program came together earlier this week at Sault College to celebrate the success of over thirty graduates.

“We are so proud of these students,” says Maeve Coccimiglio, one of the two dual credit teachers involved in the School College Connection Program. “The program directly contributes to the increased capacity of both school boards and the college to provide students with engaging programs and appropriate supports to ensure both secondary and post secondary success. Working together, schools and colleges can better inform students and parents of the wide range of college and apprenticeship programs and the knowledge and skills essential for success in such programs.”



(Left to right) Maeve Coccimiglio, teacher of School College Connection Program proudly presents Caceilia Trahan with her Ontario High School Diploma.

Since its inception in 2003, the SCWI program, in partnership with Sault College, the Algoma District School Board and the Huron Superior Catholic District School Board, provides a unique learning opportunity for students to work toward completing an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Students work in a classroom at Sault College and have the opportunity to enrol in college courses for dual credits (high school and college credits). The program ensures that students who are facing challenges in graduating from high school have greater access to more choice, with flexible options for customizing each student’s learning to individual interest, strengths and needs.

Graduate Caceilia Trahan received her Ontario Secondary School Diploma earlier this week. Through the program she received credits towards her studies at Sault College next year. When she stopped attending high school in her last year to take care of personal matters, she thought attaining a high school diploma was impossible. Trahan graduated with distinction, having maintained a 4.0 grade point average (above 80%) in all courses. "It's hard to be an adult student in high school; it's not designed for students who are responsible for a household. I didn't think it was possible for me to graduate; I was prepared to take a fifth year in high school but here I am. I've done a complete 360 from where I started. I don't even believe it yet," said Trahan when reflecting on her experience with the program.

Trahan heard about the program from a friend, and it motivated her. "I called the school and started the program all in the same day," she says looking back on the journey to make it to the College. "I didn't know where I was going with my life before this. The flexibility allowed me to work hard to support myself while achieving my high school diploma." She will be attending Sault College next year in the Peace and Conflict Studies program with the hopes of going to law school in the future. "It's nice to finally be proud of something. I'm starting to develop the Sault College pride," says Trahan. "If anyone is interested in this program, I would urge them to get started today. It was such a welcoming environment and the teachers will go the extra mile to make sure you succeed. It changed my life."

Colin Kirkwood, Dean of Technology and Skilled trades at Sault College is the College's representative for the SCWI program. "There are clear personal, social and economic benefits for students who continue their education/training beyond high school," states Kirkwood after reflecting on this past year. "For this reason, it is essential that secondary and college teachers and administrators provide engaging programs to help motivate students to achieve their potential. SCWI with representatives from colleges and boards in the province, have the capacity to assist colleges and boards in this essential work."

Congratulations to this year's graduating class. For more information on this program, please contact Maeve Coccimiglio at 705.759.2554, ext. 2851 or Katie Mohamed at ext. 2855.

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#### **About School College Connection Program**

Sault College, Algoma District School Board and the Huron Superior Catholic District School Board have teamed up to give students who have stopped attending secondary school and are within 6 credits of graduating an opportunity to attain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma in a College setting. Sault College, located in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario is one of 24 community colleges in Ontario. Visit our website at [www.saultcollege.ca](http://www.saultcollege.ca) for more information.

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