

WAGING PEACE

"When I looked at this group, I said to myself, What in heaven's name have you allowed yourself to walk into?"

—Edy Guy-François, principal of Caledonia Junior High



WAGING PEACE

At Caledonia Junior High—like at so many schools—students and teachers live in an environment of disrespect and potential danger. Enter Edy Guy-François, Caledonia's fifth principal in four years.

At first, Edy despairs. Then, drawing on her own experience as a kid headed for trouble, she resolves to change the school. Tough and uncompromising, Edy tempers her discipline with compassion. She comes down hard on kids who break the rules but also encourages a new peer mediation program, institutes monthly dances and celebrates with a wild winter carnival.

The results are tangible and nearly immediate. And then budget cuts threaten the gains.

Waging Peace looks beyond the sensational headlines on school violence to offer real solutions. The film shows the hard work that goes into turning a troubled school around. It lets us know how students *really* see school and demonstrates the positive effects of trusting teens and giving them some responsibility.

Waging Peace is the first of a series of two films. The second, **Learning Peace**, follows a year at Annapolis Elementary School, which instituted an anti-violence program.

Director: Teresa MacInnes

Producers: Peter d'Entremont (Triad Films), Kent Martin (NFB)

70 minutes

Order number: C9101 031



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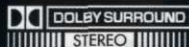
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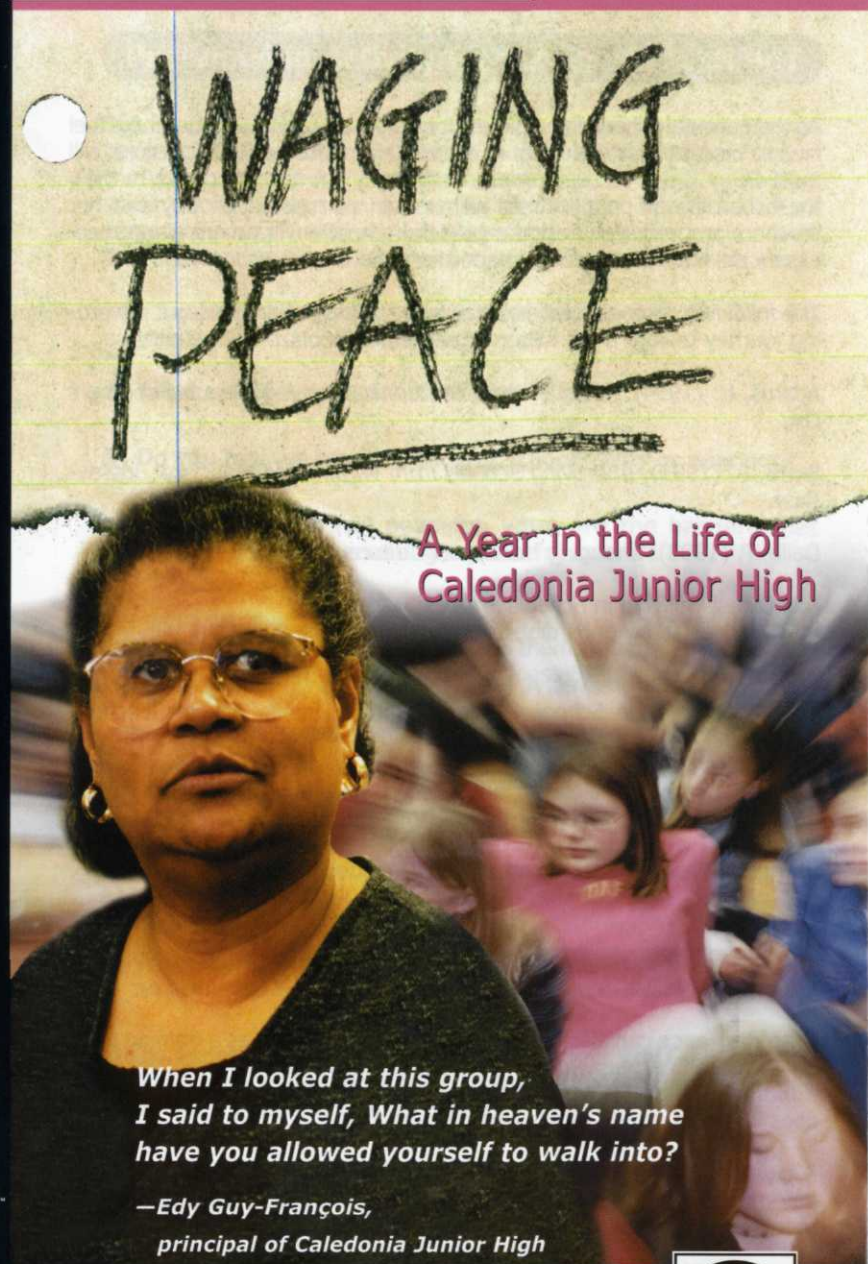
National Film Board of Canada
P.O. Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville
Montreal, Quebec H3C 3H5

Printed in Canada



VHS

C9101 031



WAGING PEACE

**A Year in the Life of
Caledonia Junior High**

*"When I looked at this group,
I said to myself, What in heaven's name
have you allowed yourself to walk into?"*

—Edy Guy-François,
principal of Caledonia Junior High



A National Film Board of Canada Release

Introduction

Waging Peace describes how Caledonia Junior High in Nova Scotia struggled to create a peaceful environment—one where both students and teachers feel safe and valued. Achieving that goal took leaders with the emotional strength, vision and commitment to change the school's culture into one that shuns violence, intimidation, and harassment in favour of harmony and an appreciation for diversity. This was not easy, as school culture—by its very nature—works relentlessly to maintain the status quo.

How would Caledonia principal Edy Guy-François begin to transform a culture of alienation and isolation into one of peace and harmony? Her solution was to provide a psychological safety net for teachers and students—allowing them to find their inner voices, reflect on their feelings of isolation, and create solutions. In the process, Edy began to challenge assumptions and help her teachers decipher their school's culture.

Waging Peace offers hope for other schools pursuing the dream of creating a peaceful and harmonious environment. It provides a model of positive change, but is not meant to be a recipe—as each situation offers its own challenges. The road map to a better world will vary from school to school. This video will assist administrators in getting the process started.

Pre-Viewing Activity for School Staff

The school administration is in the best position to make change happen. They can articulate a vision, acquire the resources to realize the vision, and provide emotional reassurance for teachers as they wade through unfamiliar waters. In the process, the entire school community must construct and reconstruct a learning environment that is accepting of new ideas and that embraces the ideal of peace.

Prior to showing the video, school staff should be given the following questions to reflect on and discuss:

- a) **What would a peaceful school look like?**
- b) **Do you feel we have a peaceful school? Why or why not?**
- c) **If our school is not peaceful, what are the barriers that prevent us from becoming a peaceful school?**

The administration must present these questions in a way that will encourage everyone to reflect deeply on them. You can also use information gleaned from classroom discussions at this time.

Post-Viewing Activity for School Staff

After staff have viewed **Waging Peace**, they can reflect on and discuss the following questions:

- a) **What did you think of the video?**
- b) **What were the most relevant parts of the video for you as an educator?**
- c) **The principal of Caledonia Junior High School, Edy Guy-François, provides a vision and a clear course of action for making her school a peaceful one. Is this a priority for our school?**
- d) **If so, what are we doing to realize this goal? If not, why not?**
- e) **Who would be the potential leaders or supporters of a peaceful school initiative? Consider staff, students, parents, board members, community members, police, health-care workers, and anyone else you can think of.**
- f) **Where do we begin? List the starting steps.**

The Next Step

As the peaceful school plan unfolds, it is important that staff members feel free to discuss their thoughts in a non-judgmental way. Discussions will most likely focus on the barriers to change, but it is important to view these barriers as opportunities rather than as roadblocks. Edy and her teachers proceeded to design a peaceful school environment where necessary risks were taken in a supportive milieu.

The following resources will assist school staff in the arduous but rewarding journey toward the creation of peaceful schools:

Adams, H. (1994). *Peace in the Classroom*. Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers Ltd.

Barth, R. (1991). *Improving Schools from Within*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dalin, P. (1993). *Changing the School Culture*. London: Cassell.

Eric Digest-Bullying in Schools
<http://ericecece.org/pubs/digests/1997/banks97.html>

Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. (1991). *What's Worth Fighting for? Working Together for Your School*. Toronto: Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation.

LaMarsh Center for Violence and Conflict Resolution-Research Projects
<http://www.yorku.ca/lamarsh>

League of Peaceful Schools <http://www.leagueofpeacefulschools.ns.ca>

Teacher Preparatory Programs

Waging Peace can also be used at the university level as a training vehicle for future teachers and administrators. It is particularly useful as a lens through which to look at the question: What is school culture and how does it impact on the things we do?

Discussion could focus on the ways in which school culture can have a detrimental effect or a positive influence on the creation of peaceful classrooms and peaceful schools.

The following selected sources are recommended for nurturing a professional dialogue:

Conley, S., Bacharach, S., and Bauer, S. (1989). "The School Work Environment and Teacher Career Dissatisfaction." *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 25 (1), 58-81.

Waging Peace

Director/ Writer:

Teresa MacInnes

Cinematographer:

Kent Nason

Sound Recordist:

Arthur McKay

Editor:

Peter Giffen

Original Music:

Steven Naylor

Narrator:

Tara Doyle

Producers:

Kent Martin

(NFB)

Peter d'Entremont

(Triad Films)

Executive Producer:

Sally Bochner

Order Number:

C9101 031

Running Time:

70 minutes

Elmore, R.F. (1987). "Reform and the Culture of Authority in Schools." *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 23 (4), 60-78.

Goodson, I. (1992). "Studying the Teacher's Life and Work" In J. Smyth (ed.), *Critical Discourses on Teacher Development*. Toronto: OISE Press.

Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers' Work and Culture in the Postmodern Age*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Rosenholtz, S. (1989). *Teachers Workplace*. New York: Longman.

Storr, A. (1994). *Solitude*. London: HarperCollins.

As they reflect, students will begin to explore their own assumptions and formulate hypotheses on those factors that could potentially thwart or support their goal of creating peaceful school environments. This would be the greatest lesson that our universities could impart to those who will eventually teach our children.

Additional Resources from the NFB

Learning Peace (2002, Order # C9101 205): The companion film to **Waging Peace**, about how an elementary school that has fostered a climate of peace struggles to maintain it.

ShowPeace Series (2000, Order # 193C0000 090): Bestselling three-part series of humorous animated films on conflict resolution.

Colour Blind (1999, Order # C9199 233): Bestselling anti-racism video for teens.

Taking Appropriate Actions Series (1998, Order # 193C9198 003) Bestselling two-video package that addresses inappropriate behaviour and sexual harassment in schools.

Someone To Talk To (1996, Order # C9196 063): A portrait of peer mediation and mediators at two high schools.

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