



## SACRED HEART CYO “SPIRIT AWARD” PRESENTED TO MANCINI and TAGLIENTI

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8<sup>th</sup> Grade Boy and Girl Recognized with Annual Award

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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NORTH MERRICK, N.Y., October 14, 2007 – It was announced today after the annual CYO “Welcome Back” Mass that recent 8th-grade graduates of the program, Kaitlyn Mancini and Michael Taglienti, had been named recipients of the annual Sacred Heart CYO “Spirit Award”. The award is presented by the parish’s CYO board in recognition of the contribution of Marianne Collins, a Merrick resident and CYO board member, who is currently participating in her 46th year of service to Nassau-Suffolk (NY) CYO.

The “Spirit Award” annually recognizes the boy and the girl in the Sacred Heart CYO program who best exemplify Mrs. Collins’ principles of teamwork, sportsmanship and humanity in the pursuit of athletic excellence. Other students nominated for the award included Kayla Kovalsky, Katelynn Brown and the entire 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls basketball team.

Finalists for the award were nominated by their 8<sup>th</sup> grade coaches in the Sacred Heart CYO program. CYO President Jim Johnson said, “This is the highest honor in our program because it recognizes those principles that we hold dear. All of the nominees and their families should be extremely proud to have been considered for this wonderful recognition. Their coaches also need to be commended for nurturing these valuable characteristics. We are blessed by the way these young athletes represent our program and our community.”

The girls’ coaches had a difficult time singling out just one member of their teams to be recognized for the award. Veteran track coach Susan Carroll said, “this is one of the most talented groups of girls that I have ever had.” Basketball coach John Gorton echoed those feelings. “The girls consistently represented the parish in the most positive of lights... Several officials commented on the demeanor of the girls, which I always felt was high praise.”

Carroll singled out Kaitlyn Mancini because of her passion for track. The coach noted all the extracurricular options that young athletes have today but noted that Mancini just loves to run. She also happens to be quite good at it! She advanced to the Long Island Championship Meet this year, earning a gold and silver medal. Her coach noted, “Kaitlyn was a great teammate and role model to the younger runners. She always had a smile on her face and a sweet disposition, yet she is a very tough competitor.”

Gorton coached Mancini in basketball and added, “She plays and practices with a passion and joy that reminds you what athletics should be about for young people, not a job or a chore, but a celebration.”

Mancini is a student at Calhoun High School.

Likewise, the winner of the boy’s “Spirit Award,” Michael Taglienti had characteristics to be admired. Nominated by Chris Melnychuk, coach of the boy’s basketball team, Taglienti was touted for his efforts both on and off the court. “He was the epitome of a good teammate,” the coach said, “courteous, considerate and hard working. Players like Michael are the reason that I enjoy coaching.”

The coach said that Taglienti really worked hard on improving his shooting skills and that directly led to better results for the team, including a 3-game run in the playoffs. Melnychuk added, “When the team did lose he displayed good sportsmanship to our opponents... and he remained upbeat and positive throughout the year.” Taglienti is a student at Chaminade High School.

Both Mancini and Taglienti have had their names engraved on the “Spirit Award” plaque, which is placed on permanent display at Sacred Heart School. On behalf of the CYO Board, Johnson also presented each an award for their personal display.

### **About Marianne Collins**

In 2007, Mrs. Collins is marking her 46th year of working with young people on Long Island athletic fields. She is currently the CYO Support Coordinator at the Office of Youth Ministry at the Diocese of Rockville Centre. She serves as Coaches Liaison to the Nassau-Suffolk CYO program at the Diocese. Her responsibilities include the organization of clinics, the preparation of coaches and the instilling of spirituality in the youth program.

In 1961, she began her coaching career, focusing on CYO girls basketball, volleyball and softball programs. Five years later, she became a sports official, and has continued in that capacity for the last 40 years. From 1969 through 1980, she served as a physical education teacher at Sacred Heart School. Her

tenure has also included coaching stints at Our Lady of Mercy Academy, Molloy College and Nassau Community College.

Mrs. Collins and her husband, Doug, are the proud parents of four children and grandparents of five.

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