

# At the head of their class

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EDUCATION REPORTER

High achievers, for sure. But among the top graduating high school students in Greater Toronto — three are actually perfect, their Grade 12 averages sitting at 100 per cent.

That's no easy feat. But on top of that, all say they still find time to play sports or take music lessons, volunteer or have part-time jobs.

In short, they have a life.

"I've taught gifted courses in the past, and the stereotype of the gifted student is the nerd with thick glasses . . . and no social skills," says Jim Greenlaw, dean of the faculty of education at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and a former high school English teacher.

"But in my experience, they are gifted in music, athletics, with a good sense of humour and widely read — I'm not surprised that their accomplishments go far beyond academics.

The 100 per cent scholars in Greater Toronto are Jana Cmorejova, of Etobicoke's Bishop Allen Academy, Dhruv Nayyar, of Brampton's Turner Penton Secondary School and Simon Babakhani, of Glenforest Secondary School in Mississauga.

Both Nayyar and Babakhani are students in Peel District School Board, which has not in recent history boasted two students with perfect averages.

(Coincidentally, last year's top student in Greater Toronto was also a Glenforest student, and she too earned a 100 per cent average.)

"It is amazing," said Janet McDougald, chair of the Peel board.

"I don't know how they do that."

Both Peel students took the international baccalaureate program, which is more rigorous than the regular curriculum.

Four of Cmorejova's credits were advanced placement courses, which again are tougher than traditional credits. She moved to Canada four years ago from Slovakia.

All the students' averages are based on their top six courses, which they use for university entrance. The students profiled for the Toronto public and Halton Catholic boards are among the top three graduates, as those with the highest average declined to be interviewed.

Greenlaw said high schoolers' grades have inflated over the years — "an 85 in 1985 became a 95 in 1995" — but "it's the rare person" who can earn 100 in six courses. While high school averages might have been lower in the past, so too were university entrance requirements.

Greenlaw said it's difficult to earn perfect marks in courses like English or history, as the marking is more subjective than in mathematics courses.

## JANA CMOREJOVA, 17

**School:** Bishop Allen Academy, Etobicoke (Toronto Catholic)

**Average:** 100%

**Top marks:** 100 in religion, psychology, calculus, data management, functions, biology, chemistry

**Favourite class:** Chemistry. "I like the application of math to real-life situations, and I like labs."

**Least favourite:** English. "I am not that creative and we had to do a lot of creative poetry and stuff like that, which I'm not good at." (She still earned a 97)

**Homework:** Three hours a night, plus weekends

**Extracurricular:** Part-time jobs at Mandarin restaurant and the school board, plays violin, volunteer for Easter Seals fundraiser and at school

**Favourite music:** "I like every type of music, but mostly jazz."

**Facebook:** "I check it every day."

**Free time:** "I like to go out with my friends to parties and concerts."

**Academic drive:** "I like to learn new things, I guess that's what I'm good at."

**This fall:** McMaster, health sciences

**What classmates don't know:** "I watch a lot of TV, usually a couple of hours after doing homework . . . all the medical shows, *House* mostly, or *Bones*."



# Perfection is satisfaction for young scholar

## Bishop Allen student gets straight 100s

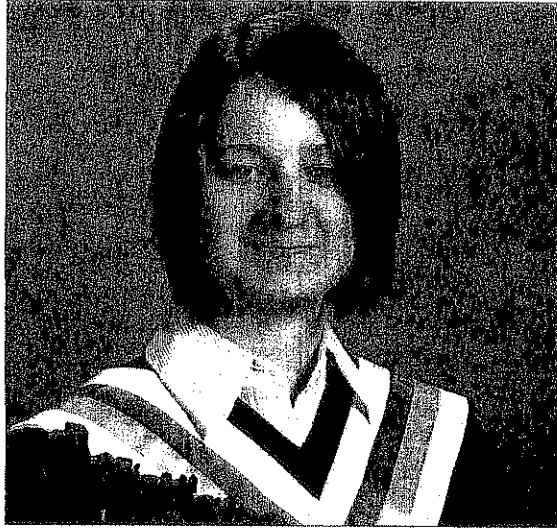
BY SHEILA DABU  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO  
It was a perfect year for Jana Cmorejova. The 17-year-old Bishop Allen Academy High School student scored the best marks in the Toronto Catholic District School Board, earning a perfect 100 per cent in all six of her Grade 12 subjects.

Cmorejova credits hard work and a passion for education as the keys to her success.

"I want to make a difference somehow in life, to make the best of what I can do and be the best I can be," she said. "I believe that's going to happen to me through education and university."

Cmorejova says her commitment to education brought her to Ottawa with a group of 40 Bishop Allen Academy students. The



Bishop Allen Academy graduate Jana Cmorejova pulled down a perfect 100 per cent in all six of her Grade 12 classes. (Photo courtesy Jana Cmorejova)

group delivered some 1,000 letters from Catholic elementary and

high school students in Toronto calling for adequate elementary educational facilities for the Ontario native community of Attawapiskat. They dropped off the letters at the office of Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl on Parliament Hill.

She said she was able to relate to the importance of having a suitable learning environment because her own school dealt with moldy portables earlier in the year.

"You can't be motivated to be the best you can be if you're

not in a facility where you can study normally," she said.

The Attawapiskat Education Authority has claimed high toxicity levels in one of its schools as a result of a 30-year-old diesel spill underneath J.R. Nagoski School in northern Ontario. The school launched an Ottawa National Day of Action, calling on the federal government to build a new school.

But it hasn't all been about studying for Cmorejova. Her

advice to fellow students? Have a balanced life. She has been a tutor for Bishop Allen students and played violin at school Masses.

Cmorejova, who juggled school and a part-time job at a fast food restaurant, also volunteered in a 24-hour relay to raise funds and awareness for Easter Seals Ontario.

This September, Cmorejova will be attending McMaster University with an entrance scholarship. She plans to study health sciences and pursue a career in medical research, with a focus on neuroscience.

Academic success runs in the family. Cmorejova's brother, Peter, earned the highest average in the Toronto Catholic District School Board last year with a 99.33 per cent.

Although they worked independently in high school, Jana says her brother helped her when she had problems with homework and gave her pointers.

Peter, who just completed his first year of health science at McMaster University says Jana's success is due to her diligence in studying for long hours. He said there was a healthy competition between the two in comparing grades but they always supported each other.

Bishop Allen Academy principal Adrian Mora said he's not surprised that the top student for the second year in a row is from the school of about 1,500 students. The high school, he said, attracts some high achieving students because of its con-

gregated advanced placement program.

"It creates an environment that's very conducive to healthy competitiveness and the pursuit of academic excellence," he said.

Students with the second and third highest averages at the Toronto Catholic board — Ania Ochocinski (99.83 per cent) and Olga Paprotska (99.33 per cent) — also came from Bishop Allen Academy.

Top three  
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Academy