

THE UNESCO AWARD: A tribute to QDPE volunteers

By Roger Passmore

CAHPER's Quality Daily Physical Education program was honoured this past December by receiving the United Nation's Economic, Social and Cultural Organization's award for "distinguished service to physical education and sport," an international award conferred every two years by UNESCO. It was the first time a Canadian program won the award. A bronze medallion and accompanying certificate was presented to Sue Cousineau, Executive Director of CAHPER, and I in Paipa, Colombia.

The award is conferred every two years upon institutions and individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of physical education and sport for all, both nationally and internationally.

Canada is one of the few countries in the world to promote physical education through an advocacy initiative. Australia and the United States, however, have some similar activities. What makes Canada's program unique is the development of strong working partnerships with key stakeholders such as Fitness Canada, provincial and territorial education ministries, national health and education associations, provincial physical education programs, QDPE provincial networks and community action teams. Through these partnerships, the QDPE message has been delivered to thousands of politicians, school administrators, teachers, parents and the general public since the program began seven years ago.

The QDPE program was initiated to promote the benefits and need for

quality physical education on a daily basis for all Canadian school children. Key components of the program are raising awareness, networking, developing leaders, lobbying, evaluation and research, and recognition.

In seven years, the program has met with encouraging success. More than 90 per cent of Canadians polled

collectively for more time for, and a quality commitment to, physical education. Roberta Bondar, a Canadian astronaut, physician and researcher, has agreed to be the honorary chairperson for the coalition.

Some coalition members, such as the Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Chiropractic Association, and the Canadian Medical Association, have started projects to promote QDPE through their networks.

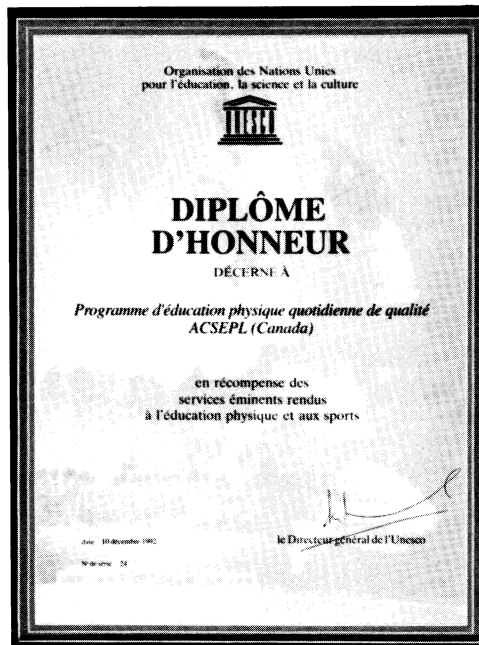
Through CAHPER, a national network of 500 leaders has been formed to deliver the QDPE message in every Canadian province.

The UNESCO award is a tribute to the hundreds of volunteers who have worked hard to further their vision of quality, daily physical education programs. It is also a tribute to the early founders of the QDPE movement on CAHPER's 1979 School Physical Activity Programs committee.

Without the leadership of the early QDPE visionaries, the dedication and commitment of the current volunteers, and without the support of the national association partners, the UNESCO award would not have been possible.

The author

Roger Passmore is the outgoing director of QDPE. The former directors included Ian Craighton and Dan Cooney, who is currently CAHPER's president. Kirk Bamford, former QDPE chairman, steps in as the new QDPE director this month.



by Gallup in 1990 believe that physical education is an important component of a balanced curriculum and 85 per cent believe physical education should be offered to all grade levels.

The percentage of Canadian schools offering QDPE to at least some of their students has reached 37 per cent, while 18 per cent of schools have developed plans to increase the amount of physical education being taught. Also, more than 50 national and provincial agencies now endorse QDPE. In February, 14 national health and education associations formed the Canadian Coalition for Quality Daily Physical Education to lobby individually and