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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

O'HARA TEACHER WINS NATIONAL AWARD

On Tuesday, April 18, Leslie Jones of O'Hara Catholic School received the 2017 NCEA **Lead. Learn. Proclaim.** award from the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) for her dedication and commitment to excellence.

The annual award honors educators who have demonstrated a strong Catholic educational philosophy as well as exceptional ability, dedication and results. The award recipients, chosen from the more than 150,000 educators who teach in the nation's Catholic elementary and secondary schools, were recognized during the annual NCEA 2017 Convention & Expo in St. Louis, Missouri this past week.

"Teachers are the backbone of our Catholic educational system, providing day-to-day instruction in faith and academics for students at over 6,000 Catholic elementary and secondary schools across the nation," said James Pavlacka, director of Leadership Development at NCEA. "The excellence that these teachers display is an inspiration to all of us who work in Catholic education."

As part of the award presentation, Leslie was acknowledged as follows, "**Leslie is captivating, authentic, passionate and most of all, faith-filled. NCEA honors you, Leslie, for your authentic witness that is an encouragement for others as they move forward on their own faith journey.**"

"I am completely humbled and honored to receive the Lead. Learn. Proclaim. award this year," said Mrs. Jones. **"I give all glory to God for blessing me with the opportunity to proclaim His good news to the O'Hara Catholic School students and families. I am beyond blessed to work at O'Hara and share about God and our Catholic faith. Beyond receiving the award, the (NCEA) conference was amazing and I am excited to bring back new and fresh ideas to O'Hara!"**

Leslie Jones is the Campus Minister at O'Hara Catholic School, where she offers her skills as the Religion Coordinator, instructor, retreat leader, liturgist, middle school youth group minister, and facilitator of a Mass 101 class designed for families interested in learning more about Catholicism. Her outreach has strengthened the bond between the school and the family, ensured the Catholic identity of the school, and enhanced the religion curriculum for every grade. Mrs. Jones has fostered relationships with the community to establish school-wide service learning opportunities that enable students to achieve the motto of O'Hara Catholic School: *Enter to Learn. Go Forth to Serve.*

Mrs. Jones was born and raised Catholic and attends St. Mary Catholic Church. She is the Life Teen minister at St. Mary and leads a group of 100+ students on a faith-filled pilgrimage to the Steubenville San Diego Conference each summer. She has worked at O'Hara for 10.5 years and is known for ending most classes and assemblies with the phrase "**God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.**"

O'Hara principal, Tammy Conway, applauds Mrs. Jones on her well-deserved award, saying: ***"The NCEA conference was amazing this year! It truly is a humbling experience to gather with 8,500 other Catholic educators around the country to learn and grow in our own faith. This year, our school was honored with one of our own being recognized in the Lead. Learn. Proclaim. awards dinner. Our school is blessed to have Mrs. Jones' authentic love of our Catholic faith touching the lives of each and every student in our building. Leslie openly shares her faith with our entire community and her retreats and faith leadership have changed lives. The O'Hara community is blessed by her presence."***

Mrs. Jones is the third O'Hara faculty member to receive such an award from the NCEA. Mrs. Maryanne Obersinner (6th grade) received the award in 2009, and Mrs. April Demers (PreK) received the award in 2015.

O'Hara Catholic School serves over 500 children from the greater Eugene/Springfield area. O'Hara provides a high-quality education and a faith-filled, nurturing environment for students in grades Pre-School through 8th.

School Motto: *Enter to Learn. Go Forth to Serve.*

Mission Statement: *O'Hara Catholic School, as an instrument of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church, is dedicated to developing the whole child in a secure and nurturing environment. In partnership with and as an extension of the family, we encourage our students to strive for excellence, to be life-long learners, to demonstrate strong Catholic values, and to generously serve God and others.*

School Philosophy: *O'Hara Catholic School provides a high-quality education to elementary and middle school children. It is the responsibility of the faculty and staff to assist the parents in their role as the primary educators of their children. We offer a core program of Roman Catholic faith development, inspiring students to model the life of Christ.*

O'Hara's student-focused environment is dedicated to educating the whole child and fostering spiritual, academic, physical, and social growth. The O'Hara community is committed to preparing our students to be responsible contributing members of our global community in service to others. The Christian morals and intellectual foundation we provide enable students to respond to God's call with their whole hearts, minds and souls and to love their neighbor as themselves (from Matthew 22:36 – 39).

To learn more about O'Hara, please visit our website: www.oharaschool.org