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### **POPE JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC ACADEMY STUDENTS PERFORM FOR PRESIDENT OF IRELAND AT IRISH AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP BREAKFAST**

**DORCHESTER**—Thirteen students of the Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy performed at a breakfast held in honor of the President of Ireland on Tuesday, May 28, 2009. The breakfast was sponsored by the Irish American Partnership (IAP).

The students, who attend the Dorchester Central Campus of the Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy, were anxious to show their violin talents to the foreign dignitary. "Our young violinists have been practicing and preparing for this event for quite some time," said Mary Swanton, Fine Arts Director at the Academy. "We are thankful to the Irish American Partnership and to President McAleese for providing us with such a special opportunity."

The students surprised President McAleese by playing "Green Glens of Antrim," a song from the President's hometown in Belfast County. The President responded by explaining the origin of the song and reciting the lyrics to the students.

"We are so honored that our talented student musicians were invited to play for President McAleese," stated Mary Russo, Regional Director of the Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy. "We have a wonderful music and fine arts program at the Academy and this performance was a perfect example of that. President McAleese was clearly impressed by what the children could do."

In addition to Swanton and Russo, also in attendance were the Archdiocese of Boston Secretary of Education Dr. Mary Grassa O'Neill, Associate Superintendent Jim Walsh, President of the IAP Joe Leary, and Irish Ambassador to the United States Michael Collins.

For more information about this story or the Academy, please contact Nat Connors at 617-265-0019 x 7006 or [nat.connors@popejp2catholicacademy.org](mailto:nat.connors@popejp2catholicacademy.org).

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Students of the Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy with Academy Fine Arts Director Mary Swanton, Archdiocese of Boston Secretary of Education Dr. Mary Grassa O'Neill, Dr. Martin McAleese, President of Ireland Mary McAleese, Archdiocese of Boston Associate Superintendent Jim Walsh, Regional Director of the Academy Mary Russo, and Principal Thomas Vennoch.