

Connecting with New Brunswick's aboriginal youth

In June 2011, the New Brunswick division of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award launched the First Nations Action Plan, which aims at bringing The Award to the province's 15 aboriginal communities. This initiative was made possible by the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program offered by Joint Economic Development Inc. (JEDI), a First Nations organization that helps create jobs in aboriginal communities; at the same time, the division has hired a First Nations Award Field officer, Sky Perley.

The project aims to better serve the aboriginal communities by bringing awareness and support to those who pursue The Award. According to Brian Cornish, Executive Director of New Brunswick division, "hiring a

First Nations field officer to work closely with the aboriginal community allows us to reach youth that we were previously unable to engage". Sky, a member of the Tobique First Nation community, has his work cut out for him. When the project launched in June 2011 there was only one participant from the aboriginal community; but within six months enrolment increased to 20.

For Sky it's about getting out into the aboriginal communities and schools and connecting directly with youth. "Many First Nations youth are already doing activities that entail achieving The Award. We need to change their mindset to show them that not only will they be giving back to their community, but The Award will help them develop

the tools to become the next generation of leaders".

The success of the First Nations Action Plan is firmly rooted in its vast support network, which includes the private sector, First Nations organizations, and provincial government. The Hon. Graydon Nicholas, Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, an Honorary Patron and also a champion of The Award, is eager to see the outcome of this new project. "Because of my Aboriginal heritage, I am proud of the work being done", says Mr. Nicholas, who is also a member of the Tobique First Nation Community. "It is inspiring to witness the leadership and confidence The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is building in these young people".



The Honorable Graydon Nicholas, Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, with Award field officer Sky Perley, both of whom are members of the Tobique First Nation community.



His Excellency David Johnston poses with Award Achievers (L-R) Sarah Walter, Benjamin Walter and Rebecca Walter at the reception in Calgary.

Governor General salutes recipients' talent and determination

On February 14 at the Fairmont Palliser hotel in Calgary, 40 participants from around the province gathered to receive the most prestigious Award level from His Excellency, the Rt. Hon. David Johnston, Governor General of Canada. The next evening at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, the Governor General presented 115 Award achievers with their Gold certificate that for many is the culmination of 18 months of dedication, perseverance and leadership.

After presenting the 155 Gold Awards over two days, the Governor General remarked that "The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a wonderful tribute to the talent and determination of youth," and the recognition of this honour means that they "are now part of a massive network of

remarkable Canadians".

Since being appointed Governor General in 2010, H.E. David Johnston has presided over seven Gold Award ceremonies and presented more than 445 Awards across the country. During these recent ceremonies, he told recipients and guests that it has been a privilege to meet the young people who pursue The Award and added: "Whenever we see young people, we also see hope and the desire to change things for the better. And in fact, you are already making an impact on our country. That is what brought you here today."

His Excellency remarked on how the youth of this country are a vital source of ideas and renewal for our society. In his closing remarks he told this group of recent achievers



Gold Award recipient Yuwen Wang poses with HE David Johnston as she accepts her certificate at the recent ceremony in Vancouver.

that "seeing you here today and hearing of your accomplishments, I know that our confidence is well-placed... your energy and your contributions are essential to building a smarter, more caring Canada".



HRH The Earl of Wessex with CFB Chairman Hartley Richardson.

Help us empower Canada's young people

A Message from Hartley T. Richardson, Chairman of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Charter for Business

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is extremely proud of the successes achieved by the multitude of young people around our country who have participated in The Award program.

To date, more than 500,000 young Canadians have benefitted from the confidence, perseverance, responsibility, and commitment to service fostered by The Award. Most exciting from my perspective has been the dramatic increase (17% since the Charter's founding) in participation by those young people considered at risk - inner-city youth, aboriginal youth, young offenders, northern and rural youth, and young people with disabilities.

The Charter's commitment to ensure access to The Award regardless of circumstances, abilities, or geography has impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands of youth across Canada, and the communities in which they live. A recent McKinsey & Company study reported that 91% of Award participants continue volunteer service after their Award is complete.

However, our success to date must not distract us from all the work still to be done. Communities all across Canada are asking for the support and resources required to actively engage their youth in the challenge of The Award.

Currently, 60 generous corporations and individuals have joined me as Founding Partners of the Charter for Business - contributing more than \$17 million to increase awareness of, and provide barrier-free access to, the proven benefits of The Award.

In 2012, I ask you to consider joining our efforts to develop the full potential of Canada's young people. I can assure you from personal experience that it is a truly rewarding experience.

Later this year, the Chairman of the Award's International Council, HRH The Prince Edward, will visit Canada to see The Award in action and thank the Charter for Business for its critical support. I look forward to introducing him to the remarkable cross-section of Canadian leaders who make up The Award family.

About The Award

"The Award transforms not only the young people who participate in it, but also the communities they live in."

Peter Melanson, National President of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is an exciting personal challenge for young Canadians. It is a balanced, non-competitive programme of voluntary activities which encourages:

- Personal discovery and growth
- Self-reliance
- Perseverance
- Responsibility
- Service to the community

Since it began in 1956, The Award has developed into one of the world's most prestigious youth programmes. More than 130 countries now offer The Award, and seven million young people have taken part. The Award is amongst the highest accolades a young Canadian can receive, and some 37,000 participate each year. In Canada, The Award has been operating since 1963 under the patronage of the Governor General and led by thousands of highly motivated volunteers. It is governed by a voluntary National Board of Directors and operates across the country through Divisional Offices and voluntary Regional Boards of Directors.

HOW DOES THE AWARD WORK?

All those between the age of 14 and 25 can participate, regardless of their circumstances or abilities. The criteria for achieving an Award are based upon individual effort and improvement. To achieve an Award, each participant must complete four sections:

- Community service helps develop a sense of personal and community responsibility.
- Skills developed by pursuing and persisting in an interest, develop creativity and personal discovery.
- Physical recreation promotes good health and a sense of achievement and satisfaction.
- Adventurous Journey cultivates a spirit of adventure, teamwork, and an appreciation of the environment.

There are 3 levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Young people participate either as individuals or through organizations such as schools, police services and youth groups.

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD IS ACHIEVABLE BY ALL

- 5% of participants are youth with disabilities
- 17% of participants are youth-at-risk
- 72% of participants join The Award via a group affiliation such as high school, Cadets, Scouts and Girl Guides
- Over 20,000 young people are pursuing The Award via secondary schools, universities and college
- 35% of young people enrolled in The Award are 14 years of age pursuing the Bronze level

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