

## An enduring partnership

### The Royal Bank's commitment to Canadian youth

RBC has been a supporter of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award since the Award came to Canada in 1963. Most recently, the bank has renewed its financial commitment to the Charter for Business, the initiative that ensures the benefits of The Award are available to at-risk youth across the country. We asked Gordon M. Nixon, President and CEO of RBC, about the bank's partnership with The Award.



**Gordon M. Nixon – President & CEO of RBC and a Founding Partner of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Charter for Business**

**Q:** What attributes of the Award have led RBC to be such a longstanding partner?

**A:** Personally, I am impressed by a few aspects of the Award: its commitment to encouraging and recognizing the contributions that youth make to the improvement of our communities, and its commitment to ensuring the business community is an active participant in the development of our youth. Too often, business and civic leaders are caught complaining about the lack of engagement of youth in community, but The Duke of Edinburgh's Award helps bring these leaders together with young people.

**Q:** What role does the business community have to play in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award?

**A:** I've always believed that business leaders have a responsibility to improve their communities and create a foundation for prosperity. Generally speaking, business leaders are privileged to have a platform from which to speak and a position from which to contribute, and to waste such an opportunity to make a difference is a

disservice to their organizations and their communities.

As a partnership between The Award Programme and the business community, The Charter for Business is making a difference by funding the expansion of The Award's work with disadvantaged young Canadians in five segments: inner-city youth, young offenders, Aboriginal youth, young people with disabilities and northern/rural youth. Since the Charter for Business was established, one in six of the Award's participants are from at-risk communities across Canada.

**Q:** The Award Programme's four components (Community Service, Skills, Physical Recreation, and Expeditions) are designed to develop self-confidence, perseverance, initiative and teamwork. As an employer, how are these skills valued?

**A:** Teamwork, integrity, self-confidence and perseverance are all characteristics that can help provide a foundation for young people to succeed in business and in life, and they are also the factors that most often define successful organizations. These qualities also align very closely with our own core values of teamwork, integrity, service, responsibility and diversity.

**Q:** Part of RBC's latest partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a programme designed to promote the Award's expansion within Canada's aboriginal communities. Why is this focus important to RBC?

**A:** This focus is closely aligned with what we're doing at RBC — working with Aboriginal communities and their leaders to help create economic opportunities that benefit not only Aboriginal peoples, but the Canadian economy as a whole. Like all youth, Aboriginal youth have tremendous potential to enhance our communities and make our country richer in so many ways, but for a variety of reasons, it has been difficult to reach and engage Aboriginal youth. I think the Award programme is a big step forward to engaging these young people and a good example of providing opportunities to make a difference.

## A message from The National President, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Peter Melanson

employees who dedicate countless hours. It is these individuals who make The Award such a unique organization and make me proud to have the opportunity to work with them on a national level. I would like to extend a warm welcome to some new faces on our National Board; Jim Kershaw, British Columbia & Yukon District President; Andre Lepage, Quebec President; Toby Barnes, Newfoundland & Labrador President; Jeff Cook, our National Treasurer, as well as Tony Lacavera and Lou Gizzarelli, who join us as Directors-at-Large.

I would also like to thank all our donors for their continued support. Congratulations to the three outstanding Gold Award Achievers from Canada who were honoured in London, England as part of the Peter Cruddas Social Innovation Initiative. It is stories like these that make me look forward to the years ahead and all we will accomplish together.



**HRH The Prince Philip congratulates and hands out Gold Award Certificates to achievers in Toronto on July 5th, 2010.**

PHOTO: GRANT MARTIN PHOTOGRAPHY

## A golden moment

### HRH The Prince Philip braves blackout to meet Award winners

Some participants had been waiting years for this moment, and it was well worth the wait. In a grand ballroom of the Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Toronto, 120 young people surrounded by family and friends eagerly awaited the arrival of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

The ceremony got underway as His Royal Highness, Gold Award Achievers and guests were welcomed by Ontario's Lieutenant-Governor, The Honourable David C. Onley.

But 10 minutes in, the lights in the ballroom flickered and the room was plunged into darkness. A power outage that affected the downtown core caused a minor disruption as gasps echoed around the room. Lights or not, the ceremony carried on, with HRH The Duke of Edinburgh walking from group to group, presenting Gold Awards and chatting with participants, their parents and guests.

The Gold Award is the highest accolade a young Canadian can receive; this ceremony is

the crowning moment of their achievement, the culmination of 18 months or more of hard work. Gold Award ceremonies occur in Canada only a few times a year and are presided over by a member of The Royal Family or The Governor General. With the 2010 Royal Visit to Canada, we were fortunate to have The Patron and Founder of The Award present and congratulate these young achievers upon receiving their prestigious Gold Award as they set goals and challenged themselves.

## Social innovation in action



**Peter Cruddas (seated) with Gold Award social innovators at the showcase event in London (L-R) Rob Aronson and Alex Shipillo from Canada and Judy Chesire from Kenya.**

For the past year the International Award has been on a global search for social innovators. In early June their search came to an end as eleven Gold Award Achievers from around the world met in London, England at a showcase event for The Peter Cruddas Social Innovation Initiative.

The initiative recognizes participants who demonstrate enterprise and who have used The Award Programme to benefit a specific sector of society. In recognition of these individ-

uals' commitment to changing the lives of others, they were presented with certificates by HRH The Earl of Wessex. The showcase was designed to help these innovators upscale their projects and build a long-term plan for increasing social innovation through The Award. Of the 11 candidates, we congratulate these three Gold Award holders from Canada:

Miles 'Rob' Aronson – Alberta. Rob started a project called 'Spread the Love' which facilitates and encourages groups

to feed the hungry through the simple act of sandwich-making.

Alex Shipillo – British Columbia. Alex started 'Impact, Youth Canada and The Micro-credit Competition', which provides young entrepreneurs with the tools and advice to succeed.

Ryan Hreljac – Ontario. Ryan started a project called 'Ryan's Well' which brings clean water to poor villages in Africa.

As part of the London event, three participants (two of whom were our own Alex and Rob) had the opportunity to meet with Peter Cruddas to share their stories and hopes for the future. They also received some tips from Peter on how to become a successful entrepreneur. After the meeting, Rob and Alex led a workshop on how the group could upscale their projects and encourage other Award participants to get involved. "With passion and energy we have engaged and worked to address a social problem within our local communities," said Alex. "Thanks to The Peter Cruddas Social Innovation Initiative we have grown as leaders and are ready to take our projects to the next level."

## Volunteer profile

### Jim Kershaw

If you ask Jim Kershaw what makes a good leader, he'll tell you that it's about standing out in a crowd. As President for the British Columbia and Yukon Divisional Board for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Jim has donated countless hours to helping young Canadians set — and more importantly — achieve their goals. For many young people, it's often the first step in a series of life experiences that will help them develop their own voice as leaders in their communities.

By day, Jim Kershaw is the TD Waterhouse Regional Sales Manager for Western Canada and represents the TD Waterhouse Investing in Youth Initiative in Vancouver by participating in Award ceremonies, speaking in schools and spreading the word about The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programme. Jim became involved with The Award when the partnership between TD Waterhouse and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Charter for Business was formed in 2005. "I had felt for some time that we needed to add a philanthropic edge to the TD Waterhouse brand and was delighted to see our alignment with an organization



**Jim Kershaw, B.C. & Yukon Divisional President with Silver Award Achiever Fiona Wong.**

that makes a meaningful difference to youth." Thanks in large part to Jim's contributions, the TD Waterhouse Investing in Youth Initiative has had a dramatic impact on the number of young Canadians taking part and succeeding in the Programme. To date, Investing in Youth participants in Vancouver have earned a total of 737 Awards and over 1700 youth enrolled.

The Investing in Youth Initiative is specifically focused on ensuring that inner-city youth and youth with disabilities have access to The Award. "It was after meeting with leaders in a few inner city schools in Vancouver that I realized how enormous an opportunity there is to make a difference in the lives of these young people," says Jim. "Investing in Youth helps them to realize their potential and step up to new challenges. They learn how important it is to see something through from start to finish and it's this dedication and satisfaction upon completing The Award that sets them head and shoulders above the crowd."

## About the 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 126 countries now offer The Award, and six 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 & Gold. Young people participate either as individuals or through organizations such as schools, police services and youth groups.

### THE CHARTER FOR BUSINESS

A partnership between The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Canadian business community, the Charter for

Business was created in 1996 to help expand The Award's work with disadvantaged young people. Some 50 corporations and individuals have become Founding Partners of the Charter, pledging over \$15 million to deliver the benefits of The Award to at-risk youth in five target communities: inner-city youth, aboriginal youth, young offenders, northern and rural youth, and young people with disabilities.

"The Award Programme is a do-it-yourself growing up kit. Its purpose is to help young people broaden their horizons, while becoming responsible adults."  
— HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, KG, KT