What is The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award?

It is a self-development leadership program available to young people across BC & Yukon ages 14-24, regardless of background, circumstances or abilities. Our mission is to provide youth with opportunities to challenge themselves and develop into the best possible versions of themselves.

For youth, personal development comes from opportunities to grow and succeed in meaningful ways. The Duke of Ed inspires youth to set and achieve goals in four activity areas: skill development, volunteering, physical activity, and adventurous journeys in nature.

- The **Skill** activity is personally chosen by the youth and it is limited only by their imagination and passion.
- **Volunteering** develops empathy, self-esteem, and provides perspective on community for youth growing into adulthood.
- **Physical activity** is key to emotional and physical wellness.
- **Adventurous Journeys** in nature allow youth to experience risk in a controlled environment, helping them become resilient and develop the independence to think for themselves.

Achievement of each Bronze, Silver, and Gold level of the Award earns youth two high school credits in the BC High School curriculum, for a total possible achievement of six credits. We recognize that not all learning happens in the classroom, and to equip young people for life means providing the opportunities to develop passion and self-confidence.

Because we are committed to zero barrier access, the BC & Yukon Division has developed diverse funded engagement initiatives for at-risk youth, including low income, youth with disabilities, Aboriginal youth, new immigrant youth, and rural youth. There are over 15,000 youth doing the Award program in BC and Yukon, supported by almost 1000 volunteers through schools, community centres, and youth organizations.

The Award gives youth opportunities to take responsibility, follow their passions, attain goals, and build self-confidence and self-esteem. A McKinsey 2009 national study of Award achievers found that:

- 87% felt more confident about themselves and their ability to achieve their life goals compared to the national average of only 44% for youth ages 15-19.
- 80% felt they understood their strengths and weaknesses better for having done the Award.
- More than 20% of Award participants are considered at-risk youth and of those 84% said they developed skills and abilities during the Award program that they used to achieve future goals.

When youth do The Duke of Ed program, they develop the tools to transition into the best versions of themselves. Investing in The Award is an investment in youth and the confident, empathetic, healthy leaders of tomorrow.

For more information, please contact Executive Director Sushil Saini at ssaini@dukeofed.org

For more inspiring impacts keep reading. ⇒
What is The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award?

The Award empowers young people, ages 14 to 24, to Make a Difference in their own lives and the lives of others, by exploring their potential, taking on new challenges, giving back to their communities, and achieving success. The Award is accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status, ability, ethnicity, or gender.

As one participant said:

“...The Award has truly opened up the possibilities that are within me.”

The Award is divided into four key components (five for Gold), unique to the individual participant. No two Awards are exactly the same. The Award educates and motivates youth to become well-rounded citizens equipped with invaluable life skills.

The Award is a registered charity organization and its success is made possible by generous donors from across Canada.

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award was founded in 1956 by His Royal Highness, The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh K.G. K.T. The Award came to Canada in 1963 and currently runs in over 140 countries around the world. To date almost 8 million young people globally have challenged themselves by participating in The Award.

TO JOIN THE AWARD AS A LEADER OR PARTICIPANT, GO TO www.dukeofed.org/bc
Physical Inactivity is an Epidemic Amongst Canadian Youth

The Issue
The majority of Canadian youth are spending their free time perched in front of screens, making unhealthy food choices, and missing out on opportunities to get fit.

The Numbers
Only 7% of Canadian youth are currently meeting the most recent MVPA (Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity) guidelines. The average number of hours spent weekly in physical activity increased by 69% for award participants.

Source: Active Healthy Kids Canada – Report Card

The Solution
As a kid I wasn’t the athletic type and didn’t have the chance to excel in sports. Because of The Award, I joined a few teams through Cadets and learned how to run, even though I didn’t always like it. I had the chance to set and achieve attainable goals and learned to believe in my own abilities. Because of this, I have remained active as an adult. I’m currently training for a marathon, which I plan to run this year.

– Rudy, Gold Award Holder

The Issue

More than 26% of children and youth (1.6 million) are overweight or obese.

Source: Childhood Obesity Foundation

The Numbers

The body composition of children ages 6 to 19 has deteriorated significantly between 1981 and 2009.

Source: Statistics Canada – Canadian Health Measures Survey

The Award Program helps young people get moving.

The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award - Canada
Equipping Young People for Life
A Culture of Giving and Volunteerism is Key to a Successful Society

The Issue
Decreases in government funding for social-, cultural-, and health-related services have made organizations more dependent upon volunteers for help and to raise funds. Canada’s youth gain insurmountable value from community service, but many don’t have the motivation or support to help them get involved.

The Numbers
"Source: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy: The Volunteer Spirit in Canada"

49% of Canadians (ages 15 to 24) don’t volunteer because they’ve never been asked."

29% SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW HOW TO GET INVOLVED."

The Solution
To complete my Gold Award, I worked as head of promotions for my school’s Charity Week in support of Spread the Net, an anti-malaria campaign committed to distributing bug nets in Africa. Not only did the experience open my eyes to how privileged I am and how important it is to think of those who don’t have the luxuries we do; it also pushed me to become a more active member of my community.

~ Nina, Gold Award Holder

The Numbers

87% of participants gained perspective on their community.

72% of participants seek out opportunities to help people.

79% of participants will continue to volunteer in the future.

The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award - Canada
Equipping Young People for Life
At Risk Youth Benefit from Opportunities for Learning and Positive Development.

The Issue
Beneficial programming isn’t always available or accessible to at-risk youth, especially those living in Canada’s hard-to-serve and difficult-to-reach communities. Access to these programs in safe and supportive environments can help keep youth off the streets and out of trouble.

The Details

Peak time for the commission of crime by youth is between 3 and 6 p.m.—when they’re left to pursue ‘leisure’ interests.

Source: Statistics Canada – Where and When Young People Commit Crime

**NINE OUT OF TEN**

teenagers would volunteer to participate in crime-prevention programs if they knew how to get involved.

Source: Centre for Research on Youth At Risk

Possession of problem-solving and communication skills, a sense of belonging, and opportunities to experience success are protection factors for at risk youth.

Source: National Crime Prevention

The Award Program provides invaluable life skills and improved self-esteem to at-risk youth across Canada.

The Solution
The Award allows us to channel youth into activities that boost self-esteem, promote positive lifestyle changes and create well-rounded individuals. Sometimes creating choice is enough to deter kids from unhealthy habits and bad decisions. The Award will help foster the next generation of leaders that are needed in these communities.

– Sky Perly, First Nations Award Field Officer, New Brunswick

The Numbers


MORE THAN **20%** of Award participants are considered at-risk youth.

Of those **84%** developed the skills to achieve future goals.

**87%** FELT MORE CONFIDENT about themselves as a result of The Award.
Self-Esteem is Developed Through Opportunities to Grow and Succeed in Meaningful Ways.

The Issue
Low self-esteem can impact a young person’s chance of future happiness and success. Because youth are facing increased pressure and stress, they require support and guidance achieve results that help them feel good about themselves.

The Numbers
In a study looking at self-esteem in youth, it was found that by Grade 10, those with low self-esteem had:

- 19% greater susceptibility to peer pressure
- 46% greater misuse of alcohol
- 11% lower grades

Source: Journal of Youth and Adolescence, Vol.26; No.2

The Solution
We found out about The Award while at a Down Syndrome Conference, and through it my daughter Teresa embarked on one of the most rewarding journeys of her life. She gained self-confidence as she tackled each component and pushed herself to go further. For her skill, she learned to play piano, then overcame her fears by asking to perform in a recital, which was a huge undertaking and boost to her self-esteem.

– Regan, mother of Teresa, Gold Award Holder

The Award Program provides growth and opportunity for youth.
Access to Nature Provides Invaluable Life Skills and Environmental Awareness.

The Issue
Young people, especially those living in urban centres, have limited exposure to nature. A lack of time spent outdoors in youth has been linked to obesity, attention disorders and depression.

Source: Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*

The Details
Adventurous activities benefit youth through:

- Physical Development
- Emotional & Mental Health
- Social & Educational Development

Allowing youth to experience risk in a controlled environment helps them become resilient and gives them independence to think for themselves.

Source: OPENspace.eca.ac.uk

The Solution
For my Adventurous Journey I participated in a dog sledding trip in Algonquin Park. It was like nothing I have ever experienced. We were out in the snow, chopping wood, taking care of our own pack of dogs and travelling great distances by sled. While it was hard work, it was totally worth it. I developed an appreciation for the environment and learned that I can accomplish a great deal on my own. This trip really boosted my self-confidence.

– Meaghan, Silver Award Holder

The Numbers
80% of participants found their Adventurous Journey challenging.
70% of participants say they are more adventurous as a result.
65% of participants made lasting friendships on their journey.


Source: Childalert.co.uk

The Award Program cultivates a spirit of adventure, discovery and self-reliance while communing with nature.