

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award

A champion of young people's infinite potential

June 10, 2021, marks what would have been HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh's 100th birthday. Despite his passing, the Award that bears his name continues to inspire, empower and transform young people across Canada and the world.

"Young people growing up in this modern and complicated world have many difficulties to face, and opportunities for personal achievement are often limited."

Those words could have been written yesterday. In fact, they first appeared in Prince Philip's foreword in the inaugural edition of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award handbook in 1956 and have been republished in every edition since.

For those who are unfamiliar with this global youth program, the Award is a charitable initiative that inspires young people aged 14 to 24 years old to develop their full potential by pursuing goals in four areas: community service, physical activity, engagement in nature and skills development.

Along the way, achievers earn a Bronze, Silver and Gold Award, with the latter two categories typically presented by dignitaries that include a province or territory's Lieutenant Governor or, when possible, a member of the Royal Family.

"Because participants set their own goals, the Award is open to virtually all youth regardless of their abilities or limitations. As long as the youth's goals meet the Award's criteria, a volunteer Award Leader will be there to help mentor the participant as they pursue their ambitions," says Gold Award achiever Melissa MacAdam, a Nova Scotia-based lawyer who now volunteers as president of the Award's national board in Canada.

From the outset, Prince Philip sought to inspire young people to, "to discover the satisfaction of achievement . . . to find purpose and passion in their lives." According to records, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh believed everyone brings unique strengths to this world; in creating the Award, he aimed to celebrate and validate each individual's unique experience.

"Getting involved in this Award helped me structure my interests and activities into an achievement, which then translated to other areas of my life," says Award achiever Sabrina Craig. "The Award also opened my eyes to my role in the global community. In turn, whenever there is something to be done, either at my work at BMO Capital Markets as a technology analyst, or as a director at Vaccine Hunters Canada, I'm able to scale up and achieve a greater impact."

HELPING YOUTH NAVIGATE THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

The need to help youth gain a sense of perseverance and resiliency has perhaps never been more apparent than it has during COVID-19.

"Prince Philip famously described the Award as a 'do-it-yourself kit for growing up,'" says Ms. MacAdam. "Over the last 15 months, we have seen first-hand how young people need opportunities and support to ensure they aren't left behind. The Award framework allows young people to take the lead, find purpose, plot their own course and discover their infinite potential. It doesn't get more DIY than that."

Like others, she is concerned that even prior to COVID-19, large numbers of young Canadians were spending some of their best years waiting in the wings of life, many without clear ambitions and direction. "Too often, young people are at risk of leaving school lacking the soft and transferable skills that employers look for. This skill gap is contribut-



Prince Philip personally met with Award achievers at a ceremony in Toronto in 2010. Today, more than 16,000 youth across Canada are actively pursuing the Award. SUPPLIED

"I truly believe the knowledge, connections and skills I've gained will help me pursue my passions and make a meaningful impact in my community and beyond."

— Gloria C., Gold Award Achiever BC

"The Award has helped me in numerous ways. It helped me to stay fit and active within the confines of my own home. Exercising for my Award helped me stay sane and avoid cabin fever in the months that we were on strict lockdown. The Award also gave me something positive and concrete to focus on, which helped curb my anxieties in other aspects of life."

— Payal M., Gold Award participant

HOW THE AWARD BENEFITS YOUTH

Participation in the Award has a proven, positive impact on young people including:



EMPLOYABILITY AND EARNING POTENTIAL



PHYSICAL HEALTH AND FITNESS



MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING



ENGAGEMENT WITH CHARITABLE AND COMMUNITY CAUSES



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY



SOCIAL COHESION

SOCIAL VALUE OF THE AWARD IN CANADA

Each dollar invested in the Award generates \$1.90 in social value.

\$11.3M

Current social value

\$51M

Future social value

\$2.6M

Social value contributed by Adult Award Leaders

ing to an increase in depression, anxiety and a sense of helplessness and dependency," says Ms. MacAdam.

In some instances, youth who feel isolated from society and their local communities can wind up frustrated. "Taking part in activities such as sport, community service, adventure and learning new skills develops resilience, determination and adaptability, among other things," says Ms. MacAdam. "The Award helps young people feel positive about themselves and ready to make constructive contributions now and throughout their adult lives."

The Award also spurs youth to move beyond their comfort zone and develop a leadership mindset.

"Connection is at the heart of leadership. Leaders set the tone; their behaviour determines how interactions are characterized by trust, psychological safety, understanding, compassion, empathy and respect," says Sandra Corelli, founder and CEO of Humanity Consulting Group, a workplace leadership consultancy.

"Emotional intelligence is key to thriving in today's uncertain

world. Through community service, practical skills, physical recreation, adventurous journeys and leadership development, participants live the stories they write for themselves, building the confidence to trust themselves to reach beyond their greatest expectations. Every Duke of Ed journey is a chapter in the larger Award story of perseverance, initiative and resiliency."

A LASTING LEGACY AND GROWING CASE FOR SUPPORT

Recognizing a rising need in communities across the country, including the importance of reaching marginalized or otherwise at-risk youth, the Award is seeking to expand its capacity and enable even more young people in Canada to get involved.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES IN A TIME OF ADVERSITY

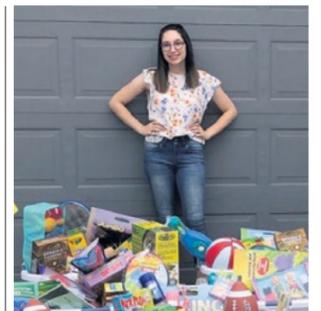
Over the past year, Award participants from across Canada used the Award to bring support to their local communities during the pandemic.



Zachary, a Gold Award participant from Ontario, used his knitting skills and rallied other young people in his community to help knit over 400 scarves, hats and socks for a homeless shelter that, due to social distancing measures, was temporarily unable to provide for those in need.



Sabrina, a Gold Award Holder from Ontario, is a director at Vaccine Hunters, a social media platform developed by a group of young people in their spare time. The platform has proved to be a trailblazer in the encouragement of Canadians across the country to get vaccinated. Sabrina says the Award instilled her desire to give back through service, in this case helping Canada reach herd immunity.



Shelan, a Gold Award Holder from Manitoba, rallied various organizations to contribute to hampers for newly arrived families in her community. The hampers contained goods that promoted physical activity and skill development during lockdown. For Shelan, the Award ignited a passion to ensure that her community discovers the value of learning outside the classroom.



To learn more about the Award and ways to get involved, please visit dukeofed.org.



INVEST IN THE INFINITE POTENTIAL OF CANADIAN YOUTH



dukeofed.org/F100