Connecting with New Brunswick’s aboriginal youth

Governor General salutes recipients’ talent and determination

On February 14 at the Fairmont (Downtown) hotel in Calgary, 40 participants from around the world gathered to receive the most prestigious Award level from His Excellency, the Hon. David Johnson, Governor General of Canada. The next evening at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, the Governor General presented 115 Gold Award achievers with their Gold certificates that mark the conclusion of 18 months of dedication, perseverance, and leadership.

After presenting the 115 Gold Awards over two days, the Governor General remarked: “The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a wonderful tribute to the talent and determination of youth, and the recognition of this honour means that they are part of a massive network of remarkable Canadians.

Since being appointed Governor General in 2010, His Excellency has provided 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 “Whatever we see young people, we see hope and the desire to change things for the better. And in fact, you are already making an impact on our society. That is what brought you here today.”

His Excellency remarked on how the youth of this country is a vital source of ideas and influence for our society. In his closing remarks he told this group of recent achievers that “this year of giving, and the experiences that you are about to have, will show you that our confidence is well placed... your energy and your contributions are essential in building a smarter, more caring Canada.”

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is an international non-competitive programme of voluntary activities which encourages preparation for adult life, and offers a rewarding experience.

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 youth in the challenge of The Award.

Currently, 60,000 enthusiastic corporators and individuals have joined us 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 remember joining our efforts to develop the full potential of Canada’s young people. You can assure us from personal experience that it is a truly rewarding experience.

Later this year, the Chairman of the Award’s International Council, The Hon. The Prime Minister, will call on Canada to see The Award in action and to work with the Award’s regional directors for critical support. I look for continued active support from all those responsible for the remarkable cross-section of Canadian leaders who make up The Award family.

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is an extra-curricular activity which is not only rewarding, but will give back to their communities. It fosters leadership and confidence. The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award is building in these young people the tools to become the next generation of leaders.

The success of the First Nations Action Plan is firmly vested in its vast support network, which includes the private sector, First Nations organizations, and provincial government. The Hon. Graeme F. MacEwen, Chairman of the First Nations Action Plan, is appropriately on hand to see the Patron and also a champion of the Aboriginal Youth Internship program, which aims at bringing The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award to young aboriginal communities. This is which aims at bringing The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award to young aboriginal communities. This is an inspirational source of ideas and renewal for our today.” That is what brought you here today.

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