A hockey stick and a can of food are two random elements that have started a social movement that is sweeping across the country, because Richard Lee believes that when you’re able to do what you love and love what you do, anything is possible.

Believing that hockey can be a vehicle for change, Richard founded FreeFoe for Food, a national grassroots, non-profit organization that aims to raise both food and awareness for a cause that affects more than a million Canadians—hunger. With no budget, armed only with her savvy communication skills and desire to effect change, Richard took to social media to start something new.

And start something he did. Organizing drop-in ball hockey games in major cities across Canada and promoting them on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, Richard has turned a volunteer-driven organization which has collected over 90,889 pounds of food for local food banks across the country since 2010. That is a social movement.

As a Gold Award achiever who has achieved all three Award levels, the Award has started something small and over the years turned into something much bigger. According to Richard, the Award gave him the framework and the opportunity to create something that speaks to his passion, while he wanted to mobilize millennials and the community service section of the programme gave him the perfect platform to do so.

“I’ve never been one to just pack it in and be done. For me, doing something in an ongoing manner for the number of weeks we had to do it was the chance to create something rather than just complete four hours,” he says. Creating Five Hole for Food told Richard on a 17-day cross-country road trip top with strangers he met on Twitter who wanted to join his cause, while setting up drop-ins in ball hockey games in nine locations from St. John’s to Vancouver. That inspired cross-country road trip has since created a volunteer-driven organization which has collected over 500,000 pounds of food for local food banks across the country.

The IGE gave participants a chance to exchange ideas and perspectives for volunteer opportunities. The Award has therefore been a perfect platform to do so. It is with great sadness that The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Trust would like to say thank you. Thank you for the framework of The Award, the Award holders on what they had learned and how they could apply their knowledge in supporting young people in their own communities and communities.

The IGE gave participants a chance to exchange ideas and establish sustainable networks of emerging leaders who will contribute to the development of The Award locally, nationally, and internationally. Canada’s four delegates were Corey Malone from Manitoba, know as a confident leader who you can reach them. The Award has proven to be one of the most explorative and challenging experiences for us delegates. Personally, I find that it challenges the way that we look at leadership and as the responsibilities of a leader.

For eight years the Duke program became a part of my family’s everyday life. It inspired my family and its is to learn and do things we never would have done otherwise, and that’s what makes it is such a special program. I took up coals and oil painting, things I never thought I would like to do. “I have left from most of the my age who would volunteer whenever they were asked to, no one really got up and started looking for volunteer opportunities. The Duke program inspired me to do that; I would look in the local paper for community clean ups, volunteered with youth, started youth struggling with math and learned a lot from the people who volunteered with me. For me the Duke wasn’t just a hobby, it wasn’t something I had to do when I got home from school, like homework, just because it had to be done. The Duke wormed its way into my heart and touched every aspect of my life, it was my anti-stress-curricular activities, my workloads, and my holidays. I’ve seen it turn a friend from a shy, unassuming and self-doubting young girl into a confident leader who isn’t afraid to back orders when something needs to be done... This isn’t just a youth program, it’s the best family activity you’ll ever have, it’s meeting extraordinary people and making friends for the rest of your all, it’s summer and winter and mosquito season. It’s discovering that you want to be and realizing you can be that person, that no matter how unobtainable your goals may seem to you, you can achieve them. I’ve grown up in the Duke program, growing by its guidelines and what it has taught me, so getting The Gold really symbolized for me the completion of my path and the journey. It was a social movement. For me the Duke isn’t just a program any more, it meant that I did what I had set out to do; I achieved my goals. I had learnt and grown and now wanted a single moment, and that is something that continues for the rest of my life. So I am very happy to say thank you. Thank you so much for supporting youth like me... for making my family and the journeys of thousands of other youth possible and a truly unforgettable experience.”

Four Gold Award Holders represented Canada on the global stage at the International Gold Event: 218 held in South Korea from October 22 to November 2. The IGE is a global leadership gathering for the next generation of key decision makers and influencers within The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award worldwide. This incredible event brought together Award participants from around the world to develop character and leadership skills, while providing opportunities to contribute to the development of policy and best practices for The Award.

More than 70 Gold Award Holders from 13 countries took part in the programme, which included skills development workshops and field visits to local educational, employment, environmental and peace-building projects. Attendees experienced first-hand what it is like for young people in South Korea and reported back to their fellow Award holders on what they had learned and how they could apply their knowledge in supporting young people in their own communities and communities.

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Royals celebrate Canadian youth
Visit recognizes The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award participants, donors and volunteers

F or a week in September, Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex travelled across Canada to celebrate the impact of The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award on Canadian youth.

The Earl, himself a Gold Award Achiever, serves as Chairman of The Award’s International Council and The Countess recently took on the role of The Award’s Global Ambassador.

The visit began in British Columbia where they presided over separate ceremonies, recognizing young people who had achieved their Gold Duke of Edin- burgh’s Award, followed by touring two far-flung First Nations communities and a number of educational and service organizations in Vancouver, Victoria, Esquimalt, and Kelowna, the R.C. programme continued as the Mission Hill Family Estate and a special dinner welcoming new Founding Partners in the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Charter for Business. Thanks to the generosity of those dinner guests, and hosts Anthony and Debra Von Mandl, of those dinner guests, and hosts Anthony and Debra Von Mandl, the dinner raised $1.2 million in pledges to support The Award and its work with disadvantaged Cana- dian youth.

For the final three days of the visit, Their Royal Highnesses travelled to separate areas of the country. The Earl visited four communities in Saskatchewan, presenting awards and meeting with Award Leaders in Regina. The Countess flew to a remote community 100 kilometers north of Thunder Bay, Ontario, to spend two days with the people of the Khaw mastery Indigenous First Nation. For final stop, Their Royal Highnesses visited the Nipissing University Symposium on Youth, Education and Aboriginal and to present Gold Awards to local recipients.

Between Their Royal Highnesses and the province’s young people, there was a portion of each visit on young Canadians who are currently engaged with The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award in Canada is followed and their unique potential and gained engaged global leaders.

IN THEIR WORDS

“The Award has allowed me to discover passions within myself that I never knew existed.”
– Marcos Iturbe, Silver Award Participant, Ontario

“The program helped me to discover who I was and to find the person I wanted to become.”
– Tony Zalewski, Gold Award Participant, Victoria, BC

“The program allowed me the opportunity to explore activities I would never have been exposed to before.”
– James Wiedel, Gold Award Participant, Nova Scotia

BY THE NUMBERS

44,000
Young Canadians who are currently engaged with The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award program
7,500,000
Dollars created by Award participants in economic value for Canada through community service
500,000+
Number of Canadians who have given The Award since 1958
86
The percentage of Award participants who develop skills to achieve future goals
75
The percentage of Award participants who have given an appreciation for the environment
87
The percentage of young people who feel more confident about themselves as a result of doing The Award
20
The percentage of Award participants considered to be at-risk youth

A golden currency
The past summer and into the fall, 394 young people from across the country were recognized for their hard work, determination and perseverance. The Gold Award is the highest accolade of achievement when pursuing The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. At eight ceremo- nies in various locations during the past six months, the Award was honoured to Their Royal Highnesses The Earl and Countess of Wessex, HRH The Princess Royal and The Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General, provided a shared opportunity to recognize the achievements of these remarkable Canadian youth.

In Kelowna, The Countess summed it up, saying, “Welcome to the Award family. I wish you every good fortune in the future. I have no doubt you and others have said a change”

The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award