

## HISTORY OF THE AWARD IN CANADA

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award began as a program to help young people develop a sense of responsibility to themselves and to their communities. It encourages personal discovery, growth, self-reliance, and perseverance, in a non-competitive format. Founded in 1956 by His Royal Highness, The Prince Philip, the Award was officially launched in Canada in 1963, for all young Canadians between the ages of 14 to 24.

Pilot projects were launched in various cities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. Early pilot groups were established thanks to early Operating Authorities including several different youth-serving organizations and secondary schools and colleges. The Air Cadet League of Canada and the Y.M.C.A were particularly instrumental in supporting The Award Scheme in several different provinces. Commander George Manson, Executive Secretary, identified that the Canadian programme required diversity of outdoor programming and flexibility in delivering the Award, "because of great differences in Canada's terrain and climate."

Promoted early as an opportunity for boys and girls to distinguish themselves, the Award was also considered ideal for average athletes or scholars, who could achieve success alongside exceptional young people who already receive attention and recognition. Award participants were considered in competition only with themselves, while striving to meet their achievements. A handful of ceremonies between May and November in 1964 honoured the very first Award recipients in Canada, totalling 48 Bronze and 6 Silver Award holders in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick. At the first Gold ceremony in Ottawa in 1966, His Royal Highness, The Prince Philip presented 18 recipients with their Gold Awards, and told the achievers' parents that "I hope it has made them aware of a lot of valuable things they can do in their spare time."

Enrolment in the Award grew gradually but steadily, and with great enthusiasm amongst its participants. After just a few years of activity in 1967, National Co-ordinator George Kitching and Executive Secretary Commander George Manson reported a "record intake of approximately 900 boys and 220 girls into the Scheme during the year. The numbers are modest in relation to the potential, but they are indicative of a growing awareness of the Award Scheme on the part of young people and adults." After seven years in Canada, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award grew to include 4,430 Participants by 1969.



The presentation of Awards by Her Majesty, The Queen, in Portage la Prairie, July 13th, 1970, was unmistakably the highlight of The Award in Canada by that time. The 1970s saw Royal visits from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, Her Majesty, the Queen, and HRH The Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh. The 1970s was a decade of growth for the Award in Canada, as participant numbers climbed to over 17,630. With expansion of the program came additional field staff across the country, and increasing dependence on financial support from corporate donations as well as government support in several provinces.

The value of the Award became easy to recognize as more participants entered into the Scheme and completed their goals. Cara Thomas, a 1975 Gold Award recipient from British Columbia, described the Award achievement process as trying “to improve yourself as an all-round person. You have to keep rating your progress, always with the idea of becoming better than you were...Self-improvement, if it’s going to be effective, inevitably takes time.” At an Award ceremony in 1976, Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor Clarence L. Gosse, MD, also praised the Award in relation to Canadian society: “It is interesting to me and of considerable importance that the Duke of Edinburgh program is progressing so rapidly at a time when leisure time is assuming increasing proportions. We have gone from a 50 hour week to a 35 hour week in about a quarter of a century...Occupation of leisure time becomes of paramount importance, both from the standpoint of future pleasure and physical and mental health.” Over less than two decades, the Award had become valued for its positive effects on Canadian society as a whole.



By the beginning of the 1980s decade the Award had expanded to include Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, the Yukon and Northwest Territories. In the 1980s The Award grew by leaps and bounds, upon the strong momentum built in the 1970s. Participant levels soared to over 44,000 by 1985, with the highest levels of participation across the country being recorded in British Columbia & The Yukon, and Quebec Divisions. The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award was now active in all provinces and territories in Canada.

The strength of the Award’s growth over a few decades was due in large part to a now expansive team of staff and volunteers, whose leadership contributions were noted in 1984 by Award President Hartland McDougall. He wrote that a “comforting realization remains the strength and dedication of our volunteers – leaders, award assessors, provincial and national council members. The quality of this leadership is impressive and is the real reason for the continued expansion and success of the Programme.” Regarding the participants themselves, Mr. McDougall remarked that “with such impressive young men and women pursuing the goals of The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Program the future well-being of our country seems assured.”

By 1996, The Charter for Business (CFB) was established as a partnership between The Award and the Canadian business community designed to support the expansion of The Award across the country.

The goal of the CFB is to ensure that all young Canadians have access to the benefits of The Award Programme, regardless of circumstances, abilities, or geography. CFB funds are particularly focussed towards inner-city and at-risk youth. HRH The Earl of Wessex, KG, GCVO and Honorary Chair of The Charter for Business, has said that “The Award Program must strive for the day when any young person who wants to do The Award can. I believe that the Charter for Business initiative is the most significant step towards achieving this goal.”



The value of The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award has long been understood by participants and those working to deliver The Award programme. In 2008 The Award worked closely with McKinsey and Company to gather statistical data about The Award from participants. The results provided measurable results on the value of The Award and its impact on young Canadians who achieve it. For example, 87% of participants believe The Award has made them more confident, 86% want to continue their volunteering, and 84% felt the skills developed by doing the Award will help them to achieve their future goals. As His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor-General of Canada has affirmed, “by participating in the Award, young people are proving that anything is possible, that they can reach beyond themselves, set lofty goals, dream big dreams and strive to realize them. The Award helps youth see that they are ready to challenge themselves, take initiative and responsibility for their successes, and that they have what it takes to persevere when times get tough.”

The Award program has now been active in Canada for more than 50 years. An estimated 500,000 young Canadians have participated in the Award since 1963, making a difference in their own lives, local communities, and around the world. The Award currently has some 44,800 participants in Canada. There are approximately 4.5 million young people in Canada between the 14 to 24 age group. Internationally, The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award is operating in over 140 countries world-wide, and to date 8 million young people have challenged themselves by doing the Award. The Award remains as relevant to young people today as it did when it all began, and we look forward to more great achievements by Canadian youth over the next 50 years.

# HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF THE AWARD IN CANADA

1956

The Award is founded in the U.K. by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, originally only for boys aged 14-18.

1963

The Award is officially launched in Canada, for all boys and girls aged 14-25.

1964

The First Award ceremonies for Canadian participants are held, in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick.

1966

First Gold Award ceremony held in Ottawa. HRH The Prince Philip presents 18 Awards.

1967

Canada hosts the first International Gold Event for Gold Award achievers around the world.

1969

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award reaches 4,430 participants across Canada and includes 949 Awards achieved.

1970

Her Majesty, The Queen, visits Portage La Prairie and presents Awards during her visit.

1973

Provincial Directors are now active in British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia.

1974

Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, presents Gold Awards at a Toronto ceremony on July 1st.

1974

Expedition Chimo is held in Nova Scotia for the first time, bringing multiple levels of Award participants together.

1978

Gold Award Holder Societies had been formed in British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia.

1979

The Award now has over 17,630 participants in Canada.

1980

At least 20,150 Participants are now active in The Award in Canada.

1983

20th Anniversary of The Award in Canada is marked by a Gala dinner, attended by HRH The Prince Philip and 800 guests.

1985

Participation in The Award in Canada reaches above 44,000 youth across the country. Participation is now active in all provinces and territories in Canada.

1986

The first Gold Award ceremony ever to be held in Quebec takes place, hosted by the Her Excellency, the Honourable Jeanne Sauve Governor-General in Quebec City.

1986

Toronto hosts the second International Forum event, drawing representatives from 18 countries and chaired by HRH The Prince Philip.

1988

Canada became a founding member of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Association. Canada remains one of the four largest National Award Authorities currently.

1990

The organization's name changes to The Duke of Edinburgh's Award: Young Canadian's Challenge.

1990

An estimated 2,000 volunteers, assessors, and advisors are supporting the work of The Award across Canada.

1997

After a period of financial challenge and organizational re-structuring, participation levels in The Award begin to grow once more to over 18,500 total active youth in Canada, almost twice as many as 6 years previous. .

2001

Her Excellency, The Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor-General, hosts a ceremony for Gold Award Achievers in St. John's, Newfoundland.

2002

Canada hosted its second International Gold Event, Rendezvous 2002.

2003

HRH Prince Andrew presents Gold Award achievers with their Awards during a visit to British Columbia.

2008

The McKinsey Study is commissioned to quantify the value of The Award to Canadian society.

2012

HRH Prince Edward kicks off official 50th Anniversary celebrations via Twitter, in September. He also presents two Gold Award ceremonies in Ottawa and Toronto during his Canadian visit.

2013

Two youth events for Award participants across Canada, Expedition 50 and LEAD, are held in celebration of The Award's 50th year in Canada.

2013

The 50th Anniversary of The Award in Canada is marked by a Royal Gala dinner in Toronto, attended by TRH The Earl and Countess of Wessex, His Excellency The Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor-General, and The Honourable David Onley, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario.

2015

Officially become The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award-Canada. With this change comes the launch of a new brand and identity for the Award program in Canada.