

Two local teens receive awards from Prince Harry

By Bill Rea

Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards program has benefitted many young people, including two Bolton teens.

Caelyn Greaves and Callie Dowds gained the chance to enhance their skills and broaden their horizons. And by achieving the Gold standard in the program, they got to meet Prince Harry in September.

The Prince, who had been in Toronto for the Invictus Games, took some time to attend the award ceremony for the program that was established by his grandfather, Prince Philip.

‘He’s very sociable, but quiet,’ Dowds recalled. ‘He talks very quietly.’

She also said he seemed very straight-faced while speaking on stage, but was more talkative when with groups.

‘He knows how to carry a conversation,’ Greaves added.

Harry made his way through the crowd of recipients, talking to one group at a time. Dowds and Greaves were in the same group.

Dowds said the first question he put to her was about the adventurous journey they took as part of the program.

Greaves added their group only had about a minute and a half with him.

‘I didn’t actually say anything to him,’ she admitted. ‘I was very scared.’

The two ladies, both 18, took part in the program as part of their involvement with the Girl Guides.

Dowds, a former Bolton Fair Ambassador, has been involved with the 1st Bolton Guides for 13 years, starting as a Spark and working her way up to Rangers. She is currently a Link member, which is a step between Rangers and being a leader. She is in her first year studying criminology at Carleton University in Ottawa.

Greaves has been with the 1st Bolton Guides for about 11 years, and is also a Link member. She is studying web design and interactive media at Humber College.

In order to qualify for the Gold level in the program, participants had to complete a certain number of hours of community service, learn a skill (both worked on their piano playing), take part in physical activity and go on an adventurous journey.

Dowds said she has volunteered at the local public library and was involved in the Interact Club of Rotary, while Greaves helped out at various community events like the Bolton Rotary Ribfest.

Their adventurous journey consisted of a four day trip to Turkey Point Provincial Park in July 2016.

‘Turkey Point is in the middle of nowhere,’ Dowds laughed (it’s actually on the north shore of Lake Erie, south of Brantford). But Greaves added it has the appeal of good flat bike trails.

It was still a struggle, they recalled, as they took the trip during a summer heat wave. They would ride out to study plants and leaves, starting at 5 a.m., before things got too hot.

‘And then we would go back and have a nap,’ Dowds said.

She added she first got involved with the program while in Grade 9 at Humberview Secondary School.

‘I got into it because it sounded really interesting,’ she recalled. ‘I liked that it was something to work toward.’

‘And it looks good on a resume,’ she added.

Greaves agreed it helped her get a couple of jobs too.

She said she found out about it while on a trip to Prince Edward Island for some Scouts who were involved in it.

‘I thought it was very good,’ she said.

Dowds said the benefit of the program included all she learned.

‘You grow a lot in the process,’ she observed.

Greaves added it required a lot of paper work, but dealing with that proved a benefit too.

‘It’s a skill that you get when you’re doing the Duke of Edinburgh,’ she commented. ‘It’s a good skill to have.’

Both said they would recommend the program to anyone.

‘The experience,’ Greaves declared. ‘You can’t compare it to anything else, really.’



Caelyn Greaves shook hands with Prince Harry at the Duke of Edinburgh Awards ceremony in September as Callie Dowds looked on.Submitted photo