

Local youths among Duke of Edinburgh Award recipients

By Bill Rea

The Scouting and Guiding movements have a long history of producing achievers, and evidence of that is easy to find.

There were more examples presented Saturday in Toronto as more than 100 young people received their Silver Awards of Achievement in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award program from Lt.-Gov. Elizabeth Dowdeswell.

They included four representatives of the 1st Bolton Scouts and one member of the 1st Bolton Pathfinders.

In order to qualify for the award, the young people have to complete an adventurous journey, perform community service, be active in some form of physical recreation and demonstrate a skill.

Pathfinder Caelyn Greaves said her journey had her canoeing through Algonquin Park. She also volunteers her time as a Sparks leader, plays the piano and stays active by hiking, cycling and going to the gym.

"It's just fantastic," she declared, describing the program, adding the experience has helped her get two jobs.

Among the Scouts being recognized was Max Gungter, who took part in a canoe trip to Algonquin Park and has volunteered with the FIRST robotics group. He plays the trumpet and is active in track and field, cross-country running and personal fitness.

"I had a great time balancing my life to fit the expectations of the award and finding what I really enjoyed doing in the community," he said. "I found that I like to teach younger kids and help them learn new information."

"I also enjoyed finding a suitable recreational activity, as I found great magnetism and connection to running while doing my Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award," he added.

Johnathan Quintal also canoed through Algonquin Park and has volunteered as a Beaver leader, as well as an instructor at Fort George Camp. He's active in tennis, soccer and skiing, and plays percussion.

"The Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award has opened my eyes to a new world for personal growth and success through the many skills and experiences I have witnessed due to the completion of this honourable award," he commented.

Tanner Krauter did camping and canoeing as his adventurous journey. His community service has included helping to build a camp in Alaska and being an assistant drama instructor. His physical activities include rock climbing, hiking and running, and he's training to become a small aircraft pilot.

"I am working toward my Gold Award, and have really enjoyed the experience that has helped me to become more active in my community," he observed.

Tottenham resident Barry Austen took part in a canoe trip, volunteers his time coaching baseball, is active in skating and shown his skill in drivers ed.

"The Duke of Edinburgh has gotten me more into the community and has kept me active, and has gotten me to try new things," he said.

His interests include camping and playing baseball. His plans for the future include post-secondary schooling to study chemistry.

The ceremony was held at Toronto Police College, and Superintendent Peter Lennox extended the welcomes, while complimenting the award recipients.

"It's a wonderful occasions and it's OK to be a little bit proud," he remarked.

In her remarks, Dowdeswell mentioned the news from earlier in the week that Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, had announced he would be retiring. She pointed to the years of service he has given to the Commonwealth.

She also congratulated the recipients on their achievements, complimenting them on the skills they have demonstrated which will serve the country and province into the future, including teamwork, creativity and the ability to have an open mind. She added they have accomplished many tasks that will enable them to be trail blazers.

"I believe all of you will thrive in this rapidly changing world," she declared, wishing them well, "because we're all counting on you."