



THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

INVESTING IN YOUNG CANADIANS

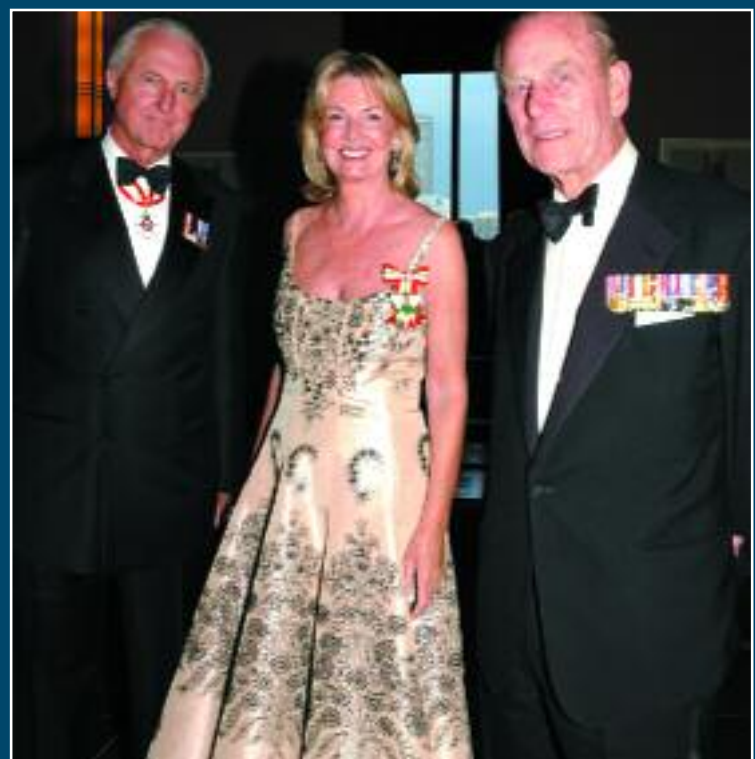


2004~2005: A Very Regal Year



HRH The Earl of Wessex attending the 'Youth Soiree' for Award Participants and Volunteers in St. John's Newfoundland.

RIGHT: H.E The Right Hon. Adrienne Clarkson presenting a Gold Award Certificate at a ceremony in Quebec City.



HRH The Duke of Edinburgh with Galen & The Hon. Hilary Weston, hosts of the Canadian Award's 40th Anniversary Gala, which raised over \$600,000 for the Award.



HRH The Earl of Wessex witnessing the signing of a partnership agreement between the Award Programme and the Canadian Cadet Programme at a Gold Award Ceremony at Government House in Charlottetown, PEI.



HRH The Countess of Wessex, centre, attending a Mother & Daughter Tea in Toronto, which raised funds for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

RIGHT: HRH The Earl of Wessex, right, attending a Gold Award Ceremony at the Perimeter Institute in Waterloo, Ontario with Mr. and Mrs. Michael Lazaridis, left, ceremony host and Co-CEO of RIM Ltd., and Waterloo Mayor Herb Epp, centre.



Founder and Chairman of the Tim Hortons Children's Foundation Ron Joyce with HRH The Earl of Wessex following a visit to the Foundation's camp in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia.



HRH The Duke of Edinburgh presenting a Gold Award Certificate at a ceremony at Edmonton City Hall.



HRH The Earl of Wessex presenting a Gold Award Certificate at a Ceremony in St. John's.

Award instills pride in extraordinary youth

For those whose chances to contribute had gone missing, recognition is especially sweet.

Two remarkable groups of youngsters in Winnipeg — the mainly Aboriginal members of the Tommy Prince Army Cadet Corps and the special needs kids at the Glenlawn Collegiate Co-op Education class — are now among thousands of Canadian youth acknowledged each year with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

"The pride they had when they achieved their Bronze Award in front of the school was pretty important," says Bonnie Southern, teacher of Greenlawn's special needs class. "These kids don't get that very often. And the rest of the school was quite impressed with them."

Second Lt. Glen Spryszak of the Tommy Prince Corps., named for an heroic Aboriginal veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, echoes the sentiment.

"Any kind of recognition for these young people is a very good feeling, something very significant for them," says Spryszak, who enrolls every Corps member in the Award program as soon as they reach the minimum required age of 14.

While the 50 years of the Award

have seen almost six million young people around the world participate in the personal development and citizenship program started by HRH Prince Philip, the Canadian Award engages in special outreach to find extraordinary participants as well.

Supported in that effort by The Charter for Business, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award here is making focused efforts to reach Aboriginal, rural, inner-city, at-risk and other youth 14 to 25 who may have disadvantages to overcome, including physical and mental disabilities.

Marion Jagger, Manitoba Executive Director for the Award, is excited about the initiatives in Winnipeg and the sense that the opportunities are starting to expand in the city.

"We are finding great spillover effects, especially with the special needs classes here," she reports. "What we have now is recognition from the [provincial] Department of Education. For marginalized students, this is huge."

Field officer Kim Windling was with the Greenlawn special needs group when the young people tackled the two-day February expedition part of the program, a daunting prospect for many who had literally never



Members of The Tommy Prince Army Cadet Corps with staff and volunteers from the Manitoba Council of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

spent a night away from home before.

"This was something that they never thought they would ever do without their parents and they were just amazing," recounts Windling, who had the group sleeping out in teepees in a wildlife sanctuary on the outskirts of the city. "When we were there, there was not even a question — everybody did what they could so they could take part."

And just as official buy-in on the educational side has been strong for an Award program that enjoys international praise, so have the Cadets embraced a program which requires community service, skills, physical fitness and an expedition component en route to earning Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

"The officers at the Corps take the

award very seriously and really support this program," says Windling. "I think these youths have been marginalized their entire lives. This is their way of being recognized for what they do."

Parents also offer some of the recognition, both of their Award-achieving children and of the program they believe has made a vital difference for their sons and daughters.

"When my son Andrew went into his high school, he just naturally got into The Duke of Edinburgh's Award program and he was lucky enough to complete all of it," says Allison Ash, from a small community outside St. John's, Nfld. "It was a wonderful experience because it gave him a sense of accomplishment and of being part of the school."



Award Participants & Achievers from The Glenlawn Collegiate Co-op Education programme in Winnipeg.

Andrew, 23, has congenital challenges and limited communication capacity. He may have been fortunate that his teachers promoted The Award program, but it was his own hard work and determination which eventually made him a Gold Award achiever.

The Award reached Andrew through an effort that started with one high school and has now established itself in a dozen others, explains Trudy O'Keefe, Newfoundland Acting Executive Director.

"We approached the school district saying we have this wonderful program and would like to introduce it to other schools," she remarks.

The concept can take some explaining. Allison Ash allows she was "apprehensive at first," about a program that required volunteer work and expeditions; but such concerns evaporated when she saw her son thriving in the program.

"I think just being with his peers at

school and knowing he was doing something just as important as others was a very significant thing," says Allison, whose son has gone on to notable distinction in the Special Olympics. "This program is a wonderful opportunity and gives participants a sense of self-esteem."

Certainly, Bill Mates knows about the importance of self-esteem for the youth he works with as Regional Field Officer for Southwestern Ontario for the Award program.

"I have been working with young offenders since 2000, offering them the opportunity to work towards their Award from within their institutions," explains Mates.

"I've worked with well over 100 young offenders and we've had some great success stories in watching youth do something good with their lives," he continues. "Pretty much their entire life up to the point that they've been arrested had been negative." Mates, a retired engineer who found a midlife passion in working with young people, understands what these kids feel.

"I start off by saying I was the principal's worst nightmare in Grade 9," he offers. "They don't get told enough that you've made your mistake, put that behind you and turn your life around."

So that's what Mates tells them — and that he has the program to help them do it.

Mates admiringly reflects on the efforts in the last 25 years internationally as The Award program has created outreach programs for young offenders.