

April 20, 2006

2006 TOYOTA EARTH DAY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The *Toyota Earth Day Scholarship Program* annually grants 15 awards of \$5000 to students from across Canada who have demonstrated excellence in environmental community service. The program encourages and rewards graduating high school students and Québec junior college students who have distinguished themselves through environmental community service, extracurricular and volunteer activities, and academic excellence.

Zoë Barrett-Wood – Flesherton, Ontario

Zoë is the founder and leader of the Environmental Club at her school where she organizes events to involve the student body in eco-work. After volunteering as a teacher's assistant, Zoë secured a co-op placement as an environmental educator, teaching elementary students about the environment, leading pond studies and making lesson plans for her classes. She has also organized groups of students and community members to pick up garbage around town for various community cleanups.

Rather than regarding used material simply as waste, Zoë sees the possibility for artistic creations instead. She shares these crafts at community festivals, and teaches local children how to reuse material, reduce garbage, and be creative all at the same time. Her artistic creations were in such demand that Zoë created her own business – DHM Design – to design, create, and market eco-purses and accessories made out of reused fabric.

Zoë is also a member of the debate club, advanced placement biology club, book and library club and the school choir. She recently traveled to Costa Rica to volunteer with the Sea Turtle Conservation Project helping to weigh and measure turtles, clean beach areas and patrol their hatchery.

Mark Ouseley – Ottawa, Ontario

Mark is the chairperson of his school's Environmental Club, and the "Green Head" on the student council. He is also the chairperson for the Schools for Peace Club and the Science Club, and is senior member, fundraiser, and presenter for the World Affairs Club. In the latter, Mark coordinated school fundraising efforts for both the Asian Tsunami and the earthquake in Pakistan. Mark's talent for fundraising has extended into many different areas; he coordinated efforts to secure funds for important groups such as the United Way, Canadian Cancer Society, and for War Child as part of his participation on the Model United Nations committee.

Mark's environmental work is distinguished by his desire for putting conservation ideas into action. Mark has been a summer volunteer at the Caldwell-Carver Conservation Area – removing invasive species, planting native trees, clearing walking trails, and tagging poison ivy patches – while also testing his mettle as a research student with Carleton University's biology department. He studied the possible role of native Canadian beetles to control the invasive *V. rossicum* perennial vine.

Allyson Parker – Cobourg, Ontario

Allyson worked and volunteered for six years at local parks and bird sanctuaries in Ontario prior to 2005, when she took her considerable passion for birds all the way to see Antarctica's penguins, after earning a spot on the Canadian Geographic Polar Bound trip.

Allyson has built on her birding expertise through long-term contributions at the Prince Edward Point and Long Point Bird Observatories – the latter as an ornithological intern. She has participated for several years at the Presqu'île Provincial Park Waterfowl Festival as a waterfowl interpreter, and with the Ontario Bird Breeding Atlas, collecting and recording breeding data for many rare species.

Beyond her passion for birds, Allyson has focused on many environmental issues within her school and community. She recently shared her new-found knowledge of environmental issues in Antarctica, by conducting presentations to other students at school. At her school, Allyson has been a member, and recently co-president, of the Environment Club. As well, she organized many activities including battery/ink-jet cartridge collection, recycling projects, the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup and Yellow Fish Road Project campaigns, and an Environmental Conference at the school.

Jasmeet Sidhu – Brampton, Ontario

Jasmeet established her school's Environmental Club and created an award-winning "environmental action plan" that has served as a template for other schools in the area. She was grade representative for the Student Advisory Council, and both founder and president of the Earth Week & Clean Air Committee and the World Issues Awareness Committee.

While establishing a strong environmental ethic within her own school, Jasmeet was not content until she had done the same for her entire region. As founder and president of the Peel Environmental Youth Alliance (PEYA), she created an umbrella organization that has served to help implement environmental clubs and recycling programs in all 220 schools in the Peel Region. These accomplishments did not go unnoticed, as she was invited to speak at several fairs and conferences and appeared as a panelist on the TVO debate show, VoxTalk, to discuss environmental action and awareness.

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