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Good deeds land woman on national list

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A local 19-year-old has been named one of the top youth in Canada.

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Laura Stymiest, a Mount Allison University student from Fredericton, has made the Top 20 Under 20 list, which celebrates Canadian youth who have demonstrated innovation, leadership and achievement, but haven't turned 20.

"The list was actually a day late coming out, so I had assumed when I didn't hear anything at first that I hadn't been chosen," Stymiest said. "Next thing you know, I'm studying for my final exam and I get this email that I made the list. Not only was it a nice surprise, but it was a great boost during a stressful time."

Stymiest grew up in Fredericton with her parents Deborah and Bev, and her younger sister, Kate.

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Submitted photo

Helping others: Laura Stymiest of Fredericton has made the Top 20 Under 20 list, which celebrates Canadian youth who have demonstrated innovation, leadership and achievement.

She attended Rothesay Netherwood School, a private university-preparatory school, where she organized a student Global Medical Brigades trip to Honduras.

"We gathered medical supplies and books and assisted medical professionals with primary health clinics in Honduras," Stymiest said. "I saw some interesting cases, including babies with really intense urinary tract infections that hadn't been treated for a year, and a 16-year-old girl who had never been to a doctor before even though she had a cleft palate and was living with a hole in the roof of her mouth. It was pretty sad, but it felt good to think I was playing a small part in helping them."

Deborah Stymiest went to Honduras to watch her daughter in action. She said it was incredible seeing how mature and level-headed her daughter was on the front lines.

"She dealt with patients who had childhood diseases, translated Spanish for the doctors and really made a point of connecting with the people there," Deborah Stymiest said.

"I think if she gets a chance to fulfil her dreams, Laura will become a doctor."

Laura Stymiest is living in Toronto working as an intern for Doctors Without Borders. She said her dream is to attend McMaster University's medical program.

"I'd like to go on more missions like the one to Honduras and end up practising medicine in Canada," Stymiest said. "I'd also like to maybe do some policy work at different levels and just continue on trying to help people."

The Top 20 Under 20 list is an initiative of Youth In Motion, an organization aimed at honouring and supporting outstanding youth.

Being named to the list comes with a \$5,000 scholarship and the chance to be matched with a mentor.

"I'm hoping to be matched with someone who is a mover and shaker in the global health scene who can give me some advice on moving forward with my goals," Stymiest said.






"Really though, this is an amazing opportunity no matter who I am teamed up with. It's such a motivation to be lumped together with 19 incredible students from across the country. It's definitely going to push me to keep going, keep challenging myself, and not give up on my dreams."

Stymiest will return to Mount Allison in the fall for her third year of a bachelor of science degree. She plans to major in biology with a minor in international studies.

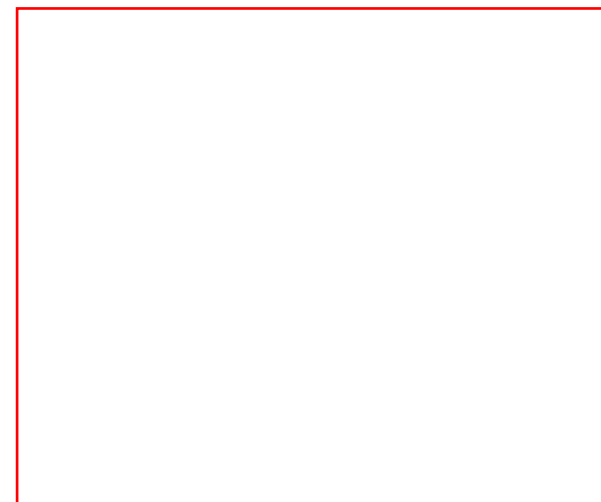
"We are very lucky to have two wonderful daughters," Deborah Stymiest said from her home in Fredericton. They are happy and giving back to others, and that's all we could ever ask for."

For the complete Top 20 Under 20 list, visit www.top20under20.ca.

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