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High school, college and university students

Top 20 Under 20 awards: researchers, entrepreneurs and activists

Youth in Motion's award winners include cancer treatment researchers, a 12-year-old fundraiser and a mountain climber

June 02, 2009 05:45 PM EDT

Youth in Motion (www.youth-in-motion.ca) is the non-profit organization that runs the annual Top 20 Under 20, a national awards program that celebrates young Canadians who have demonstrated a significant level of innovation, leadership and

Applicants can be nominated, or nominate themselves, and must be under 20 on Dec. 31, 2008.

Winners are selected by a volunteer national judging panel of people who have made significant contributions in education, business, and the not-for-profit sectors.

Winners receive a bursary of up to \$5,000 to be applied toward an educational experience. They also attend a four-day leadership summit and receive career coaching.

Profiles of the winners (whose ages are listed as what they were on Dec. 31, 2008) appear alphabetically below.

James Brooks, 12, London, Ont.

By Marjo Johne



There were a dozen things James Brooks could have bought with the \$100 gift he got for his eighth birthday. But then he read about Kanzi, a bonobo that can communicate with people, who was living in Iowa. So he donated his birthday money to the

organization that looks after the celebrity ape.

"Monkeys and apes were always my favourite animals," says James, who is now 12. "But then I found out that apes are an endangered species and I thought 'I really want to help.' " Having already raised about \$4,000 for the Great Apes Trust by asking friends and family to make donations in lieu of birthday gifts, James decided to help the widows of park rangers in the Democratic Republic of Congo who were killed by ape poachers.

Last year, he started 1000 Classrooms. Through its website, www.1000classrooms.org, James is working to collect at least \$3 each from 1,000 classrooms across Canada, money that will be used to buy henhouses. "The idea is to set up the widows with chicken houses so they can sell eggs and make some income," says James, who has so far collected money from about 70 classrooms. "But by bringing the program to classrooms, I can also teach thousands of kids about apes and maybe inspire them to help as well."

Ariel Charney, 17, Montreal

By Gail Johnson



Ariel Charney was introduced to children with special needs at a young age. Her mom worked as a special-needs assistant, and Charney sometimes accompanied her. The kids she encountered



left an indelible mark on her.

"They showed so much strength and character," Ariel says. "I knew I wanted to get involved, as it's an area that's always touched me."

She joined the International Friendship Circle, an organization that pairs teenage volunteers with children with special physical, medical or mental needs. She was the group's first president in 2007 and went on to launch a T-shirt campaign called Imprint the World.

The project's mandate was twofold: to raise awareness of people with special needs and to foster a culture of acceptance and positivity. When someone purchased a shirt, they also had to commit to doing three acts of kindness.

Ariel, who's entering her final year of CEGEP at Dawson College in Montreal, wants to study medicine. An avid researcher, she was a top finisher at last year's Super Expo-sciences Bell 2008 Quebec Final, conducted a stem-cell project at the McGill Genome Center, and contributed to a research project at the Weizmann Institute in Israel. She'll spend the summer studying at a University of Southern California stem-cell lab.

Editor's note: The CEGEP Ariel attends was incorrectly named in a previous version of this piece. This version has been corrected.

Beth Ferreira, 17, Winnipeg

By Marlene Habib



The scientific community just can't seem to get enough of 17-year-old Beth Ferreira's eye-opening research on measuring mercury and heavy-metal levels in Arctic mammals, in particular the ringed seal. Just recently, the Grade 12 student at Fort Richmond Collegiate in Winnipeg returned from Reno, Nev., where she presented her doctorate-level research to an international science and engineering fair.

Beth's work has been a childhood-bred labour of love that took off as a Grade 10 school science fair project. "As a young kid, I spent a lot of time outdoors on family vacations, and the environment and wildlife has just become a part of me," she says. "And the ringed seal is really interesting — it's the main prey of the polar bear, and, with the current sea-ice melt, the ringed seal's population level tells us what's happening in the Arctic."

Beth's work, which has involved conducting hundreds of hours of research at Fisheries and Oceans Canada, focuses on novel ways to analyze contaminants in the whiskers and claws of the ringed seal, so as not to endanger the animal. She is also working on a manuscript for publication in a scientific journal. Beth says her research helps the Inuit who hunt the ringed seal, and provides insight into the physiological decline of the polar bear because of contaminants such as mercury

and global warming.

She is taking her love of helping animals and people into her university studies.

In September, she'll be in her first year of the sciences program at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and may aim for a career in medicine or marine biology.

Alison Hall, 17, Winnipeg

By Marlene Habib



Alison Hall could easily have crumbled after learning of her mother's breast cancer diagnosis in 2006, but for the 17-year-old St. Mary's Academy high-school student, fear became her ally.

While Alison and her father, two brothers and sister rallied with her mother, Mary, during her treatment, the Grade 12 Winnipeg resident also came up with a novel idea — an event that focuses on fighting cancer while raising awareness about preventing the disease.

Alison serves as chair of The Challenge for Life, a fundraising event for CancerCare Manitoba that culminates in a 20-kilometre walk. In the six months leading up to the walk, participants also work on reaching their own health and fitness goals,

with the help of Winnipeg-wide events featuring life coaches, dietitians and exercise experts.

"A diagnosis of cancer is overwhelming, and such a scary thing for anyone. Those first few months were tough on my family," Alison says about learning of her mother's cancer. "But I learned to turn a negative experience into a positive one."

Not one to sit back and let fear take over, she, supported by her three siblings, were on a mission to fight cancer. In June, 2007, they participated in the Weekend to End Breast Cancer walk, raising \$25,000.

The weekend also served to link Alison with CancerCare Manitoba, which now co-hosts Challenge for Life — an event that aims to raise much-needed funding to battle cancers of all kinds.

The first Challenge for Life 20-km walk was Sept. 27, 2008. It raised \$650,000 and attracted 500 participants from across Manitoba, with corporate sponsors that covered many of the event costs, such as food.

Today, Alison is happy to say her mother has been declared cancer-free for two years.

Alison is also busy helping organize the second annual Challenge for Life walk, set for June 13 in Winnipeg, while preparing to take the journalism program at

Carleton University in Ottawa beginning this fall.

Caroline Jo, 18, Montreal

By Gail Johnson



Last May, Caroline Jo went on the trip of a lifetime. As an International Climate Champion representing youth, she presented her ideas on how to mitigate the effects of climate change at the G8 + 5 Environment Minister's Meeting in Kobe, Japan.

Her proposal earned her 20,000 votes and top spot in a competition hosted by the British Council's International Climate Champions program. She stressed the importance of raising awareness on climate change around the world and the provision of technology and funding to countries worst hit by the consequences of global warming.

But the CEGEP student at Marianopolis College wasn't about to let her commitment to the environment end in Kobe. Upon her return, she helped launch ICCommit Eco-Week, an annual event in which students from across the country pledge to take small steps to reduce energy consumption.

"I wanted people to make a difference in their day-to-day lives and show the politicians that we were taking action, too," Caroline says. "Some people

committed to taking only four-minute showers or to walking to school every day instead of driving. ... It's amazing to see people incorporate changes into their lives."

Alyssa Larson, 17, Hanna, Alta.

By Marjo Johne



Clever inventions often start with a sudden spark of an idea. In Alyssa Larson's case, it wasn't so much a spark but a kick from a normally gentle horse named Rocky.

The incident happened about four years ago when Alyssa, whose family owns a ranch in the Canadian Badlands town of Hanna, about two hours northeast of Calgary, tried to give Rocky some deworming medicine.

"He struck out, but I was all right, aside from a bruise," recalls Alyssa.

Horse deworming medicine is commonly administered using a syringe inserted in the mouth. Horses dislike the taste of the deworming paste, says Alyssa, and may kick or toss their heads. Some also get skittish as soon as they see a syringe coming their way.

"So I thought, 'What could we use that would be comfortable for horses?' " says

Alyssa. "The answer was to create something similar to what they're already used to having in their mouth."

Using plastic tubing from a local hardware store, Alyssa crafted a medicine dispensing device designed to fit like a bit in a horse's mouth — an invention she later showed in her high school's science fair. Four years and many design refinements later, Alyssa's fledgling company, Rock Worm Inc., is almost ready to launch the Equine MediWormer.

"It's a less invasive way of deworming horses," says Alyssa, who starts her studies in life agriculture and environmental sciences this fall at the University of Alberta.

"It will take away stress from horses and horse owners."

Roxane Fortin Lecompte, 18, Quebec City

By Christina Varga



Roxane Fortin Lecompte is the General Director of Garneau Travail Inc., a fully student-run enterprise. Based at Collège François-Xavier-Garneau, it organizes conferences and supports the entrepreneurial ventures and career explorations of students aged 17-25 in three areas: web development, interior design and environmental micro-enterprise.

In her volunteer position, Roxane oversees up to 25 student managers and 120 student employees. Her group has won many prizes and has significantly reduced their carbon footprint. She does this work, she says, because she wants to support entrepreneurship in Quebec. She has also received a \$25,000 scholarship from her college for her entrepreneurship work.

In addition to full-time studies at her CEGEP, where she studies organizational management, Roxane mentors students who come from Mexico to spend a trimester at her college and ensures that their transition to school life in Quebec City is smooth. After she finishes her CEGEP studies, she would like to go into the management program at either McGill or Ottawa universities.

For the past three years, Roxane has worked with physically and mentally challenged individuals through Adaptavie, a non-profit organization that promotes adaptive recreational sports activities for ages 10 through 45. In 2006, Roxane received Quebec City's highest recognition for her volunteerism.

"My mum taught me to care about everyone," she says, adding she learned more from the Adaptavie participants than from her last semester at school.

Alysha Li , 17, Vancouver

By Marlene Habib



To Grade 12 Vancouver student Alysha Li, embracing the fair-play spirit of the Olympic Games goes far beyond the playing field.

So when Alysha and two other members of the Vancouver District Students' Council (VDSC) attended a workshop featuring speakers from the Paralympics in November, 2007, the creative wheels for helping promote physical activity, friendship and empowerment among students of all abilities were set in motion.

Alysha, who turned 18 in March and graduates this month from Eric Hamber Secondary School, played an important role in helping land a \$10,000 grant from the City of Vancouver for a special mini-Paralympics day on May 27 called "Passport to Play." Given Vancouver is playing host to the 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympics, "Passport to Play" seemed the perfect event to "bridge the gap between disabled and able-bodied individuals," Alysha said.

"Many opportunities are now available to students to adopt an active and healthy lifestyle, but through observation, I've noticed that little was being done to promote an active and healthy lifestyle for students with disabilities," Alysha said about "Passport to Play," which she created with the help of her co-chair, Patsy Peters of the VDSC, and other students and officials at event host John Oliver Secondary School.

Alysha acted as emcee for the one-day event. About 85 able-bodied student

volunteer scorekeepers, coaches and other officials interacted with 165 athletes from 11 Vancouver high schools, who participated in about a dozen sports and activities, including soccer, softball, wheelchair basketball and a wheelchair obstacle course.

Alysha said "Passport to Play" was a resounding success, complete with opening and closing ceremonies as well as the mascots for the Vancouver Olympics/Paralympics.

She will continue to build on her organizational skills at the University of Western Ontario in London, where she'll be in the faculty of social sciences and taking management and organizational studies beginning this September.

Linda Liu, 17, Surrey, B.C.

By Christina Varga



It was Linda Liu's realization of the lack of affordable cancer medications while visiting relatives with cancer in China that led her to research the *Z. spinosa* plant. No one had previously identified the plant as a potential anticancer weapon, but Linda was drawn to the properties of its phytochemicals and betulinic acid.

Z. spinosa shows potential for treating melanoma and breast and colorectal cancer,

she says, has high levels of Vitamin C and other nutrients and thrives in harsh environments, making it potentially beneficial for patients in developing nations.

"I think my passion for international development and human rights led to my interest in health sciences," she says. "Preventable diseases disrupt communities, erode economic growth and discourage foreign investment. Widespread diseases create poverty, making it more difficult to eliminate these diseases and this causes even more illnesses to develop."

Linda won gold prizes at the Greater Vancouver Regional Science Fair, and awards at the B.C. Sanofi-Aventis BioTalent Challenges and Canada wide science fairs in 2008 and 2009, as well as a United Nations Youth Achievement Award.

Now at Sands Secondary School in Surrey, B.C., she plans to go to the University of British Columbia and hopes to pursue a career that combines international development and health sciences.

"I may choose to become a doctor and work for Doctors Without Borders or I may become involved in not-for-profit drug development," she says.

Justin Lui, 19, Edmonton

By Gail Johnson



Justin Lui remembers studying for his Grade 12 exams two years ago. He was working at the library when he noticed a homeless man walk in. Carrying a backpack stuffed with clothes, shoes,

and pop cans, the man grabbed a book then tried to conceal himself while he had a nap. That glimpse into another person's world had a profound impact on him.

"It looked like he had all his belongings with him, while I was sitting there not worrying about a thing in the world," Justin explains. "He didn't know where he was going to sleep that night or where his next meal would come from. That perspective drew me out of my comfort zone. I just thought, 'Is this right? Should I just be sitting here?' "

He didn't just sit there. The University of Alberta sciences student joined the City of Edmonton Youth Council, which he now chairs, and spearheaded a homelessness committee.

Last year the committee held Heart 2 Art, an eco-friendly art competition that drew more than 1,000 submissions by people under 20. The group raised more than \$110,000, which went to Boyle Street Community Services and housing for people in the inner-city.

Justin wants to pursue medicine and this summer is going to Thailand to help a doctor set up medical clinics in poverty-stricken villages.

Isdin Oke, 18, Guelph

By Gail Johnson



It was the bananas in his family kitchen that got Isdin Oke thinking. His mom would buy big bunches when they were on sale, but the fruit often didn't get eaten before going bad. If only there were a way to slow down the way they ripened, Isdin thought.

So he and a friend embarked on a research project involving snapdragon flowers, in which they manipulated a chemical, thereby delaying the plant's aging process. The idea earned the students a gold medal at last year's Waterloo-Wellington Science and Engineering Fair, but Isdin believes that it could have a profound impact on global food shortages.

"This is a way to prolong the life of the flower that we could use in fruits and vegetables to slow down their natural degradation," Isdin explains. "We could preserve food and produce for long periods of time."

Isdin has also competed twice in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Canadian National Brain Bee, a competition based on neuroscience and psychology now in its second year. (He was one of three champions last year.)

He's especially excited about nanoscience, which he's majoring in at the University of Guelph.

"It's so new and exciting and intriguing," says Isdin, who's heading into his second year. "There's so much out there we can't see, things on the atomic and molecular level that build up the world we live in."

John Park, 18, Toronto

By Marjo Johne



John Park remembers being rendered breathless by the icebergs, glaciers and creatures of the Arctic. But his northern adventure in 2007 also left the Toronto high-school student feeling worried about the future of the planet.

"I saw first-hand the devastating effects of climate change," says John, who travelled to the Arctic through Students on Ice, an organization in Gatineau, Que., that organizes educational expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic. "Auyittuq is an Inuktitut word that means 'the land that never melts,' but when we got to the Auyittuq National Park, it was all puddles, all melting away."

John began painting about the environment and got his work displayed at various art galleries. "But I wanted to do more," he says. "So after thinking about it for a

while, I talked to some friends about forming a group that does hands-on activism for the environment."

Environmentally Concerned Students had its first meeting on March 29, 2008, which happened to be Earth Day. For its first project the group is focusing on the Beaufort Sea, a part of the Arctic Ocean believed to have a seabed rich with petroleum reserves.

John says he would like the Canadian government to stop oil and gas exploration in the Beaufort Sea until proper plans are in place to protect the region, including developing a method to deal with oil spills. His group has gathered about 2,000 signatures on a petition, which has been sent to the Prime Minister.

John has also been promoting his cause at schools and various events.

"The more people know about it, the more pressure there is for the government to respond and do something about it," he says.

Nadine Qureshi, 19, Victoria

By Marlene Habib



Nadine Qureshi, who has no shortage of causes for which she works tirelessly, won't rest until malaria is eradicated. With a slew



of volunteer work under her belt, Nadine spent three years helping found the Mission Against Malaria Society (MAMS), registering it as a charity, to help raise funds for the eradication and prevention of the disease.

"My parents are both nurses. I grew up with a background in medicine and my dad was born in East Africa, so I have known about malaria and its infection problems," says Nadine, whose family moved to Victoria from Edmonton five years ago. "If enough energy and people are involved, I really think it can be eradicated."

Nadine's love of volunteering began five years ago, starting with the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. She has also been involved with Free the Children, World Partnership Walk and Journey of Hope.

Nadine credits her twin sister Natasha, now a director of MAMS, with helping with the society's growth. Both recently completed the second year of the cell biology program at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and may pursue a career in medicine.

Last August, when Nadine was 19, she travelled to Tanzania after helping raise \$8,000 in three months. The money went to buying mosquito netting for 600 families, to whom she distributed the nets personally.

"Hung over a bed, mosquito netting is very effective in preventing malaria and it's relatively cheap — six to 10 dollars each — and lasts 10 years easily," she notes.

While in Tanzania, the avid public speaker also helped link her former high school, St. Michael's University School in Victoria, with the boarding school her father graduated from, as well as the International Rotary Club. She believes this connection will help get malaria treatment to needy groups such as children in boarding schools, women and large families.

Sebastian Roberts, 19, Vancouver

By Gail Johnson



There's no denying the crucial role technology plays in young people's lives. Sebastian Roberts is capitalizing on that, using the Web not only to develop a community of socially conscious youth but also to revolutionize learning in the far reaches of the globe.

Sebastian, who graduated from Lord Byng Secondary School in 2006, co-founded We Got Skillz (www.wegotskillz.org), a website for youth. "It's a platform for young people to express themselves," Sebastian says, pointing to the music, dance, fashion, and sports aspects of the site.

He wants to widen the site's mandate by developing an online curriculum that would be available for free to young people around the world. The way he sees it, distance education shouldn't just be for wealthy kids from wealthy nations.

The concept is similar to one that propelled his involvement in Bavubuka Foundation, a non-profit organization that aims to nurture young leaders in Uganda. Wanting to empower youth through sports and play, Sebastian developed the organization's All*Sports branch. He has made three trips to Uganda, taking with him more than 900 kilograms (2,000 pounds) of donated sports equipment and clothing.

"One ball can change a child's life," he says.

Bavubuka Sports is founded on the belief that group sports promote co-operation, improve health, develop self-confidence and provide much-needed leisure time for disadvantaged youth. Bavubuka Sports's main goals include teaching and modelling the tools essential for leadership, including co-operation and teamwork, skill development, self-esteem, and self-confidence through recreation.

Carolina Romeo, 16, Calgary

By Marjo Johne



She's a genius and a jock, entering the University of Calgary's Schulich School of Engineering at the age of 15 and playing ringette and field hockey at inter-university, provincial and national levels.

She's also a juggler and polymath who coaches girls in both field hockey and ringette, and is so adept at decorating pastries she was named best student in her high school's commercial foods program.

It's amazing how Carolina Romeo, who turned 16 last September, manages to do it all. But that's exactly what she's trying to teach the girls she's coaching.

"A lot of girls quit sports when they're older because they want to focus more on academics or whatever other activities they're involved in," says Carolina, whose family moved to Calgary from Buenos Aires, Argentina when she was eight years old. "But I want to show that they can do it all."

Carolina, who skipped two grades in high school, made sports history last year when she became the youngest ever student athlete at the University of Calgary. But her sports activities go beyond the university; she plays defence for the Calgary Belle AA ringette team — which won the national championships this year — and is also part of the team that will represent Canada this summer at the World Junior Ringette Championship games, to be held in the Czech Republic.

"That's another thing I love about being in sports, I get to do a lot of travelling," says Carolina.

Alex Shipillo, 19, Vancouver

By Gail Johnson



In his last year of high school, Alex Shipillo was busy applying for scholarships and researching post-secondary institutions. What struck him wasn't the breadth of options available but the fact that so few people around him seemed to know about them. So he and a friend, as part of a class assignment, started a website offering such data to their peers.

The day they launched their site, in 2006, Youth Canada (www.youthcanada.ca) had 800 hits. The next year, it had 18,000.

It was relaunched in 2008 under the umbrella of Impact Entrepreneurship Group — which encourages entrepreneurial spirit in young people — and the founders are hoping the site will attract 100,000 visitors this year. It has articles on everything from applying to U.S. schools to volunteer opportunities. "It's all the information I wish I'd had in high school," Alex says. "It's really filled a niche."

Through Impact, Alex also developed the Microcredit Competition (<http://microcredit.impact.org>), which provides teams of high-school students from across Canada with a \$100 loan and one week to generate as much revenue as possible for a charity of their choice. In 2008, it raised \$15,000 through 35 schools; next year, Alex is hoping 500 schools will participate.

"It's very inspiring for students to know that they're capable of taking an idea and turning it into reality," says Alex, who has just finished his third year studying sciences at UBC and hopes to start his own business one day. "Youth engagement is about more than just learning at school," he says. "It's about supporting and inspiring them."

Laura Stymiest, 19, Fredericton, N.B.

By Marjo Johne



For eight days last February, a group of university students and health-care professionals from New Brunswick travelled to villages just outside the Honduras capital of Tegucigalpa and provided free medical and dental care to thousands of residents. All because a 19-year-old biology student named Laura Stymiest stumbled upon the website of Global Brigades, a non-profit organization that gives students opportunities to volunteer in public health and development programs in poor countries.

"You have to start your own club to work with Global Brigades," says Laura, who studies at Mount Allison University in Sackville, near Moncton. "So that's what I did." Recruiting students to join her on a medical aid mission to Honduras was the easy part. The 34 who signed up were "enthusiastic and ready from the get-go." Getting doctors and dentists to come aboard was another story.

"It got to the point where I started thinking this trip wasn't going to happen, but then we ended up with 10 doctors and dentists, including my mom, who happens to be a dentist." Laura took care of all the travel arrangements and collected medical supplies, including a donation of medicines and supplies worth about \$35,000 from Quebec-based pharmaceutical firm Merck Frosst Canada Ltd.

At the end of their eight-day medical tour, Laura and her brigade had treated 3,600 Hondurans, many of whom had never before seen a doctor or dentist.

"The greatest part about the whole experience was that we didn't have to turn people away."

Lauren Wallace, 19, Hamilton, Ont.

By Marlene Habib



An eye-opening trip to Kenya two years ago taught Lauren Wallace there is a mountain of work to do in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Last December, Lauren, an arts and sciences student at the University of Guelph in Ontario, led a team from the university that also included her aunt Cathy Wallace on a climb of Mount Kilimanjaro in northeastern Tanzania. The seven-day

adventure, called The Climb to End AIDS, raised \$16,000 to help the Masai Centre in Guelph support an HIV and AIDS clinic in Lesotho, Africa.

For the then-19-year-old, whose family lives in Hamilton, Ont., and all her team members, preparing for the climb took months of gruelling training and a coordinated months-long effort.

But she was driven to succeed.

"I went to Kenya at the end of Grade 12 with the Free the Children organization to help build schools, and while I was there, we learned a lot about the health of the community we were working in," Lauren recalls about her motivation for The Climb to End AIDS.

"At one of the talks we had, I learned 8,000 people die every day of AIDS around the world. I got really upset and angry about that and I really wanted to do something big to raise funds and awareness. When I came home, I decided to link a climb of the world's highest freestanding mountain, which is a difficult feat, with fundraising for HIV and AIDS in one of the world's most devastated regions to symbolically show people that overcoming this epidemic is possible."

Lauren also spearheaded turning the fund-raising project into a University of Guelph independent study course last fall for her team. The academic credit course was as much for educational purposes as it was to ensure the climbing team's

safety on Mount Kilimanjaro.

"We met on a regular basis and did research on Tanzania ... and that helped us prepare for the climb," she says.

As Lauren enters her third year studying arts and sciences, she is looking to partner with a youth-based organization in Toronto that would act as an umbrella group for her Climb to End AIDS. In the next couple of years, she hopes to lead another fundraising climb, this time in Argentina.

Michael Xu, 17, Kanata, Ont.

By Gail Johnson



For some people, business acumen comes naturally. Take Michael Xu, a Grade 12 student at A.Y. Jackson Secondary School.

"Some people are really good at basketball; some people are really good at guitar. I wanted to be really good at something, to create my own thing, so I just started a business."

That was when he was in Grade 10, and Vestige Gear Inc. (www.vestige-gear.com) started out as a site dedicated to the hip-hop market in general and those with an interest in a dance known as the "clown walk" in particular.

The business has evolved into not only a commercial venture that sells everything from hoodies to jewellery but also an online community for aspiring young designers, and now has more than 5,000 members.

Michael took his vision one step further when his international-business class called for a fundraising project. After helping raise more than \$20,000 for a girls' school in Kenya, he was determined to continue with philanthropic efforts.

"I thought, 'Why not make our own foundation with our own purpose, our own goal, of helping youth achieve their dreams? We always hear about youth dropping out of school or turning to drugs. What about funding — financially and psychologically — their dreams?'"

Whether youth want to learn to play guitar or start their own business, Michael's Your Dream, Your World Foundation (www.yourdreamyourworld.org) provides monetary and moral support.

Michael will spend the summer visiting family in China, where he also hopes to expand Vestige's business.

Xingyu Zhou, 16, Saskatoon, Sask.

By Christina Varga



Xingyu Zhou's Grade 8 science fair project started her on the route to identifying chemicals with potential health benefits in the bark of trees used in the lumber industry.

She had found a type of antioxidant in fava beans, and her research on this led her to looking for antioxidants in common tree bark. She decided to study the bark of trees discarded in the lumber industry because of her other passion of waste reduction.

She contacted the University of Saskatchewan and got some lab space, and for the past couple of years has been purifying the complex substances in the tree bark to try and find a couple of chemicals that show some anticancer and antibacterial possibilities.

She has won a Canada Wide Science Fair prize for this project, and another on using enzymes to degrade waste to make ethanol that she worked on when she was waiting for lab space to develop her tree bark project.

She has another year at Walter Murray Collegiate Institute in Saskatoon and, after that, she would like to study medicine or do medical research.

"I always wanted to find something new that will benefit humanity," she said.

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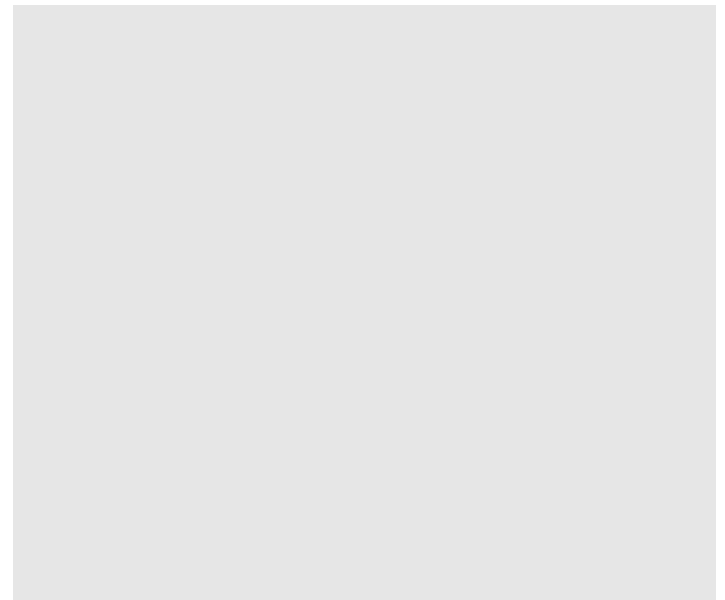
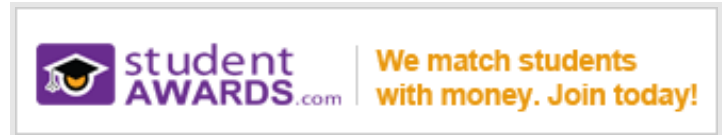
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