



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

For Immediate Release

November 21, 2007

Local youth awarded for promoting peace and tolerance at YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast

Hamilton, ON – Four local youth were the proud recipients of YMCA Peace Medals at this morning's annual YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast. The Peace Medal is awarded annually to individuals or groups who model how each of us can contribute to peace. Without any special means or resources, these individuals create positive social change locally and internationally.

2007 YMCA Peace Medal Winners:

Adult Individual Category (Age 25+):

Nancy DiGregorio

- Played an instrumental role in seeking peaceful solutions to violence, conflict, discrimination and injustice in schools and out into the streets of Hamilton.
- Believes we must empower youth to be leaders and stand up for the cause of peace and justice.
- Brought the Leaders Today program into schools and spearheaded the Diversity Training that has reached full system implementation.

Youth Individual Category (Age 24 and under): 3-way tie (all nominees)

Rachel Gardner

- Rachel is the co-leader of HOPE (Highschoolers Opening People's Eyes) where she leads others in recognizing the importance of safe and peaceful communities.
- Through her work and research in world issues she was selected as one of the World Vision delegates for the "Emerging Global Leaders Conference".
- She actively seeks to reduce poverty, crime, injustice and violence as well as protecting women's rights.

Jarrett Mazza-Anthony

- Jarrett is an advocate for all victims and those in need.
- In order to assist third world countries, he inspired 350 students to give up a Sunday to walk and raise money. In addition he has organized food drives and is gives to others in need.
- He promotes peace through his actions and speaks out for justice and peace for all.

Kaylee Elizabeth St. Pierre

- KayLee is 12 years old and cares about making her community a place for all to feel safe and welcome.
- She was the first prize recipient for her anti-bullying speech with the Hamilton

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YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington

79 James Street South, Hamilton, ON L8P 2Z1 tel: 905-529-7102 fax: 905-529-6682 www.ymcahb.on.ca

Charitable Registration # 10808 3825 RR0001

Wentworth School Board Speech Competition.

- She has allied with teachers through peer to peer mediation in order to teach younger students to resolve conflict peacefully.
- She was awarded the Ontario Principal's Award when graduated grade 5.

Youth Group Category (Age 24 and under):

Social Justice Committee at Lester B. Pearson High School, Burlington

- The Social Justice Committee promotes non-violence and raises awareness for humanitarian issues among the youth and community.
- Last year raised the group raised \$13,000 to build a school in Sierra Leone. This year they are raising funds to increase awareness for the children in the Dominican Republic.
- They encouraged the student body to band together to support the human rights issues in a cooperative format and worked tirelessly to raise awareness which exist on a local/national/international level
- On International Peace Day they planted a tree to raise awareness for non-violence and alternative dispute resolutions.

"The YMCA Peace Medallion recipients have led the way in showing how any one of us has the ability or power to create positive social change without special resources. They are a tremendous inspiration and role model for improving the quality of life in a community, either at home or overseas," said Jim Commerford, YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington President & CEO.

This year's YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast featured international speakers Marina Nemat, Author and Lana Slezić, Photojournalist and Author who spoke about the plight of women in the Middle East. In interview format, Emcee Connie Smith of CHCH News, engaged the two women in conversations around their cultural observations, beliefs and hopes for women, which will be aired on CHCH News Straight Talk on Saturday, November 24, 2007 at 6:30 pm.

Since 1981, YMCA World Peace Day has been recognized annually throughout the world on the third Saturday in November. In 1984, YMCA Canada expanded on this initiative by dedicating a full week to this critical issue.

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For further information, please contact:

Kate Walton
Manager, Communications
905-317-4941
Katherine_walton@ymca.ca