

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SASKATCHEWAN YOUTH AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

Premier Brad Wall announced today the names of five young people who will receive the Saskatchewan Youth Award.

"Each of the recipients has demonstrated leadership and dedication to the well-being of their fellow citizens," Wall said. "We are fortunate to live in a province where so many young people are actively engaged in their communities, helping to shape the future of Saskatchewan."

The Saskatchewan Youth Award is bestowed on citizens ages 15 to 24 who have made significant contributions to Saskatchewan through personal accomplishments and outstanding achievement. Including the five new members, 16 youth have received the award since its inception in 2006.

The 2008 recipients are:

- Bryce Ehman, Weyburn
- Jasmine Erickson, Estevan
- Justin Gryba, Saskatoon
- Nicole LaPlante, North Battleford
- Sarah Thiesson, Clavet

The recipients will receive their awards this fall. Recipients are selected from nominations submitted by the public. Selections are made by an independent committee comprised of members of the Saskatchewan Honours Advisory Council and youth representatives.

For more information on the Saskatchewan Youth Award or the Saskatchewan Honours and Awards Program, please visit www.ops.gov.sk.ca.

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Bryce Ehman

Bryce Ehman of Weyburn is a role model who shines in his community by reaching out to help those less fortunate. He has volunteered at the Functional Integrated Program at Weyburn Comprehensive High School, mentoring students with special conditions like Autism and Downs Syndrome. He has been a “swimming buddy” for special needs pre-kindergarten children and officiates minor hockey games for Midget age level and other elementary school sports. Recently he was a part of Team Sask at the 2009 Canada-Wide Science Fair in Winnipeg. Bryce works for a pharmacy, delivering prescriptions to shut-ins, nursing homes and long term care facilities, taking time to visit with his customers. Bryce is also an active member of the Board of Directors for The Family Place/Weyburn and Area Council on Child Abuse. He still finds time for extra curricular activities including hockey, speed swimming, water polo, choir and acting in his high school’s musical productions. Bryce will graduate this year and plans to attend the University of Saskatchewan in the fall.

Jasmine Erickson

Jasmine Erickson of Estevan is a talented performer whose dedication to her school and her community has made them both a better place. Through SHOUTS (Students Helping Others Unite Together Socially) she mentored new students, helping ease the transition to high school. She was awarded Most Valuable SHOUTS two years in a row. She was on the honour roll through all four years of high school and led many activities in her school to raise awareness of healthy lifestyle choices. She was a member of Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD). Jasmine is passionate about performing. She has won numerous awards for acting and cheerleading choreography. She has 14 years experience in dance, including jazz, hip-hop and highland dancing – for which she has a gold medal. Jasmine has taught Sunday school, participated in Air Cadets, and acted as committee head for the Estevan Relay for Life. In 2006, she won the Estevan Idol competition and has since given performances at the United Way Telethon and Centennial Day celebrations. Jasmine is currently attending the Randolph Academy in Toronto where she is the Student Rep for her class and assists with the younger dance programs.

Justin Gryba

Justin Gryba of Saskatoon is a socially conscience individual whose energy and enthusiasm has done much to help children in his community. A photographer by trade, Justin teaches a weekly community photography class to youth. Besides volunteering for the university paper, he has covered events including the University of Saskatchewan Walk for Darfur and the Canadian Cancer Association’s Relay for Life. He is currently working on a book for the pediatrics ward at the Royal University Hospital, to illustrate what a child will experience when admitted to hospital, in hope to alleviate the anxiety of young patients. Justin also volunteers on the pediatrics ward, comforting and entertaining patients. He was the co-facilitator and leader of Jump Start, an after school program for inner city children, exposing them to health conscious choices and is a group leader for the University of Saskatchewan weekly Inner City Swim. Justin is in his third year at the University of Saskatchewan where he is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies, with a plan to continue in Education while maintaining his business and community involvement with photography.

Nicole LaPlante

Nicole LaPlante of North Battleford leads by example. Honour roll student and valedictorian of her graduating class, Nicole was Junior Chief of the school council, spearheaded the school recycling program and reported on school events for the local newspaper and radio station. Nicole has been a member of several youth organizations that organize presentations to high school students about substance abuse and healthy lifestyle choices including Sakewew Substance Awareness and Empowerment for Youth (SSAEY), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), and Battleford Concern for Youth. Nicole participated in several local and provincial conferences giving presentations on drug and alcohol abuse and teen pregnancy. For the last two years she has participated in the Summer Immigration Support Program, introducing children of immigrant families to the community, language and fun activities. In 2007, Nicole was a foster parent for two young brothers and donated her hair to cancer patients receiving chemotherapy. She works hardest to empower female students to better themselves, especially young mothers. She has completed her first year of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan through the North West Regional College.

Sarah Thiesson

Sarah Thiesson of Clavet strives to benefit the lives of those around her through conscientious leadership. In 2004, she received the Master Leader Award from the Better Than Best Youth Leadership Training Program held at her school. Since then, the Sarah Thiesson Youth Leadership Award has been presented annually at Clavet School. She helped her School host five annual walks for the Hope Cancer Help Centre in Saskatoon. Throughout high school she remained on the high honour roll, receiving numerous awards including the Governor General's Academic Award. A dedicated athlete, Sarah was recognized in 2008 as Most Valuable Player in five sports and named Female Athlete of the Year. In 2008, she apprenticed under beamline scientist Ian Coulthard at the Canadian Light Source Synchrotron. At the University of Saskatchewan she was awarded the prestigious Chancellor's Scholarship, and also received the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan Prize, given to the Grade 12 student entering the College of Engineering with the highest marks, with an average of 100 per cent in seven subjects. She has completed her first year of Engineering.