

MEDIA RELEASE

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UNITED WAY PROUD TO AWARD FIRST EVER YOUTH LEADERS IN ACTION SCHOLARSHIPS

United Way of Winnipeg is proud to announce the very first recipients of its Youth Leaders in Action Scholarships. United Way's Youth Relations Council designed the scholarship to celebrate the contributions of young community leaders who have made a difference in the lives of people around them. "It's all about young people getting involved and connecting to their community," said Lainey Shrom, Vice-Chair of United Way's Youth Relations Council. "We wanted to create a scholarship to recognize the young leaders in our city who have challenged themselves to effect change."

Four young leaders have each been awarded the \$500 scholarship. One of this year's recipients, Norman McLean, grew up in the West Broadway neighbourhood and began attending the West Broadway Youth Outreach drop-in centre when he was very young. McLean volunteered at the centre as a teenager and was later hired as a summer employee. Now at 24, McLean is still involved and connected to WBYO as a volunteer for a weekly homework club. "I know first hand the difference it can mean to have a positive role model in your life, and a place where you are free to have fun, learn and grow," said McLean. "It means everything to me to be able to give that back to the children at the centre."

Two of the recipients have been involved with Girl Guides for over a decade. Stephanie Kardal is currently a leader with three Guide units and has challenged herself to adapt the traditional Guiding program for individuals with special needs. Kelsey Jensen is using her skills as a Girl Guide leader to run activities for new Canadians at the International Centre.

Just five years ago, Suhjin Kang was a new Canadian. She and her family moved from Korea in 2002 and received support from the International Centre. She saw firsthand the difference it made for her family, and is now giving back by volunteering. "I would like to help newcomers, since I was one of them five years ago," said Kang. "By helping newcomers at the International Centre, I want to make our community a much warmer and friendlier one."

United Way of Winnipeg and its Youth Relations Council want to congratulate the very first recipients of the Youth Leaders in Action Scholarships and thank them for their commitment to improving the lives of others. It's our hope that their dedication will inspire other youth to connect with the community and make a difference.

To qualify for a United Way Youth Leaders in Action Scholarship, applicants must attend or have been accepted to a post-secondary institution. They must demonstrate leadership and a genuine commitment to the community at a neighbourhood level. Applicants must also demonstrate a need for financial support and be connected to one of the nearly 100 organizations funded by United Way of Winnipeg. United Way's Youth Relations Council will award four youth with the scholarship every spring.

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