

**Press Release** - Toronto, January 30, 2008:

## **Rotary Youth Impact Awards given at Old Mill Gala Event.**



Photo by John Stevenson (all rights released)

The Rotary Club of Toronto West honoured award recipients Laurie-Beth Davidson, Prachy Mohan, Adam Wheeler, Honourable James Bartleman, Malcolm Black, and Kelly Clark. The club made a \$10,000 donation to support Mr Bartleman's efforts through Club Amick to alleviate illiteracy amongst aboriginal children in Northern Ontario. Club President Brian Hicks (rear) emceed the Awards Gala Event recently held at the Old Mill Inn.

Over 270 guests attended the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Rotary Youth Impact Awards Dinner Gala held at the Old Mill Inn on January 25<sup>th</sup>. This popular event honours individuals, organizations and businesses that have had a positive impact on youth in Toronto and surrounding communities.

The Rotary Club of Toronto West presented recipients with Youth Impact Awards in six separate categories.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to the Honourable James Bartleman, immediate past Lieutenant Governor for Ontario for his outstanding efforts to improve the lives of young aboriginal children in Northern Ontario through a series of literacy initiatives.

Mr Bartleman's extensive travels visiting native communities of the north left a strong impression on him of the seemingly hopeless problems faced by the youth who, amongst many things, lacked simple access to books and the miraculous world of literature. He organized book drives, and developed an aboriginal school twinning program, aboriginal summer literacy camps, and the Club Amick program to give aboriginal children the opportunity to become literate, to gain a better education and to live more enjoyable lives. Over 1.2 million books have been contributed through these initiatives.

A \$10,000 dollar donation was given by The Rotary Club of Toronto West to support Mr. Bartleman's Club Amick program.

The Business Category Award was given to Kelly Clark, founder of "Who is Nobody?" a Literacy and Character Education Program that supports students in grades 1 to 12 to help them realize that "Everyone is Somebody". By following five easy steps, teachers can help students identify their personal strengths and use them to help others. In 2002, Kelly received seed money from The Rotary Club of Toronto West to start the program, and it has now reached out widely to School Boards across Ontario and other provinces.

The Individual Award was given to Laurie-Beth Davidson, a former nurse and long-standing resident of Etobicoke. Her life-long efforts in helping children in Metro Children's Aid, orphanages and through the Refugee Support efforts of her Church has led her to travel around the world more recently to deliver bedkits to needy children through the "Sleeping Children Around the World" or SCAW program.

Malcolm Black was recognized with the Community Organization Award for his initiatives with a registered charity of the Toronto Boat Museum called Mahogany Harbour, which he co-founded. The charity's purpose is the transformation of lives, particularly "Kids at Risk", to bring groups of kids together to build a number of boats typically within 2 days. The group also involves youth in boat restoration, and will be expanding this year with a boating program for handicapped kids.

The Youth Award was given to Adam Wheeler, a passionate community activist and student leader. Adam's work includes youth advocacy and working with marginalized communities, developing programs to engage youth in their neighborhoods, and educating others about social justice and equity. In the community, Adam has volunteered with the Toronto Public Library, the Toronto Youth Cabinet, Planned Parenthood, Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia program, and The STOP Community Food Centre. Adam has worked at the Ontario Human Rights Commission as a summer student, supporting staff during mediations, investigations and legal proceedings, and now works as a Co-op student with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association where he helps to defend the liberties of the underprivileged.

The Under 18 Youth Award was given to Prachy Mohan. She has been recognized as a dedicated young leader, who has influenced the lives of many youth enabling them to see a different perspective on social justice issues, such as discrimination, hate crimes, mental health and education rights. She is involved with the Youth Action Committee, Justice for Children and Youth, the President of the Multicultural Club, Treasurer of the Student Council, Student Executive of the United Way of Greater Toronto, Chair of the Fundraising Committee of Peer Leaders, and many others. She has received the prestigious Multicultural Club Leadership Award for bringing about cross-cultural experiences among new immigrant students. She has played a significant role in raising money to build a school in Sierra Leone. Her contributions have enabled Jarvis Collegiate to fundraise over \$15,000 to date for this cause.

Planning has already started for next year's Tenth Anniversary Rotary Youth Impact Awards Gala event. Since its inception, The Rotary Club of Toronto West has raised over \$190,000 in support of Rotary's programs for youth in the community and around the world. Visit [www.RotaryTorontoWest.ca](http://www.RotaryTorontoWest.ca)

---

Further information available from John Stevenson, Public Relations Chair, Rotary Club of Toronto West. Direct 416 233 8657. [john.liz.stevenson@royalpage.ca](mailto:john.liz.stevenson@royalpage.ca)