

Local Scout earns Duke of Edinburgh Award



Steve Vickers and Karen Matson, Duke of Edinburgh's Award program advisors for the 1st Bolton Scouts, flanked recipients Beatrice Imrie and Sean Strong.

By Bill Rea

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award program continues to be a going concern, and that was demonstrated Friday, as about 70 young people received the Gold certification.

The recipients included two members of the 1st Bolton Scouts; Beatrice Imrie and Sean Strong.

The presentations were made by Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex and youngest son of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, at a ceremony in Toronto.

A Palgrave resident, Imrie is a graduate of the 3D Animation program at Humber College. She has passed through the Bronze and Silver levels of the award program.

"The whole experience was really worthwhile," she commented after the ceremony. "A little trying at times, but that made it more worthwhile."

Strong, who lives in Nobleton, is in the culinary skills program at Humber, studying to be a chef.

He said his involvement in the award program "has helped me grow, both as an individual and as a member of society."

"The skills, hardships and friendships I have endured and developed will stay with me for the rest of my life," he added.

The two went through the program with other members of the Scouts. Strong said the experience was "totally worthwhile, in spite of the fact we wanted to kill each other at times."

Jennifer Reynolds, Ontario past-president of the program, observed this is the 50th anniversary of the program operating in Canada. Since then, some 500,000 young people have taken advantage of the program, and she observed it's still growing.

She also stressed the efforts of the participants are at the heart of the program.

Mark Standish, of RBC Capital Markets, which sponsored Friday's ceremonies, offered his congratulations to all receiving recognition. He said the time and effort it took them to complete each level of the program speaks to their persistence and commitment. Standish said he went through the program in his youth, and he observed that it helped develop his skill sets and confidence.

"I hold the award and its primary purpose close to my heart," he said.

"Today is truly a day to celebrate," commented Jim Kershaw, president of the award program in Canada, as he reflected on the number of people who have already gone through it, and observed there are about 40,000 currently in it. "We're very proud of the program in Canada."

Kershaw also reflected on all the work it took the recipients to reach the Gold level, calling it an "indication that you are a very special person."

As well, he observed that many start the program, but not all complete it.

"You are in a very elite group," he said. "You developed new, transferable skills that will stay with you for life."

"You set goals, you worked hard and you succeeded," Kershaw added. "In fact, you've already made a difference."

Prince Edward told the recipients that as they reflect back on what they have been through, "you feel it's been a worthwhile adventure."

"I'm sure there were times when you really wondered why you were doing it," he added. "It's a great feeling when you get to the end."

The Prince also expressed gratitude to the leaders, parents and friends of the recipients for the support they have offered during the

program. He said these might be individual awards, but they can't be achieved without a lot of outside help.

Keep up the excellent work, he said. It's very, very much appreciated.

When you leave this room, just walk a few inches taller, he told the recipients, pointing out a lot of people say they can do it. The difference is you know you can.