



STAFF PHOTO J.T. LEWIS

The 2005 Rotary Medallion Awards Program, recipients are, front from left: Victoria Ventresca, Notre Dame College school; Trudy Tran, Centennial high school; Marie-Pier Picard, Ecole Secondaire Jean-Vanier; Heather Labelle, Eastdale secondary school and Melanie Guilmette, Ecole Secondaire Confederation. Second row from left are: Greg Higginbotham, Notre Dame; Cole Richards, Centennial; Eric Dimeo, Jean-Vanier; Brandon L  houx, Eastdale; and Kevin Daboll, Confederation. Behind the students are Rotary Club of Welland's organizers and presenters Vic Kerschl and Alison Brown.

Rotary honours 10 students

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The Welland Rotary Club honoured 10 graduating students, two from each Welland area high school, for demonstrating the ideals the organization was founded on.

"We're looking for kids who are not just academics," said Welland Rotary member Vic Kerschl.

"Our motto is service above self and we're looking for kids who kind of exemplify that."

The local Rotary Club invited the students to a luncheon at the Welland Club on Tuesday.

One thing that set the 20-year-old program apart is that the winners are selected by the student's peers, Kerschl said - that aspect of the program shows the winning students that people have noticed the work they've been doing.

Notre Dame student Greg Higginbotham called it a prestigious award.

"It's renowned all over," he said.

To be selected from 350 graduating Notre Dame students, "is pretty amazing to me. I'm happy to get it."

Victoria Ventresca has spent her years at Notre Dame involved in activities ranging from "social justice" causes to student council.

Jean-Vanier student Eric Dimeo said the fact that it was his peers that selected him for the award felt "really good. It's a great honour to receive the award."

Marie-Pier Picard has spent her years at Jean-Vanier "working really hard to get where I am today. I do everything I can to get the best results possible."

But she "never thought" that her efforts were being noticed by her classmates.

"It's good to be recognized by your school and Welland Rotary," said Eastdale student Brandon L  houx.

Throughout his years at the school the student council president has stayed very active, and the recognition "feels good."

Heather Labelle said she's worked hard throughout high school and winning the award was an honour.

She's currently the president of Eastdale's music council, but her involvement goes way beyond a love for music. She was also involved in activities ranging from enrichment

programs to leadership conferences.

Centennial student Trudy Tran said winning the award came as a surprise.

She thinks her classmates chose her for the honour because of her involvement with the school's sports and music programs.

Cole Richards said it was an "accomplishment and an achievement."

And like Tran, the Centennial student called winning the medallion a surprise - especially since he's only been with the school for the past year.

Melanie Guilmette has spent the past year working "like crazy" on various committees at Confederation, including helping organize the prom.

"Confederation is a smaller school and everyone knows each other," she said. The size of the school allowed her to build a friendships with fellow students.

Besides staying involved in school activities, Confederation student Kevin Daboll said he also tries to keep a positive attitude. He also tries to lend "a helping hand" whenever he can.

That might have had something to do with winning the award, he added.

The students will receive their awards at their graduations.