

FOR RELEASE
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Government of Yukon honours outstanding Yukon youth

Four Yukoners are being recognized through the Outstanding Youth Achievement Awards. Jetta Bilsky, Elizabeth Boyd, Katie Vowk and Jack Royle are the 2017 award winners. The awards were presented by Yukon Commissioner Doug Phillips, Minister of Education Tracy-Anne McPhee and Minister of Tourism and Culture Jeanie Dendys.

The awards recognize youth who are involved in their Yukon communities. Examples of involvement include volunteering, fundraising, helping seniors and Elders, or any activity that allows youth to act as positive role models.

Quotes

"It is with immense pride that we recognize young Yukoners making a difference in their communities. Our territory has long been known for its excellent volunteer spirit and it is clear Yukon's future will continue to shine bright with the contribution of the youth being honoured today."

–Yukon Commissioner Doug Phillips

"Yukon youth who are going above and beyond and contribute to our communities are an inspiration to their peers and to Yukoners of all ages."

–Minister of Education Tracy-Anne McPhee

Quick facts

- Winners receive a cash prize of \$250, a certificate of recognition from the Commissioner's office and are featured on posters in their community.
- Youth between the ages of 15 and 20 can be nominated for an Outstanding Youth Achievement Award.

Learn more: Outstanding Youth Achievement Awards

See backgrounder.

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Backgrounder

Biographies of 2017 Outstanding Youth Achievement Awards winners

Jetta Bilsky
Age: 17
Community of nominee: Whitehorse

Jetta, 17, is being recognized for being an outstanding role model, volunteer, and an active member of the sport community. Jetta works hard to excel while still being kind, polite, dependable and loving. She was one of the first volunteers with the Whitehorse General Hospital's volunteer program. She was instrumental in the development of the volunteer program through piloting the activities, processes and policies involved with the program's implementation. Jetta is proud of the work she does, working and volunteering as needed. She sees this as valuable experience for her career aspirations as a physician. Jetta is also part of a team of volunteers who prepare and serve food to those in need at the Sacred Heart Soup Kitchen. Important aspects of this volunteer role include organization, working as a team, compassion and friendliness. Jetta is also a youth basketball referee for high school aged 12 to 17. She was chosen to play for the Yukon women's basketball team at the Western Canada Games and at the Arctic Winter Games. Jetta has excelled in the sport, winning several awards such as Most Dedicated, Most Improved and Most Valuable Player. She is currently completing her silver level Duke of Edinburgh Award. Jetta contributes to the betterment of Whitehorse, local citizens and Yukon in general.

Jack Royle
Age: 17
Community of nominee: Whitehorse

Jack, 17, is being recognized for his willingness to help others and his involvement with many Vanier Catholic Secondary School and Whitehorse community initiatives. He began helping in the soup kitchen beside his mother at the age of six. He also helps assemble the Rotary snack bags that the soup kitchen distributes. Thanks to his dedication, Jack was awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship by the Rotary Club of Whitehorse in 2016 for his outstanding community service. Jack was given many organizing and coordinating tasks by the Rendezvous Committee and was recognized by the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous Society as their Youth Volunteer of the Year in 2016. He has volunteered for every food drive the Catholic Schools of Whitehorse has organized. He has also been an active member of Vanier's Social Justice Club. Jack was a founding member of Vanier's Gay-Straight Alliance and is an outspoken advocate for acceptance of all people, regardless of their religion, sexual orientation or gender. He has been awarded the Christian Witness and Service Award multiple times. Jack is an outstanding citizen at Vanier Catholic Secondary School as well as an outstanding member of the Whitehorse Sacred Heart Parish and the city in general. Jack is a leader and is an outspoken defender of those who have faced difficult circumstances.

Elizabeth Boyd

Age: 18

Community of nominee: Hamlet of Mount Lorne

Elizabeth, 18, is being recognized for her exceptional devotion as a volunteer firefighter with the Mount Lorne Volunteer Fire Department. She was also heavily involved with the local 4-H Club and Junior Rangers program. In her last years as a Junior Ranger, she helped instruct younger members of the group. At the age of 16, she joined the MLVFD as an "Explorer Firefighter." When she turned 18, she became a full-fledged volunteer firefighter. As a member of the Mount Lorne Volunteer Fire Department, she attends practices regularly and takes part in community events. She is always ready to step up for demonstrations and activities, and is always volunteering with fundraising events such as litter clean-up, the Mis-Adventure Run and information booths. On top of that she has trained and done exceptionally well representing Yukon at the Regional Fire Fit Competitions held in Langley, B.C. She excelled as a participant of the Ember Academy in 2015—a week-long program sponsored by the Fire Marshall's Office to help encourage women to join the fire service. Since then, she has earned her basic level for firefighters and is working on her advanced Level. In August, she will be an integral part of the team of instructors at the Ember Academy. Elizabeth is not afraid of taking on new challenges such as learning new skills required for being a volunteer firefighter.

Katie Vowk

Age: 17

Community of nominee: Whitehorse

Katie, 17, is being recognized as an exemplary mentor to young skiers and swimmers with the local Alpine Ski Association and Synchro Yukon for the past five years. She has shown them how to be a team and takes the time to explain the value that they bring to the team dynamic. After competing at a high level within synchronized swimming, Katie returned to the sport as a coach with the 6 to 9-year-old girls in the pool twice a week and led them to their final water show each spring. Katie has also volunteered with the training of Special Olympic World athletes. She has received multiple awards for outstanding athleticism and achievement in sports such as the Government of Yukon Minister Award, Government of Yukon Award of Achievement, Government of Yukon Award of Recognition and Award of Excellence. The awards presented to her are for her achievements in Alpine Ski racing at two Arctic Winter Games and one Canada Winter Games. Katie competed at the Canadian Nationals in pair's synchronized swimming after eight years of being a member of Synchro Yukon. She received one MVP for volleyball and was a top three scorer in her rugby season. Katie brings warmth, laughter and personality along with her sincerity when she works, volunteers and interacts within the community and especially with the youth in the sporting community.

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