



Youth of Distinction: Come out, come out, wherever you are! Local group pushes to increase low number of nominations

CALGARY – We know they're out there: young people in our communities that make our lives and our city better. They volunteer their time, they care for our environment, they help a friend through tough times, or they bring attention to issues that are going unnoticed. Yet, a local nonprofit group that organizes an annual awards ceremony to recognize the efforts of these remarkable youths is well below the number of nominations they expected this year. With the nomination deadline looming on April 6th, Child and Youth Friendly Calgary (CYFC) is making a final push to see these youths get the recognition they deserve.

So far, CYFC has only received 12 ConocoPhillips Youth of Distinction Awards (YODA) nominations – a far cry from the 100 they were expecting this year. “We’re hoping that there will be a final flood of nominations as we get closer to the deadline,” explained Kaitlin Gordon, the YODA program coordinator with CYFC, “Perhaps people are waiting until the last minute this year, which is still OK with us – as long as we get them in time. With everything going on in people’s busy lives these days, a simple reminder can’t hurt.”

The awards are an opportunity for Calgarians to recognize deserving youth aged 13-18 for their individual contributions and achievements. The awards are not academic, and any youth can be nominated. Award categories include Leadership, Volunteerism, Activist, Environmentalist (Individual), Environmental (Group), Peer Support, and Perseverance. The award winners will be honoured at a gala ceremony on May 9th at the Calgary Zoo.

Beyond recognizing some deserving teens, there are a few other incentives for submitting YODA nominations this year. The “Race to Nominate” initiative will recognize the schools with the most nominations for its students. ConocoPhillips will award the top three schools with prizes of \$5000, \$3000, and \$1000 respectively to use however they see fit at their school. Even nominators get some recognition this year, as everyone who submits a nomination will receive a free YODA t-shirt.

“Our city is full of youth who bring vitality and leadership to our communities,” Gordon explained, “These awards not only acknowledge their good work, but will encourage them to continue contributing to society throughout their adult lives.”

Nominations are still being accepted until April 6th. For more information about the 2009 ConocoPhillips Youth of Distinction Awards, please call Child and Youth Friendly Calgary at 403-266-5448, or download a nomination form at www.cyfc.ca.

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Child & Youth Friendly Calgary

Child and Youth Friendly Calgary is a non-profit organization based on the firm belief that young people who experience being contributing members of society will become adults who have a sense of ownership and a responsibility to their community. Our purpose is to “lead in providing meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute to our community.”