



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Calgary's largest youth awards announce changes for 2012

New Arts and Culture, Sportsmanship categories reflect Calgary's changing youth population

For the past eight years, the ConocoPhillips Youth of Distinction Awards have celebrated youth ages 13-18 that bring vitality and leadership to their communities in ways like volunteerism, leadership, perseverance and more.

But the event organizers and youth steering committee at Youth Central realize that the cultural landscape of Calgary in 2012 looks a lot different than when the awards began in 2003.

This year, two new categories (out of nine in total) recognize youth who demonstrate a passion for either arts and culture or sportsmanship. These changes coincide with Calgary's Cultural Capital of Canada designation, 100 years of the City of Calgary's recreation department, 100 years of the Calgary Stampede and 100 years of the Pumphouse and Grand Theatres.

"Over 100 youth were nominated for last year's awards, each with a unique contribution to our city," says Jennifer Atkinson, program coordinator at Youth Central. "But we knew there were more youth who deserved recognition. There are so many youth who are involved in making Calgary grow in other ways, like helping others understand the importance of sports in their community or raising awareness for the arts. That's why we introduced the Arts and Culture and Sportsmanship awards this year."

Also for the first time, Shaw TV will be filming and airing the award ceremony in its entirety.

In addition to the Arts and Culture and Sportsmanship awards, there are seven other categories: Advocacy, Environmentalism (Group and Individual), Leadership, Peer Support, Perseverance and Volunteerism. Local schools with the highest number of nominated students will receive up to \$1,000 from title sponsor ConocoPhillips Canada.

"ConocoPhillips is committed to supporting and acknowledging youth through the Youth of Distinction Awards because these young citizens are the leaders of tomorrow. We know this will strengthen communities now and in the future," says Barbara Simic, Manager Community Investment, ConocoPhillips Canada.

Nominations are being accepted until March 5, 2012. The award winners will be honoured at a ceremony on May 5, 2012 at the Calgary Zoo. For more information about the ConocoPhillips Youth of Distinction Awards, please call Youth Central at 403-266-5448 or visit www.youthcentral.com/yoda.

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Youth Central (formerly Child and Youth Friendly Calgary) is a charitable non-profit organization established in 1992 and is 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 mission is to inspire, engage and celebrate youth through community participation.

Thank you to our major supporters: Alliance Pipeline; Apache Canada Ltd.; The Calgary Foundation; The City of Calgary; The City of Calgary – FCSS; Cenovus Energy Inc.; ConocoPhillips Canada; Government of Alberta; Government of Canada; Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life; Macleod Dixon LLP; Nexen Inc.; RBC Foundation; Starbucks Foundation; Suncor Energy Foundation; TD Canada Trust; TELUS; and United Way of Calgary and Area