



*"Inspiring, engaging and celebrating youth  
through community participation".*

May 7, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Youth of Distinction Awards celebrates deserving local youth**

Calgary – Youth Central is pleased to announce eight incredible young recipients for the Youth of Distinction Awards!

Now in its 15th year, the Youth of Distinction Awards (YODA) provides an opportunity for Calgarians to nominate youth (12-18 years old) who deserve recognition for their outstanding contributions to the community.

Award categories and recipients are: Advocacy, Selena Mearns; Arts & Culture, Kaitlyn Yap; Environment, Grace Lew; Leadership, Asher Nyhoff; Peer Support, Chelsea Legendre; Perseverance, Savanna Sturm; Sportsmanship, Lauren Koper; and Volunteer, Asha Nenshi-Nathoo.

"The eight different categories recognize a variety of achievements, where academics are not taken into account," says Lan Tran, a grade 12 student at Central Memorial High School and Co-chair of the YODA committee for her second year. "The finalists inspire youth and adults alike with their stories. They show others that they too can make a difference."

This year, over 120 nominations were received, and 24 finalists were chosen by the YODA committee; a group nine youth volunteers at Youth Central.

"YODA is a very important event to Youth Central because it encourages youth to celebrate each other's accomplishments," says Michelle Hodgins, Program Coordinator at Youth Central. "The youth on the YODA committee have dedicated over 250 hours promoting the program, reviewing nominations and planning a beautiful ceremony."

The event, which was held at the Calgary Zoo, included a welcome from Mayor Nenshi and plated brunch.

Youth Central is a charitable non-profit organization established in 1992. Our mission is to inspire, engage and celebrate youth through community participation. We offer nine programs to Calgary's youth that provide meaningful volunteer experiences and help youth become active, caring citizens. We currently have over 1400 youth involved in our programs.

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Thank you to our major supporters: Alberta Culture and Tourism – Community Initiatives Program; Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink; Anonymous Fund at the Calgary Foundation; The Cadillac Fairview Corporation Limited; The Calgary Foundation; The City of Calgary – FCSS; Government of Canada – Canada Summer Jobs; Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life; The Prosser Charitable Foundation; RC Bishop of the Diocese of Calgary – Catholic Charities; TD Bank Group;

and United Way of Calgary and Area