

November 21<sup>st</sup> 2008

Youth Volunteer of the Year Award  
Selection Committee  
The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce  
555 Bay Street North  
Hamilton, ON L8L 1H1

**Nomination of Mina Kazemi, (Grade 11)  
Hillfield Strathallan College**

It is my great pleasure to nominate Mina Kazemi, 16 years old, from Hillfield Strathallan College, for the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce Youth Volunteer of the Year Award. I have been Mina's French teacher for two years and I am the founder and coordinator of the HSC-SISO ECC (English Conversation Circle), now in its second year.

Despite Mina's young age, she is an extremely experienced altruist. She is the successful product of an upbringing where preserving the environment, supporting local produce, lobbying for legal fair trade and traveling to impoverished Mexican rural areas to implement program to create self-sustainable livelihoods are of utmost importance. In the context of our school, Mina is the leader of a thriving project that brings 35 high school student volunteers together with 32 refugee youth from war-torn countries (from Sudan and Myanmar) to teach them English, to make them comfortable in their new society, to help them assimilate, to help them do their homework and to bring them encouragement, smiles and friendship. Mina has taken the initiative to coordinate a food drive for a Sudanese refugee family when the husband fell extremely ill last Christmas. Besides offering 130 hours of her time volunteering with our ECC thus far, she has volunteered at the Open Doors at Jamesville Community Center; joined a planning committee for the new youth center for SISO (The Globe); and has coordinated two events for 'Hope for David', to help raise 40,000 for an African boy in need of medical treatment.

Being a member of Hillfield Strathallan College's Social Action Committee, Mina was instrumental in organizing the May 08 Education Awareness Week through World Vision. To develop and prepare herself for better understanding of the needs of people of various parts of the world, she has attended several leadership camps from Leaders Today (Academy Power of One Camp), to Free the Children (Me to We Day), and Red Pine Camp (Leaders in Training 1-3). She has traveled to Mexico during her March Break in 2007 and again in 2008 with the DREAM organization, as a vital member of the Global Literacy Field School. She has done all this while maintaining an average of over 90%

consistently, playing on the school varsity basketball team, performing in the large school musicals, competing in the science fair, and doing her bronze lifesaving certificate and first aid.

She is currently working on her silver medal for the Duke of Edinburgh leadership program. Mina has already accumulated over 340 service hours, which do not include the camp she founded and directed this past summer. Called *Camp Stella Puella*, it had been a long-held dream of Mina's. It was implemented to raise the self-esteem of girls aged 4-13 in the town of Dunnville, on the outskirts of Hamilton. The camp ran from August 4 – 8 from 9-4 at the Kazemi home. The goal was to empower young girls to feel confident in their own skin, to teach them to make a difference through social action and to encourage and inspire them to support disadvantaged girls around the world. The camp was offered to 19 young women.

As a leader for our English Conversation Circle with SISO, its success and growth is largely due to Mina's skill with newcomers, as well as her enthusiasm and her dedication. Our school group has grown from 11 volunteers to 35 this year. Thanks to her patience, kindness and extraordinarily diverse teaching style, the program encourages our delicate refugee children to continue to attend our Thursday sessions at Jamesville Community Center. All the most challenging cases are entrusted to Mina because of the immediate warmth she brings to scarred youth in need. Mina can understand the effect of trauma on refugee children; she can find creative and effective methods to get quiet and shy children to communicate and trust her.

Hillfield Strathallan College and I have been blessed to have Mina as a worthy example of altruism to help our projects continue and grow, as we uphold our pledge to better the world around us.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Heidi Peragine  
Senior School Moderns Chair

Hamilton Citizen of the Year  
Selection Committee  
The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce  
555 Bay Street North  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L8L 1H1

November 18<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Nomination of Alison Ower, (Grade 12)  
Hillfield Strathallan College**

Please consider this letter of recommendation for Alison Ower for the 2008 **Youth Volunteer of the Year Award**.

I have known Alison since grade 11, when she became a student in my social science class. She is a determined, co-operative and highly motivated person, who exudes a strong work ethic, which is coupled together with an outstanding ability to lead. It was no surprise, therefore, that she completed the course with an average of 93%, whilst at the same time undertaking an extremely challenging additional course load. In fact, Alison completed the year with an overall average of 90%, which, if the past is an indicator of future success, I anticipate she will maintain. By any measure, Alison is an outstanding student.

Moreover, after being involved in the Social Action Committee for some time, this year, she assumed its leadership as Chairperson. The Committee, of which I am Faculty Adviser, is one of our largest student-led clubs, often including between forty and fifty students all involved in outreach projects to our community. It is now centrally involved in working with one of the College's key community partners, City Kidz, a local charity which offers support and programming to some of Hamilton's most impoverished children.

This year, our partnership is centred around two key events: *The Road2Hope Marathon* (a qualifying event for the Boston Marathon), which will raise funds for City Kidz, and the *Rise and Shine Leadership Breakfast*, organized and hosted by HSC, to take place on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2009. At that time, local leaders and celebrities with roots in the Hamilton community will raise funds for City Kidz. The student committee's aim is to help provide City Kidz with the funds to buy and maintain two additional school buses, which will enable them to add 200 children to its Saturday morning program. Alison has been central in putting together *and* leading not only the Social Action Committee members, but also other key graduates who are responsible for areas such as finance, outreach, programming and food services, as well working closely with the College's Senior Administrative team, key leaders from City Kidz, local businesses and community leaders.

In short, it has been somewhat of a marvel to watch her in action, chairing key meetings, organizing and inspiring fellow students, and coordinating the production of a whole raft of literature which will be critical to the event's success, and our on-going partnership. She is, as we had anticipated, exactly the right person for the job, aiding the College not only in fulfilling its

strategic mandate to provide genuine leadership opportunities to students, but also in providing a model of how our pupils can reach out to – and help to better – the lives of those in need around the world, and here at home.

In July of this year Alison was part of a global outreach program to Arusha, Tanzania, as part of the View Foundation. There she volunteered at Moshono Primary School, assisting in the construction and refurbishing of classrooms, as well as coordinating games with the local children of the two indigenous tribes of the region, the Hadza and Masai.

In her years at the College, Alison has risen to be a genuine community leader, and is leaving an indelible mark on both our College and the community at large. I am pleased to recommend her as a most worthy candidate for the Youth Volunteer of the Year award.

Sincerely,

Mr. William Peat,  
Assistant Head of Senior School.

Hamilton Citizen of the Year  
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November 18<sup>th</sup> 2008

**Nomination of Emmaline Houston, (Grade 12)**  
**Hillfield Strathallan College**

Please consider this letter of recommendation for Emmaline Houston for the 2008 **Youth Volunteer of the Year Award**.

I have known Emmaline Houston for three and a half years as her Guidance Counsellor, and this year also as her Tutorial Leader. I have been impressed by Emmaline's commitment to the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) for the Hamilton Community Foundation since 2006. She has been involved in the organization and management of the YAC, acting as its co-Chair since June 2008. In addition, Emmaline is active in many other community projects, including:

- ✓ Correspondence & Recording Secretary/Site Visit Coordinator
- ✓ Hamilton High School Environmental Conference 2007-2008 – workshop planner and facilitator
- ✓ Ontario Going Green International Conference 2007-2008 – committee member
- ✓ Recreation Helper and Friendly Visitor – Idlewyld Manor, Hamilton
- ✓ Tuck Shop assistant – Ancaster Hockey Arena
- ✓ YWCA Charity Golf Tournament 2006 – Tournament volunteer/planner
- ✓ Dundas Public Library Reading Buddy 2006

At school, Emmaline has been an Honour pin recipient since 2006, and has received the Student Council Leadership pin for 2006, 2007 and 2008. She won a Bronze merit award, a Safety Management Systems Software award, and a Mohawk College/Sheridan College Entrance Scholarship at the Bay Area Science & Engineering Fair (BASEF) in 2006. She is involved in the Environmental Club, the Social Action Committee, competes on our varsity Rowing teams, and was a CISAA Gold medal Field Hockey winner in 2008. Emmaline plays flute in the HSC wind ensemble, which were Gold medal winners in the Standard Band competition in Orlando in 2008, New York in 2007 and again at the Golden Horseshoe Music Festival in 2007. In addition she was our College representative at the Model United Nations in Montreal in 2007.

Emmaline has been a 9-year member of Girl Guides of Canada, completing Pathfinders in 2006. She also holds certificates for Wilderness First Aid, Basic Life Support, and a Level B certificate from the Ontario Recreational Canoe Association. She also has achieved Bronze and a Silver

Awards in the International Duke of Edinburgh Awards Program. In March 2008 Emmaline accompanied the HSC global outreach expedition to Arusha, Tanzania where the team worked on a community project in a village school for several weeks. This life-changing experience culminated with her successfully climbing Mount Kilimanjaro to 4700 metres.

Emmaline is an excellent student and has been planning her future based on her experience with children, as well as her involvement in the environmental issues and problems of the third world countries. I am proud to nominate her on behalf of Hillfield Strathallan College for the 2008 Youth Volunteer Award. Emmaline is a young woman determined to make a positive contribution in people's lives.

Sincerely,

Blanka Guyatt  
Director of Student Services