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2019

Michael A. Strembitsky

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Honouring Student Excellence

Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence

Honouring Student Excellence

On June 25, 2019, the Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees had the honour of recognizing 19 outstanding nominees for the Michael A. Strembitsky Award of Excellence. A gold (\$2,000), silver (\$1,500) and bronze (\$1,000) medal and cash award were presented to three Grade 12 students who are completing their schooling and who best exemplify:

- excellence in personal, social and academic endeavours
- keen interest in a broad selection of subjects and activities
- willingness to seek meaningful change
- initiative, courage, confidence and a commitment to excellence
- co-operation with other students, staff and community members
- potential to provide leadership throughout life
- responsible participation in society

Michael A. Strembitsky Award Nominees

Daniel Carleton
Academy at King Edward

Ahdithya Visweswaran
Harry Ainlay

Michael DeMarco
McNally

Alex Erickson
Strathcona

Jonathan Sieswerda
Argyll Centre

Hamda Ahmed
J. Percy Page

Eric Kwas
Millwoods Christian

Luke Nelson
Victoria

Chinelle Mattis
Centre High

Izza Javed
Jasper Place

Armaan Somani
Old Scona

Emma Kinch
Vimy Ridge

Esther Muloki
Eastglen

Abbigail Baehr
Lillian Osborne

George Kajaleme
Queen Elizabeth

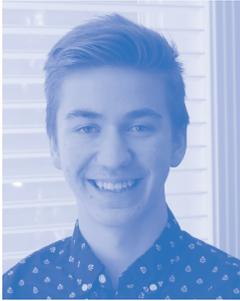
Colleen Lamb
W.P. Wagner

Mikaela Wegner
Edmonton Christian

Mehera Salah
M.E. LaZerte

Deniel Cherkasov
Ross Sheppard

GOLD Medal



Michael DeMarco
McNally

Michael was an International Baccalaureate student who was a leader both in his school and in the community. He balanced various extra-curricular activities with schoolwork, all while maintaining honours standing. Principal Lisa Wright says, “Michael is self-motivated, has a solid work ethic, and has helped mobilize other youth through community initiatives, events and projects.”

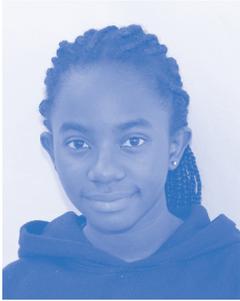
To promote volunteering to schoolmates, he created the *McNally Assists Students Serving in Volunteer Experiences* (MASSIVE) initiative. Using a website, monthly newsletter and social media, he connected youth with local volunteering opportunities. He initiated a school’s book club and chaired the charity pancake breakfast committee. Michael helped lead the school’s Youth Engagement Focus Group, which sought to engage student voice and insight on key school projects. He was also the director of student programming for the 2018 Canadian Student Leadership Conference.

Over the past two years, Michael has represented McNally as one of our District’s Student Trustees. In Grade 11, he designed the time-management brochures and this year, he served as vice-chair of the Senate.

Outside school, Michael volunteered as the marketing director for SUNIA, which is a model United Nations summer camp focused on empowering youth. He developed a promotional plan to be used across Canada. With SUNIA, he also helped with programming to teach youth about international affairs and sustainable development.

Michael says, “As I move beyond high school, I’ll look to engage my passion for technology and politics, making an impact on my community through sustainable, future-conscious innovation.” He received a \$5,000 ATB Loran Foundation award and a \$60,000 UBC Presidential Scholar award, where he will be pursuing post-secondary studies in computer science.

SILVER Medal



Esther Muloki
Eastglen

Esther grew up in Uganda and at an early age, became involved in community-based organizations like Uganda Red Cross and Uganda Green Foundation. When she immigrated to Canada in 2016, she volunteered with Eastglen’s peer leadership program that helps ease the transition of new immigrant students into the school system. At the school, she was also an active member of the Boys and Girls Club leadership group.

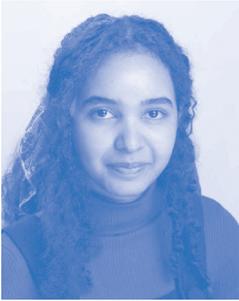
“Esther is one of the most ethical and grounded students I have had the privilege of working with,” says Principal Darren Fox. “She truly wants to make a difference in the lives of everyone around her and strives for success in everything she does.”

Esther is part of the City of Edmonton Youth Council, where she is a member of the Urban Planning and Regional subcommittee, working on the Ticket to Ride—a fundraiser to help underprivileged students gain access to bus tickets and affordable transit. She also worked on the Design Conference project to help provide an avenue for youth to influence the way their communities are shaped.

She attended the National Student Conference Forum, where she was able to connect with students from across Canada, and discuss how to achieve sustainability as a country and Commonwealth.

While engaging in many volunteer initiatives, Esther has been able to achieve honours and is among the top five per cent of her graduating class. Esther says, “My involvement in leadership has helped me gain confidence and has introduced me to new people who are implementing change in their communities, which inspires me to do more.”

BRONZE Medal



Mehera Salah
M.E. LaZerte

Mehera is kind and humble, and has a desire to grow personally. Principal Kim Backs says, “Mehera has made leadership her lifestyle choice and has made the world around her a better place. She has the remarkable ability to be intentional with her decision and words, which allows her to uniquely build confidence and self worth in others.”

She was a keen contributor to all the school’s marquee events, was a youth leader and maintained a high academic standing throughout high school as an International Baccalaureate student. Over the past couple years, Mehera was on the executive of the school’s Interact Club and school council, co-chaired helping hampers, founded Climate Leaders, led the gardening committee, was a mentor through Big Brothers Big Sisters, and partook in the Junior Achievement Program. Mehera also participated on the swim, cross-country and track teams, and volunteered in the local theatre.

Mehera was the school’s STEM (curriculum focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics) ambassador and participated in the Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science, and Technology (WISEST) summer research program. She currently has an internship at a local engineering lab.

Mehera says, “My personal experiences lend me an ability and responsibility to understand the individuals needing help and the stories wanted to be heard.”

She will be attending the University of Alberta in the engineering program.