

Teen activist wins lieutenant governor salute

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By ROGER BELGRAVE

Brampton teenager Corey Sherwood's community efforts to end discrimination and promote tolerance was recognized with a provincial award and scholarship.

Sherwood was named a recipient of the 2009 Lincoln Alexander Award, presented Dec. 10 at Queen's Park by Lieutenant Governor of Ontario David C. Onley and former lieutenant governor Lincoln M. Alexander. Established in 1993, the award was created in honour of Alexander, Ontario's first black lieutenant governor.

Three young people, between the ages of 16 and 25, are recognized each year for their work to eliminate racial discrimination in Ontario. Recipients receive the award and \$5,000 each.

Sherwood was nominated for the award by his guidance counsellor. Nominations from across the province are submitted for the award.

"It was such a great honour to be recognized at such a high level," he said. "I was surprised and absolutely taken away by it."

The St. Edmund Campion Secondary School graduate was singled out for contributions to the Brampton community and work to eliminate racism.

"I think it is extremely important to look after your community, even more so than making a change in the world," the 18-year-old said. "I grew up in Brampton, I've lived in Brampton almost my entire life so this city means a lot to me."

As a young black man, he has personally faced discrimination and racism growing up. His personal experiences and those of family members have inspired a commitment to foster change and spread understanding between members of the diverse community in which he lives.

His great-great uncle, Rev. William White, was the only black commissioned officer in the British armed forces during the First World War. His great-great uncle's diary inspired an anti-racism project, "Learning from History," which Sherwood presented to the school on Remembrance Day.

Sherwood was also instrumental in introducing his high school to the Harmony Movement, a non-profit organization formed to promote diversity and combat all forms of discrimination and prejudice. The organization offers diversity education in many Greater Toronto Area (GTA) schools and works to empower youth to become social change leaders.

He often visited local elementary schools to speak about hope and breaking stereotypes.

"My father is my primary role model," the teenager admitted. "He's also done a lot of civil activism and he's always found it very important to also make a change in the community. So I've kind of followed his footsteps."

His father is Canadian actor and filmmaker Anthony Sherwood, whose career in cinema, television and on stage has not prevented him from becoming a recognized and honoured activist.

Grassroots civil action has global ramifications, the younger Sherwood has concluded.

"If everyone within the world makes a difference within their own community then it will change the world because the world is comprised of several communities," he explained.

He is currently attending Wilfrid Laurier University in first-year business administration. The young activist and entrepreneur is hoping to start two businesses— a clothing apparel company and a business to help students seeking a post-secondary education.