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Shelburne represented in UGDSB Everyday Hero Awards

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) announced the winners of their Everyday Hero Awards on April 20, which included two recipients from Shelburne.

Child and youth counsellor Katelyn Charbonneau, and Centre Dufferin District High School (CDDHS) Black Chapter Student Group were part of the 13 finalist chosen by the Everyday Hero Awards Selection Committee.

Recipients of the awards from across the board included dedicated school and board staff, a bus driver, student groups and volunteers.

Katelyn Charbonneau is a child and youth counsellor with Centennial Hyland Elementary School and Primrose Elementary School. Through her job as a counsellor she helps support students struggling with social, emotional, and behavioural concerns at school.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Charbonneau has been providing direct support to students around the impacts of COVID-19 and ways to cope with it. With the pandemic, she's seen an increase in caseloads with students that typically wouldn't require support now needing it

Speaking with the Free Press about the nomination and recognition Charbonneau said, ?It's a great feeling, I was very taken aback and surprised by the nomination. It feels good to be recognized on kind of a larger scope, my schools do a really great job at making my efforts known, but in this year especially, knowing how different things are and how challenging they are, it's a great feeling.?

CDDHS Black Chapter is a student group that promotes Black experiences and looks to empower the voices of Black students both socially and politically. During the school year the Black Chapter has worked on several projects including their Black History Month presentation, ?Hair Love' video, a Black Brilliance conference that was cancelled due to COVID, collaborating with other groups, and providing feedback on the UGDSB school resource officer program.

?At the end of the day it feels good to see that people are seeing the work that we're all doing and putting in,? said Gabby Spencer, the group's social media manager.

Azaria Gallimore, a member of the Black Chapter, recalled waking up to find out they had won the award.

?When I found out there were other schools involved in it and we out of all of them got it, I felt honoured,? said Gallimore.

Geer Harvey and Trinna Thompson are the two staff representatives that help lead the students group. In an interview with the Free Press, Harvey speaks to the pride they have for the work the student have done.

?We didn't set out for the kids to win any awards, our goal is giving them a space to be themselves but to see them recognized this way by the community and UGDSB, is really awesome,? said Harvey. ?We're consistently calling on them to do extra work, beyond being an everyday student, and it makes us proud because it speaks to what's possible and what they can achieve.?

A virtual ceremony honouring the recipients of the awards will be held on May 10 at 7 p.m. and can be accessed by visiting: https://vimeo.com/ugstream.