

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2 NEW PROMISING LEADERS RECEIVE CANADA'S TOP SCHOLARSHIP

June 28, 2006 (Toronto) - Today, the Canadian Merit Scholarship Foundation (CMSF) announced two new recipients of the 2006 CMSF national awards, Grace Li of Toronto and Matthew Little of Sudbury.

Thirty (30) young Canadians have received **CMSF National Awards, valued at up to \$75,000** (totaling \$2.25 million). The recipients were selected from an initial pool of approximately 3,500 applicants.

In addition to the 30 national award recipients, forty (40) students have received **CMSF Finalist Awards** (total \$100,000) and forty (40) students have received **CMSF Provincial Awards** (total \$60,000).

Founded in 1988, CMSF is an independent and privately funded organization that gives out the largest undergraduate awards to the country's most promising young leaders. CMSF's principal supporter is The W. Garfield Weston Foundation. Other supporters include BMO Nesbit Burns, RBC Foundation, BMO Financial Group, QBC, Dominion of Canada General Insurance Company, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, the Morrison Foundation, Redknee Inc, and Scotiabank, to name a few.

"The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is a proud supporter of The Canadian Merit Scholarship Foundation," says Galen Weston, Chairman of George Weston Ltd. "I believe that what we as individuals and as a society spend on the development of innovative, educated, well rounded citizens, is probably the best investment we can make."

"One of the keys to successful community reinvestment by young Canadians is to support and reward their efforts," says executive director Franca Gucciardi, herself an alumna chosen in the first class of the program. "We are committed to encouraging and supporting young Canadians to put their talents to work. We challenge them to be socially responsible, entrepreneurial and community-focused leaders," says Ms. Gucciardi.

The CMSF selection process is the most rigorous of any scholarship-granting foundation in Canada and relies on a network of over 300 volunteer assessors and interviewers from all areas of the country.

CMSF national awards are tenable at the 25 leading Canadian universities that are part of the CMSF consortium. In order to strengthen their commitment to leadership and service, national award recipients have access to additional support, including a conference, mentors, summer internships and grants.

All CMSF recipients have demonstrated outstanding service to their community, character, leadership potential, entrepreneurial energy and academic excellence. This year's 30 national award recipients include: Zoë Barrett-Wood (Flesherton ON), Kyla Brophy (North Vancouver BC), Sunny Cheung (Toronto ON), Caroline Crawford (Winnipeg MB), Patrick Duncan (London ON), Alain Dupuis (Sudbury ON), Conor Falvey (Rose Bay NS), Rea Fenger (Victoria BC), Mark Godfrey (Wallacetown ON), Afzal Habib (Pickering ON), Ali Hamandi (Oakville ON), Mathieu Isabel (Thetford Mines QC), Beth Hong (Coquitlam BC), Megan Kavaner (Manning AB), Kathryn Lennon (Edmonton AB), Grace Li (Toronto, ON), Matthew Little (Sudbury, ON), David Lussier (Winnipeg MB), Maria Maute (Bouctouche NB), Jessa McGregor (Nanaimo BC), Justin Oake (Stephenville NL), Éloïse Ouellet-Décoste (Montreal QC), Mark Ouseley (Ottawa ON), John Pegg (Sutton West BC), Shawn Potter (Windsor NS), Christopher Proctor (Warren MB), Katie Sardinha (Summerland BC), Lindsay Sowdluapik-Lloyd (Iqaluit NU), Christine Wadsworth (Toronto ON) and Yannick Wittwer (Telkwa BC).

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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Bios of 2006 CMSF National Award Scholars

Zoë Barrett-Wood, CMSF National Award Grey Highlands Secondary School, Flesherton ON

After volunteering in Costa Rica with a local organization protecting sea turtles, Zoë organized an info night for her village to raise awareness of the different volunteer opportunities available locally and abroad. For the past four years, she has coordinated summer art workshops at the local library and a crafts and music festival. She also runs her own business, DHM Designs, making environmentally-friendly purses and accessories with recycled fabrics.

Kyla Brophy, CMSF National Award Windsor Secondary School, North Vancouver BC

As the president of the school interact club, Kyla led a group of 60 students to raise more than \$10K for various local and international charities. She also founded a campaign to support Covenant House, an organization that supports street youth. Kyla plays alto/tenor saxophone and oboe in her school's concert and jazz bands.

Sunny Cheung, CMSF National Award North Toronto Collegiate Institute, Toronto, ON

Sunny is the principal bassoonist with the North Toronto Symphony Orchestra and also plays the piano and trumpet. He was the captain of a team of the 2005 Chinese youth debating contest and a volunteer for many community groups. He achieved the gold award of Duke of Edinburgh program.

Caroline Crawford, CMSF Weston National Award Silver Heights Collegiate, Winnipeg, MB

Caroline is currently on a Rotary Youth exchange to Denmark where she is learning Danish. Back home, she was editor of her school's yearbook, and served on the Youth Parliament of Manitoba. After reading that \$15,000 would build a school and pay a teacher's annual salary in Ethiopia, she organized a successful fundraiser that involved five schools in her area. She was on the hockey team and has played soccer competitively for 13 years.

Patrick Duncan, CMSF Weston National Award Catholic Central High School, London ON

Patrick is a youth group leader at his church and the captain of his school football team and community soccer team. He served as student trustee on his district school board and rewrote the board's student representation policy, making the student trustee position more accountable to students. He is a self-taught guitarist and a long-standing volunteer with the Boys and Girls Club.

Alain Dupuis, CMSF Weston National Award Collège Notre-Dame, Sudbury ON

Alain is a board member of the Franco-Ontarian youth federation, captain of his school's improvisation team and a DJ for the student radio station. He was a speech-writer during the student elections, and has also engaged in a criminal case simulation at the Ontario Superior Court.

Conor Falvey, CMSF National Award Park View Education Centre, Rose Bay NS

Conor is a member of her school's social justice group, which has raised funds to rebuild schools in Bosnia and communities devastated by the 2004 tsunami. She is also on the executive of a group trying to connect youth social justice groups in the province. She is co-editor of her school's newspaper and, as part of National Novel Writing Month, she wrote a 50,000 word novella.

**Rea Fenger, CMSF National Award
Esquimalt High School, Victoria BC**

Among many of Rea's passions is teaching wilderness skills to kids, so she became an instructor with Scouts Canada. She is the stage manager for her school's play and is the captain of her school's rowing and curling teams. The only female umpire of her local baseball park, Rea is also a member of the Sail and Life Training Society.

**Mark Godfrey, CMSF National Award
West Elgin Secondary School, Wallacetown ON**

A talented musician, Mark leads his school's music council in organizing trips, concerts, and a band retreat. Together with his board's student trustee, Mark created a documentary to raise awareness of the role that rural schools play in smaller communities. He is co-captain of his school's volleyball team and was captain of the basketball team the previous year.

**Afzal Habib, CMSF National Award
Pine Ridge Secondary School, Pickering, ON**

Afzal is motivated to create school and community environments that celebrate diversity. He became interested in the topic when he attended a summer camp that looked at equity issues. He has been a member of his school's anti-racism club and is a member of the multicultural council of Oshawa, which he co-founded. Afzal enjoys mixing hindi, hip-hop and bhangra music.

**Ali Hamandi, CMSF Weston National Award
Abbey Park High School, Oakville, ON**

With a student colleague, Ali established a "Wheels in Motion" event at his school to make more students aware of spinal cord injuries. He is on the cross country, track and field and badminton teams and plays piano and tenor saxophone. Ali has hiked the Chilkoot trail and canoed down the Yukon River.

**Mathieu Isabel, CMSF Weston National Award
Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific/Polyvalente de Thetford Mines, Thetford Mines QC**

Three years ago, Mathieu left his home community of Thetford Mines, Québec to attend Pearson College in British Columbia. He spent nine months on an island in Lake Titicaca in Bolivia, where he taught math and English lessons and created a summer camp for children in the community along with his co-volunteers from Pearson. He is passionate about scuba diving and aviation, and has obtained his pilot license through his long-standing involvement with cadets.

**Beth Hong, CMSF Weston National Award
Pinetree Secondary, Coquitlam BC**

Beth is president of her school's multicultural club, and has been helping to provide healthy food choices in her community through her work on the City of Coquitlam's Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Committee. Over the past year, she has worked towards bringing Opening Doors, a program that gives women and children leaving abusive relationships priority housing, to her housing co-operative.

**Megan Kavaner, CMSF Weston National Award
Paul Rowe Jr/Sr High School, Manning AB**

Megan comes from a community of 1100 residents. In Manning, Megan coaches the junior girls volleyball team and competes on the senior girls team. She also plays hockey and softball and is a synchronized figure skater. For the last six years, she has been volunteering at the town's long-term care facility.

Kathryn Lennon, CMSF National Award

Mahindra United World College of India/Ross Sheppard High School, Edmonton AB

Kathryn spent her last two years of high school at the Mahindra United World College of India, where she volunteered at the Manavya home for HIV positive children and created a short documentary to help the organization with fundraising efforts abroad. She has been a facilitator with the Rural Roots Tour, presenting to schools about social issues in rural Alberta, and with the Pearson Seminar on Youth Leadership.

Grace Li, CMSF National Award

Victoria Park Collegiate Institute, Toronto, ON

Having had much support when she first came to Canada in the 8th grade, Grace recognizes how important it is for newcomers to be able to communicate and integrate into their new communities. To facilitate this process, she works as a translator for newly arrived Chinese families. Grace plays the piano and violin in school and community orchestras, paints, leads an archery club and is a Toronto Youth Ambassador.

Matthew Little, CMSF National Award

Lockerby Composite School, Sudbury, ON

An avid fan of promoting an active lifestyle, Matthew is a junior racer for the Laurentian Nordic Cross-Country Ski Team and an instructor for the Jackrabbits Ski Program for children. He plays the piano, is a self-taught film-maker, founded Students for Students – a group that works to ensure a safe school environment, and raises money for Alzheimer's through participating in the Sudbury Dragon Boat Festival.

David Lussier, CMSF Weston National Award

Gordon Bell High School, Winnipeg MB

After spending two years with his family volunteering in a farm community dedicated to welcoming individuals with special needs, David is now co-leader of the Special Ed Social Group that helps students with disabilities fully integrate in his school. He also runs a student tutoring program for ESL and general-level students. David is an avid volleyball player and swimming instructor.

Maria Maute, CMSF National Award

École Clément-Cormier, Bouctouche NB

Through her role as the co-founder and president of the student newspaper "l'papier", Maria discovered her passion for journalism. She is a member of the New Brunswick francophone youth federation and the assistant manager of the Bellevue Bed and Breakfast.

Jessa McGregor, CMSF Weston National Award

Nanaimo and District Secondary, Nanaimo BC

Swimming since she was three months old, Jessa is now BC's high school record holder and one of the top 20 swimmers in Canada. She is the co-editor of the yearbook, co-president of the student council and is on the waterpolo and soccer teams. She coached an under-6 girls soccer team and is a mentor for elementary school children through the Big Brothers/Sisters program.

Justin Oake, CMSF National Award

Stephenville High School, Stephenville, NL

Justin is a mentor to eight- and nine-year-old children through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada and is a minor hockey instructor. He plays tenor and alto saxophone for the school concert and jazz bands and is on his school's hockey, track and field and basketball teams. He also plays squash and is an executive member of his student council.

Éloïse Ouellet-Décoste, CMSF National Award

Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific/École secondaire Paul-Gérin-Lajoie-d'Outremont, Montreal QC

At the age of 16, Éloïse left Canada to live in Brazil on a one-year cultural exchange program. At Pearson College, she led the sustainable development group to reduce the ecological footprint of the college, and she is currently living and volunteering on an island in Lake Titicaca in Bolivia through Pearson's third-year option. She has competed in downhill skiing at the provincial level and speaks English, French, Spanish and Portuguese fluently.

Mark Ouseley, CMSF National Award

Ashbury College, Ottawa ON

Environmental activist, Tae kwon do black belt and avid musician, Mark is also an outdoor education enthusiast. Over the course of the past year, he has been working to establish a wildlife garden on campus where both Canadian plant species and students can co-exist. Mark also coordinates the school's photography club and science clubs and is on the rowing and cross-country teams.

John Pegg, CMSF Weston National Award

Sutton District High School, Sutton West, BC

Raised on the family farm, John has a true passion for the outdoors and for animal care. He has been a horseback-riding instructor for the last three years. John is first trombone on his school's band and also enjoys playing the baritone and tuba. He was the captain of his rugby team throughout high school and is on the wrestling and cross-country teams.

Shawn Potter, CMSF Weston National Award

Avon View High School Windsor, NS

Shawn is the captain of his school soccer team and the organist and choir director at his church. He plays piano at seniors' homes and community events and has organized church fundraisers. He is a level 10 RCM for piano and he also plays trumpet.

Christopher Proctor, CMSF Weston National Award

Warren Collegiate Institute, Warren MB

Christopher is a mentor to elementary school students, providing support on how to tackle situations linked to drug and alcohol abuse, peer pressure, racism, and bullying. He is on four of his school's sports teams and is the co-captain of his hockey team. He is also a member of the student government and a Sunday school teacher.

Katie Sardinha, CMSF National Award

Summerland Secondary School, Summerland BC

Katie has been involved in Girl Guides for the last 12 years, and was recently awarded the Canada Cord for her dedication. She is also the founder and coordinator of two fair trade fairs in her community and has been involved in school drama productions. She plays the violin and French horn and is a first-degree reiki practitioner.

Lindsay Sowdluapik-Lloyd, CMSF Weston National Award

Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific/Inuksuk High School, Iqaluit NU

Lindsay was co-president of the youth advisory panel of the Nunavut Court of Justice, a group that provides support to youth involved in the justice system. She was selected to attend Pearson College, where she has been involved in a program that provides youth from a nearby reserve with additional educational and recreational activities. In Iqaluit, Lindsay has volunteered with the crisis help line and a local women's shelter.

**Christine Wadsworth, CMSF National Award
Marshall McLuhan Catholic Secondary School, Toronto ON**

Christine is the captain of her school's debate team and is on the Canadian National Team. She is also the captain of her varsity field hockey and soccer teams and has been head delegate at three model UN conferences. She raised funds for projects in Tanzania, and spent time there in the summer working with a local group to build a school.

**Yannick Wittwer, CMSF Weston National Award
Smithers Secondary School, Telkwa BC**

Yannick has been involved in 4-H for eight years and has been president for the past two. He is president of his school's student council and has been captain or co-captain of the basketball, volleyball and soccer teams. Yannick works on his family farm and in his spare time he enjoys woodworking.