

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YOUNG LEADERS SELECTED FOR THE COUNTRY'S TOP SCHOLARSHIP

Feb 16, 2005 (Toronto) - The Canadian Merit Scholarship Foundation (CMSF) announces the 30 National Award Scholars for 2005 as well as finalist and provincial awards. 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.

- **30 CMSF National Awards worth up to \$75,000 each for four-years of undergraduate university studies in Canada (totaling \$2.25 million).**
- **40 CMSF Finalists award winners receive \$2500 each (totaling \$100,000).**
- **40 CMSF Provincial award winners receive \$1500 each (totaling \$60,000).**
- **Award winners were selected out of approximately 4,000 applications nationwide.**
- **Selection process is the most intense and personalized scholarship evaluation in Canada with approximately 300 volunteer assessors and interviewers.**
- **25 partner universities in Canada waive tuition costs for National Award Scholars.**

"We invest in the future and well-being of our communities by investing in individuals - one at a time" says Executive Director, Franca Gucciardi, herself an alumna chosen in the first class of the program. "CMSF has always supported unconventional young people and encourages them to take their talents and put them to work. We challenge them to be socially responsible, entrepreneurial and community-focused leaders, positively impacting tomorrow's Canada."

All recipients have demonstrated outstanding service to the community, character, leadership potential, entrepreneurial energy as well as academic excellence. This year's 30 national award recipients include future leaders from all over Canada: Ashley Tufts (Iqaluit, NU); Jesse Robson and Maggie Jones (Corner Brook, NL); Michael Currie (Charlottetown, PE); Lisette Yorke (Hillside Boularderie, NS); Samuel Breau (Fair Isle, NB); Éric Beaudoin (St. Tite-des-Caps, QC); François Cadieux (Boucherville, QC); Alexandra Rouillard (Rouyn-Noranda, QC); Marie-Claire Lussier Desbiens (St-Édouard, QC); Vijitha Mahalingam, Dilzayn Panjwani, Azim Panju, Jamie Thomas-Pavanel, Yin Ying Zhang (Toronto, ON); Rajiev Krishnakhanthan (Ajax, ON); Debjani Poddar (Burlington, ON); Natalie Gerum (Dundas, ON); Graham Smith

(Kingston, ON); David Vlemmix (Dorchester, ON); Sharon Kennedy (Waterloo, ON); Matthew Reid (London, ON); Sheryl Johnson and Keelan Cumming (Winnipeg, MB); Andrea Figueroa (Edmonton, AB); Maren Beeston (Hanna, AB); Hayes Zirnhelt (Williams Lake, BC); Lindsey Massar (Langley, BC); Lindsey Lenters (Vancouver, BC) and; Evan Hesketh (Victoria, BC).

The future looks a little brighter when we consider what drives these young individuals: wanting to improve the world in various ways and adding fresh energy and new points of view. They are involved in such remarkable achievements such as coaching disabled skiers, helping to run a youth crisis phone line in the North, working with a rural youth education project in the prairies, founding a women's rights group in an inner-city neighborhood, researching on the impact of SARS or strengthening francophone culture out West.

These scholars will now receive a full scholarship to a Canadian university of their choice. They will also have access to additional support including a conference, mentors, summer internships and grants in order to strengthen and encourage their demonstrated commitment to leadership and service.

"CMSF understands that leadership is about taking risks and supports your development, as well as that of the community around you." says Lucas A. Skoczkowski, CMSF alumnus and now CMSF Board Director. Mr. Skoczkowski is founder and CEO of Redknee Inc., a private Canadian company and developer of communication products for the mobile network industry. For this accomplishment he has been recognized with the Ernst & Young – 2004 Entrepreneur of the Year Award. *"CMSF's mission is rooted in one simple idea - it's the people who set out wanting to change the world, who ultimately do just that."*

- 30 -

Media Contact:

Jessica Tudos
CMSF Outreach and Communications Coordinator
416-646-2120 x226
jessica.tudos@cmsf.ca