



Celebrating the achievements of our remarkable young people

Meet some of our previous William Wallace award winners





Zak - Tertiary award winner 2011



Zak Quor exudes a youthful confidence and energy which is contagious to everyone he meets. It was this positive attitude and drive to achieve that saw Zak win a 2011 William Wallace tertiary award.

The award has helped Zak move into the University Halls of Residence. “Being in the halls has really helped me develop my character. There is so much diversity, so many kinds of people there. I come from a low socio economic area where the things you talked about were very different. Here I am using my brain and meeting people who like what I like. It’s great.

“The William Wallace award has been incredibly beneficial to my success at university. It provided me the opportunity to develop as a person in the halls and within my studies. Previously I was not in the right environment to study and relax at home. I definitely wouldn’t be able to pay the rent without this award!”

He adds “It was nice to get external recognition. Not just for me but also to recognise those who have helped me reach my potential.” His caregiver Ian has been a constant source of support and inspiration for Zak. “He sets the bar for me. He pushes me to achieve even more. I have surprised myself. I have exceeded my own expectations.”





Samantha - Tertiary award winner 2011



Samantha has been focussed on her ambition to study zoology at a tertiary level since she discovered her passion for working with animals.

Her natural abilities have seen her excel in the sciences, particularly biology at NCEA, and this has further supported her decision to work in this field. Samantha has also been volunteering at her local veterinary clinic to build on her knowledge.

She's about to start her first year at Otago Uni majoring in biology and she's looking forward to the challenge!

Samantha was nominated by Janeane, who accompanied her to Wellington to receive the award from Social Development Minister Paula Bennett and opera singer Ben Makisi.

Samantha says her foster parents, Graham and Donna Reid, were "really impressed" she got the award, and her birth mother "told me she was proud of me".





Rodger - Leadership award winner 2010



Rodger missed the awards ceremony in 2010, as he was on his way to Argentina with Teen Missions International to use his award to help him to pursue his goal of supporting those who need it most. His foster parents Linda and Trevor accepted the award on Rodgers behalf.

We spoke to him on his return about his award. Winning the William Wallace award was “a great feeling”, Rodger says, adding the award does a lot for the people who win it. “For most of their lives they probably haven’t had the best up-bringing and winning the award means that they can celebrate something good. The support I received from Linda and Trevor was amazing.”

Rodger was also selected to be the young person representative on the selection panel for the 2011 awards and attended the ceremony to share in his travels and some words of praise and encouragement for the winners.

Being in the role of selector “was pretty exciting”, Rodger said, because it meant he was able to give other young people like himself who were still in the care of Child, Youth and Family “the opportunity to do something and get rid of the negative aspects of their life and celebrate something positive”.





Sherrie - Tertiary award winner 2010



Three years ago Sherrie would never have dreamed of being presented an award by Minister Paula Bennett and rugby league star Steve Price.

Sheree's dream is to be a social worker, or to lead a tangata whenua organisation. With her achievements in leadership and a natural sense of social justice, she's already well on the way. At Challenge College she showed people what she was made of by helping students and teachers alike, and mentoring other young people from at-risk families.

Sheree says the love and stability that comes from being with loving caregivers was a turning point for her. But the rewards are felt by her foster parents Nina and Carla too. Carla says "Sherrie is the most loyal, loving, respectful young adult and if we ever need her she'll be there. She's always going to be part of the family".

"I didn't think any of this could happen, it was like being opened to a new world," says Sheree. "Instead of always being down on the bottom looking up, I feel like I've come out on top of it," she says.





Phillip Baldwin - Vocational award winner 2009



A sportsman through and through, as well as a talented artist and a musician who learnt to play the guitar by ear, Philip was a winner at this year's William Wallace Awards.

As part of the Emerging Junior Tall Blacks, Philip must surely be no stranger to such accolades. "Actually – this was the first time I've ever won an award like this; it was a big buzz," he says.

His gift for basketball was discovered by fluke when he was 13 and went along to a mate's practice. They were short of players, so Philip was asked to give it a go.

He didn't even know the rules, but the coach immediately spotted his talent. This was soon affirmed by a talent scout who said that Philip had the skills and potential to get a scholarship and play NBA basketball in America.

Philip – who stands at six foot two – is not only tall in stature, but also in mana. He is described as "a natural leader", he's a mentor to troubled teens, has spoken to other young people about turning his life around, and is a coach at his old primary school. "He's a gentle giant and he's got a very caring nature," says Julie. "He's just an awesome kid and I'm really proud of him."





Lagi - GFS Scholarship award winner 2009



Lagi is a young woman who has a bright future ahead. She was presented with a Girls Friendly Society scholarship by Hon Paula Bennett at this year's William Wallace awards.

Her leadership potential is reflected in the badges lining both lapels of her school blazer. They tell the story of a young woman who was the elected board of trustees' pupil representative of her college and reflect her status as school council head prefect, Wellington representative rugby union player, netball coach, player and referee.

"I am greatly thankful for my closest friends who have supported me all the way, my favourite teachers at Wellington Girls' College for mothering me, my social workers Leo and Natalia for being there for me and my foster family for their acceptance and understanding. Last but not least, I thank God for giving me strength and good thoughts."





Jordon - Vocational award winner 2008



Jordan may be modest by nature, but as he picks out a melody he has composed on his guitar, it's obvious there is nothing modest about his talent.

One of the highlights of the ceremony was Jordan playing one of his own classical compositions on the guitar.

It's a passion that he's grateful he had the chance to discover, thanks to his caregivers James and Heather Tuhoro. They welcomed Jordan into their family when he was 12 years old, and he has never left. "He's like a son to us, it's a pleasure to have him as part of the family," says Heather. "He's got a gift for anything, no matter

what he got his hands on, he'd be good at it," agrees James proudly.

It was James who encouraged Jordan to pick up the guitar. They have also nurtured his gift for carpentry and Maori design, and the whole family has a passion for camping holidays, fishing and the outdoors. "I would rather be with Child, Youth and Family because it's given me all these opportunities," says Jordan.

"When he came to us he was a lost young boy, all he wanted was love. He certainly got that and now he's spoilt!" laughs James.





Maree - Tertiary award winner 2008



When I found out I had won I just cried and cried,” says Maree Hansen, “I was so overwhelmed.” Using her tertiary award, Maree is now studying physical education at Canterbury Polytechnic, and will be sharing her story of growing up in foster care with us at this year’s Award ceremony.

“When I came to the farm I got to feel what it was like to be in a proper family...I never knew what love was, and I never had mother and father figures until I came to the farm. [Jenny and Chris] are my mum and dad, and they always will be,” says Maree.

Her foster mum Jenny Rose was the first caregiver to have not one, but two foster children win a William Wallace Award. Her foster son Darren (featured in the poster above) won three years ago. “I said that I was going to raise them as my own. I wouldn’t give up on my own children, and I wouldn’t give up on these kids,” says Jenny.





Turoa - Highly Commended award winner 2007



When Turoa Salmon attended last year's ANZAC Day celebrations in Gallipoli, it really was a dream come true. He was a winner at the 2007 William Wallace Awards and stole the show in his army uniform. The Award went towards funding his trip to Gallipoli, as part of his Cadet training.

The trip of a lifetime was even better than he could have imagined, or as 16 year old Turoa says, "It was mean, it was massive. I didn't want to come home."

Since winning the William Wallace Award, he has been going from strength to strength. He has been on the Spirit of Adventure, where he was elected as Captain. He has helped the Cadets win national competitions and was recently promoted to Lance Corporal.

He now has his sights set on a career in the army, and that is another dream which will no doubt come true.

