

HENRY
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Intelligencer

Natasha Cadieux wants to make a difference in the lives of youth.

She's already made quite an impact on the young in her church, school and community — and she's only 18 years old.

The returning Grade 12 student at Quinte Secondary School can now add something new to her lengthy list of personal accomplishments.

Cadieux is the 2004 recipient of the Maurice Rollins Youth Leadership Award presented last weekend at the 7th Volunteer Celebration sponsored by Volunteer and Information Quinte.

The award also carries a \$500 bursary and she said the money will come in extremely handy when she enrolls at Algonquin College in Ottawa this fall.

"I have had some personal challenges this year to work through, so this award is special because I have been able to achieve this despite the circumstances," Cadieux said.

What's even more remarkable about her win is that Cadieux earned VIQ's top volunteer award, the Ruth Burrows Award, in 2001. She was 15 years old — the youngest recipient ever.

"I was very excited and surprised when I received that award three years ago and I was definitely just as excited in receiving the Maurice Rollins Youth Leadership Award. Both awards mean a lot because they are given by the people in the community."

Cadieux was nominated for this year's award by her school as well as Belleville Mayor Mary-Anne Sills — whom she got to know while rehearsing for the Vagina Monologues earlier this year — and local MPP Ernie Parsons.

"That's why it was important to me to have won because I respect these people," she said.

Cadieux has settled on a career in the social services field, either with the

Children's Aid Society or in group homes.

She will be enrolling in September in the three-year child and youth worker program at Algonquin.

"From a young age, I knew I wanted to work with children, especially those children with difficult family lives and those who need an extra guiding hand," she said.

"I want to make a difference in a young person's life and I feel that's where my strengths are."

Cadieux has already had several years' experience working with youth.

She was a youngster herself when she started working with the kids in the nursery at St. Mark's United Church in Cannifton. Then, in Grade 9, she started teaching Sunday school and continued for