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Despite some adversity in his life, William Dayment is an extremely kind young person.

It is that important trait that has earned the 16-year-old Sir James Whitney School deaf student laurels as the High School Kindness Citizen of the Year for 2004.

The Violence Awareness and Random Acts of Kindness committee drew Dayment's name recently from the nominations submitted by Quinte-area high schools. He wins a home computer and digital camera.

Dayment said he cried when his name was drawn at Kindness Court in the Quinte Mall last month.

"I did feel my eyes well up when my name was announced as the winner," Dayment said through an interpreter. "I was happy and honoured to win."

But, he vowed, "I'll be the same kind person."

Born profoundly deaf, Dayment has been attending Sir James Whitney School since 1992.

He lost his father eight years ago. His mother died just before Christmas and he is now living with his aunt in Pembroke.

Dayment said his parents taught him to be kind to others.

"My parents were very friendly and kind people. There was always a welcome mat at our house for people to drop in and visit...they had the greatest influence on me."

Brian McIntosh, a residence counsellor, said Dayment is a worthy choice as Kindness student of the year.

"William doesn't think about being a kind person, he just does what comes naturally," he said. "He demonstrates courtesy to all around him, students and staff, is never critical and is always positive."

Dayment is extremely helpful and kind especially with the younger students on campus.

"Sir James Whitney is made up of stu-

dents from ages four to 20. In many ways, it is like a large group of siblings. To many of the younger students, William is like a kind older brother," said McIntosh.

He said Dayment exemplifies courage and personal integrity.

"William has been known to intervene

between older, larger students when he sees that someone is being mistreated or bullied."

Dayment, meanwhile, has led an active life both in school and in the community.

"I enjoy volunteering and I volunteer in a lot of things," he said.

The Pembroke student, who has a twin sister and two older siblings, came to Sir James Whitney School a dozen years ago to start kindergarten. He travels home every Friday and returns to the school residence Sunday evenings.

Dayment said he has enjoyed all his years at the Dundas Street West school.

"I love it here because all the students are deaf," he said.

He has also been extremely involved in school activities.

He belongs to the school's volleyball, ball hockey and swim teams and is in his second year on the student parliament. As director of sports and social activities, he helps organize and run school dances, winter carnival, beach day and spirit week and reports to parent council about school activities.

Considered an excellent swimmer, Dayment helps tutor young deaf swimmers. His dream would be to someday qualify for the Canadian Olympic swim team.

He loves to cook and bake and sometimes makes snacks for his residence mates.

He is also involved in numerous arts and crafts activities in the student residence.

With another deaf student, Dayment set up American Sign Language instruction for Sagonaska School students on campus who don't know sign language. He said he saw it as a way of bridging the gap between hearing and deaf students on campus.

Outside school, Dayment volunteers with the local White Cane Club, setting up and putting away tables and chairs for their meetings and occasionally serving food and drinks to guests. He also volunteers with Assistive Aquatics, helping the physically challenged with their exercise program in the school's pool.

Dayment said he wants to be a professional photographer or, his second choice, a chef.

"I find pictures and photography fascinating and I've always wanted to do that," he said.

He took photos at his brother's wedding and the family was impressed with his work.

"That really confirmed that I want to be a photographer."

Dayment plans to continue studying at Sir James Whitney until he turns 20.

"By then, I will have a school picked out to study photography."