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The Georgetown



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CLIMATE CHAMPION NAMED JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

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It's not every day that a child can say they have political party leaders personally rooting for them.

But it's just that kind of support that led to Georgetown's Spencer Lippa recently being named one of the Ontario Community Newspaper Association's Junior Citizens of 2019.

The 12-year-old, who's championed environmental action locally and has been dubbed 'Georgetown's answer to Greta Thunberg,' is one of a dozen youths across the province who've received the prestigious title in recognition of the difference they make in their communities.

"I was stunned. I sat there blankly. kind of shocked," said the youngster of when he heard the news. "I was just mind-blown. It's such a great honour to be one of the junior citizens."

Bolstering Lippa's application for the honour were letters of nomination from provincial Green Party leader



Herb Garbutt / Torstar

Spencer Lippa sits on the boulevard beside Ethel Gardiner Public School during one of his weekly strikes to draw attention for the need to act on climate change.

Mike Schreiner, and the head of Canada's Green Party, Elizabeth May. Lippa became the youngest member of the environmentally-friendly party at the age of 10.

Closer to home, the Georgetown boy also received nomination letters from Janet Duval of the Halton Hills Climate Action team, who first encouraged him and his family to apply for the title, his grade 7 teacher Nadine Rohmann and Ralph Martin, the local Green Party

candidate during the recent federal

"I really think it came down to the kind words and support of those nominators," said Lippa's mother, Janel Bascom. "I'm absolutely thrilled. What a brave decision (by the OCNA) to put climate change and environmentalism at the forefront like this."

Lippa has been front and centre at local climate change rallies and has personally held school strikes calling for climate action every Friday since September at Ethel Gardiner Public School.

So where does the proud mom see her son going in the future?

"All the way to Ottawa," she said. "Spencer has already expressed interest in being an MP or an MPP. This kid is determined, he is hard-working and is completely committed to this cause. It's just a matter of getting out of his way."

If elected, the wise-beyond-hisyears boy said the first piece of legislation he would pass is a Canadian ban on fracking, where high-pressure liquids are injected deep underground to free up oil and gas deposits.

"It's the worst way to get energy," he

Lippa and the 11 other junior citizens will be recognized at a special ceremony on April 3.

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