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# Champion COMMUNITY Page

## Milton sea cadet brothers earn distinction

### Baxter teens complete criteria for coveted Duke of Edinburgh award

By LISA CARTWRIGHT  
 The Champion

Two years of hard work paid off October 14, when the Baxter brothers were awarded the Duke of Edinburgh's silver award at Queen's Park.

The award was presented to Milton residents Matthew and Adam Baxter, both 17, after they completed four sections of the program — service, expedition, skills and fitness.

"Service, you volunteer in the community, expedition you go outdoors and learn different skills," said Pam Swartz, administrator coordinator for the Ontario Division of the Duke Of Edinburgh Award program.

"Skills can be anything — learning computers, learning an instrument, learning a language and physical fitness is obviously for health."

Ms Swartz said the program creates well-rounded individuals.

#### Self improvement is key

And that is what the awards are all about — helping youths become better people, she said.

"It's not a competition at all," Ms Swartz said about the awards.

The only one a participant has to compete against is himself.

Participants are not awarded based on a set criterion, but rather on their individual effort and their improvement over the course of the program, Ms Swartz said.

And while not everyone receives an award at the end, each person comes away a better person.

"I think it creates self-reliance and independence and helping others," she said.

Matthew and Adam said the program also encouraged them to volunteer in the community and increase their level of physical fitness.

Not that the brothers required help in either category.

The Grade 12 E.C. Drury students have been members of the Milton Sea Cadets since they were 10.

As members, they attend training programs, assist with community events and participate in a number of physical activities.

They're also involved with a number of sports at school including wrestling, rugby and volleyball.

Both play the guitar and squeeze in time to work part-time — Adam as a lifeguard at the

Leisure Centre, and Matthew at Pizza Hut. School is also important to the brothers.

Adam said he wants to go to university and take human kinetics. He then wants to get his teaching degree so he can teach physical education.

Matthew wants to go to college for music and either teach or perform.

Both agreed the award will look great on their resumé.

The brothers said they were happy with the award.

"It's a nationally recognized award," Matthew said.

Adam agreed: "It's a cool award. Not a lot of people have it."

#### World-wide program

The award program was started by Prince Phillip in 1956 and now operates in 60 countries. Also known as the International Award for Young People, there are more than 2.5 million participants including 100,000 Canadians.

The program is open to youths 14 to 25.

There are three levels of the award — bronze, silver and gold — each with an increasing level of commitment.

Participants have the option of either completing each of the three levels one at a time, or going directly into either silver or gold.

The Baxter brothers decided to go directly into the silver award. They are now working toward the gold and must complete all the criteria in 18 months.

The gold award is presented by a member of the Royal Family. Last July, an awards ceremony was held in Montreal with Prince Edward and Princess Sophia presenting the awards.

#### Recommend program

Both Matthew and Adam recommend other youths participate in the program as it gives them something to do as well as increasing community involvement and physical fitness.

Lt. Shaun Weatherhead of the Milton Sea Cadets said the brothers are the first people in the core to have won the award.

"It think its fabulous," Mr. Weatherhead said.

Mr. Weatherhead said while he was there to guide the boys during the program, they had to do the work themselves.

"The two kids actually went out and pursued it (the award). They were the first two who strove to get it. The first two that really made it a priority," he said.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Matthew (left) and Adam Baxter proudly display their Duke of Edinburgh Silver

## Awards program criteria

Youths 14 to 25 are invited to accept the Duke of Edinburgh challenge.

- Those wishing to participate in the program, must contact the Ontario division office before beginning.

- Participants receive a record book, which details what activities they must complete for each category.

- Youths can complete all three levels of the program or go directly into silver or gold.

- There is a minimum age to begin each level. All three levels must be completed by the time the participant reaches 25.

- Each level has four categories to complete. The categories include service, expeditions, skills and physical fitness.

- Participants can customize the program to fit it into their schedules. Youths do not have to do the program continuously, but can break it up over several years.

- "It's supposed to be enjoyable," said Pam Swartz, Ontario division coordinator of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. "It is supposed to incorporate into a lifestyle."

- Youths submit their record book to the Ontario division office, where it's assessed for its individual merit.

- Awards are presented at ceremonies throughout the year.

- For details call the Ontario division office at (416) 203-2282, or email at [duke@dukeofed.org](mailto:duke@dukeofed.org).

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