



## **Alex Escobar - Chaminade College, Toronto Catholic District School Board - 2011 Outstanding Youth Service Recipient**

Alex Escobar is a 17 year old, grade 11 student from Toronto Ontario. Alex has proven to be an exemplary role model both at school and within the community. Alex is passionate about empowering youth to have a voice. He utilizes various platforms to get his message across. These platforms include being a member of the Peer Council at school, sitting on various community committees along with other leadership opportunities that he avails himself to.

Alex's life story is one of triumph overcoming adversity and it is a true testament to a young man who came to realize that he was leading a life that would steer him down the wrong path. One may have believed that with no parental support, living the street life and being placed in an expulsion program would lead one in a negative direction. However Alex made the decision to make a turn that would lead him into a life that is filled with achievements above and beyond expectations. He has been described as a youth who demonstrates responsibility, leadership, respect and a willingness to excel.

Alex has a considerable involvement in both school and the community all the while maintaining honour roll status by maintaining above a 90% average in all subjects for the past two years. At school, he participates in the Mentorship Program. He has demonstrated an ability to lead, motivate and engage students. Alex is a Peer Mentor to grade 9 students who are struggling and are at risk both academically and socially and assists them during both lunch period and after school. He gives his time to help guide them towards achieving success. Alex also helps incoming students from elementary schools feel welcome. He has made it a priority that everyone who he works with leaves feeling better about themselves and their education.

Alex is a representative of the Chaminade's Safe Action Team, which helps to improve the safety of the students at school. He has been instrumental in helping with the facilitation of the school's breakfast program, aiming at providing a healthy snack for those that would otherwise have nothing, and attends school early every day to assist in the distribution of the breakfast to his fellow students. Alex has devoted time to the school's recycling program. Alex also co-ordinates the intramural sports program and is on the football and wrestling teams. Alex has been asked to sit on a council with teachers, parents and the administration to provide input towards the safety and security of the school and community. Alex acts as the voice of his school and speaks passionately about some real-life examples and situations that face young people today. Alex's commitment to social justice is evident in his role to assist with the partnership the school has with Free the Children which helps to raise awareness and funds for a lunch program at a school in India. He hopes to also become involved in working with the school to help promote the annual Respect for Life Week in May 2012. Alex was selected to represent the school along with 25 of his peers from other schools, at Camp Olivia, a leadership training retreat.

Alex was recognized for his work in the community by receiving the Working Against Violence Everyday, Louise Russo Award. This award is given to a youth that has demonstrated respect, responsibility and leadership through concrete actions that create safer and healthier communities.

Alex has been described as the strong silent type and has earned respect from his peers by engaging in pro-social activities and by making it "cool" to be involved both in his community and school. Alex volunteered for Jake's House Christmas Party for Children with Autism. Alex is held in high esteem by his community and by the entire body of both students and staff. He has genuinely demonstrated kindness, respect, empathy, responsibility, reliability, commitment and still remains humble. Alex hopes to one day attend university and pursue a career as an anaesthesiologist. It is because of who Alex is and what he has achieved in his short life, that he is this year's winner of the Outstanding Youth Service Award.

Congratulations Alex!