

'Leaders without titles' needed to champion respect

BY LEE-ANN CHEVRETTE
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THE City of Thunder Bay's annual respect. Award recognizes an individual or organization that promotes attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that recognize the importance of human dignity, and demonstrates leadership to foster respect for others.

The 2017 respect. Award was presented to Farhan Yousaf, an international student at Lakehead University, who is committed to creating an environment and culture that is inclusive of all people.

Farhan started Culture Days at Lakehead University to recognize and celebrate campus diversity, and has worked as a mentor for racialized youth. He is a founding member of the Racialized Young Professionals Network (RYPn), which is dedicated to breaking down racial barriers and helping racialized youth network and achieve success. Farhan is also involved in initiatives to address food insecurity and access to clean water in remote northern communities.

This is the fifth year that the city has presented the annual Award. Previous winners include Dianna Atkinson (2016); the Regional Multicultural Youth Council (2015); Larry Baxter (2014); and Thomas MacDonald (2013).



ONE CITY
MANY VOICES

Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Advisory Committee produces this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.

While it is important to recognize outstanding efforts when it comes to exemplifying respect in Thunder Bay, it is also critical to encourage all residents to champion efforts that will create a culture of respect. A wise woman I know recently spoke about the need for "leaders without titles" — that no single individual or organization is capable of addressing the complex issues of racism, discrimination and marginalization. We must also look within ourselves to reflect upon the ways in which we can individually contribute — through our thoughts, words and actions, to make Thunder Bay better for everyone.

If the respect initiative seems overly simplistic to you, I invite you to take a deeper look. Its nine principles encourage us to reflect on our actions and our thinking to:

- check our biases
- value our differences and embrace diversity in all its forms
- model appropriate behaviour
- listen deeply to others
- have conversations that matter
- be accountable for our actions
- step in against bullying and discrimination, and support others with compassion
- take pride in our community
- reach out for help when we need it.

Creating a culture of respect begins with a personal commitment to explore our own thoughts and actions. Embodying these nine principles will help to support the development of these "leaders without titles" that our community needs, and to collectively create a culture of respect and the community we all know Thunder Bay can be.

For more information on respect., visit www.thunderbay.ca/respect

Lee-Ann Chevrette is the co-ordinator of the Thunder Bay Crime Prevention Council.

The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.



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Farhan Yousaf is this year's winner of the respect. award.