

Indigenous Graduates from Central Okanagan Schools Receive Prestigious Awards

Story by Ed Kolybaba

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The Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise is pleased to announce that two indigenous secondary school graduates were recently presented with two 2021 awards sponsored by the club.



The **Kelowna Sunrise Rotary All Around Medicine Wheel Award**, valued at \$750 was awarded to **Sianna Williamson**, a student from Kelowna Secondary School. Sianna is a well-rounded student who seeks out her wellness priorities in order to achieve her personal and academic goals. In doing so, she has met the criteria whereby she demonstrated active service, citizenship, leadership, personal determination and an outstanding work ethic at school/community, excelled in team sports or individual physical accomplishments, demonstrated cultural contributions at school and in her community and provided evidence of overcoming personal and systemic barriers to success.

Sianna plans to attend McGill University to study psychiatry before pursuing a career supporting intergenerational trauma survivors and residential school survivors.

The **Kelowna Sunrise Rotary Spiritual Award**, valued at \$500 was presented to **Hayden Wilson** who graduated from George Elliot Secondary this spring. Hayden has met the criteria for this award by focusing on making cultural contributions by being involved in promoting and being actively engaged in cultural activities within the school and community. He has also demonstrated active and productive service, citizenship, personal determination and an excellent work ethic.

Hayden's future Goal is to continue with a forest ranger and peace officer training program which he has already commenced. He hopes that he will have the opportunity to use the

knowledge and the skills he will acquire from the program to serve on his home reserve working alongside band members and Elders to protect the community's traditional lands.

A third award, valued at \$500, the 2021 **Medicine Wheel Award - Diverse Needs and Abilities**, personally sponsored by a member of the club, was presented to **Keeanu Saunders**, a 2021 graduate of Mount Boucherie Secondary School. To be eligible for the award, Keenanu also had to demonstrate outstanding service, citizenship, leadership, personal determination and an excellent work ethic, along with contributing to cultural endeavours within the school and community and providing evidence of overcoming challenges and diverse abilities in order to succeed.

Keeanu was on an Evergreen graduation path, but through determination and strength earned his full Dogwood Diploma. While remaining well connected to his Indigenous culture and his community, his goal is to pursue study in physiotherapy.