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A STUDENT STAR ON THE RISE — ON AND OFF CAMPUS

Impact Awards profile: Alysha Rose, Rising Star award winner

Marie Visca - April 8, 2015



Rising Star Award winner Alysha Rose. (Ryan McNutt photo)

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For Alysha Rose, being involved in her community has never seemed like a choice. It's been the way the 17-year-old Dal student has lived her entire life thus far; she couldn't really imagine doing anything else.

The first-year Medical Sciences student, originally from Saanichton, B.C. (just north of Victoria) has certainly made an impact since arriving at Dal, literally and figuratively. She was honoured as a "Rising Star" at last month's Student Impact Awards.

"I wanted to find a place where I could do something of value with my life, both academically and intellectually, but also from a community perspective and from a humanitarian perspective," says Alysha. "The more I learned about Dal, the more it turned into the right choice.

"I find myself with this strange sense that I'm never going to be able to give back as much to this place as I've already gained from it."

Starting something new

Since coming to Halifax this fall — [one of two Schulich Leaders at Dalhousie this year](#) — the amount that Alysha has done in just one year is certainly worthy of celebration. Before even arriving on campus, she reached out to Big Brothers Big Sisters Halifax about establishing a student chapter at Dalhousie. She successfully started and runs Big Brothers Big Sisters Dal, a society committed to fundraising, increasing community awareness and connecting students with volunteer work at the organization's Halifax location. After two semesters, the society has grown to over 50 individuals who volunteer as they can, and a solid dozen core members who attend all meetings and assist with overall coordination.

"Mentorship was a huge part of my life and is a huge part of who I am, so I understand how big of an impact it can have on a kid," says Alysha, who can't say enough about the people who've come out to support Big Brothers Big Sisters.

"I think we're strong in that we seek to empower everyone to be leaders. If anyone wants to take leadership on something or bring in a new idea, we say yes and everyone works together to make that happen. I think that's really important because empowering everyone in the community to be leaders makes the community richer in the end."

Staying connected to community

Alysha is also the Vice-President of MEDLIFE Dalhousie where she is currently organizing two mobile clinic trips for Dal students. She's also developing peer-teaching workshops in her program and works with Dal Gets REAL, a movement of students across Canada who go into schools and talk to youth about unlearning homophobic and discriminatory language. She also recently became an official ally within the Allies at Dalhousie community, a group of individuals who provide a supportive, non-judgmental and safe place for anyone within the LGBTQ community to

talk.

“I think that the more we can tell our stories, speak to young people and engage with them, the more we can help to eradicate ignorance and create a more respectful and safe place for everyone,” said Alysha, reflecting on the importance of the work done by Dal Gets REAL. “Words have weight, and words are some of the most powerful things we have. Especially for me as a young person, having people who want to listen and talk and hear your story and help — I just think that’s so important. It’s what gets people through.”

In addition to her work on campus, Alysha’s also heavily active in the Halifax community. She volunteers at Sunday Supper, an initiative through Mobile Outreach Street Health that provides weekly meals to those in need, and is in the early stages of organizing Halifax’s first Women’s Memorial March. The Memorial Marches are active in cities across Canada to raise awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women, an issue that has increasingly caught Alysha’s attention.

“The more I become informed, the more I become emotionally startled, and the more I feel myself becoming indignant and impassioned,” she said. “It’s an understatement to say it’s an important issue. Bringing the Halifax community together to heal and to feel the loss, but also to demand action and inquiry — these are all important steps that we need to take as a city.”

Staying inspired

Despite remarkable work in student and community life, Alysha remains humbled. Her first year at Dal has her excited for what’s next, and she’s looking forward to completing her honours degree in Medical Sciences, becoming more involved in research, and eventually pursuing a career in humanitarian medicine.

“I’m interested in a lot of things, and I know that medicine is the best way to tie all of them together,” she says. “Some of the most inspiring people I’ve ever met are doctors who also became advocates for social justice issues that came down to human health and human rights.

“For me, it’s really important to keep speaking, to keep finding a voice, to keep standing up for what matters and what is right. Whether that’s LGBTQ rights or kids who need grown-ups in their lives or bringing people in to do volunteer work in mobile clinics, all of that matters.”

Alysha was one of eight students to receive a Rising Star award at the Student Impact Awards. [Read more about all of this year’s Impact Award recipients](#)

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Diane C

I know Alysha from her time at Stelly's Secondary School and I am not even a little surprised to hear that she is moving and shaking things at Dalhousie. She is a remarkable young woman and BC's loss is certainly Halifax's gain!

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7 months ago

Jackson fowlow

What an amazing person and beacon. So great to read about this. Dal pride lives on!

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