

Preston receives \$60,000 scholarship

DSS student to study at McMaster after being selected for one of 40 national awards

DELTA OPTIMIST
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When Grade 12 Delta Secondary student Claire Preston started working on scholarship applications last fall, she never imagined she would be selected as one of 40 students from across Canada to win a \$60,000 entrance scholarship to study sciences at the university level.

"I did not expect very much, as I know there are many extremely qualified applicants out there," Preston says. "When I got the email from McMaster that morning, it was surreal, as if I had suddenly woken up into another dream, and I continued to feel this way until a couple of weeks later, when the reality of it finally began to sink in, that I had been chosen."

Due to her achievements in science, as well as her artistic successes and volunteer endeavours, Preston was selected as a winner of the Schulich Leader Scholarship. The scholarship, in its inaugural year, is being awarded to 40 graduating students from across the country that are enrolling in science, technology, engineering or mathematics at one of 20 selected Canadian universities.

All Canadian secondary schools were eligible to select one nominee for the award. Delta Secondary was one of 977 schools that submitted a nomination.

Preston has enjoyed many successes and contributed greatly to her school community during her years at the Ladner high school.

Academically, she has had the top average in her grade each year, has been the Canadian Math Contest winner in her school each year, has scored in the top one per cent nationally on the Michael Smith Science Challenge, and has the top mark in her school for her grade in the departments of science, math, English, French, drafting, visual arts, animation, civics and social studies.

She also placed first in the district in last year's Concours d'Art Oratoire and was a finalist in the Delta Interschool Film Festival for an animation piece she created.

In addition to these accomplishments, Preston has done extensive volunteer work. She is a member of her school's Environment Club, Grad Council, Sculpture Club, Glee Club, Student Council, UBC Physics Olympics team and Kwantlen Polytechnic University Science Challenge team. She is also a volunteer Energy Ambassador with B.C. Hydro.

Her extracurricular passions are music and art. She plays clarinet at the ARCT level and is the first clarinet in the Delta Youth Orchestra. She also plays piano and teaches piano to younger students.

She does acrylic painting, sculpture, drawing, computer graphics, web design, animation, 3D modeling and rendering, crafting and sewing, having her work displayed in various locations and providing graphic and web design services to clients.

Hoping to continue her passion for sciences at university, Preston had planned on attending a local postsecondary institution.

"I had always had a desire to go to eastern Canada for university, but with the cost it previously seemed like a fleeting fantasy. Now, it has all become possible," she says.

Thanks to the \$60,000 Schulich Leader Scholarship, Preston will begin studying at McMaster in September.

"My dreams of being able to work on the forefront of developing science and technology, of being able to help lead humans in some way to a better future, may one day become a reality," she says.

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