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# Maike van Niekerk awarded prestigious award from Dalhousie University

TC Media  
Published on March 29, 2016

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Humanitarian and Dalhousie University student Maike van Niekerk has been awarded the university's most prestigious student leadership award, the Board of Governors' Award.

The award celebrates students' contribution to the quality and vitality of the university through both academic and extracurricular accomplishment.

Nominations for this award come from across the university and winners are selected by a committee consisting of the president, three members of the Board of Governors and the vice-provost student affairs.

A third-year nursing student at Dalhousie, van Niekerk of Massey Drive has dedicated her life to fighting breast cancer after the passing of her mother in 2011.

"I lost my mom to breast cancer when I was 15 and that was a turning point in my life where I decided that I wanted to help people going through a similar illness," said van Niekerk in a press release from the university.



Photo by Nick Pearce  
Maike van Niekerk is seen with her Board of Governors' Award from Dalhousie University.

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"I wanted to alleviate some of the stresses, some of the fears."

To honour her mother, the Corner Brook Regional High graduate established Katrin's Karepackage, an initiative to offset travel costs for patients travelling to cancer-related appointments in St. John's and Halifax, in June 2014.

In 2014 she biked 1,100 kilometres across Newfoundland and in 2015 she ran seven marathons in seven days to raise awareness and funding for Katrin's Karepackage.

"The support I received on these initiatives was so humbling," she said. "Along the way people shared their stories with me and invited me into their homes. The entire province came together and it was very inspiring."

While at school van Niekerk volunteers approximately 25 hours per week with various non-profit charities including Ronald McDonald House, Breast Cancer Action Nova Scotia and the Canadian Cancer Society. She is also president of the Dalhousie Nursing Research Interest Group and Dalhousie Nursing Global Health Community. Van Niekerk has also volunteered in Nepal to provide neonatal, oncology and outpatient care.

In 2013 she was named as a Canadian Schulich Leader, receiving a \$60,000 scholarship to attend Dalhousie.

The Canadian Schulich Leader Scholarships recognize 40 Canadian high school graduates pursuing science, engineering, technology or math programs in university.

In 2015 van Niekerk was named Newfoundland Red Cross' Young Humanitarian of the Year. She was also named one of Plan International Canada's Top 20 Under 20.

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Congratulations! You are an inspiration to us all!

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**Corner Brooker** March 29, 2016 - 07:22

So very proud of you, Maiké and what you have done and continue to do for people. Congratulations!

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