



SCHULICH SCHOLARS ALEXANDER CZEHRYN AND KAILEE RUTHERFORD

U of M's Schulich Leaders set on building a brighter future

SEPTEMBER 4, 2014 — Two U of M hopefuls received life-changing news this spring. Not only were they accepted into the programs of their choice, but they were each awarded the Schulich Leader Scholarship.

"I hung up the phone and started crying," says Kailee Rutherford, a graduate of Prairie Mountain High who is studying Science at the U of M this fall. "I was so overwhelmed at first that my mom thought something was wrong."

Rutherford had just learned she would receive \$60,000 in recognition of her academic excellence and her outstanding community leadership.

"This is a huge weight off my shoulders," she explains.

Alexander Czehryn's family had a similar reaction when they found out he will receive \$80,000 to support his Engineering studies.

"My mom started jumping up and down," he remembers. "My brother picked me up."

Both families have good reason to be excited. The prestigious Schulich award is one of the most generous and competitive scholarships available to Canadian students. This year, there were 1,147 nominees from across Canada. Of these, 54 applied to the U of M, and only Rutherford and Czehryn were selected.

The young leaders are known for their unshakable positive spirit, and for inspiring others to give back. Both attribute others' suffering to their long-term goals and decisions of what to study in university.

"When I was half way done my chemo treatment, there was a 23-month-old boy beside me and I found out he had passed away," remembers Rutherford. "I knew then that I wanted to be able to help because I was mad that there was this little kid that was barely in this world and he was taken."

Rutherford was diagnosed with cancer in her Grade 11 year. In the face of this challenge, she maintained excellent grades, became an ambassador for the Terry Fox foundation and was elected student council president. Her friends and family were amazed at her positive spirit, and how she turned heartbreaking experiences into her inspiration to one day become a doctor and help save young lives.

Czehryn also dreams of saving lives. He says much of his inspiration comes from watching his father cope with hemophilia. His long term goal is to be a tissue engineer.

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He remembers stories of when his dad was young and there were very few treatments for the symptoms of his disease. Alex says he sees how research has dramatically improved his dad's treatment options, and he sees tissue engineering as a way to help people with conditions like his dad's.

"Tissue engineering is a new frontier so there's still a lot of research being done and I want to be a part of that," says Czehryn. "I want to be a part of creating solutions for the future."

His 99 per cent average upon graduation from the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute certainly suggests that he has the potential to achieve his dreams.

Both young leaders say they are incredibly grateful to receive the Schulich scholarship, and are excited to participate in campus clubs and expand their horizons at the University of Manitoba.

"I really want to live up to this scholarship and use it well," says Czehryn. "I will take my courses seriously and excel in everything I do."

The four-year award goes to 40 students per year from 20 eligible Canadian universities and is designated for students pursuing undergraduate studies in STEM subjects: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Recipients in the field of engineering are awarded \$80,000. Those in the remaining fields receive \$60,000.

This is the third year in a row that two upcoming U of M first-year students have received the award.

MYRRHANDA NOVAK

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