

Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award

MARL awarded this year's Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award at an award ceremony on December 8th, 2011 at the Manitoba Legislature to the Voices Leadership Team; Jasmine Cowley and Malcolm Christian for their fantastic work in developing the 'Free Hug Day' campaign.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child outlines a number of things that children/youth should be provided with in order to grow and develop to their best potential, one of those things is adults to provide care when parents are incapable of doing so. 'Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network' works to provide support, encouragement and advocacy for youth in care. Jasmine and Malcolm identified an area of concern in Manitoba's child welfare system; being that the shortage of life long foster families for youth in care leads to youth in care not receiving positive touch on a daily basis, essentially not being hugged on a daily basis. They then brainstormed a solution to spread information about this problem, an information day held at the forks called 'Free Hug day'. There they handed out information pamphlets, answered questions and provided over 100 hugs to the public and youth. Jasmine and Malcolm also videotaped the event and compiled and edited the footage into a video which can be seen on the Voices' website and on YouTube. The opening quote of the video states that we need "4 hugs a day for survival, 8 hugs a day for maintenance, and 12 a day for growth". The video is a very powerful depiction of the preparation and implementation of the plan developed by these two youths and it generates a highly emotive responsive from everyone who views it. MARL was please to present this award to Jasmine and Malcolm, two incredible youth leaders, for their very impressive commitment to the rights and needs of youth in care. Congratulations Jasmine and Malcolm.



As published on the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties website (original link - <http://www.marl.mb.ca/content/current-news/sybil-shack-human-rights-youth-award>)
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