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Yukon First Nations woman receives award for tackling 'lateral violence'

Teagyn Vallevand, co-founder of Youth For Lateral Kindness, was given an 'Everyday Political Citizen' award

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Teagyn Vallevand, seen here at Canada Day celebrations in Whitehorse last summer, was given an 'Everyday Political Citizen' award by Samara Canada for her work with Youth For Lateral Kindness. (Philippe Morin/CBC)

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Teagyn Vallevand is still kind of surprised.

The young First Nations woman from Whitehorse had been nominated for an "Everyday Political Citizen" award, handed out annually by Samara Canada, a non-profit group that works to increase civic engagement.

She went to the award ceremony this week with no anxiety about winning.

"I was just expecting to go and be able to meet everybody and have a nice time in Toronto, and then go back to Whitehorse," she said.

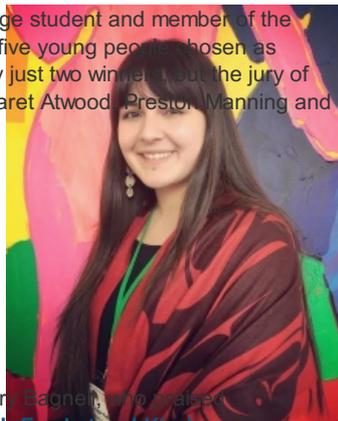
"I honestly wasn't expecting this."

Vallevand, a 21-year-old Yukon College student and member of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation, was one of five young people chosen as winners this week. There are normally just two winners, but the jury of notable Canadians — including Margaret Atwood, Preston Manning and Rick Mercer — just couldn't narrow it down.

"It makes me feel really good about the work that I do," Vallevand said.

Preventing lateral violence

She was nominated by Yukon MP Lorne Bagnell, who praised Vallevand's work in co-founding Youth For Lateral Kindness, an organization that facilitates workshops aimed at preventing lateral violence in Indigenous



The recognition 'makes me feel really good about the work that I do,' Vallevand said. (Youth For Lateral Kindness)

Weather

Severe weather warnings or watches in effect for:

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Weather forecast table with icons and temperatures for Whitehorse (3°C), Yellowknife (-16°C), Inuvik (-11°C), Iqaluit (-13°C), and Kuujuaq (-2°C).

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- Youth For Lateral Kindness

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communities.

Lateral violence is often described as abuse directed at one's peers. In Indigenous communities, it is often attributed to a history of colonialism, oppression, and intergenerational trauma.

- **VIDEO | 'Not just a lecture': Aboriginal youth group talks about violence**

Youth For Lateral Kindness also conducts "blanket exercise" workshops. The **blanket exercise** is used as a way to teach Indigenous history and foster understanding of the impacts of colonialism.

Vallevand says the Samara award shows that she's on the right path with her work and it inspires her to keep going.

"It definitely reinforces the idea that we are impacting our communities, that we are creating the change that we want to see within our communities — that the work we're doing is important work," she said.

"We just kind of do the work — we don't expect to be recognized for it. So it just feels really good."

With files from Steve Hossack



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Chief Roberta Joseph and Chief Simon Mervyn spoke to reporters on Parliament Hill



'Why didn't you jump out?' Iqaluit man elated after being reunited with puppy following boat fire

0:30

It was a rough start to the week for Everton Michael Lewis, who says he went for a Monday morning coffee run and came back to find his home in flames - but he was all smiles after being reunited with his puppy, which escaped the blaze.



Bowhead whales exfoliate in Cumberland Sound, Nunavut

1:04

Canadian researchers recently caught bowhead whales in an intimate act of deep exfoliation in Nunavut waters.



Louis Sebert defends record as N.W.T. cabinet minister before vote to oust him from cabinet.

8:06

N.W.T. Justice Minister Louis Sebert narrowly survived a vote to remove him from cabinet on Oct. 18, after losing a confidence vote during the legislative assembly's midterm review. Here, Sebert speaks to MLAs immediately before the vote.

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