



ILC Press Release

Wave of accomplishment and sense of opportunity sweeps through ceremony honouring high school graduates from 17 to 62 years of age

TORONTO, Nov. 25 /CNW/ -

After donning their gowns and making the walk across the stage in front of family and friends, adult learners from all corners of the province received high school graduation certificates last Saturday afternoon at a ceremony held at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

While the ceremony was in many ways familiar, this was not your typical high school graduation. The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education, attended the ceremony and congratulated each honouree saying, “We know education opens up doors — whether you are upgrading your skills, embarking on a new career or learning something new. This is true for students of all ages.”

The annual ILC Graduation and Award Ceremony is a formal occasion to recognize and celebrate the achievements of learners who have earned their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) through distance study with the Independent Learning Centre. The ceremony also honoured the top-scoring General Education Development (GED) test writers who have earned their Ontario High School Equivalency Certificate.

Sarah Irwin, Managing Director of the ILC, proudly addressed the graduates. “Each of you have taken the initiative and assumed the responsibility for obtaining your credentials, and in so doing, you have embraced new opportunities.”

Stephanie Beedham, 25, of Stayner, was one of the 1.6 million Ontarians aged 20 to 64 without a high school diploma. She left school after Grade 11, four credits short and with no intentions of ever going back. She attended the ceremony in the company of her spouse, and children, aged 5 and 4. “I knew I had to get my diploma if I wanted to pursue a career that was going to make me proud and set an example for my children.” Distance education was the right choice for Beedham. She added, “The challenge of raising a family so young along with going back to school seemed

impossible. But I was able to finish my remaining credits from home and each time I passed a course there was a feeling of true accomplishment. I feel as though I can accomplish anything now!”

Class valedictorian Starr Campagnaro, 21 from Cambridge, enrolled with the ILC as an alternative when attending a traditional day school became difficult. In her address she referred to the graduating class as “self-determined graduates”, remarking, “With its availability to a wide range of individuals from various backgrounds, the ILC has undoubtedly enhanced and improved many lives over the last 80 years. I extend my gratitude to the Ministry of Education for supporting alternative forms of education and enabling many to participate in what could be seen as a growing tradition in learning.”

Brenda Towedo, 50, of Ottawa, was honoured with the Robert Hogan Award, recognizing the achievement of an adult learner who has overcome significant challenges and adversity to complete their high school education. Towedo describes herself as “an independent learner by choice”, adding, “ILC has taught me a lot of valuable lessons and has given me a second chance. I believe education is the key to all aspects of life whether big or small, or who you are. And today, I am a high school graduate.”

About the Independent Learning Centre

The Independent Learning Centre (ILC) is the province’s designated provider of accredited distance education and the exclusive provider of General Educational Development (GED) testing in Ontario. Funded by the Ministry of Education, the ILC provides an alternative source of public education including credit courses, student support and granting the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Since 2001 TVO (tvo.org) has administered the Independent Learning Centre.

For more information, visit ilc.org.

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