

Youth receives Commonwealth leadership award from the Queen of England

MN July 16, 2015 Paul Bieg PINTO, Aaron Joshua

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The 24-year-old is among 60 exceptional youth from across the Commonwealth being recognized and celebrated for taking leadership roles in their communities to transform the lives of others.

Pinto and his family moved to Canada from Bahrain after the 1991 Gulf War.

Since then, he has travelled all over the world South Africa, India and Columbia working on projects supporting disadvantaged communities.

In high school, he co-founded an initiative to help people in Canada living below the poverty line. The project delivers food hampers to migrants, the elderly and survivors of abuse.

After returning from a yearlong exchange in Europe and a development internship in Central Russia, he established the Canadian Youth Think Tank.

The organization offers opportunities for young Canadians opportunity to produce written articles on Canadian and global public policy news, developments and events.

The former St. Francis Xavier Catholic Secondary School student was a World Vision Canada Youth Ambassador, a member of the *Globe and Mail* Student Advisory Board, a Junior

Research Fellow at the NATO Council of Canada, chair of the Mississauga City Youth Council and Canada's Youth Ambassador to the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Last October, Pinto travelled to Ukraine as one of 90 Canadians to be an International Election Observer monitoring parliamentary elections.

"To be presented with an award by Her Majesty The Queen in recognition of my work is an incredible honour," said Pinto, who added engaging with other award winners, dignitaries, politicians and advocates for social change was an inspiring experience.

Award recipients spent a week in the United Kingdom receiving training and mentoring, as well as networking.

Following the June 22 award ceremony, they took part in a four-day residential development program, which included workshops at Cambridge University, meetings with U.K. business leaders and visits to social action projects.

The Queen's Young Leaders Program was established by The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, in partnership with Comic Relief and The Royal Commonwealth Society.

Applications to become a 2016 Queen's Young Leader are open until Sept. 7, 2015. Visit queensyoungleaders.com for more information.

