

Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program



Islands Trust

2005 Honourable Mention Winner Profile

Winner: **Nicholas and Naomi Wilde-Van Ginkles, Pender Island**

Category: Individual

Project: Work to sensitize the community to the environmental impact of chemicals

Nominator: Peter Easthope, North Pender

Project Description:

Nicholas and Naomi are twins who are natural-born sensitive detectors of chemical toxins due to the unusual character of their immune systems. Inspired by their love of nature and belief in social responsibility, and with a deepened first hand experience of the harmful effect of chemicals, the twin's environmental activism has contributed significantly to sensitizing the community on Pender Island to the environmental impact of chemicals. The purpose of their work is to effect reductions in the use of chemicals and to participate in developing education programs that can instruct people on the impact of our environment and our lives.

Nicolas and Naomi have been environmentally active over the past five years (they are 14 years old) in promoting ecological sustainability. They have co-founded numerous environmental youth initiatives, including the Pender Environmentally Conscious Kids, and participated in regional and national environmental youth initiatives. In 2001-2002, the twins launched a 'pesticide reduction' campaign on Pender Island, intended to directly reduce the introduction of chemicals into the environment by encouraging the use of alternative organic practices. Those committing not to use pesticides put award plaques on public display. This promoted increased awareness and a further shift to alternative organic practices on a continuing basis.

They have helped to organize and participate in a variety of environmental projects from beach cleanups and broom pulling to developing input for the Loretta's Wood management plan and organizing a student voting exercise in parallel with the 2004 federal election. They have also contributed to writing educational plays and creating posters.

Nicholas and Naomi spoke at the Healthy Island Celebration in 2002 and were delegates to the International Children's Conference on the Environment in Victoria in 2002. They have been selected as members of the 18-person trans-Canadian Youth Round Table of the Environment sponsored by the federal government. The federal environmental minister also asked them to write a report on pesticides for consideration within the federal government's ongoing review of pesticide products and issues.

Naomi and Nicholas' remarkable knowledge of the issues, their enthusiasm and their unbounded energy directed to sustaining our ecosystems, made all the more impressive by their youthfulness, has a powerful impact on those who come in contact with them.