

Erin's Dreams

October 17, 2007

When Rachel Davis lost her life in 2004 trying to protect a total stranger in a street fight in Vancouver, she inspired many people to take a leap of faith and embrace compassion in their everyday lives. She also inspired two cities to mark her passing, and has received the Vancouver Police Certificate of Merit and most recently, the Governor-General's Medal of Bravery posthumously.

Today, her family has awarded the first Rachel Davis Award to 22 year-old Erin Fogarty of Regina. Not for bravery, not for heroism, not for great achievements, but for simple compassion. Open to young Canadians 17 - 23, the award is Rachel's family's way of honouring not only their own daughter, but all youth who care about and help vulnerable people – and who have a dream.

It would never have been possible without the generous support of the hundreds of people who came out to a hugely successful fundraiser at Regina's O'Hanlon's Pub last August, which ran well into the night with music, standup comedy and the cast of CTV's *Corner Gas*. Rachel's mother is Janet Wright, who plays the part of Emma in the show. In recognition of this support, Saskatchewan was selected for nominations for the first Rachel Davis Award.



Rachel Davis

The call for nominations went out in June 2007, and submissions came in from all over the province. "Narrowing it down to a few finalists was really difficult" says Bruce Davis, Rachel's father and member of the selection committee. "We kept going over and over the applications, changing our minds, sorting things out...but we finally hit on the right person."

Erin Fogarty is the kind of person who not only works helping troubled youth working at Ranch Erhlo in Regina, but she loves it, and loves 'her kids'. These are children who have been left behind by family and society. They're not easy to be with. But as Erin's dad says, "she loves working with these children and believes she can make a difference in their lives. Many times she comes home in tears - but gladly the next day she goes off to work with them again to try to make a better day for all...she has always stood up for the small person - even as a youngster she was never afraid to be different."

There it is: standing up for the small person, not being afraid to be different – that's the kind of compassion that



Erin Fogarty

can make a difference. Whether it's a mute native girl for whom Erin started to learn sign language to communicate with, or an elderly Alzheimer's patient who she befriended and brought life back into his eyes, these vulnerable people find a friend and ally in Erin Fogarty.

And she's one of those young people you never hear about.

The Rachel Davis Foundation is honoured to recognize someone who never asks for thanks or recognition. In addition to one day earning a post grad degree in Aboriginal Social Work and mastering Cree, Erin dreams of a special project she's working on now to help with self-esteem problems with young girls. She has recently begun to develop a creative approach to this profoundly important social issue, but needs to advance in her field with a Master's degree to develop it further. The Rachel Davis Foundation is proud to present this award to Erin Fogarty in Rachel's name to help make that happen. This year the award is for \$7500.

Further information about the Foundation, the award, or about Rachel herself, can be found at www.racheldavis.ca