

# Montmartre School student wins \$75,000 Weston Loran Award scholarship

BY TIM SWITZER, LEADER-POST MARCH 11, 2010



Jenna Gall, a Monmartre School student, was awarded a Weston Loran Award scholarship worth \$75,000 over four years. It is the largest undergraduate merit scholarship in Canada.

**Photograph by:** supplied by Jesse Helmer, Canadian Merit Scholarship Foundation

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REGINA — Jenna Gall has never wanted to be stuck behind closed doors.

The 17-year-old grew up on a farm near Montmartre (though her family now lives in the town) where she developed a lifelong love for the outdoors. When she was 10, she ran her first 10-kilometre race. She spent much of her winters out on snowmobiles with the family.

Last summer, she started taking her fascination with the natural world to new lengths when she made her first trek to the Arctic with the group, Students on Ice. She spent three weeks on the expedition with 100-plus students and scientists doing research and observing icebergs and every imaginable type of wildlife.

When that wasn't enough, Gall went the other way in December when she began a three-week stint in Antarctica with Students on Ice.

"They're really the last places on the planet we have that are really wild and untouched by humans," said Gall. "That wondrous, wild 'wow factor' led me to them."

After graduating from Montmartre School this spring, Gall plans to further that interest while pursuing a science degree (specializing in environmental ecology) at either Simon Fraser University or the University of British Columbia-Okanagan in Kelowna.

That is going to be made a lot easier thanks to the Weston Loran Award scholarship which is worth up to \$75,000 over four years. The award, handed out to just 15 graduating students in Canada each

year, also includes a summer program and mentorship from past Loran scholars.

So with the cost of schooling taken care of, maybe Gall can slow down from her usual daily schedule.

"It really opened a lot of doors for me because if it wasn't for the scholarship, I would still be going to university, but I would have to be working too," said Gall. "In that sense, I know my marks would drop and I wouldn't have time for the stuff I do now like volunteering and being in different groups."

So, no slowing down then?

"I've never been able to just do nothing," said Gall. "It closes doors when you're not doing something."

In just the last few years, Gall has created the Green Team environmental group in Montmartre, established a newspaper column to promote the group's activities, formed a running club, led an after-school sports program for young children and coached and officiated soccer games.

Oh, and she runs the kitchen at the Trackside Inn five days a week.

"She never tires," said Susan Sebastian, one the inn's owners.

"It's amazing. What she does in a day, I couldn't do in a week. Sometimes I sit down and read Facebook and she has already jogged for three miles, done a light yoga session, went and visited her grandma and then has to go to work and then has make it to a hockey game that night."

Gall credits much of her work ethic to the way she and her two brothers — 19-year-old Kent and 16-year-old Trent — were raised by their parents, Wayne and Darlene.

That has not gone unnoticed by others in Montmartre.

"I can think way back to when she was in Grade 6 or 7 and she was put in charge of babysitting all the young kids and she was always working a job," said Dave Bircher, principal of Montmartre School. "This school year, she has probably focused more on getting involved in some different things around the school as well.

"She sets a goal for herself and she'll do what she has to do to achieve it. Work ethic, hard work and perseverance kind of defines Jenna."

[tswitzer@leaderpost.canwest.com](mailto:tswitzer@leaderpost.canwest.com)

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