RBC awards teachers and students from the TDSB Vision Program with unique 2010 Olympic Team Torchbearer spot

TORONTO, Nov. 10 /CNW/ - 12 students, and their teachers from the Toronto District School Board's Vision Program, have been selected by RBC through the Canadian Olympic School Program as 2010 Olympic Team Torchbearers.

"Our students are honoured to be part of something so extraordinary as the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay and we want to thank RBC for this opportunity," said Robin Stewart, Specialist Teacher of the Blind, TDSB. "These students have dedicated themselves to raising awareness in their school communities and the community at large by educating their peers and teachers about visual impairment, blindness, braille, and their amazing abilities. Despite a myriad of logistical obstacles they have come together with the common goal of breaking down the barriers imposed upon them through communication and understanding. I am proud and excited to share this experience with them."

Through the Canadian Olympic School Program, which brings the Olympic Spirit to classrooms across Canada, RBC provided teachers, coaches and school leaders the opportunity to help create a better Canada by working with their students to submit a team pledge that chronicled how they were going to improve their community, be more environmentally-friendly, or live healthier lifestyles. RBC and the Canadian Olympic Committee reviewed the pledges received from across the country and have awarded 16 teams of 20 students and teachers with the opportunity to be 2010 Olympic Team Torchbearers. Each team will collectively carry the Olympic Flame for one kilometre during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay.

Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute student, Ramya Amuthan, wrote part of the Vision Program's pledge in the form of an essay entitled "Let's Find Common Ground." The students believe reaching this "common ground" between us is what will help make a better place for our families and friends, our community and our country.

The TDSB Vision Program Team Torchbearers include the following students:
- Ramya Amuthan from Winston Churchill
- Andrew Isaacson and Brittany Kolenberg - Newtonbrook SS
- Hussain Jasim - St. Andrew JHS
- Cameron Knox - Bloordale MS
- Hasaan Malik - Frank Oke SS
- Runa Patel - Woburn CI
- Sarah Patel - Marc Garneau
- Kelsey Quesnelle - Silverthorne CI
- George Quarcoo - Western Tech
- Nicholas Rastasulozas - West Toronto CI, and
- Luis Santiago-Gonsalves from St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School

Eight TDSB Vision Program Teachers will also take part in the relay:
- Robin Stewart, Specialist Teacher of the Blind and Chair of TDSB Vision Program Torch Team
- Dr. Carol Farrenkopf, Coordinator, TDSB Vision Program
- Matt Brook, Specialist Teacher of the Blind
- Christina Bardes, Specialist Teacher of the Blind
- Bill Young, Specialist Teacher of the Blind
- Sheila Whitmore, Specialist Teacher of the Blind
- Landra Berwick, Orientation & Mobility Specialist
- Cathy Sattelberger, Orientation & Mobility Specialist

The Team Olympic Torchbearer program was created by the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay to provide teams with the opportunity to carry the Olympic Flame and be recognized for making a difference in their community through teamwork and cooperation.
"The TDSB Vision Program and their students are an inspiration to us all and demonstrate how each of us can make a difference and help build a lasting legacy for our city," said Ian Parks, RBC's regional vice president for North York. "To be part of the 2010 Olympic Torch Relay is a unique and thrilling opportunity and RBC is proud to offer Canadians a chance to participate in the Olympic celebrations and share in the Olympic Spirit community by community."

Residents of Toronto are encouraged to come out and cheer on the torchbearers as they make their way across Canada in the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay. The Olympic Flame will be in the Toronto area from Dec. 17 - 19, 2009.

Approximately 12,000 Canadians will carry the flame across the country with millions more cheering and supporting them. The 2010 Olympic Torch Relay began its journey to Vancouver on October 30, 2009, when the flame arrived in Victoria following a traditional lighting ceremony in Greece. The Olympic Flame is now traveling from coast to coast to coast through every province and territory in Canada - spanning 45,000 kilometers and over 1,000 communities over the course of 106 days. It will end at B.C. Place on February 12, 2010, with the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron, signaling the start of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

As Canada's longest-standing supporter of the Canadian Olympic Team since 1947, RBC is a Premier National Partner of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and proud to bring the Olympic Spirit to communities across Canada as Presenting Partner of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay. To see how 2010 Olympic Torchbearers, selected by RBC, are making a difference in their communities, visit rbc.com/carrythetorch.

The Canadian Olympic Committee is a national, private, not-for-profit organization committed to sport excellence. It is responsible for all aspects of Canada's involvement in the Olympic Movement, including Canada's participation in the Olympic and Pan American Games and a wide variety of programs that promote the Olympic Movement in Canada through cultural and educational means. For more information see the COC website: www.olympic.ca. Photos available upon request.

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