

Metchosin firefighters create scholarship in honour of chief's daughter



By Goldstream News Gazette

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A well deserving Belmont secondary student has become the first recipient of the Metchosin volunteer firefighters' Delaney Dunlop Memorial Scholarship.

Belmont graduate Cole Gagne was awarded with the \$500 scholarship in memory of Delaney Dunlop, the daughter of Metchosin fire Chief Stephanie Dunlop.

Last October Delaney passed away after a year long battle with rhabdomyosarcoma, a cancerous tumour of the muscles.

Delaney graduated from Belmont in 2010 and was enrolled at University of Victoria to study political science. During her senior year, Delaney had applied and received some scholarships to go towards her post secondary education.

"Delaney loved school, she really enjoyed it," Stephanie said. "She was an all around good spirit."

Criteria for the scholarship is a Belmont student who enjoys school and is well respected in the school. The recipient of the scholarship didn't have to be on teams or clubs at school or get the best grades, Stephanie said.

Gagne is a good fit for the award – he was voted by his peers as the 2011 graduating class valedictorian. Like Delaney, Gagne is from Metchosin and he plans to attend UVic to study political science.

The fire chief presented the scholarship to Gagne, but noted she had no part in the creation of the award. The

Metchosin volunteer firefighters wanted to honour Delaney and create a legacy for her. After a unanimous vote among members, they created the Metchosin Firefighters Delaney Dunlop Memorial Scholarship.

Then they surprised their chief with the kind gesture.

"Delaney loved school and she would love this scholarship," Stephanie said. "I was thrilled when they told me."

News of the scholarship brought tears to Stephanie's eyes, said Capt. Jason Humphries.

"We talked about doing something that would honour and be a legacy (for Delaney) and show support from the firefighters," Humphries said.

The firefighters grew close to Delaney and got to know her well, as she was often at the hall volunteering and helping out when ever they needed a hand, said Capt. Eric Meredith.

Last fall while sick with cancer, Delaney organized the banquet and fire hall events for the Bite Me Fishing Derby.

Delaney would help out at the fire hall when ever she could whether it was washing dishes or baby sitting children when needed. "She was always here," Humphries said.

The scholarship will be awarded to a Belmont student annually and is for \$500. The money comes from the Metchosin Firefighters' Society budget. The District of Metchosin puts money into the fund each year in lieu of payment to its volunteer firefighters.

Delaney was diagnosed with cancer in July 2009 and passed away on Thanksgiving Day in 2010.

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