



The 2011 Representative's Award of Excellence: Youth Leadership Samantha Claver

Samantha Claver is a 17 year youth who moved to Canada from the Philippines in 2007 with her father and two sisters as a result of fear and violence in her home country.

Samantha is a Youth Community Developer with Project Respect, the youth sexualized violence prevention program of the Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre. She assists in developing youth-centered programming and curriculum to improve education around sexualized violence.

She has been involved in two theatre projects "Where is Home" and "My Forbidden Disorder" that enabled newcomer youth to share their migration experiences with audiences and evoked discussion and reflection on issues such as immigration, trauma, exclusion and bullying.

She positively contributes to her community by inspiring and encouraging young people to participate as well, which is clearly evident through her involvement with the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society and the Bayanihan Community Centre.

Samantha is dedicated and committed to pursuing the values and goals of her parents and continues to be an activist in her local community and abroad. She attends events with her father to speak about her experiences in the Philippines and in Canada, where she promotes human rights.

Hearing Samantha's story of coming to Canada as a political refugee is inspiring; she shares her story through her involvement in theatre and at human rights events which generates compassion and awareness within the community.

Samantha is entering grade 12 this year and is one of only a few students selected to attend the UStart program at the University of Victoria, a program for students to start university early. Her future goal is to become a medical doctor.

I think a good leader shows commitment, trust, friendship, honesty, bravery and is someone I could look up to. Sam is committed to everything she does. We trust each other and she is very honest. She is a good friend and always welcoming to new people. She is also brave, like in the theatre projects. I look up to her as a leader. She makes a difference in many young people's lives. All these things make her an amazing person and a good person to win the youth leadership award.

Samantha has experienced a great deal of loss and hardship throughout her life. However, instead of allowing these difficulties to paralyze her, she has worked tirelessly to educate and motivate those in her community to take a stand against oppression and political injustice.