

Youth Award of Merit

Brooklyn Valaire

Recipient of the 2019 Youth Award of Merit, Brooklyn Valaire is only eight years old, but has already shown a drive to help others that inspires those around her.

After hearing about homelessness on TV one fall evening in 2018, Brooklyn started asking questions about it. She insisted that they do something to help, especially since winter was imminent. Brooklyn and her mom, Crystal, came up with the idea of Brooklyn's Backpacks for the Homeless. Crystal used Facebook to ask friends and neighbours for donations, and the response was immediate. They collected and filled 50 backpacks with essentials such as gloves, socks, toques and toiletries, and handed them out in September 2018 outside of Edmonton's Hope Mission.

Since then, Brooklyn's Backpacks for the Homeless has grown substantially. Every month Crystal and Brooklyn, with the help of other volunteers, cook and serve a meal to more than 100 people. They hand out backpacks, clothing and blankets at the same time. They've partnered with other organizations such as the Leduc Hub and the Bissell Centre. Their goal is to be able to offer food and supplies to the homeless on a continual basis.

Brooklyn loves to travel and particularly loves animals. She owns two St. Bernards, three cats and a lizard. She hopes to be a farmer someday so that she can grow food for those who don't have any. Her family is proud of her accomplishments and her love for others, and hopes to see her fulfil her vision of a better world.