

NEPEAN THIS WEEK

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AYALA RAVEK

Junior Citizen of the Year nominee

By MEGHAN CROSS
NEPEAN THIS WEEK



Twelve-year-old Ayala Ravek from Nepean holds her nomination certificate for the Junior Citizen of the Year award up for all to see. Ayala received the certificate from Nepean This Week on Nov. 29 on behalf of the Ontario Community Newspapers Association. She was also recently nominated for the Young Achiever Award sponsored by Women on the Move and the Toronto Sun.

Ayala Ravek is making news again -- only this time it's not about her web site, it is because of it.

Ayala, 12, made city-wide coverage earlier this year for her innovative web site. Suffering from a rare disorder, Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, Ayala started a web site to help others and inform people about RSD.

Her courage, and hard work, along with a kind and generous nature, inspired her parents, Pamela and Oded Ravek, to nominate their daughter for a very special award.

The Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Awards are presented annually by the Ontario Community Newspapers Association (OCNA).

Nominations from across the province are accepted for youth who have accomplished incredible things in their community.

On Nov. 29, Ayala was presented with her nomination certificate by Nepean This Week on behalf of the OCNA.

"I am really excited about this...," says Ayala.

In the nomination information, her parents wrote that she has become "a source of strength and hope to others while living with a physical limitation."

Ayala has had RSD for almost two years, a disease of the sympathetic nervous system that causes chronic pain.

Her web site, 'Ayala's No Pain Zone,' describes her journey to find help, a description of RSD - all from her point of view.

Responses to her web site include: "I've had RSD for seven years. You are the most inspira-

tional 11-year-old I've ever read about," and "Wow! What a great site you have. A lot of creativity and positive energy... I look forward to the day when I'll check it out and see that the cure was found and all this is behind you."

Jennifer Stinson, a nurse practitioner Chronic Pain Program at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto supported the nomination.

"When I think about what it means to be an outstanding community junior citizen, Ayala has all the qualities of such a deserving candidate," she wrote. "She was determined from the beginning not to let the pain control and take over her life.

She created this web site to help educate and provide support for other kids with RSD... an extraordinary accomplishment given that she was in and still is experiencing constant severe pain."

The winners of the Junior Citizen of the Year awards will be posted on the OCNA web site on Dec. 3 and recipients will receive notice by registered mail.