

As beaches open, be aware: City

24 There's a connection between what Torontonians do and what ends up in the beach water.

"When people are down (at the beach), don't litter; keep the environment clean," said Sarah Winterton, program director of the Toronto-based organization Environment Defence.

"People have to be mindful of the connection between what they do ... (and) an impact on water quality."

With Toronto's 10 life-guarded beaches officially open for business Thursday, Environment Defence, a non-government organization working to protect the environment and human health, is presenting Toronto with the international Blue Flag at four of its beaches, including Cherry, Hanlan's Point, Ward's Island and Woodbine Beach.

"There's a reliability," Winterton said of the Blue Flag. When it flies at a beach, it indicates that it



Cherry Beach

has met the highest standards in water quality, safety and environmental management. It also means that the water is safe for swimmers.

From this month to the end of August, city officials will be collecting water samples from the 10

beaches and testing for E. Coli levels daily.

"Water quality varies quite drastically from place to place," Winterton said. The frequency of the water sampling is to ensure that high standards are met for public health. "And it paints a very clear picture of what's going on at each beach."

Toronto is focusing on Centre Island, Bluffer's and Sunnyside beaches because of their consistently poor water quality.

-Danielle Wong, for 24 hours

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Teen leader headed to help in Africa

One motto did it all for Shamin Jr. Mohamed.

"All it takes is one action to make all your dreams a reality," the 16-year-old said to an auditorium filled with elementary school students at the Brave Young World presentation recently for the 25th anniversary of the Milk International Children's Festival of the Arts at Harbourfront.

This line, Mohamed said later, was the one motto that motivated his battle against world hunger and AIDS.

The Grade 12 Toronto student from Runnymede C.I. was one of the winners for the Top 20 Under 20 — an awards program

created by Youth in Motion to honour young Canadians who excelled in innovation, leadership and achievement before reaching 20.

Winners include young people who have fought against child prostitution, racial profiling and one young person who started piano lessons for the visually impaired.

As the organizer, Mohamed raised almost \$10,000 over the past two annual World Vision 30-hour famines at his high school, and is now heading up the third one. The teenager also initiated the Children's AIDS Health Program (www.LetsStopAIDS.org), a charity pro-



Mohamed

gram encouraging young people to participate in helping other kids with AIDS around the world.

In July, Mohamed is traveling to South Africa through this program, reaching out to and educating various AIDS orphanages.

"My main goal is to get as many youth involved

as possible," Mohamed said.

And, said the small-framed humanitarian, to let them know it's OK to go even if they're just kids.

"I mean, even when I told people I was going to South Africa, people were like, 'Are you going with adults?'"

He noticed the increasing awareness around AIDS this year.

"You see those Aldo ads and that's all really good," said Mohamed, referring to the "Hear, See, Speak" Aldo Fights AIDS campaign. "But we need to get elementary schools involved."

-Danielle Wong, for 24 hours

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