

# ***Roxana Robin*** ~ 2006 YMCA Peace Medal Nominee

## ***International aid to enslaved children***

Roxana Robin, born in Bangladesh, spent her 2 first years in an orphanage before being adopted by a French family.

At the age of 20 she came to Montreal to start a new life. After some soul searching she decided to return to the continent of her birth to volunteer at an orphanage in India, where she saw children forced into armed conflict, sold for prostitution and used as household slaves.

It was after this experience, in the year 2000, that Roxana returned to Montreal and founded Children's Care International. CCI was created to open rehabilitation centres to help child victims of sexual tourism and slavery reintegrate into society by offering education, professional training, health care, proper nutrition and psychological support.

In 2003, Roxana opened the Rainbow Rehabilitation Centre in Andra Pradesh, India, and has since freed 60 children from slavery there. Here in Montreal, Roxana has given talks and presentations to school children on child slavery in India, raising awareness of this growing violation of children's rights.

***Association TROP-PEACE*** ~Travail de Réflexion pour les Ondes Pacifique

## **2006 YMCA Peace Medal Nominee**



Association TROP-PEACE was founded by René Caron, a comedian by profession, after the massacre at École Polytechnique. TROP-PEACE works in partnership with CSQ, les Clubs Optimistes and les Chevaliers de Colomb, to bring the message of non-violence to school children.

Trop-Peace has Toupaix, a mascot, who speaks to youth about peace, non-violence and respect, bringing them the message in a fun way they can relate to. The organization also produces videos and guides on peace building for schools to use in their programs. They raise awareness about the violence found on television, in video games and on the internet.

René Caron, now 81 years old, volunteers his time, travelling throughout Quebec, eastern Ontario and the Maritimes to bring his message of non-violence and respect to thousands of school children.

## ***Theddy Siyomvo*** ~ 2006 YMCA Peace Medal Nominee

### ***Volunteer with the refugees at the YMCA Residence***



Theddy Siyomvo arrived in Montreal in 2003 from Burundi as a refugee. Like many, he started his life in Montreal at the YMCA Residence.

Now he volunteers at the Residence, Monday through Friday, working with the refugee children who are staying there with their families. He has a particular talent with children. With his warmth and humour, he brings joy and laughter to the residents.

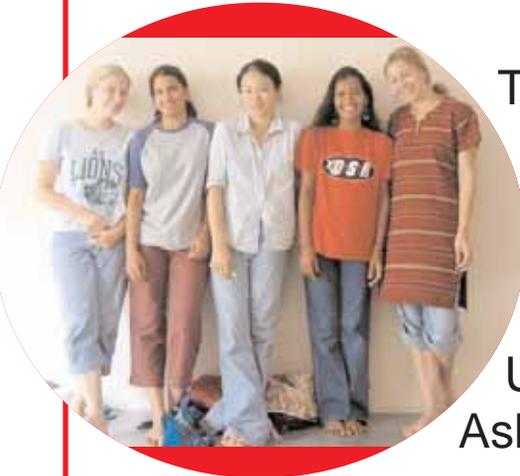
He gives his help even after people leave the Residence, such as the elderly African woman who speaks neither English or French, who he accompanies to church, for grocery shopping and to medical appointments.

Theddy has even learned Spanish from working with the Spanish-speaking refugees staying at the Residence. His sense of solidarity and his huge heart bring a sense of peace to all who are going through a difficult time.

# *Ashraya Initiative for Children*

## **2006 YMCA Peace Medal Nominee**

### *A home for street children in India*



The Ashraya Initiative for Children established a home for street children in India in 2004. The founding directors are Kaminika Morjaria, from McGill University and Elizabeth Sholtys, from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. The initiative is run by 7 university students from across the globe (Canada, Japan, Austria and the USA). Lopa Das is the current President of the McGill chapter of Ashraya Initiative for Children.

The Board assumes legal guardianship for each child and there is always one of the 7 Directors (all university students) living in the home with the children, on a rotating basis.

The home, located in Pune, India, just outside Bombay, has no more than 15 children ages 6 - 14, at a time. Here a family environment is created for the children and they are given the opportunity for schooling and access to technical skills training and cultural, environmental and social service programs that will facilitate positive integration into society as the children approach adulthood.

## *Zerf Productions*

### **2006 YMCA Peace Medal Nominee**

#### *Raising funds for child AIDS victims in Africa*



Zerf Productions, founded by Wilhelmina Fredericks, a Notre-Dame-de-Grâce filmmaker, has a unique method of raising funds to support the HIV/AIDS work of this charitable organization; the Zerf Challenge, an annual climb up Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa.

Zerf serves the needy community at home and abroad, addressing health care and the lack of clean water, working towards eradicating malnutrition and poverty, encouraging community development and education related to preventing AIDS and other infectious diseases.

In 2005, Zerf Productions donated \$225,000 worth of medicine, powdered milk, clothing and educational materials to Africa.

After last year's Zerf Challenge, the climbers delivered \$40,000 worth of AIDS medication and other supplies to African hospitals. Visiting the orphans in these hospitals was as unforgettable as the climb up Mt. Kilimanjaro for the participants.

# ***S.H.O.U.T***

## **2006 YMCA Peace Medal Nominee**

### ***Students Helping Others Understand Tolerance***

After a visit to Poland to learn about the Holocaust as a backdrop to understanding past and current genocides, Concordia University students formed the Montreal chapter of SHOUT, a national organization now active in 18 Canadian universities from coast to coast.



They returned to North America eager to make a difference by promoting genocide awareness and speaking out against racism and intolerance. In 2005, the Concordia chapter of SHOUT organized a session with survivors of the Holocaust, Pol Pot's

Cambodian purge and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Plans for 2006/07 include film screenings, speakers Elie Wiesel and Stephen Lewis, and Witness to History programs.

Through SHOUT, more than 300 students across Canada and the US build bridges between diverse campus groups and spread awareness in eradicating social injustice and promoting respect and inclusion for all global citizens.