

F a m i l y

OUR BRIGHTEST HOPES

YTV salutes achieving youngsters from coast to coast

BY MIKE BOONE

YTV will be coordinating flight arrivals from far and wide for its fourth annual *Achievement Awards* presentation. This year's **YTV awards** — to be telecast live from the National Arts Centre in Ottawa on **Thursday** — might be Canada's most geographically representational television program. Viewers will see gifted kids who have accomplished great things from coast to coast.

Of course, there are YTV Achievement Awards winners from Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. But the list of 14 winners also includes youngsters (19 and under to qualify) from such off-the-beaten track locations as Messines, Que., (Annie Galipeau, who's 14 and a winner in the Acting category); Minaki, Ont., (Jocelyn McDonald, 8, who has won a Bravery Award for rescuing a friend from an abductor); Whitehorse, Y.T. (Angela Walkley, 18, a Public Service winner); Lower Sackville, N.S., (Neal Graham, 17, the Environmental category winner); and Clearbrook, B.C., (Nicholas Woo, 11, winner of Writing award).

And the winner of the Terry Fox Award — given to an individual or group who best exemplifies Fox's indomitable spirit — is Cindy Wall. The 19-year-old native of St. John's has spent her life fighting cystic fibrosis and defying predictions that she wouldn't survive her 14th birthday.

The *YTV Achievement Awards* are special . . . and not just because the achievers revive one's faith in youth. There isn't another awards show on Canadian TV that honors winners from the Yukon to Newfoundland.

Bev Burrow, who has produced the

YTV Achievement Awards since their inception, says it has never been an exclusively central Canadian show. The net keeps reaching wider, however, as YTV spreads the word that it wants to recognize achievement. This year's considerable regional diversity is attributable, Burrow explains, to YTV's increased efforts to involve more organizations across Canada in the



MARTIN: REVIVING FAITH IN CANADA'S YOUTH Achievement Awards selection process.

"Each year we've increased our awareness of achievement by approaching more people and reaching out across the country," Burrow says. "We've only been able to do that by learning. Each year we've revised, refined and honed the list of people we contact."

Burrow says the YTV Achievement Awards data base — which forms the foundation of the nomination process — includes every organization that is youth-oriented in Canada: church groups; boys' and girls' clubs; Ys;

public libraries; Cubs and Brownies; Scouts and Guides; arts schools; cadets; youth theatre troupes and the like. The list contains approximately 1,200 entries and serves as the basis for outreach efforts by the YTV Achievement Awards research staff.

"The researchers' job," Burrow says, "is to drive in applications. One of our big resources this year was a bilingual researcher brought on specifically to bring in nominations from French-speaking parts of the country." It seems to be working. During their first three years, the awards drew an average of 10 nominations from Quebec. This year's list included 150 nominees and produced three winners.

Andrea Martin is the host of this year's *YTV Achievement Awards* telecast. Her predecessors were Alan Thicke in 1992, Derek McGrath in 1991 and Jim Carrey at the first awards show in 1990.

The selection of winners this year involved a core panel of 10 judges plus experts in each category — including former National Ballet of Canada star Veronica Tennant, swimmer Sylvie Frechette, pop singer Molly Johnson and children's entertainers Sharon, Lois & Bram.

Not all the expert judges are celebrities. Gord Cummer, who is chief executive officer of the Canadian Industrial Innovation Centre, helped judge the Innovation category (won by Rochan Sankar, a 16-year-old from Brossard, Que., who has invented the *Cardiogauge*, a cardiac status monitor).

Each of the awards winners gets a statuette and \$3,000. Viewers get the warm-all-over feeling of watching great kids who are Canada's brightest hopes for the future. □