

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Entrepreneurial Student Awarded \$20,000 for Innovative Business Idea

Calgary, AB (March 22, 2010) – St. Mary's University College is proud to announce Michelle Forbes as this year's winner of the Youth Technopreneurship Program (YTP).

Michelle, a student in the Bachelor of Education program, is the recipient of a \$20,000 prize to grow a home business she launched last year called *Lavender Breeze*, which sells lavender products, including bath salts, dryer sachets, pillow liners, eye pillows and heating pads.

Advertised internally as *Leading Lights* at St. Mary's and funded by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, YTP is a business plan competition offering entrepreneurial support, mentorship and funding to young entrepreneurs who aspire to build innovative technology, science or knowledge-based companies throughout Alberta. The competition is open to youth under 35 years of age who are enrolled at a post-secondary institution in Alberta or who have graduated within the past year.



Initially among 14 applicants who began the business proposal process with guidance from faculty representatives Linda Neilsen and Tim Spellman, Michelle was one of two finalists whose submissions were evaluated by three people from the Calgary business community. She is grateful for the prize money which will help her expand a business idea fueled by a desire to use natural and safe products for her family.

"Lavender has so many uses," she said. "I'm very passionate about it. It cures headaches, soothes sore muscles, and is a natural sleep aid and mosquito repellent. People are becoming more aware of the side effects of chemicals and want a chemical-free alternative."

Michelle will use the prize money to research and develop new products, meet with potential organic lavender suppliers in France and cover business expenses such as legal fees and advertising.

"We are pleased that the Youth Technopreneurship Program has given one of our students the opportunity to bring her business goals to fruition at this stage in her career," said Dr. Mark Charlton, Vice-President Academic and Dean.

About St. Mary's University College

St. Mary's University College is a Catholic post-secondary, liberal arts and sciences teaching and research institution open to all faiths and traditions. St. Mary's offers Bachelor of Arts degrees, a Bachelor of Education (Elementary) degree and university courses in 33 academic disciplines. For more information, visit www.stmu.ab.ca

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