

## 30 UNDER 30 RECIPIENTS, OCTOBER 2025

*30 Under 30* is a campaign to recognize young leaders 30 and under. Finalists were selected by a panel of Basin residents based on demonstrated excellence in community impact, innovation, leadership, community engagement, volunteerism and entrepreneurial spirit.

Name	Community	Biography
Rhys Boekelheide	Cranbrook	Rhys, 24, is a young entrepreneur from Cranbrook who has turned simple ideas into thriving businesses. He launched Crap Collectors at 16, then co-founded Junk Bros and Moving Bros, where he manages logistics, bookkeeping, and customer service. Known for his work ethic and community spirit, Rhys has supported wildfire cleanup in Aq'am and local volunteer efforts. He is respected for providing quality service with integrity and a genuine commitment to his community.
Justin Brogan	Rossland	Justin, 28, is a passionate non-binary young professional striving to make a difference in their communities. As a CPA (Chartered Professional Accountant), they work to forward sustainability, collaboration, and data-backed decision making as an accountant with the City of Rossland. They're also a passionate volunteer and advocate with multiple local non-profits. Currently serving as Nelson Pride Society's Chair & Treasurer, they've led the organization through incorporation and transformation since 2023, substantially increasing funding and capacity.
Devin Capilo	Shuswap	Devin, 18, is a proud member of the Shuswap Band and serves as a Junior Salmon Chief and Guardian, dedicated to being a "keeper of the land." A recent graduate of David Thompson Secondary School, he is learning Secwépemc language and cultural protocols while sharing knowledge with his community. Skilled in traditional practices and creative arts, Devin is an emerging leader committed to cultural preservation, youth advocacy, and strengthening community for future generations.
Chris Cawdell	Elko	Chris, 23, is a lieutenant with the RDEK Elk Valley & South Country Rural Fire and Rescue Service Fire and a volunteer with Search and Rescue, offering his time and skills when they're needed most. A former Royal Canadian Army Cadet, he received top awards for leadership and citizenship, including the Legion Medal of Excellence and the Lord Strathcona Medal. Christopher also volunteers with Cranbrook Search and Rescue, local sports, and community events. His commitment to safety, service, and mentorship makes him an outstanding young leader. When he's not working, you'll find him hiking, hunting, or just enjoying the outdoors.
Skye Cunningham	Nakusp	Skye, 28, was raised and currently lives in Nakusp. She has a Diploma in Journalism from SAIT and a Bachelor of Arts in Professional Communications from Royal Roads University. Since 2019, she has had multiple roles in her hometown, including the Nakusp and Area Youth Network Coordinator, Communications Specialist for Cabin Resource Management with a focus on community forestry and caribou local population recovery, Manager with Arrow Lakes Search and Rescue, and Kinship Connection Society Chair. Her work in communications and public engagement strengthens local organizations while building connection and resilience across the community.
Indea D'Aigle	Rossland	Indea, 25, is passionate about health promotion and injury prevention. With a Bachelor of Science in Behavioural Neuroscience, she works remotely as a research assistant with Vancouver research labs while engaging locally in the Kootenays. Her community involvement focuses on concussion awareness and physical literacy, where she helps bridge the gap between research and real-world practice. Indea is committed to sharing knowledge in ways that empower

		communities and create lasting change.
Dan Geddes	Golden	Dan, 29, has been a resident of Golden since 2018. He is the founder and director of Dirtbag Climbing Corp and sees business and community as intrinsically connected. Through his business, and his volunteerism on several community boards, such as the Kicking Chamber of Commerce Horse, he strives to effect social change, focused on food security and sport for life. His leadership fosters equity, connection, and resilience, making him a trusted mentor and community builder.
Sebastian Gylander	Golden	Sebastian, 21, is a Special Olympic athlete with extensive experience in competitive skiing, including a two-time gold medalist at the 2025 World Winter Games in Turin, Italy. He has skied with the Golden Nordic Club for 11 years, completed his NCCP coaching course, and volunteers as a coach to support younger athletes. He has demonstrated resilience by overcoming challenges related to his disabilities and inspiring others in his community through positive leadership and personal example. Beyond his athletic achievements, Sebastian works at the Golden Municipal Campground and is admired for his work ethic, positivity and leadership.
Spencer Hall	Valemount	Spencer, 28, is the owner and editor of the Rocky Mountain Goat newspaper in Valemount. He fell into journalism after discovering his love of storytelling while attending the Radio Arts program at BCIT. Shortly after moving to Valemount, Spencer bought the newspaper to ensure residents maintained their access to independent local news. Since purchasing the publication in 2024, he has modernized operations, expanded the Goat's online presence, led community-focused reporting, and supported residents through events such as wildfire evacuations. Spencer also volunteers with the Valemount Learning Society and local fundraisers, using his platform to strengthen community connection and advocate for inclusivity.
Danika Hammond	New Denver	Danika, 30, is a policy analyst with the BC Government focused on rural proofing. She serves as a Village Councillor and sits on the boards of the Slocan Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Valhalla Fine Arts Society. In 2024, Danika with her mom, re-opened the historic Silverton General Store, now a thriving community hub supporting local suppliers and offering critically needed services and goods for the local community. Dedicated to rural development, youth engagement and community sustainability, Danika brings leadership that connects policy, local business, and grassroots initiatives across the communities where she lives.
Porter Hansen	Nelson	Porter, 17, embodies the spirit of grit, leadership and community. At the age of ten, he launched his own business, Grit & Grind, starting with odd jobs and hiring friends to help. Over the past seven years, he has scaled that vision into a thriving operation with two trucks, more than a thousand completed commercial and residential projects, and a dedicated team of part-time and full-time employees. Balancing entrepreneurship with academics and athletics, Porter has consistently maintained a 4.0 GPA as an honour roll student. His drive extends beyond the classroom and business—he is also a national champion in boxing, proudly representing Canada on the international stage and competing at the World Championships in Germany July 2025. He leads with integrity, providing opportunities for his peers through his business, while inspiring others with his work ethic and vision. As an older brother to a sister with special needs, he has developed a strong sense of empathy, responsibility, and resilience—qualities that shape his leadership both in business and in life.
Kai Harwood	Castlegar	Kai, 29, is a Nelson-based queer artist, activist and disruptor. On the art side, they're a zine maker, poet, performer and writer. When it comes to activism and volunteerism, they're supporting the development of Castlegar Pride, are on the board for Castlegar Community Services and working with a variety of other non-profits in the area. Kai is the Youth and Family Engagement Coordinator at Foundry Kootenay–Boundary, supporting youth through mental health, peer and

		community services. Their goal is to help make the Kootenays a kinder place for everyone; especially other queer folks to live.
Nick Jensen	Cranbrook	Nick, 18, is a young entrepreneur from Cranbrook who recently graduated from Mt. Baker Secondary School and is pursuing a degree in business management at the University of Lethbridge. He is the founder of Air Barrier Innovations Ltd., a company manufacturing energy-efficient building gaskets now distributed through Home Hardware stores and other suppliers across Canada. Alongside his business success, Nick has excelled in athletics, volunteered on Rotary projects, and earned awards in business competitions.
Tyler Kamstra	Golden	Tyler, 22, is an athlete, volunteer, and community leader from Golden. A Special Olympics competitor, he has won gold at the regional, provincial, and national levels in sprinting and also competes in swimming, cycling, and weightlifting. Beyond athletics, Tyler serves as President of the Golden Rotary Club, making him the youngest president in his district. Dedicated and hardworking, he also contributes through local volunteer work, showing determination and leadership in every role.
Alex Leffelaar	Nelson	Alex, 29, is a music student and environmental engineer passionate about community-building and collaboration. Alongside leading climate initiatives like Nelson's Low Carbon Homes Pilot and the RDCK's Rural Mobility Working Group, he founded the Moonflower Collective to support local arts. Whether writing tunes, climbing peaks, or designing sustainable solutions, Alex is driven by curiosity, creativity, and a deep commitment to community. Alex is known for bringing people together across sectors to advance climate action, housing, and sustainable community development. He believes that meaningful change begins with listening—to each other, to the land and to the possibilities we create together.
Chancellor Litke	Cranbrook	Chancellor, 27, is the owner of Guidance Planning Strategies Ltd., where he helps over 500 families and business owners with retirement, succession, and financial planning. As Past-President of JCI Kootenay and Treasurer of JCI Canada, he champions youth leadership and community development, volunteering with Rotary, local festival, and leadership development. Chancellor has built a respected business, serves as a mentor and role model, and continues to make a lasting impact in the Cranbrook community and beyond through public speaking and volunteering. Through his business, mentorship and volunteer work, Chance demonstrates leadership, innovation, and community service, inspiring others across Cranbrook to achieve their goals.
Oakley Mengel	Elkford	Oakley, 18, is in her second year of post-secondary, attending the University of Calgary for a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Studies. She is an emerging artist and community leader who uses creativity to spark meaningful conversation and inspire change. Through her art she has courageously addressed difficult topics like suicide awareness and loss, blending visual storytelling with empathy to bring people together. Proceeds from her work have gone directly to support individuals and families facing addiction and mental health challenges. I am fuelled off learning, appreciating the human experience, and the ones in my life I love the most. Beyond her artwork, Oakley teaches children, leads youth activity programs and serves as a mentor for emerging artists. She has artistic aspirations of being a tattoo artist and is passionate about her love for dark reds.
Rebecca Odnokon	Cranbrook	Rebecca, 29, is an account executive in commercial insurance who has built a career defined by courage and perseverance. She has competed in strongman and bodybuilding events, and today channels that same drive into her work and community service. An active member of JCI Kootenay, Rotary, and a volunteer with Little Mittens Animal Rescue, she is committed to growth, leadership, and giving back. Rebecca's story reflects resilience, passion and pride in the communities where she works and volunteers.
Deeken Pascal	Shuswap	Deeken, 15, is a proud youth from the Shuswap Band and a dedicated advocate for Hoop Dancing and Secwépemc culture. He shares his leadership at



		officials and helps grow the game, reflecting his passion for leadership and community impact.
Keegan Street	Fernie	Keegan, 25, is the co-founder and head roaster of Rooftop Coffee Roasters in Fernie. What began as a hobby on his family's rooftop patio, while he was still in high school, has grown into a nationally recognized roastery and café, known for quality, sustainability and strong community support. With a background in Environmental Engineering, Keegan has built lasting relationships with coffee farmers, led Rooftop to over \$1M in annual revenue, and earned recognition in national coffee competitions. Keegan is also a dedicated community volunteer with active involvement in the Elk River Alliance and music nights in Fernie. Rooftop Coffee Roasters supports several local initiatives such as the Emily Brydon Youth Foundation and the Fernie Trails Alliance. Keegan's leadership combines entrepreneurship, community service and sustainability.
Jayla Toorenburgh	Cranbrook	Jayla, 29, born and raised in Cranbrook, has always had a passion for supporting others through both volunteerism and work. Her volunteer journey spans youth mentorships, summer camps, art programs, tutoring, crisis line responding and more, both in her hometown and during her studies in Alberta. Now back in the East Kootenays, she continues living out this passion as a counsellor at a local non-profit, fostering and embodying the support she values in her community.
Findlay Whittick	Invermere	Findlay, 17, is a young entrepreneur and community leader. At 15, he founded Summit Soccer Camps, creating opportunities for kids aged 6–13 to develop their skills, stay active, and build confidence. Over the past three years, his camps have steadily grown to serve dozens of families while employing local coaches. Passionate about sports, youth development, and entrepreneurship, Findlay is dedicated to making a positive impact in his community and beyond. Recognized as Youth Entrepreneur of the Year, Findlay continues to balance school, sport, and business with a vision to expand his camps and inspire other youth.
Victoria Wilkinson	Kootenay Bay	Victoria, 28, is a dedicated supervisor lifeguard and swim instructor who also lives with a disability, but more importantly, she is someone who loves working with and giving back to her community. She has been actively working to make both pools and local lakes more accessible, ensuring that people with disabilities can be included and enjoy the water safely. Victoria has volunteered at numerous youth events, such as Halloween hunts, and has coached with the Special Olympics swim team. She is also a member of Emergency Support Services, contributing her time and skills to help others in times of need. Through her leadership, advocacy, and volunteerism, Victoria demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion, safety, and community well-being. Known for her inclusive approach, she helps teach accessibility practices and encourages others to view challenges as opportunities for growth.

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