

VANIER

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NEWS RELEASE

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No roads barred for three Vanier students - Hats Off to You! Winners

When you travel an unbeaten path, there's no telling where it will lead. For three Vanier College students taking chances on the road less travelled led straight to winning scholarships in the 2009 Chapeaux les Filles - Hats Off to You! Competition. The big winner was Architectural Technology student Bijova Milli Nath-Chowdhury who was awarded \$2000 for Outstanding Entrepreneurship at the Provincial finals of Hats Off to You! on May 4, 2009.

The annual competition which is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sport, aims at rewarding young women who choose to study in areas traditionally occupied by men. Milli had already won \$750 in early April when regional winners were announced. She was joined by two other Vanier Architectural Technology students Rina Gupta and Cecillia Li who both won \$500.

"They are all exceptional students!" says their teacher, Margaret Surridge. "All total, this year's three young women from Vanier won \$3750 in prizes in Chapeau les filles! This is a great follow-up to Stefanie Taylor, also of Architectural Technology at Vanier, who won the 2007-2008 prize in the Entrepreneurship category."

Bijova Milli Nath-Chowdhury, this year's winner who is in her second year of studies, has already shown her business acumen and entrepreneurial initiative by starting her own consulting, service and interior design company, with a friend. "To get ahead in this business you need experience and contacts so I thought it would be a good idea to offer my services while I was still in school. That will allow me to taken bigger projects once I graduate."

Milli's ambition is to have her own company specializing in construction and sustainable renovations. "Given the amount of pollution in the world, I think we should aim to build with recycled materials," she says. Although Milli was always interested in engineering and architecture, a guidance counsellor advised her against going into those male-dominated careers. So Milli studied biology, but it wasn't long before she regretted her choice and changed course, registering for the Architectural Technology program at Vanier. It was obviously the right decision.

In addition to the cash prizes, Milli also won a bursary for one year of training in business launching and planning, training that will definitely help her with her future ambitions.

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