

Local francophone receives provincial award

A 21-year-old St. John's woman who didn't even know a francophone community existed in the city has been given the Prix Roger-Champagne award for francophone personality of the year in this province.

Gillianne Beaulieu grew up speaking only French with her French



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father, but otherwise solely using English.

That changed when, as a teenager, she played volleyball at the Francophone Games being held in Quebec. There, she discovered the strength of the cultural group she was a part of.

She returned to become a leader in the francophone community in this province, and in 2007 was named vice-president of the Provincial Francophone Federation. Last September, she also became vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Francophone Youth.

Beaulieu said that despite her late introduction to it, her francophone culture is a defining part of her identity.

"My passion, my source of identity, is the French language," she said in a news release.

"In the lives of all young francophones in the province, there is an 'aha' moment when they discover the importance of the French language and culture. If a young Newfoundlander or Labradorian does not seize this 'aha' moment, they face assimilation. They lose their heritage."