

LADYBUG GIRL IS REALLY SPREADING HER WINGS – Gordon Sinclair
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Welcome back to *The Young and The Relentless* – the international edition – which we join in progress.

Hannah Taylor was only eight when I introduced you to this sensitive little girl of privilege.

By that time she had already been raising money and awareness for two years because she saw a man eating out of a dumpster when she was five and had to do something to help.

Now, after she travelled and spoke to thousands of Canadians and raised more than \$1 million for the poorest of Canada's poor. Hannah's Ladybug Foundation and her wider mission have grown like the little girl herself.

And gradually she is becoming recognized outside Canada for who she has always been.

A human rights activist.

On Tuesday, in fact, she'll be in New York City as the youngest finalist in the 2007 Golden BRICK Awards, a gala \$1,500-a-plate evening that CNN has described as the "Oscars of youth service awards" in North America.

You can actually vote online for her right until Monday at <http://www.brickawards.com>.

Then the same night that she dines in Manhattan, Hannah will dash off to Sweden where she joins the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child as its youngest jury member.

Rather dazzling company for a daughter of Winnipeg to be keeping.

But here's what's really special about being selected for seven years of jury duty.

It's not that Nelson Mandela is a patron or that the organization has become known as the Nobel Prize for children's rights.

It's the other children Hannah will have the honour of sitting and learning with on the jury.

Unlike Hannah, most of the other jury members have been victims of the world's worst forms of abuse and depravity.

Among them are:

- a 14-year-old girl from Nepal who was 11 when she was tortured and enslaved in a brothel in India;
- a 12-year-old boy from Brazil who was left with little choice but to turn to crime to survive in the streets;
- a 17-year-old boy from Uganda kidnapped at 12 by rebels who tortured his brother to death and forced him to become a child soldier;
- a 14-year-old girl from Mozambique who was four when she stepped on one of the country's two million landmines;
- a 15-year-old who was born and lived his whole life in a refugee camp in the Algerian desert;
- a 15-year-old boy from Palestine who longs for a life of peace without menacing tanks and soldiers.

And then there is a 13-year-old South African named Gabatshwane Gumede whose parents both died of AIDS, which leads to her being shunned even though she wasn't infected herself.

Young Gabatshwane will be Hannah's roommate.

So why, you might ask, was this little girl from the Prairies of Canada chosen to be on the same jury with all these children?

Well, there are other children - like a 13-year-old girl from Israel - who are there because of their activist roles in promoting the protection and rights of children.

And as the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child said in a press release from Sweden yesterday: "In the jury, Hannah represents children fighting for other children's rights, especially the homeless children."

Which brings us back to Winnipeg, and Hannah's first cause.

On May 1, Siloam Mission will open its 60-bed emergency shelter thanks to the support of the federal and provincial governments and, of course, The Ladybug Foundation.

They're calling it Hannah's Place.