

# Youth For Human Rights International Awards Outstanding Human Rights Activists, Celebrates 20th Anniversary

*Twenty years of promoting human rights education to ensure the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights become a reality for all*

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [Youth for Human Rights International](#) (YHRI) hosted a [Global Virtual Conference](#) to mark its 20th Anniversary December 8 and to celebrate International Human Rights Day. More than 1,600 human rights proponents from 97 nations attended.

A panel of renowned human rights advocates discussed the importance of human rights education and awarded outstanding human rights activists for their dedication and the impact of their work to make human rights a reality across the globe.

The first awardee was human rights ambassador Ellen Firestone who has been working with Youth for Human Rights International since 2007. Over the past decade, she has delivered workshops and talks on "Human Rights: from Education to Action," launched her own human rights podcast, and served in several human rights NGOs such as the Advisory Board for Global Education Motivators in Philadelphia. She has reached more than 80,000 with her human rights message. "With knowledge comes responsibility," says Firestone. "We have the important job of continuing to educate the world's people on their human rights so they can promote and protect them for themselves and others." Firestone encourages everyone to become involved and take the first step to raise awareness.

YHRI presented its second award to Costa Rica Legislative Assembly Deputy Jorge Luis Fonseca Fonseca. In 2018 Youth for Human Rights Costa Rica executives urged Fonseca to introduce legislation to promote teaching the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in the school system of the country. He did so, and on August 25, 2021, the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica



Rock 4 Human Rights lead singer and founder Wil Seabrook presents Ellen Firestone with her Youth for Human Rights International Award.

passed into law a bill mandating human rights education in schools throughout the country. "We believe that we have made a great contribution to the Costa Rican education system so that young students know which rights are inherent in them, simply because they are human beings," says Fonseca. "I am grateful that you have thought of me to promote this bill which came to fruition."

The third awardee, York Regional Police Superintendent (Ret.) Ricky Veerappan, was acknowledged for promoting human rights through the Community Services Division. "Events over the past two years have had a huge impact on police/community relationships and the level of trust and confidence in policing in general," says Veerappan.

He explained that York Region Police believe that policing must be done "through the lens of human rights not human rights through the lens of policing. Human rights has to be the platform on which policing is built."

Panelists included humanitarians and human rights activists Wil Seabrook, founder of Rock 4 Human Rights; Dr. Mary Shuttleworth, President and Founder of Youth for Human Rights International; Rabbi Michael Shevack, Councilor-General of the World Cultural Organization; Wafik Moustafa, Founder and Chairman of British Arab Network; Laura Guercio, President of Legal Aid Worldwide; Demme Durret, Youth for Human Rights International Youth Ambassador; and Fabio Amicarelli, Humanitarian Programs Director of the Church of Scientology International.

Youth for Human Rights International President Mary Shuttleworth said, "With such dedication and support, together we now look to the future, enriched by lessons learned and star-high goals. We surge unwavering toward a future where generations 20 years on will know that human rights have at last become a reality for all time to come."

Over the past 20 years, Youth for Human Rights International has grown to a worldwide movement of 150 groups, clubs and chapters, partnering with 1,500 organizations and government agencies across 92 nations, educating 1.7 million youth with its materials, reaching more than 700 million people; and leaving its mark at every level of society. YHRI acknowledges



Superintendent (Ret.) Ricky Veerappan of the York Provincial Police of Ontario, Canada, believes policing must be done through the lens of human rights. He was awarded the Youth for Human Rights International Award for his work.

all its outstanding partners and volunteers whose purpose is to make the rights enshrined in the United Nations [Universal Declaration on Human Rights](#) a reality. Special thanks goes to its main sponsor, the Church of Scientology.

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