

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For its 20th Women of Distinction Awards, the Women's Y Foundation presents the Award for Young Woman of Distinction to an involved woman: Frédérique Vallières.

**Montreal, September 10th, 2013** – The Women's Y Foundation and National Bank are honoured to present Ms Frédérique Vallières, President and Co-founder of Reach Out To Humanity (ROTH), as the 2013 Woman of Distinction in Young Woman of Distinction category. Selected by independent volunteers committees, Ms Vallières will be honoured at the 20th edition of the Women of Distinction Awards Benefit Evening on September 30<sup>th</sup> at Palais des congrès de Montréal.

Frédérique Vallières has been actively involved in improving conditions in communities around the world for many years. She was 14 years old when she first learned about international development on a trip to Tijuana with a group of other students to build houses for poor Mexican families. This first trip – she was to return twice during high school – had a profound impact. She realized just how lucky she was to have been born into a relatively well-off family in a country where she could freely determine her own future, while so many others around the world don't have this privilege. This changed her view on life and has continued to guide her, both personally and professionally.

Following her return from a memorable trip to Kenya in 2006, she created the non-profit organization Reach Out To Humanity for Health (ROTH) with a small group of friends. The organization now brings together a hundred volunteers. Its mission is to work closely with local groups in vulnerable communities, mainly in Africa and South America, to build spaces and buildings enabling community members to meet basic needs and generate lasting change.

With this vision, Frédérique Vallières and her team seize every opportunity to use technology to resolve major stumbling blocks. For example, although the road network is very limited in East Africa, the level of cell phone use is phenomenally high among rural populations. This can make it much easier to set up virtual infrastructures, which can address specific health issues. ROTH has been involved in a number of important projects, including construction of two new buildings in Kenya: an additional dormitory for MWEDO Girls Secondary School which has a growing waiting list, and a second medical clinic in Mbita, serving a population of 67,000 free of charge. This community has a 25% infant mortality rate and an AIDS infection rate of 28% (compared to 6.7% for Kenya as a whole).

Frédérique Vallières holds Bachelor degrees in Biology and Psychology from McGill University and a Master's degree in Global Health from the Centre for Global Health at Trinity College in Dublin. Excellence in her Master's earned her the Kevany Award from this prestigious Irish college, where the Global Health program is known for its interdisciplinary approach and its focus on international cooperation. This distinct vision is entirely shared by Ms Vallières, and prompted her to continue her Ph.D. studies at the institution while working as a research assistant.

#### **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women of Distinction Awards**

Since the first awards ceremony in 1994, 220 women have been publicly honoured during the Women of Distinction Awards Benefit Evening. This year, the Women's Y Foundation's most important fundraising activity will be held on September 30, 2013 at the Palais des congrès. In addition to honouring a new class of exceptional women, this event will celebrate 20 years of Women of Distinction as well as 138 years of support to Montreal women and girls through YWCA programs and services.

**September 30th, 2013** at Palais des congrès

For more information visit: [Fondation.Ydesfemmesmtl.org](http://Fondation.Ydesfemmesmtl.org)

To purchase a table or tickets: **Women's Y Foundation** at 514-866-9944

*Since 1875, the YWCA Montreal has contributed to improving the lives of women and girls by increasing their skills, self-esteem and autonomy, encouraging their personal growth, and preventing all forms of violence through various programs adapted to their needs. The organization is working to build a better future for women and girls in a just society where women and girls have the power and opportunity to realize their full potential. The Women's Y Foundation helps the YWCA Montreal remain at the forefront, supporting women and girls as they take on a more active social and economic role in Montreal society.*

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