



# Hurst Legacy Award 2022

## Fati Stanley

The Hurst Legacy Award was founded in 2019 to honour the incredible work of our founder, Jim “Hurst” Hayhurst. While he passed away in early 2020, his legacy lives on in the Trails Alumni who are benefiting from his creation of Trails over 30 years ago. The Hurst Legacy Award is presented annually to a Trails Alumni who consistently lives the Trails mission. This award proves that we all have the capacity and the responsibility to give back, regardless of our age, background or abilities.



Dragonflies 1995 - 2001



- Bachelor of Arts, Dartmouth College
- Ivy League Track and Field Champion
- Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award
- Trails AIM Mentor
- RBC Olympian and Athlete Ambassador

*Coming to Trails was like being part of the X-Men. They found us from neighbourhoods all over the city and brought us together. It was clear that we all had potential and our unique stories were our super powers. Trails built us up, taught us to love and respect each other, and made us feel special. There’s no other place like Trails.*

Growing up, I was always aware of the financial barriers my family faced. My mom was extremely resourceful, but I knew that school trips, camps, travel and post-secondary education all came with a steep price tag. Coming to Trails at age 12 was the first time I didn’t feel this limitation. Trails removed these critical barriers and never asked for anything in return. Trails only asked that we always give our best. The Trails family of staff and campers made me feel like I belonged from day one. I was a bright-eyed boy looking to find a way to experience my dreams and adventures, and Trails made that possible.

When I think of my years at Trails, I think of my group as a family who spent four of our most formative years in life — together. It was like having cousins from all over the world and city. Together we found a place of safety and trust. Everyone had different pulls and challenges in their lives, but once a month, Trails pulled us together and away from those dark paths.

I remember a key moment on our week-long hike along the Bruce Trail. It had been an exhausting day, hiking up and down hills with a pack weighing half my weight. The trail seemed to never end. Finally, we found our perfect campsite. There was one problem — we were camping near a cliff. And although I am sure we were a safe distance, in the middle of the night I found myself having a terrifying dream and an overwhelming sense of claustrophobia. In the complete darkness I began to toss and turn and reach for the exit of the tent. I wildly unzipped the tent and leaped out to catch my breath. Just as I was about

to sprint frantically into the darkness, a firm hand grabbed my leg. It was one of my friends who was also sleeping in the tent. Calmly, he reassured me that I was having a dream and that I was safe. As my clarity came back I realised where I was. My friend had grabbed me as I was about six feet from the cliff. I could feel the wind on my face and hear the waves crashing below. His words instantly calmed my nerves like nothing I had ever felt. I trusted him and knew that I would be okay.

It was the moment that I knew we were a true family, forever united. I am not sure what would have happened that night, but I know that my trip mates — a group I now count as my friends, my family — saved me from myself many times over our years together.

Sometimes support and outreach is in a formal role, and sometimes it means helping a friend, family or community member. Today I try to make a difference for the better in as many ways as I can. From my consulting career to the time I spend helping others, I am keenly aware of the bigger impact of my words and actions. For five years I served on the Ontario Trillium Foundation where I reviewed hundreds of grants for the most deserving of our charitable sector. Through this role I also helped organizations create sustainable funding models so they could continue to grow and thrive after their Trillium funding ran out. I have had the privilege to mentor a number of incredible young people through the Trails AIM program, at work and through personal connections. I also helped create and now sit as a board member for the Arts Access Fund, a special arts scholarship fund for deserving students who need the financial support to pursue a dream.

I have been able to take all my experiences learned at Trails — love for nature, appreciation of other people’s experiences, leadership training, team-building tools, and accountability — and make a difference. 4 Seasons, 4 Years, 4 Life.