



experiences
CANADA



150
&
ME

Canada 150&Me Yearbook





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Thanks for inspiring us with your vision,
ideas, and commitments to building a
better Canada for the next 150 years!



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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Experiences Canada is pleased to partner with the Order of Canada. As part of their 50th anniversary celebrations, the Order of Canada brought its members to each of our four regional forums and the National Youth Forum to share their stories and inspire young Canadians.

We would like to thank our national sponsors and program partners that made Canada 150&Me possible.

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As we celebrate Canada 150, Canadians of all ages and backgrounds have come together to reflect on our past, rejoice in what we have accomplished so far and look to the future with optimism.

Our Government was proud to support Canada 150&Me, a Canada 150 signature initiative, which brought thousands of young Canadians together for a national conversation about the future of our country. It encouraged them to explore topical and timely issues that mattered most to them, while fostering a greater understanding of our diversity and the values that we all share.

As Minister of Canadian Heritage, I would like to congratulate Experiences Canada on organizing this excellent initiative and on your ongoing efforts to provide inspiring and educational programs for young people.

I would also like to thank the young people across the country who participated in the Canada 150&Me program. I hope the experiences and lessons you take from this program will inspire you to lead the way in your neighbourhoods, schools and communities for many years to come.

THE HONOURABLE MÉLANIE JOLY

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE





A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Watching Canada 150&Me grow from an idea to the eight multi-media youth presentations delivered at the National Youth Forum in Ottawa in June has been an experience! It has been an incredible journey led by a team at Experiences Canada that clearly delivered a superb program. On behalf of the Board we would like to offer our deepest congratulations to each and every participant on a project well done—a project that we will have an enduring impact on each of you and the families and communities you visited.

At Experiences Canada, we believe in youth, their power and influence. So much of our programming offers youth an opportunity to explore our country, our issues, our history and our identity—and to make life-long friendships with one another. To be effective as global leaders, youth need to be strongly rooted in their knowledge and understanding of what it means to be Canadian. And, one of the amazing things about Canada is that you can discover so much about other cultures by talking with each other, listening to each other and sharing your stories.

It was clearly evident that Canada 150&Me youth participants had a keen understanding of empathy, fairness and equity. It was clear that they knew their history, sciences and languages and are on the path to leadership to make this country a better place. More than any generation that has come before, young people are connecting with the rest of the country and the rest of the world.

But Canada is not perfect. Canada 150&Me asked youth to look at the challenges, as well as opportunities facing their generation. There are a lot of issues still to be resolved. With Canada 150&Me we provided a safe space for the conversation to begin, to look at Canada in a global context and introduce youth to some of the many organizations that are tackling those problems.

We are proud to strengthen Canada's youth leadership, and look forward to seeing how they will lead us into the next 150 years!

KYLE HILL

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



Two years ago the planning began. The Canada 150&Me ambition was to start a year-long national conversation among youth about the greatest challenges and opportunities facing Canada for their generation.

This legacy book looks at the project from its inception, to the discussions held across the country this past spring, culminating in a week-long celebration of Canadian heritage, history and public policy in Ottawa between June 24 and July 2, 2017. We provided multiple platforms for participating youth between the ages of 14 and 19 and our youth ambassadors between the ages of 21 and 29 to have a safe space to explore timely issues, meet renowned Canadian experts and emerging leaders—and to have a voice.

We asked them to speak up, speak often and speak loudly! And they did.

Over 1,200 students registered and uploaded videos, performances, essays and images as part of the national competition. Seventy volunteer judges selected 150 youth to travel to one of

four regional forums based on themes identified by young people as the most relevant. Another 2,900 young people joined the conversations either on-site at the regional forums, or online. Throughout the past year, youth participants have addressed subjects ranging from mental health, relationships with Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQ rights, humanitarian assistance, the environment and sustainable development, social inclusion, diversity, education, the economy and attachment to social media.

Recommendations from each of the four regional forums were presented to Order of Canada members, business and political leaders, and government officials at the National Youth Forum on June 26, 2017. And this conversation will continue through a new Canada 150&Me alumni network. We hope that this group of young leaders will continue to be inspired to help shape Canada's future.

Canada 150 has been a milestone. It was not only an opportunity to reflect on

our past 150 years as a confederation, but it has also put young people at the forefront in defining the Canada we want for the next 150 years.

Often, the small, early steps we take can have a huge ripple effect. This will be our Canada 150&Me legacy—motivating thousands of young people to get more involved in their communities and to take an interest in public policy. We are grateful to the many national sponsors and partners featured throughout this e-book, who have made this project possible.

It's been a fantastic learning experience for us as well; spending so much quality time listening and learning from young people about their hopes, their dreams, and the issues that matter most to them. I can't think of a better way to have marked Canada's sesquicentennial!

DEBORAH MORRISON
PRESIDENT & CEO



Experiences Canada is widely recognized as Canada's leading service provider for youth exchanges. Launched in 1936 and previously known as SEVEC, Experiences Canada arranges travel, accommodation and programming for an estimated 5,000 young Canadians who participate in reciprocal exchanges and youth events annually to better explore their country's rich history, culture, and geography.

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College Louis-Riel
École secondaire de la Salle
Fleetwood Park Secondary School
Panorama Ridge Secondary School
Sisler High School
Sullivan Heights Secondary School
The Collegiate at University of Winnipeg
Kevin de Boice
Christie Brown
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Arlene Van Riuten

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ABOUT CANADA 150&ME

Experiences Canada set out to create a unique opportunity for young people ages 14-19 to mark Canada's 150th anniversary to talk about the most important challenges and opportunities they saw facing Canada for their generation. The goal was to let youth lead a national conversation, share their thoughts and ideas on social media, and participate either online or in person at one of the five events we held across the country between April and July, 2017. Over 3,300 youth participated directly in the forums. And since they shared their experiences with peers and family through social media, and we estimate our total reach to be over 12,000.



DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE LAUNCH EVENT

On September 25, 2016, Experiences Canada was honoured to have the Canada 150&Me project showcased during the royal visit with Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada.

The Honourable Melanie Joly, minister of Canadian Heritage hosted a youth panel discussion with the 120 some youth from across Canada invited to attend a reception with the royal couple.

In her remarks, the minister said that “the signature Canada 150&Me project will bring together some of our country’s most enthusiastic young people for exchanges and forums that will help them become engaged citizens. The 150th anniversary of Confederation encourages all Canadians to dream about what the future has in store for us. We should take advantage of this unique opportunity to help our youth develop to their full potential, so they can in turn invest in their community.”

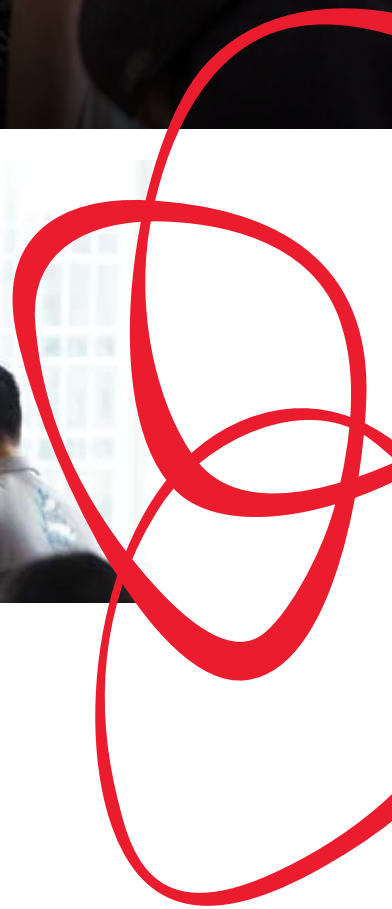
Three outstanding young Canadians joined the panel discussion including:

- **LEEN AL ZAIBAK**, a leader in supporting the success of Syrian refugees resettled in Canada and abroad;
- **AURELIE RIVARD**, a four-time medallist and two time world record holder at the 2016 Paralympic games in Rio de Janeiro; and
- **HJALMER WENSTOB**, a traditional carver and member of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation located on Vancouver Island.



Alexandra Kropova, one the first youth to participate in the Canada 150&Me project was invited to emcee the event. She explained how the project was “the perfect way to combine [her] passion for filmmaking with [her] desire to get more involved in [her] community.” Her video project described how our upcoming generation of Canadians will have to work collaboratively with other nations to combat the negative effects of global warming.

Twenty-six student representatives from three local Surrey schools: Panorama Ridge, Sullivan Heights, and Fleetwood Park also participated in the event. The students were chosen for their key role as hosts for youth travelling to the lower mainland for in the Canada 150&Me project.







I AM
EQUALLY
PROUD TO BE
A PART OF
SOME OF THE
WORK THAT
EXPERIENCES
CANADA DOES.

As a member of Experiences Canada's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), my experience with Canada 150&Me started long before I got on a plane and travelled from Edmonton to Vancouver. We were exposed to the idea of celebrating Canada's 150th in a big way in 2015, though we weren't quite sure, at that point, what the program would become. The YAC was involved in shaping the program, from which logos would look the best, to discussing the main issues that were important to us, and to the rest of Canadian youth. What is Canada's biggest opportunity or challenge facing your generation? Though we didn't know exactly what the program would look like, we knew what it meant and how important it would be to youth across the country.

As part of my responsibility as a YAC member, I gave presentations in my school, posted flyers, contacted teachers and principals in my district, and helped design and run social media ad campaigns. Working on a national project that would affect young Canadians on such a remarkable scale gave me the experience and confidence to pursue more leadership opportunities. It really made me realize, in simple terms, how important all of our voices truly are, and that there are people listening to them. I decided to submit a project and experience everything that we had been planning for months. Being part of this project, from conceptualization, to promotion, to participation truly made me appreciate how many young people were impacted, and found their voice because of Canada 150&Me.

My time in Vancouver was incredibly educational and inspiring, but beyond that, it was so much fun. I still talk to the friends that I met on my trip today, and I know that because of the experiences we shared, we will always be a part of this Canada 150 network of people. I am beyond grateful to have had this opportunity to participate in Canada 150&Me, and I am equally proud to be a part of some of the work that Experiences Canada does. Merci beaucoup Experiences Canada!

- ASTRID KRUEGER



YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Canada 150&Me could not have happened without the support of 19 truly dedicated and inspirational youth ambassadors who supervised participants throughout their respective weeks. They marshalled, cajoled and kept a watchful eye on their charges as well as led discussions and hosted our Regional and National Forums. They have helped steer youth with their multimedia presentations today. They are a diverse group of young activists and role models in their own right.

Farid Ahmad, *Toronto, ON*

Sarah Bulman, *Charlottetown, PEI*

Aaron Chan, *Langley, BC*

Erinn Drage, *Halifax, NS*

Russell Drummond, *Victoria, BC*

Sara Eftekhar, *West Vancouver, BC*

Justin Fisch, *Barss Corner, NS*

Maya Gunnarsson, *Toronto, ON*

Sherifa Hadi, *Ottawa, ON*

Jaron Hart, *Winnipeg, MB*

Meagan Larocque, *Ottawa, ON*

Kalynne Maracle, *Tyendinaga
Mohawk Territory, ON*

Gabrielle Marleau, *Montreal, QC*

Kyle Muswagon, *Winnipeg, MB*

Ermias Nagatu, *Toronto, ON*

Lisa Russell, *Winnipeg, MB*

Daniel Sadler, *Calgary, AB*

Garry Smolyansky, *Toronto, ON*

Adam Young, *Saskatoon, SK*





**THE McCAIN FOUNDATION
IS PROUD TO BE A PARTNER
IN CANADA 150&ME**

**EMPOWERING YOUTH TO CREATE POSITIVE
CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.**



PROJECT SUBMISSIONS

Experiences Canada received over 1,200 applications between the project launch in May 2016 and the February 15, 2017 entry deadline. Experiences Canada staff completed an initial screening of projects and forwarded a shortlist of 650 projects to volunteer judges for evaluation. The 70-80 judges had online access to the projects. Three judges evaluated each project and an average score was generated from among their evaluations.

The list of 150 top-scoring projects was generated, and Experiences Canada assigned youth to one of the five regional events. We first factored in their area of interest, but also con-

sidered their geographic location—assuming they would rather travel somewhere than stay in their home city. Finally, Experiences Canada wanted to ensure that among each regional group there was a reasonable geographic and demographic diversity of participants.

The task for the judges was not easy—youth participants demonstrated an exceptional amount of passion, creativity, and subject knowledge through their work. This e-book contains a sample of some of those project submissions to provide readers with a sense of the breadth of the issues they raised, and the calibre of their efforts.





Abinaya Ravichandran



Tobi Billing



Alan Cao

To this day, racism is still a reoccurring problem. Many Caucasian people look at those of color as invaders of their land, and thieves of their jobs. Even at schools, where everyone is equal, those of color are mocked for trying to achieve a higher grade point average. Many are assaulted simply because of who they are.

- Puneet Gill, BC



Grace Zhu

Building on our openness and willingness to embrace change, our sense of community, volunteerism, and inclusiveness, will forge a new identity that resonates with all Canadian's old and young, rural and urban, Canadian born or immigrant. This is the greatest opportunity facing Canadian youth.

- Jonathan Plank, SK



Benjamin Pilat





Katie Chan



Gabby Castillo



Jayda Cole



Eliz Malaso



Ethan Ani

We, the undersigned, represent young Canadians. We are committed to this process of healing and reconciliation, to building a country that is made stronger through our differences, and to adding our voices to others to help form a nation that is supportive and equal for all.

- Liam Cowan, ON

We are not being taught about the horrors of residential schools... We keep sweeping some of the most important things in our history under the rug because it's uncomfortable talk about. But the reality is that we won't reconcile with first nation people if we don't educate.

- Sydney Dionne, NB



Isabelle Louie



Ada Alward-O'Neil



Faatema Hariff

Today there is a group of adolescents that are silenced, they are at a higher risk than any other - they come face to face with emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. This is the grim reality for many LGBTQ youth in every province across Canada. In today's generation, one of the greatest challenges that we face is the negative reactions towards the "coming out" of our queer youth. The problems being not feeling accepted by parents, peers, or educators; as well as having limited resources and support.

- Jessica Peterson, AB



Hailey Edmonds Shiwak



Bonita Ysobel



Ryan Alexander

Unfortunately, recent Global events seemed to have rekindled that fear of the unknown, that fear of difference, that fear of immigrants. Many seem to have forgotten that immigration does not only benefit those who arrive in our Country but also benefits our society as a whole. Many seem to have forgotten that the knowledge and experience that immigrants bring with them when they arrive here will only serve to enrich and strengthen our Country.

- Lucas Galand, QC

There once was a time,
Where ravens could be free.
Not standing on tall buildings,
But nestling high above the trees.

Those settlers,
cut quickly their Homes too of our Motherland.
Leaving homeless ravens in the rain,
Choking on the wet sand.

Our past, present, and future,
Endures the effects of the settlers' blight.
The living dead ending their lives,
Out in the cold moonlight.

- Hiram Lo, BC



Sophia Pilcher



Hidden Secrets | Bobby Shingoose

Many projects were submitted in video format – highlighting the many creative ways there are to share an idea : documentary, dance, spoken word, and animation to name just a few. To see more video submissions (or to activate these ones if you are reading a print edition) visit our youtube channel: [youtube.com/experiencescanada](https://www.youtube.com/experiencescanada)



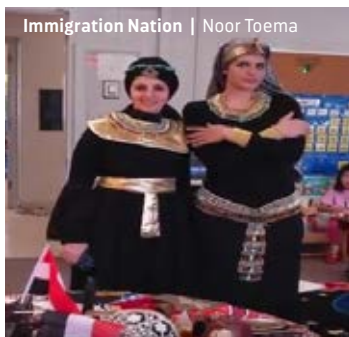
Diversity | Roya Pishvaei



One Love | Shawn Gochan and Chris Samudio



Please Save The Arctic | Maryn Woo



Immigration Nation | Noor Toema



Opportunities | Jae Ho Kim



Poverty Line | Abby Contreras and Nicole Nisperos



A Haven For Homeless | Elora Gibbons





JUDGING AND SELECTION PROCESS

The review and selection processes were integral to the Canada 150&Me project. Youth projects were assessed based on five criteria: originality, content, structure, communications for the project they presented, and the participant's personal biography. On average, each project was reviewed at least three times, before it received a final averaged score.

It is estimated that in total more than 240 hours were spent reviewing and judging student work. We are grateful for the the following 80 volunteers who contributed both time and expertise in reviewing the projects and helping us determine those which would be awarded an opportunity to participate in the Regional and National Forums.

Aggarwal, Ishita
 Ahmad, Farid
 Ahmed, Fatima
 Ahmed-Hassan, Faiza
 Ahn, Suyoung
 Bailey, Carolyn
 Bain, Kenneth
 Bannis, Johanna
 Barg, Karen
 Becker, Alyssa
 Blondel, André
 Bradburn, Miya
 Brinston, Kayla
 Burtenshaw-deVrie, Natasha
 Cayouette, Heather
 Chateauvert, Pierre-Yves
 Chen, Peggy
 Chiorean, Viviana
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 Collishaw, Rachel
 Cooke, Max
 Dashwood, Monica

Dennison, John
 Di Gangi, Carissa
 Dickie, Michelle
 Domanski, Allyson
 Drukis, Shailyn
 Dubeau, Angèle
 Fowler, Catherine
 Fung, Kay
 Garrett, Dustin
 Gordon, John
 Harding, Rebecca
 Hasan, Imran
 Hawkins, Joan
 Hawse, Sheridan
 Horeth, Rebecca
 Howe, Sydney
 Jacques, Philippe-Alexandre
 Jenkins, Winston
 Jutras, Pier-Nadeige
 Kingdon, Tom
 Kolar, Alexis
 Kolie, Minh Hoa

Kumar, Rajesh
 Laroche, Louis
 Leurent, Emeline
 Levandier, Tara
 Lumsden, Gavin
 McAtamney, Caroline
 McCullough, Jamie
 McKeever, Megan
 Merritt, Hilary
 Monahan, Heather
 Mendou, Tonleu
 Nagatu, Ermias
 Nelson, Marilyn
 Nichol Longtin, Allison
 O'Donoghue, Meagan
 Owen, Greg
 Perla, Armando
 Prévost-Mullane, Manon
 Radford, Sharon
 Reeves, Mary
 Ruest, Janet
 Scammell, Helen

Scholz, Kerri
 Shim, Jason
 Smith, Cindy
 Smith, Tanya
 Solijon, Leidamae
 Thabet, Sandrine
 Thomas, Wayne
 Thompson, John
 Tremblay, Jennifer
 Turenne, Roger
 Van Ruiten, Arlene
 Volpe, Gabriella
 Wake, Erin
 Watson, Pat
 Weldon, Cynthia
 Wright, Alexandra
 Yousof, Marjila
 Zamin, Deborah
 Zubriski, Amber





2017

YOUTH FORUMS

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 P. 50 OTTAWA



APRIL 5

VANCOUVER YOUTH FORUM ON THE ENVIRONMENT



"YOUR ROLE IN
RECRUITING AND
EDUCATING
THEIR PEERS IN
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION
IS ESSENTIAL IN
PROMOTING CHANGE."
- DAVID SUZUKI

Vancouver was a magnificent backdrop to launch the Canada 150&Me Forum. For many youth it was their first time visiting British Columbia, and they joined host twins and families from the participating Surrey schools: Panorama Ridge, Sullivan Heights and Fleetwood Park.

The environmental theme carried on throughout the week as our participants visited Stanley Park, the Vancouver Aquarium, cleaned up the shoreline, took a sea to sky gondola in Squamish, attended a City of Surrey workshop on sustainable cities and volunteered with the Evergreen Sustainable Communities.

On April 5, 2017, Dr. David Suzuki shared his concerns for the environment in the growing international economy. He spoke of Canada's Indigenous roots in the four sacred elements: water, air, fire and earth, and the impor-

tance of conserving them. Dr. Suzuki reminded the youth that their role in recruiting and educating their peers in environmental protection is essential for promoting change.

A panel of young leaders—Meredith Adler, executive director of Student Energy; Jonah Bryson, film-maker; and Hjalmer Wenstob, traditional carver and Assembly of First Nations youth activist—discussed how Canadian youth can make a difference for the environment by getting informed, finding their passion, and using these as a tool for change.

During the youth forum, all participants broke out into small workshops groups to discuss a series of guided questions. In Vancouver there were 10 workshop groups on site involving between 30-40 youth. All of their discussions were recorded and transcribed in the summaries below.

CHALLENGES & ISSUES

"It takes longer to change the minds of people as the effect of climate change is slow and they may not see the effects until it is too late." — **Vancouver youth participant**

"The Environmental Right to Water program that regulated water in estuaries and rivers across the country was disbanded. We should bring it back!" — **Layne, Vancouver**

"In PEI, there are more storms in the summer and the winter and there is a lot of coastal erosion that is causing habitat loss. It has been getting worse in recent years." — **Lise, PEI**

"We're having early flooding in Winnipeg—they had to open the floodgates the earliest ever in history this year." — **Jasmine, Winnipeg Collegiate**

What are some of the barriers that we must overcome if we are going to have an impact on the environment?

- We need to change the social mindset. Changing the law is not enough if people still don't value the environment.
- Many environmental alternatives, like installing solar panels or buying a fully electric car are still very expensive.
- People are not properly educated on the efforts they should make to decrease their carbon footprint. For example, some individuals do not know how to recycle or how to use their compost bin.

What impacts of climate change have you already noticed in your community? Where do you think the greatest risks are for Canadians and for communities?

- Wildfires are on the rise across the country due to the dryness of the land.
- Animals are being forced to move from their homes because of habitat loss due to wildfires, deforestations and flooding. Invasive species are thriving in locations they have never been before.
- Polar bears are becoming extinct because of the increase in temperature in the North. The bee population is also decreasing at an alarming rate.
- Winters are getting warmer and warmer, as are summers. This can be seen in many locations around the world. People also notice extreme temperatures that were never previously recorded.

- The coast has been the most affected zone because of the increase in temperature that leads to a rise in the ocean level. The affected cities will require help from the rest of the population in the near future.
- Cattle-farming is a growing issue as it releases large amounts of methane into the environment. Fifty per cent of the methane released in the air is due to cattle.

What the government and corporations can do:

"Indigenous Peoples should be stewards of the land, like David Suzuki said."

"We need a stronger incentive system to convince big corporations to be protecting the environment and perhaps penalties if they are harming the environment."

"Carpooling and public transportation can help reduce fossil fuels and carbon emissions."

"In Charlottetown we just started using water meters on every house so we know how much water we are using. And the province is giving rain water bins so we can use water that is more natural to obtain."

"Our society can do this. It is what Canada is capable of, and I think it is the greatest challenge and opportunity facing our generation!"

What strategies can Canada take to ensure that governments and businesses take action on environmental concerns? Should environmental rights or the right to a healthy environment—clean air and water, safe food, and a stable climate—be entrenched in the Canadian constitution?

- Most youth participants agree that access to clean air, as well as water should be in our constitution.
- Environmental protection should be entrenched as well because it is ridiculous to think that environmental protection is something that could be changed or removed by the party in power. Protecting the environment is not something that changes with politics or the economy, it is the underlying foundation of humanity. It needs to be entrenched because people need that level of authority in their minds when making these decisions.

- In order to change the mindset of young people, more needs to be done in raising awareness. Social media is a good tool to reach youth.
- Renewable energy must be put in place as much as possible, such as solar panels and wind turbines. These could be used to power large corporations that require a large quantity of energy.
- The government should not accept lobbying money from fossil fuel companies. This makes it harder for environmentally-friendly corporations to succeed.
- Companies should be forced to use bio-degradable packaging.
- The carbon tax is a good way to make corporations switch to renewable energy methods and lower the quantity of carbon dioxide they release in the air.
- The government should provide subsidies to farmers to encourage them to keep growing their own fruits and vegetables. It should also increase "buy local" marketing campaigns.
- When many people mobilize for a common purpose, the government and corporations can't ignore it and must respond. Therefore, the more we are fighting for a common cause, the easier it will be to get the government to react.
- The government should enact laws to preserve farm land and prevent it from being bought to build houses.

By 2050, 70 per cent of the world will be living in cities. Urban issues like affordable housing, waste management, sustainable energy, transportation, green roofs, are becoming increasingly important. What ideas do you have for making cities more environmentally sustainable?

- The government should support "green" companies that release less carbon dioxide. This could be done by providing subsidies to these companies or implementing a carbon tax.
- The government should promote public transportation as well as electric or hybrid car use.
- Some cities, such as Waterloo, limit the amount of garbage bags a household can use every week.
- Buildings should be better insulated to contain heat and cool air in a more efficient way and to avoid the use of heaters and air conditioning, which require a lot of energy.

- There should be more green spaces around large cities. Therefore, forests must not be cut down to make room for new buildings. When there is a housing problem in larger cities, in order to prevent environmental destruction, we should build up instead of around.

What youth can do:

"I feel like a lot of people have a misperception that 'if I turn off my tap for two minutes while I brush my teeth it's not going to make a difference'. But it's not solely about what you do, it's about what other people do because of you. I always thought, since I started high school, that leaders have an obligation to create more leaders. One of the main things about what it is to be a leader is to inspire more people and get them to grow their own leadership skills. In getting people to try to take care of the environment, if one person does it, that's fine, but if you're a true leader you also want to teach other people to do it."

What are things that you can personally do to reduce the impact of climate change in your community?

- We can update our homes with green technologies such as solar panels or wind turbines. These could be used to power multiple homes. We can also buy locally produced food.
- Reducing the amount of water and electricity we use is something everyone can do. This can be done as easily as turning of the tap when you brush your teeth.
- Using reusable water bottles, as well as bags is also a good action to take. The amount of plastic found in the ocean is alarming.
- Composting and making sure we recycle properly can also have a good impact on the environment. Unfortunately, many individuals do not know what we can and cannot recycle/compost.
- Since the cattle industry releases a large amount of methane, eating less meat and more greens is an important step to take.
- Using an electric vehicle or public transportation greatly decreases your carbon footprint.



CONGRATULATIONS PARTICIPANTS
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"Congratulations! We would like to invite you to Vancouver..." I couldn't believe what I was reading, and sometimes still can't. It was crazy to think that I was about to be whisked across the country to spend an entire week in the place I'd always longed to visit. For free.

My excitement dimmed just slightly, when I realized that my essay on human rights had gotten me into the environment conference. My attitude towards environmental issues had always been along the lines of, "meh, other people are handling it." Looking over the itinerary however, I was amazed at all of the incredible things I would be doing, and knew the experience was well worth being bored at the forum. Before I knew it, I was flying across Canada, about to have all of my expectations for the week proven wrong.

From the first day I already had the trip of a lifetime while privately roaming around the UBC Museum of Anthropology, and the next day getting to fulfill a dream of mine of going into the mountains to experience the most incredible views one could ever see.

But the forum was the next thing on our list, so I got all dolled up

expecting to go be bored out of my mind for a few hours. Immediately, I was proven wrong. We started on an incredible high note, listening to Dr. David Suzuki speak. I unexpectedly found my cynical self really caring about, and empathizing with what was being said. But what had truly surprised me, was how much of the day was spent discussing First Nations traditions, concerns, and issues, which is what most of my essay had been about. It was clearly shown how deeply connected the First Nations peoples are with the land, both physically and spiritually. This opened my eyes to an entire way of thinking I hadn't considered before. One lesson in particular that I am certain will stick with me, and that I have been eagerly sharing with others is that you can't talk about environmental issues without talking about First Nations issues, and you can't talk about First Nations issues without talking about environmental issues.

This became a trend throughout the rest of the week—seeing just how strong of a presence the First Nations communities have in the Vancouver area. My favourite speaker of the week ended up being the son of a Chief, who was just meant to be doing a welcom-



ing blessing, and ended up saying much more. To hear someone so young with such a passion for the land, his traditions and culture, and for other young people, was incredibly inspiring.

I returned home with an entirely different lesson than I had expected to learn. I wouldn't trade a second of my time, because I got exactly the drive I needed to keep working to better my community and country. Thank you so much to Experiences Canada, and to the phenomenal family who welcomed me.

I UNEXPECTEDLY
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WITH WHAT WAS
BEING SAID...

- CAMERON SMITH,
TRENTON, NS

WHAT CANADA'S MADE OF

In the past year, a lot of elements in my life have changed. The way I see the world, the important issues within it, and my vision of making a difference have been altered drastically. I can attribute a major portion of this renewed way of thinking to Experiences Canada.

Every day of our lives, we change the world in small, simple ways. To change the world in a way that means something is what I have always been, and always will be, after. When I read about the Canada 150&Me contest I thought to myself, "this is change that means something". Bringing together thousands of youth to interact with each other and experience the places and people of Canada will not only impact the future of our generation, but the future of our country.

Even though my expectations for this journey of Canadian ambition and pride were tremendously high, this nation and the people who thrive in it still managed to exceed them.

Although I anticipated the best part of my time in Vancouver and Ottawa to be the sights, it was the people that made my experiences truly special. Having discussions with youth from all walks of life made me realize how diverse our country is, and how being Canadian means something different for everyone. The hopes, dreams, and aspirations of every youth are

different, but we all have one goal in common: we want change, and we want to do it together. I started to take an interest in issues I had never even considered before, and began to see that what may seem as unimportant to me has a very direct impact on someone else.

The most important concept 150&Me helped me see is that policy and legislation isn't what Canada's made of. No leader or law could ever make this country any better or worse. Canada's foundation is the people; the people who are proud of where they've been and where they're going. The people who work together to ensure peace, safety, and community lies within every household. The people who protest, advocate, and fight for what they know is right. The people who get up every day at four in the morning and drive two hours to work just so they can send their children to university. The people who take a chance at a new life because they know that there is so much more than what they have left behind. The people who vote. Canada is what we do, as a generation and as a community. In the ever changing political, global, and economic landscape, one thing is clear: the next one hundred and fifty years are bound to be good ones.

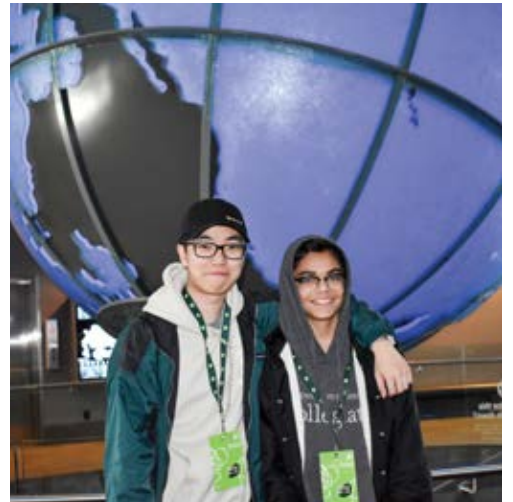
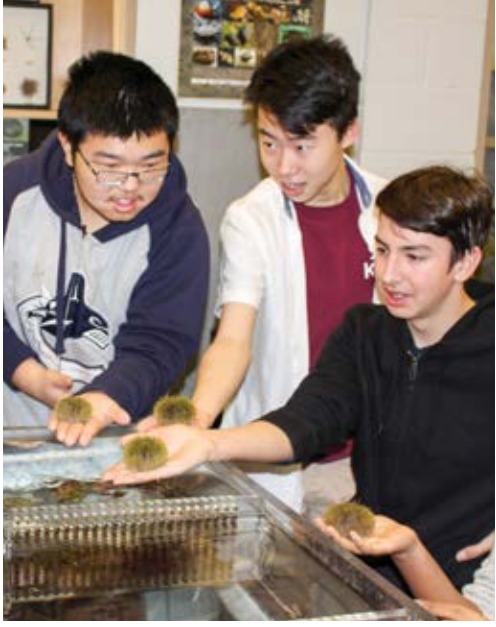
**- CATHERINE CADIGAN,
LINDSAY, ON**



Experiences Canada and Canada 150&Me has provided me with a once in a lifetime opportunity and possibly one of the most amazing weeks of my life. I was both very excited and nervous to leave my little town of Lake Lenore, but as soon as I arrived in Vancouver all of my nerves disappeared. Everyone was so kind and welcoming and I became very excited to start the week. Once all of the participants had arrived in Vancouver, we headed to Panorama Ridge High School, where we met our host twins and got a rundown of all the things we would be doing during the week. I had an amazing time exploring and learning at all of the museums and galleries that we visited. It was interesting to learn more about the province of British Columbia and the land. At the regional forum in Vancouver, we focused on the environment with Dr. David Suzuki. We talked about the negatives and positives on what people and companies are doing to the environment, and how they can change what they are doing to allow the environment to recover for future generations. While we were in the Vancouver area, we also helped remove trash and foreign objects from a shoreline, and participated in an invasive species removal at Tynehead Regional Park. Himalayan blackberries and English ivy are invasive to British Columbia, so we removed as many of those plants as we could in our short time frame. While I was at home with my twin, Jennah, I got to be fully embraced and treated like a member of their family. Jennah brought me to a fair and to White Rock, Metrotown, which allowed me to see and explore even more. Being around so many motivated and passionate youth gave me my own ideas and hopes on how we can change our environment for the better. Constantly being outdoors or around nature with the 150&Me participants gave me new understanding and respect for the beautiful country we live in. Experiences Canada has provided me with a lifetime of memories and over 150 new and amazing friends. I cannot wait to see what we will all accomplish in the future.

**- SHELBY VOZ,
LAKE LENORE, SK**





experiences
CANADA



150
&
ME



Thank you for sharing your vision,
your dreams, and your hopes for
Canada's next 150 years.

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APRIL 11

MONTREAL YOUTH FORUM

ON CANADA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD



With its cosmopolitan flair, Montreal was the perfect setting to look at Canada's place in the world. Visiting students stayed at the HI-Montreal Youth Hostel that offered a distinctly downtown feel.

Youth experienced a Cabane à Sucre treat and toured Pharmascience Inc.—Quebec's largest pharmaceutical employer, the Bombardier Museum and TOHU—Cirque de Soleil's St. Michel campus. They also participated in a Human Library event with people who work internationally, explored Canada's fur trade industry, and visited the Kahnawake First Nations reserve.

On April 11, 2017, guest speakers Gregory Charles, O.C., musician and radio personality, and Daniel Germain, C.M., president of Breakfast Clubs of Canada, held the crowd's attention during the Forum on Canada's Place in the

World at the Montreal Science Centre as they described their respective journeys to international acclaim. Gregory Charles left participants with the simple advice to "listen and then make others listen" by relentlessly pursuing their passions, and persistently exploiting every opportunity. Daniel Germain encouraged youth to start small and close to home, unhindered by limitations, in the pursuit of their dreams.

The inspiring youth panel—Melanie-Rose Frappier, founder of the social enterprise, It's Cool to be Healthy; Bree and Hailey Hollinsworth, founders of Ungalli, a sustainable fashion business; Antoine Nouvet, conflict prevention and open data advisor; and Sadia Rafiquddin, journalist and human rights advocate—each spoke about how they made their mark in the world early on in their careers.

"START SMALL AND CLOSE TO HOME. UNHINDERED BY LIMITATIONS, IN THE PURSUIT OF THEIR DREAMS."
- DANIEL GERMAIN



CHALLENGES & ISSUES

"[Indigenous Peoples], these are people who have been marginalized since the Confederation."

Are there areas where you think Canada could be doing more to contribute to a better world? Are there areas where you think Canada is doing too much?

- Canada does not have a permanent role in rebuilding countries after conflicts, only temporary projects.
- Many ecosystems have been damaged by pollution and there is a lack of green initiatives to protect our environment.
- Youth are concerned about making real changes on the human rights front globally (i.e. correct actions rather than simply condemning actions).
- Indigenous rights violations have been disregarded for years without formal reconciliation.
- Canada is focusing on too many issues at once rather than investing enough energy to properly resolve one issue at a time.
- NGOs need to coordinate their activities to avoid working in parallel rather than together, overlapping, and sometimes even against each other.
- Youth do not feel adequately prepared to enter the international scene as it is fast-paced, constantly changing, and they have limited accessibility to information regarding international issues.
- There has been an increase in technological influences within the work force, and schools do a poor job of educating youth in this area (i.e. learning about technology and how to use it properly, incorporating it into work habits, etc.).
- Canada's contribution to space exploration is poor.
- There is a lack of unity between countries of the world, including Canada and other nations.
- There remains an intolerance of other cultures, religions and beliefs both within Canada and in the world.
- Youth feel that cultures within Canadian communities are being diluted by assimilation.
- Canada's efforts are restricted to local and national problems and very little is being done on the international scene.
- There is not enough international support to struggling countries (i.e. third-world countries, impoverished countries, war-torn countries, etc.).
- There is still gender inequality and underrepresentation of minorities within government, workplaces, etc.
- There is a large number of people experiencing homelessness, notably youth and veterans.
- There is a labor shortage—especially in the agricultural industries.
- Canada has a growing problem with obesity in populations of all ages, and little is being done to counteract this problem.
- There is a growing crisis surrounding drug abuse and addiction among the Canadian population, especially in schools.
- Canadian industries, notably factories and food production industries, are practicing animal cruelty.

What the government, corporations and schools can do

"School is teaching you how to get a cubicle job. You need to learn how to create a change, and not simply how to become middle class and have a family. There are no classes that will give you what you need in order to change the world."

"Canada is actually one of the most diverse countries in the world [...] But are we doing enough with it? If we unite our people with all different races, genders, and sexualities, then maybe we will become more exposed to these different things, talking to these people from different backgrounds. From that, we will become more knowledgeable about current events and world issues and we might even care a little bit more."

What are your priorities for change to ensure Canada has a greater positive impact on current world issues?

While some youth focused on what Canada could do abroad:

- The government should look for permanent solutions for struggling countries (poverty, homelessness, war, etc.).
- Schools and communities should promote volunteer opportunities for youth in order to maximize participation and resources.
- Protect fresh water bodies.
- Promote donations from wealthy classes of citizens.

CANADA SHOULD
CONTINUE—
AND EVEN
INCREASE—ITS
PEACEKEEPING
EFFORTS
INTERNATIONALLY.



- Multiply food programs.
- There are many empty houses in Canada. These can be made accessible to the homeless population in order to alleviate the homelessness issue.
- Repair the ecosystems that have been damaged, and create artificial ones to replace the ones that are not mendable.
- Share natural resources internationally.
- Canada should continue—and even increase—its peacekeeping efforts internationally.
- The government should contribute and invest in global green initiatives and programs both nationally and internationally.
- Fund [more] programs outside of Canada to maintain good relationships with other countries.
- Encourage small business growth in newcomers with special sets of skills.
- Participate in [more] world events in order to improve international relations.
- Reduce the cost of travel to facilitate youth's access to cultural experiences.

Others felt that making an impact on the global community starts with addressing critical issues at home first:

- Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.
- The government can create programs to encourage youth activity within the community to counter the drug problem (i.e. things to do for fun that are not drugs).
- Create more safe injection sites.
- Canada should increase female representation at senior and executive levels within the government.

Do you think today's Canadian youth are well prepared to participate in an increasingly global world? What ideas, strategies, education and training would you recommend to strengthen our capacity to be effective global citizens, economically, politically, and socially?

- Create more opportunities for youth experiences outside their community (i.e. exchanges, cooperation trips, etc.), and use social media to advertise and inform youth of these opportunities (i.e. livestreaming, Facebook posts, etc.).
- The government should advertise French language speaking, and increase opportunities to speak French (i.e. travel to Quebec).
- Advertise exchange programs and travel opportunities.
- Schools should incorporate education on all cultures to curricula as well as education on proper use of technology.
- Increase vocational teaching in high schools, creative learning and flexible teaching methods
- Incorporate mental health awareness and wellness into education.
- Schools should improve French language teaching to promote bilingualism.
- Teach youth about agricultural practices and their importance to society.

What youth can do:

"The 150 project in general is actually a really good idea to allow Canadians to experience this sort of thing as a whole."

"If we become more involved in international exchanges, get to learn about the different communities, get to learn about the different cultures and get to learn about the different problems being caused in this world—and being taught about how to take action, we can take the steps to complete these actions and create a better life for those in different countries and different cultures and different societies around the world."

Is there more that youth could or should be doing here at home first to support their communities and provinces that also contribute to a better world?

- Approach conversations with open minds, be less scared to speak to people they don't know and jump less to conclusions.
- Question school curricula and educational material.
- Volunteer within their community.
- Increase communication between youth leaders by encouraging them to create their own networks.
- Speak about global and community issues to people in positions of authority.
- Participate in global events.

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WE ARE YOU. YOU ARE US. LET'S CELEBRATE. WHAT? MONTREAL.

I wish I could tell you everything I did and everything I experienced while in Montreal. Those six days were perhaps the best in my life. Given half the chance, I think we all would have stayed.

My project, Reject The Status Quo, was based on the idea that although we are aware of the multitude of problems we face, we have become inured and choose to do nothing; we have become apathetic. Montreal proved me wrong. It taught me there were other students out there who weren't content with maintaining the status quo.

We discussed Canada's place in the world in terms of education, feminism, the environment, politics, and foreign policy during our breakout sessions at the forum. We talked to industry professionals and innovators, like Robert Greenhill, Rahul Singh, and Hailey and Bree Ungalli, who had all chosen to do something and not just stand by idly. The energy was palpable and we fed off

of it. We finally had an outlet to express all the frustration and creativity we had been holding back in our home cities. To have a dynamic discussion with people who care is perhaps the most inspiring thing in the world

And Montreal was somewhere I truly belonged. None of us slept the night before departure. We stayed up together, connected by our passion and our dreams. We cried, we laughed, we lived, we loved. We vowed to change the world.

Coming back was difficult because I had changed and yet the world I was returning to was the same one I'd left. Montreal was proof that the world is so much bigger than we've been taught. My experiences, my friends, my knowledge and my newly-found acceptance of myself and my place in the world is proof that we are not alone.

**- LINDA XIA,
SURREY, BC**

YOUTH WERE
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BENEFIT THE STATE
OF OUR COUNTRY.

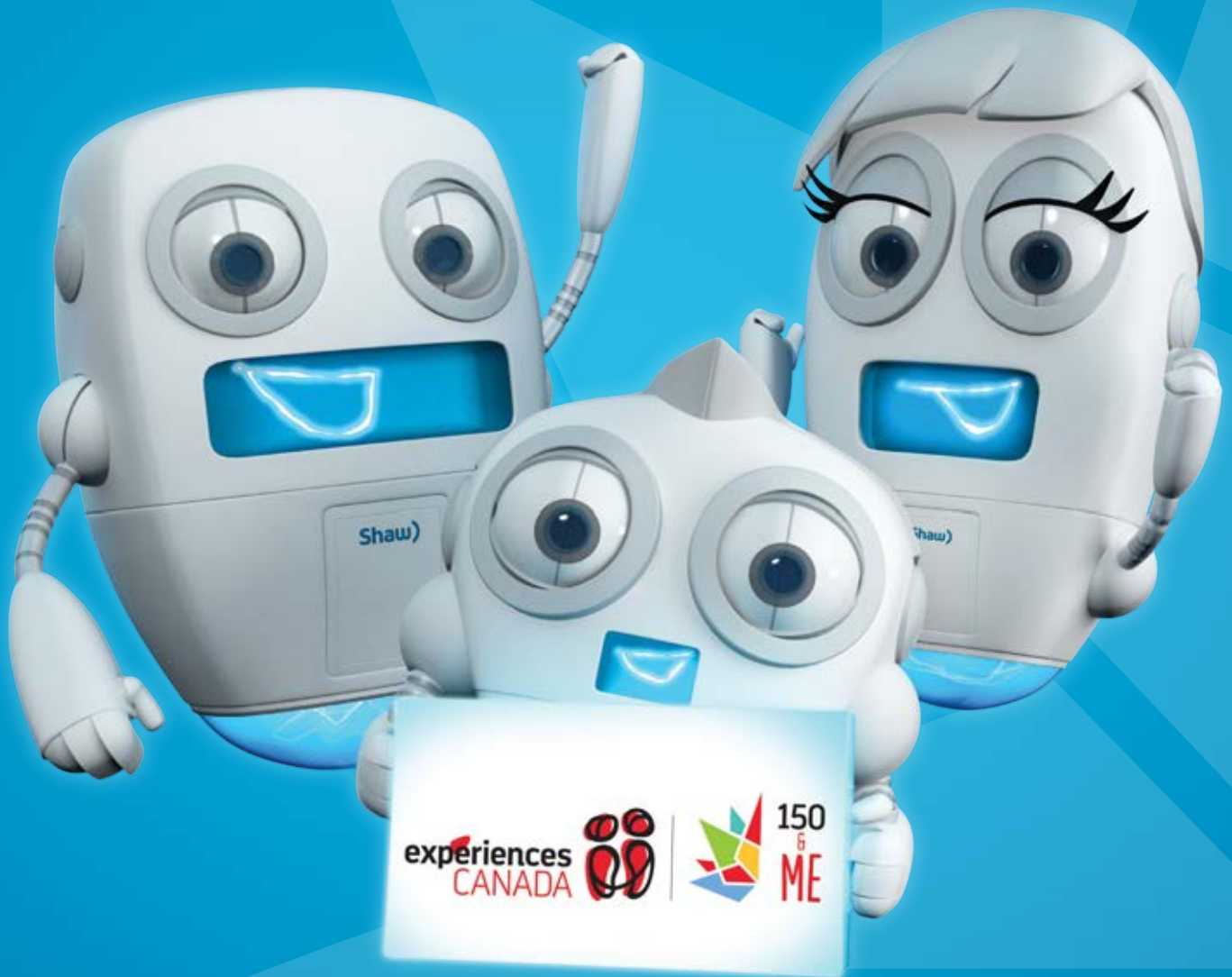
Canada 150&Me has brought me the experiences of a lifetime, and for that I will always be grateful. The experiences from the program, along with the encouraging and positive atmosphere have allowed me to grow out of my comfort zone and shape my individuality. As a result, I am more apt to voice my thoughts and opinions, and encouraged to further strive to make a difference in my local and global communities. The connections made with other like-minded youth from across the country, who drive positive change in the world, have been a huge inspiration to me. Furthermore, the leaders who surrounded us during our trips have taught me of the opportunities and different life paths one may pursue to achieve their fullest potential in life. Both the regional and national forums have allowed me to express my creativity and opinion, both individually and collaboratively. I was extremely fortunate to attend the Montreal Forum and to forge national connections and friendships that will last a lifetime. I am continually astounded at the opportunities that were presented to the attending youth. We were enabled to converse with experienced and well-accomplished individuals from a variety of different walks of life, which was an activity that gave me so much insight into the needs of developing countries. Furthermore, youth were encouraged to voice their thoughts and concerns to benefit the state of our country, and hearing each person speak was so incredibly inspiring. It was a privilege to take part in the national forum in Ottawa and to connect with senators, and bond with one another over performance preparations for the Governor General and the Canada Day celebration. These were all amazing life milestones that have motivated me to seek out future opportunities in my postsecondary career. My time with Canada 150&Me has given me some of the best moments of my life so far—the most amazing time spent with the most wonderful people.

- SOPHIA PILCHER,
SURREY BC





Congratulations to all participants!



Shaw is committed to improving the lives of kids through the Shaw Kids Investment Program. We are proud to support the work of Experiences Canada as they help nurture the future leaders of our country.

skip

Shaw Kids Investment Program



MAY 16

HALIFAX YOUTH FORUM

ON IMMIGRATION & DIVERSITY



"EACH INDIVIDUAL'S
UNIQUE EXPERIENCES
PROVIDE THE BASIS
FOR CANADA'S
GREATEST STRENGTH:
INCLUSIVENESS."
- SENATOR CHANTAL
PETITCLERC

There was much to do in Nova Scotia when we held the Forum on Immigration & Diversity at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. On May 16, 2017, special guests Senator Ratna Omidvar and Senator Chantal Petitclerc spoke to their experiences with diversity and integration. Senator Omidvar recounted in five chapters a story of rejection, renewal and redemption upon arriving in Canada, and encouraged youth to turn challenges into "teachable moments" when faced with ignorance. Senator Petitclerc reinforced this concept by reminding youth that, like hers, each individual's unique experiences provide the basis for Canada's greatest strength: inclusiveness.

Panelists Leen Al-Zaibak, co-founder and director of Jusoor, Sarah Jama, disability activist, and president of the McMaster womanists; and Ermias Nagatu, a gradu-

ate of Pathways to Education spoke about how they overcame their own personal challenges obstacles. They provided practical advice on how youth can become advocates for their own causes and communities.

The immigration and diversity theme carried on for the rest of the week with visits to Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), Africville Museum, Black Loyalist Heritage Centre and Millbrook Cultural Centre. Youth also joined together around a camp fire at the Mi'kmaw Camp at Kejimikujik, and heard from Holocaust survivor and Hungarian refugee—Judy Abrams—at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. Finally, a trip to Nova Scotia would not have been complete if it didn't also include a visit to Lunenburg to see Bluenose II and enjoy a lobster supper at the most photographed place in Canada—Peggy's Cove.

CHALLENGES & ISSUES

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belonging irrespective of age, disability, gender, religion, sexual preference or nationality. There are many barriers to inclusion: some are attitudinal (prejudice and discrimination); some are environmental (access to tools, services or technologies to enable equal participation); and others are institutional (laws, policies).

Which barriers do you think pose the greatest challenges? If removed, which ones do you think would have the greatest positive impact?

- Exclusion/physical separation of certain racial groups within a community, "smaller communities within a bigger community" (i.e. Chinatown, Italian neighbourhood, etc.).
- Cultural appropriation (i.e. traditional Indigenous items being misused in educational settings).
- Limited access to cultural experiences (i.e. festivals, exchanges, interactions with international students, etc.).
- Negative content on social media (bullying, hate crime, insults, racism, etc.).
- Misinformation and naïve users on the Internet (i.e. spreading of false information, users not checking validity of information on the web, etc.).
- Racism/stereotyping (i.e. Indigenous Peoples, immigrants and their children, international students, etc.).
- Non-transferrable qualifications from foreign countries (i.e. professional certifications not recognized in Canada).
- Lack of workers in rural areas/growing industries.
- Attitudinal and environmental barriers (i.e. not being open to foreign workers qualifications, practices not being inclusive/open to learning about new cultures, etc.).
- Disparities between provinces educational curriculums (i.e. Indigenous learning/education on residential schools only added in certain provinces).
- "Fear of the unknown" when it comes to other cultures, values, beliefs, etc.
- Limited avenues for expression for certain groups (i.e. mental illness, LGBTQ community, physical disabilities, etc.).



What the government, private sector and schools can do:

"The opportunities that Canada brings is something that a lot of other countries, that a lot of other individuals look up to as a model [...] the ideal model of democracy, and so that's something that I think that our country should be very proud of."

"The way you use social media is a big part of staying safe."

"Once we demand inclusiveness, we'll solve a lot of issues."

"But here we can be something else and then Canadian. We can have these values and we can appreciate the country but also appreciate where we came from."

"One of our main issues is our attitude. We need to demand inclusiveness. People need to stand up for people who can't stand up for themselves."

What more can we do to ensure that we attract top talent to Canada? How can we best support newcomers to ensure they become successful members of our communities?

- The government should provide more opportunities to share cultures (landmarks, museums, festivals, etc.), and designate distinct city areas to allow newcomers to better conserve their culture without diluting it with other cultures.
- A variety of cultures should be positively advertised on the internet.
- Reflect diversity in the government/parliamentary representation.
- Simplify foreign qualifications and support foreign professionals.
- Increase industry jobs.

It is often said that Canada is a cultural mosaic and fosters greater cultural diversity, whereas the United States is a cultural melting pot. Cultural diversity is based on an understanding that even if people in a given region or community have cultural differences, they desire the same five goals: acceptance, well-being, security, esteem and equity. Do you agree? How is Canada a model for other countries in achieving those five desires? In what areas could we be doing more?

- The government should provide newcomers tools to help them integrate into their communities and obtain equal opportunities (housing, social support, employment, English language education, etc.).
- Ensure all communities welcome newcomers correctly and appropriately.
- Implement inclusive practices (gender-neutral bathrooms, multiple languages on signs/instructions, etc.).
- Increase access to services and security in rural areas.
- Add bursaries and resources to balance opportunities for youth of all backgrounds.
- Implement policies for accessibility installation and upkeep.
- Promote national and international exchanges.
- Find ways to increase exposure to, and acceptance of other cultures through education in order to decrease stereotypes.

There is a growing debate about the impact of technology on social networks. Some argue that the Internet and other technologies are bringing the world



closer together and creating communities that otherwise couldn't exist. Others argue that these platforms are leading to greater social isolation, and contributing to rising mental health issues, particularly among young people. Recognizing that there is probably truth to both of those statements, what actions can we take to optimize the positive impacts of these technologies, and minimize the most negative ones?

- Increase accessibility to youth discussions and information (live stream forums, more events, etc.).
- Speak up in situations where social media acts as a medium for discrimination and negative activities.
- Teach youth how to distinguish between authentic and false information on the internet to avoid spreading misinformation on social media/Internet.
- Teach rules for posting on social media (what not to post on social media, personal information protection, etc.).

What youth can do:

"So we're given all these opportunities to learn about each other and make each other part of our own culture of being Canadian."

"It's all in how you use it [technology], just like if you use it to create new opportunities for yourself and for others, you're using it to your benefit."

"We're able to educate ourselves about all the different things that are happening. Our parents can no longer keep us from knowing things they don't want us to know. We can now take the initiative to form our own opinions."

"Don't stand for the negative. You don't have to lead the conversation necessarily, but at least if someone says something wrong, don't stand for it, don't laugh. Correct them!"

What ideas or examples do you have from your school or community to inspire a more inclusive society?

- Participate in national and international exchanges.
- Speak up against negative social media usage.
- Use social media to share knowledge and communicate with others in order to learn more about their culture.
- Correct wrong information and discrimination.
- Lead open conversations with people from other backgrounds; be curious.
- Speak up for those who do not have a voice.



"WE CAN NOW TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO FORM OUR OWN OPINIONS"



Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21
Musée canadien de l'immigration du Quai 21

A world of stories

- National historic site
- Genealogical research
- Canada's newest national museum





THE HALIFAX FORUM REALLY INSPIRED AND MOTIVATED ME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN MY COMMUNITY AND IN CANADA.



The Halifax Regional Youth Forum was an unforgettable and life-changing experience for me. It was incredibly rewarding to be able to meet other young people from across Canada. On top of learning more about their corner of the country and their unique point of view on the issues that affect us, I also had an opportunity to practice my second language, English. I was fortunate to go on many fun and inspiring tours that allowed me to visit and explore much of Nova Scotia; I also learned a great deal about the week's theme: Immigration and Diversity. The Youth Forum was an opportunity to discuss and debate these important topics. I left the experience with a fresh perspective and knowledge that will serve me well for the rest of my life. Thank you to Experiences Canada as well as to its employees, volunteers and valued sponsors for making this experience possible!

- JONATHAN SAVARD,
MAGOG, QC

My trip to the Halifax for the Youth Forum on Immigration and Diversity was an incredible experience. What made it so special were the many "firsts" for me. It was my first time on a plane, first trip with people I didn't know and first time travelling to the Maritimes. When I received the email inviting me to the forum to Halifax, I was nervous thinking about all this, but I knew it would be a great experience... and it truly was.

What really stood out to me during the week was how easy it was to talk to everyone. It started with a name game at the airport with a small group of us. I remember having such a hard time remembering the names of about 10 people, but a few stuck with me, like Kangaroo Kailyn, Narwhal Neil and Jaguar John. By the end of the week, I knew everyone's names. I was able to talk to everyone and get to know everyone, whether it was just quick question during a scavenger hunt, a conversation while walking to the dining hall, or a game during our long bus rides. It just really amazed me how easy it was to talk, laugh and just strike up a conversation with someone.

An important aspect of the week was discussing the challenges facing our

generation in Canada, specifically when it comes to immigration and diversity. Listening and discussing issues about immigration and diversity during the Halifax forum really inspired and motivated me to make a difference in my community and in Canada. During the breakout sessions, I learned about the diversity in schools other than in my city. We discussed with some other students from Halifax some of the barriers for international students, French and English students, and students with mental and physical disabilities. I am glad I got to have those discussions because it has given me a better picture and idea of the diversity in Canada.

I am so thankful that I got to be part of one of the Experiences Canada Youth Forums. I got to meet so many inspiring individuals who are making a difference in Canada. We have made so many memories together and I will think of all of you whenever I see a platypus or dandelions. A huge thank you to all the amazingly cool youth ambassadors and to all the staff who put this trip together. Waiting for the 175 reunion!

- ANNIE JIANG,
WINNIPEG, MB



WINNIPEG YOUTH FORUM

ON HUMAN RIGHTS



"IT'S TOUGH TO SAY THAT WHAT MY ANCESTORS DID WAS WRONG BUT IT'S SOMETHING WE NEED TO DO."

Travelling youth stayed with host twins and families from three Winnipeg schools: Sisler High School, the University of Winnipeg Collegiate and Collège Louis Riel. Youth were welcomed to Treaty One territory at Thunderbird House with a series of workshops on reconciliation and a traditional Indigenous supper. Walking tours of the Forks Market, Louis Riel's gravesite and Saint Boniface Museum taught them about Métis history and culture. Youth also spent two full days learning first-hand about the impact of poverty and homelessness. They volunteered with community agencies, Habitat for Humanity, Winnipeg Harvest and Siloam Mission, and toured Resource Assistance for Youth service locations, which provide support to homeless children and youth.

Finally, outdoor activities at Riding Mountain National Park, an overnight stay at Camp Wannakumbac rounded out their stay.

On May 25, 2017, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy P.C., C.C., O.M., Canada's former minister of

Foreign Affairs and former president of the University of Winnipeg, addressed the Youth Forum on Human Rights at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg. He spoke about his role model, former Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, and of the fundamental values that drove Pearson to lay the framework for guaranteed basic protection. He addressed the need to strive for human security rather than national security, including the need to protect individual differences.

A panel discussion followed about the importance of seeking out opportunities, of listening to others' stories, and of building a network around your passions. The panel was led by human rights lawyer and activist, Senator Marilou McPhedran with Ahsan Syed, Canada Youth Delegate to the 71st Assembly of the United Nations; Derek Juno, vice president of Business Development for Mealshare; and Sadia Rafiquddin, a freelance human rights journalist.



CHALLENGES & ISSUES

"Violence should not be used from a higher power to a lower one, for example there is an imbalance in power when a correctional system carries out the death penalty on an inmate. Violence between the powerful and the powerless is wrong."

For the third year in a row, Human Rights Watch's 2017 Report on Canada identifies the unresolved cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women, and the living conditions of Indigenous Peoples as the top two human rights challenges in our country. The report also identifies a broad range of significant issues affecting Indigenous Peoples, including policing practices, and access to safe drinking water, housing, healthcare, and education—particularly among those living on reserves and in remote communities.

- Discrimination towards Indigenous Peoples (i.e. less job opportunities).
- Unequal access to services such as emergency services and clean water on reserves and in remote/rural areas.
- Lack of education about Indigenous culture, values and realities.
- Poor management of funds by non-profit organizations and reserves.
- Little access to authentic and, culturally sensitive information pertaining to Indigenous Peoples—especially in schools.
- Irregular human rights practices both within Canada (i.e. treatment of Indigenous Peoples) and internationally (i.e. non-profit organizations, military intervention, etc.).

- Balance/reconciliation of human rights and cultural values (i.e. distinguishing between practices that infringe on religious values versus human rights violations, or both).
- Poor, or lack of housing for Indigenous youth.
- Poor healthcare systems on reserves and in remote/rural areas.
- Limited access to higher education on reserves and in remote/rural areas.
- Intergenerational trauma caused by residential schools (i.e. no proper reconciliation nor acknowledgement).
- Poor communication between Canadian citizens and the nation's representatives with regards to global issues and actions being done to resolve them.

What do you find most difficult about this situation? What needs to be done as we move forward? Do you think governments are putting adequate resources toward the proper priority areas to address these injustices?

- Provide resources in reserves/removed areas (water access, basic necessities, etc.).
- Make public the records pertaining to funds used by the government to respond to Indigenous Peoples' needs.
- Increase Indigenous representation within government in order to reflect their realities.
- Increase funding to schools (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous).

Suggestions on what the government, corporations and schools can do:

"The more minds we have working together to solve issues, the quicker they will be solved."

"It can't be an 'us vs them' mentality anymore in the world (too connected) it should just be an 'us'—referring to human beings all over the world."

"Indigenous youth—I think we should ask them what they think, what they would like, what they think would be good for them to build on. If anyone knows what they need, it's them."

"As an English person in Canada, it is very difficult for me to acknowledge that my ancestors did these terrible things, or at least that they were complacent about it... it is difficult for me to come to terms with that. I think that's why this education has been stalled until now. It's tough to say that what my ancestors did was wrong, but it's something we need to do. And I think that putting more information in the education system is a really good plan."

"Yes, it is the government's responsibility, but the government is of the people."

"My idea was the fact that when human rights were being established, they were thought to be universal so that all cultures would be able to adopt them. Although there are different cultures and there are extremes, I feel that the specific reason for human rights is to create a fair and equal society, and I feel that that is what every country in the world should strive to be."

Can human rights be universal in a world with so many different identities, cultures and traditions? Does Canada have an exceptional role to play in modeling the balance between cultural diversity and universal rights? What unique contributions does Canada have to offer in making the world more secure and more sustainable?

- Encourage open-mindedness in other countries, in part by being a role model.
- Fund charitable organizations
- Inform Canadians of global issues and things being done to counter them.
- Incorporate [trustworthy] information on marginalized groups into school curricula.
- Fix human rights practices/violations in Canadian organizations working abroad.
- Create a global refugee system.

- Provide opportunities for and inform youth of opportunities to be educated outside of schools (hands-on experiences).

In an increasingly global world, what are our international human rights responsibilities? Where do we draw the line in setting out the boundaries for being responsible for others? What is an appropriate role for Canada as a defender and protector of international laws and human rights? Can we afford it? Can we afford not to?

- International collaboration and mediation with non-human rights conforming countries.
- Canada taking responsibility for breaches to human rights while on international territories.
- Continue to provide peacekeeping internationally.
- We should be willing to undertake interventions [by force] in cases of human rights violations when all else fails.
- Lead by example for human rights practices on the international scene.

What youth can do:

"We should be focusing on youth because they're the ones who are going to make the biggest difference."

"People say that our generation has a big load and lots of pressure to make right the wrongs in the world. I think this can be turned into fuel. You think we can do all this stuff? Well, let's try. I think it's exciting."

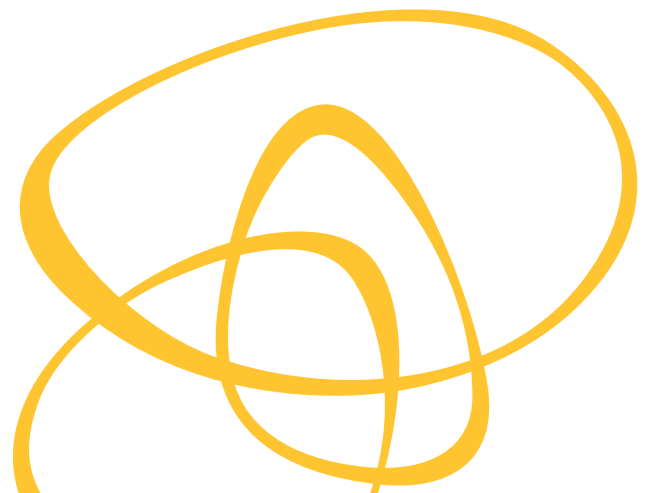
"I think that as a person, if someone wants to change themselves it is to help others change—the more you help other people, the more you realize what values you want in yourself. This is one way that Canada can help create a better place for others."



What can you do either as an individual or within your community to support human rights and advocate against injustices in another country?

- Educate friends and family (young and old).
- Seek out tools to take action in their community.
- Write letters and reach out to elected officials.
- Find opportunities for growth (i.e. exchanges, forums, volunteering, etc.).
- Protect/preserve all cultures present in Canada and learn about these cultures.
- Interact with others in order to learn about their culture (small acts of kindness, approach a stranger, etc.).
- Self-educate through social media and research.
- Spread [trustworthy] information through social media and information websites.
- Educate other youth on issues pertaining to your culture/share your knowledge with your peers.

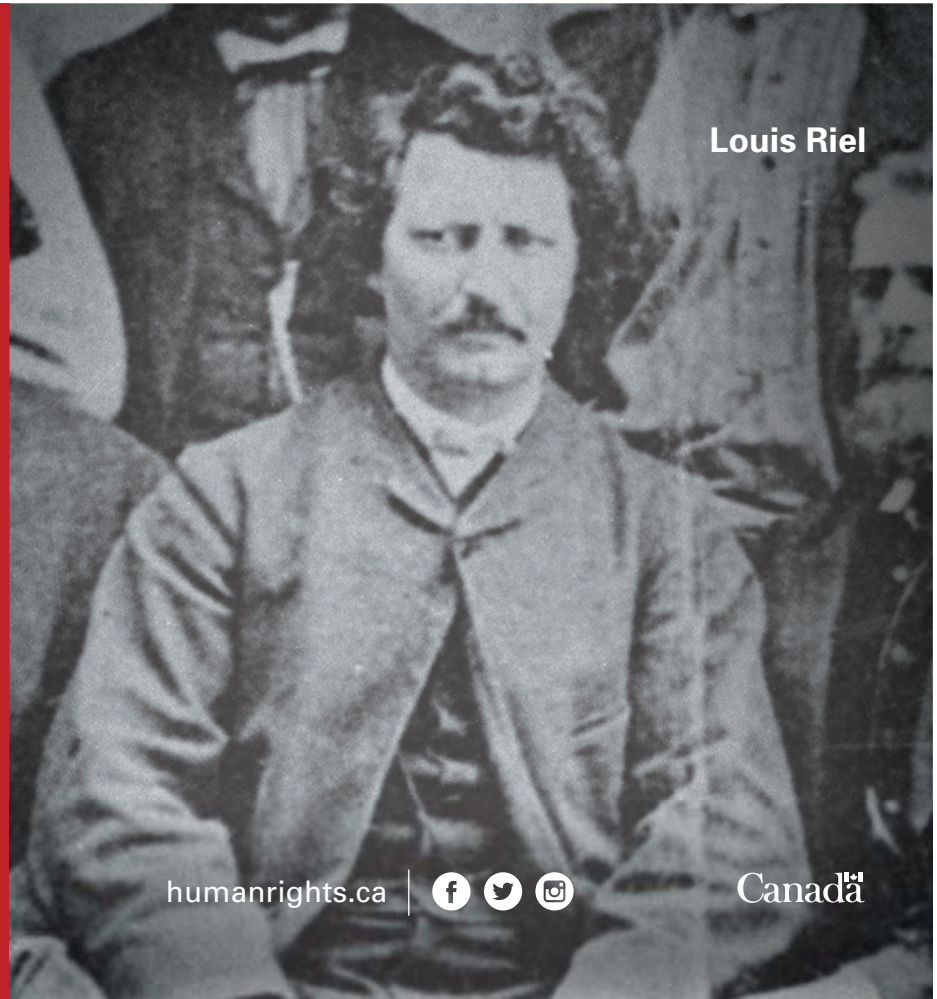
WE SHOULD BE
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From a new basketball court in Winkler, to a new mural on a heritage building in Hamiota, to sport programs for newcomer youth in Winnipeg, Manitoba projects supported by the Community Fund for Canada's 150th helped build community and foster a greater sense of belonging **For Good. Forever.**

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I WILL FOREVER
TREASURE
THIS AMAZING
EXPERIENCE FOR
REMEMBRANCE
WITH ALL THE
FRIENDS WE
HAVE MADE
THROUGHOUT THIS
WEEK



One day in my Grade 11 history class, my teacher, Ms. Orysya Petryshyn, who leads the WE Organization group, shared with us that my school, Sisler High School, was the only school in Winnipeg School Division to become an official host school. The other two host schools in Manitoba were Collège Louis-Riel and University of Winnipeg Collegiate. Winnipeg was one of the regional forum host cities along with the other three: Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax. One thing we were asked to do was share Canada's challenges throughout history. There were so many creations from many students across this country such as dance, posters, writing pieces and singing. When forum week came, I hosted a female student named Abby Contreras, from Surrey, BC—who is the perfect person to host. During the week, we went to the Forks and St. Boniface Museum. We also did an overnight stay at Camp Wannakumbac in Clear Lake, MB. The next day, we went to Riding Mountain National Park and Assiniboine Zoo, where I had been before. We also did some volunteer work at Habitat for Humanity, Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY), Siloam Mission, and Winnipeg Harvest. During the forum, our main topic was human rights. In groups, we learned about how we can consider the challenges of our topic (for example, residential schools, missing and murdered Indigenous women, inequities, discrimination, and racism to every culture, including Indigenous Peoples).

- EIKO VIDAL,
WINNIPEG, MB

CANADA 150&ME

Travel, learning, adventures and friendships

When I first heard about this program I had no idea I would be selected to take part in something so incredible. As someone who loves adventures, I couldn't wait to travel to Winnipeg. From the seven hour long journey to all the rainy days in Winnipeg, I wouldn't change anything about my time there. Although I celebrated my 17th birthday away from home, I felt like I was with a second family. I'll never forget waking up at five a.m. to go watch the sunrise or getting lost at the Zoo while trying to find Asia. I really appreciate everything that my host family did for me, especially when I injured my toe playing soccer. I would love to visit Winnipeg again and explore more of the city. It was sad to say goodbye to everyone and to end my adventure with Experiences Canada. Later in June, I found out that my adventures are far from over as I got the opportunity to travel to Ottawa. I was so excited to see familiar faces and make new friends. When I arrived in Ottawa, it was all hugs and hellos. I really connected with some people on the very first day. From going to the Governor General Performing Arts Awards, visiting museums, dancing in the rain on Canada Day and performing in front of thousands of people, everything was unforgettable. The Carlton common rooms will always have a special place in my heart, because that is where we played cards nonstop, where we ordered really bad bubble tea, where we checked in with our super cool ambassadors and where we stayed up all night because we wanted to spend as much time as we could together before saying goodbye to everyone in morning. It wasn't just adventures and exploring. We built real friendships with people from all across Canada. It was amazing to see what just 150 youth can do to make Canada and the world a better place. With youth ambassadors as crazy as we were and staff members who always took care of us, this experience really was one of a lifetime. Saying goodbye to everyone was one of the hardest things I've ever done. It was all tears and hugs at the airport. It's really true when people say time flies when you're having fun. Those 10 days went by so fast even though we accomplished so much together in that time. When I looked around the room at the closing brunch, I saw inventors, problem solvers, and world changers. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for all of us. Whatever it is, it is definitely going to make the next 150 years extraordinary.

- ISHINI HEWAPATHIRANA,
DARTMOUTH, NS

I travelled to Winnipeg for the forum on human rights in May. It was an awesome experience. I really had no idea what to expect. I had gone on a mission trip to the Dominican Republic a couple of years ago, but this was a totally different experience. We did a lot of cool stuff, including visits to St. Boniface museum, Louis Riel's Grave, The Forks Market, Circle of Life Thunderbird House, BDI with my host family, Riding Mountain National Park and Winnipeg Zoo. We also went to Camp Wan-nakumbac and woke up at five a.m. for the sunrise, and participated in activities at the Winnipeg Harvest and Resource Assistance for Youth (RAY).

One of the highlights of my week was the forum. My initial thoughts were that it might be boring, but at least it would only be one day. Boy was I wrong! It was an amazing experience. It was so wonderful to be in a room with so many other youth who want to learn and then share what we learned with others. I learned so much and the forum was a real eye opener. I loved being able to share ideas with other youth. We had several people who spoke about human rights and then we split up into several different groups.

In our break out groups, we talked about the plight of missing and murdered Indigenous women, and the living conditions of Indigenous peoples. We also talked about what we can do as individuals or within our communities to support human

rights and advocate against injustices in other countries. We discussed how we can educate ourselves, as well as our friends and family. Other ways we can advocate against human right injustices is to write letters to elected officials, interact with others to learn about their culture and to use social media to spread factual information.

During lunch, some of us had some more in depth discussions on human rights, which drew us closer together and made me want to get even more involved with human rights issues.

Too often as youth we think about ourselves and what we want instead of a bigger picture. At the forum, I realized that I want to have a say in what my world will be like as an adult. All youth should have, and want to have, a part in making this world a better place for everyone.

This forum raised my awareness of human right issues, and I plan to support human rights as well as advocate against injustices in Canada and around the world. It was a fantastic day. I learned a lot, grew personally, made new friends from across Canada and had a lot of fun. It was an awesome experience. It made me hope I would get selected to go to Ottawa so I could be a part of the presentations to the government. In the end, I did get selected, but that is another story for another day.

- JULIANA WILLEMSMA,
KINGSVILLE, ON







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JUNE 26

NATIONAL YOUTH FORUM

NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA, OTTAWA

"IT IS TODAY'S YOUTH WHO WILL GIVE LIFE TO RECONCILIATION. CLOSE THE GAPS. INVEST IN EDUCATION. REVITALIZING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND BREATHE LIFE INTO IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY."
- NATIONAL CHIEF PERRY BELLEGARDE

One hundred fifty youth between the ages of 14 and 19, selected from across Canada arrived in Ottawa, on June 24 for eight days of experiential learning, leadership development, and community engagement activities as part of Canada 150&Me.

During their time in Ottawa, participants attended the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards; volunteered at the Gloucester Community Garden, Gatineau Park and Ottawa 2017 Picnic on the Bridge; and visited Inspiration Village, Parliament Hill and our national museums. They had key roles to play in the Canada 150 celebrations, performing in the Canada Day noon hour show on Parliament Hill, and acting as National Gallery "teen docents for a day", talking to visitors about their favourite pieces on display in the Canadian Art collection.

However, their primary purpose in Ottawa was to represent the collective results and recommendations of an estimated 2,900 youth from across the country, who participated in a series of regional forums about the greatest challenges and opportunities for Canada's future.

Youth participants presented eight multi-media presentations—performances, poetry, videos, tableaus and images—to an audience that included His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, National Chief Perry Bellegarde, MP William Amos, historian Charlotte Gray, members of the Order of Canada, government officials, and business, political and community leaders. Youth repeatedly identified several distinct themes: true, real and immediate reconciliation with Indigenous communities and including Indigenous cultures in the educational system; accelerating Canada's commitment to carbon reduction, environmental technologies, renewable energy and sustainable development; addressing the impacts of technology and the rapid pace of change; better understanding mental health and suicide; fostering greater youth engagement; addressing inequalities in quality and opportunities of education in French and English across Canada; embracing social inclusion at the same time as celebrating diversity; and advocating for women's and LGBTQ+ rights.

In his remarks, the Governor General expressed feeling encouraged by the depth and breadth of the



issues raised by national participants. He was heartened by the scope, imagination, creativity, energy, appetite for change, and passion of youth as they challenge the status quo for a better Canada. He was optimistic about this new generation and where they will take us next with their dreams, and their ability to collaborate on our future!

National Chief Perry Bellegarde applauded the powerful messages delivered by youth participants about change locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. He clearly said that it is today's youth who will give life to reconciliation, close the gaps, invest in education, revitalize Indigenous languages, and breathe life into identity and diversity—diversity fosters strength and acceptance. Looking ahead to the next 150 years, Bellegarde reiterated highlights from youth presentations on the importance of the environment, water and clean air, and reminded us that we fit into the world by acknowledging Mother Earth, Father Sky, Grandmother Moon, and Grandfather Sun. Finally, he felt heartened that so much of what the youth presented reflected the Indigenous perspective of the world—a view from which he felt more of the world could benefit.

Will Amos, member of parliament for Pontiac, used his experience as an environmental lawyer and now as an MP as an example of the importance of making a difference in public life. When he spoke about our democratic institutions and processes, he suggested that becoming more aware and involved in the good work in parliamentary standing committees—a part of our legislative process that is often overlooked—is

one way to pave the path to change. He encouraged participants to run for office—locally, provincially or federally—and to take a closer look at standing committees as a way to understand the priorities of parliament and change government policies.

Acclaimed author and historian, Charlotte Gray, was the last speaker at the National Forum. She asked the question, "In a world where the future is uncertain, what role can history play to help us find our place?" She spoke about three lessons. First, she told the story of George Etienne Cartier, a rebel with les Patriotes in Québec in 1837, who would later become a Father of Confederation in 1867. From rebel outcast to founding Father of Confederation, Cartier never wavered from his commitment to support his culture and identity. He made sure that Canada would become a country built on compromise—a country where people keep talking, use negotiation to build a resilient country, and accommodate differences and pragmatism. Her second lesson was that Canada is built on a collective effort; it is not a place where one person gets all the glory, but rather a country that constantly reinvents itself. And although there are scars and dark chapters in our history, each generation's values have evolved to become a much more diverse and inclusive Canada than the previous one. Finally, she reminded the young audience to continue to be civil and well-informed in the future, and not to leave people behind. "Focus on what we have in common; we have the collective power to fix them and we need to keep changing in order to move forward."





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I have never been more proud to be Canadian. Let me just start off by saying that I STILL can't believe I was one of 150 youth from all over Canada—a country of 36 million people—chosen to attend this incredibly amazing event. There is literally no other conference that could ever compare to the Canada 150&Me National Youth Forum because the PEOPLE made it a once in a lifetime celebration that was truly one of a kind. Even the little things from sharing an early morning breakfast at Carleton University, to walking around in rainy Ottawa—every minute of every day was memorable and unforgettable. Everyone's spirit, enthusiasm, and energy were inspiring, and the volunteer activities, museum tours, and keynote speakers were enlightening. I know whenever I'm in need of some motivation, I can think back to this experience and be motivated to take on the world's many challenges and aim for the goals that seem unachievable.

Parting ways was one of the hardest things I've had to do in my life so far, but I wouldn't have changed a thing. As much as I want to have a little more

time to connect with even more individuals on a more personal level, it was perfect just the way it was. To the sponsors; thank you for giving us priceless memories and one of my life's greatest treasures. To Experiences Canada; thank you for making me fall in love with my country in a million more ways than I already have. To the youth ambassadors; thank you for encouraging meaningful conversations about important topics and for being such inspirational human beings. And to my fellow youth delegates; thank you for challenging me to think differently and making it possible for me to say that I have life long friendships from coast to coast!

I know in 50 years for Canada's 200th birthday we will be proud of what we've done as a nation, and not regretting what we could've done because Canada is in extraordinary hands. Thank you is simply not enough, but for now, until I can repay my thankfulness in my future endeavours, thank you is all that I can say.

**- ELAINE LI,
MISSISSAUGA ON**

TWO EXTRAORDINARY TRIPS

Some people call the Îles-de-la-Madeleine the “*The pearl of Quebec*.” So what could be more extraordinary to a young 15-year-old islander than not just one, but two trips!

The most important things I learned are hard to express in words. As soon as I arrived in Ottawa, I wanted to leave. But by the end of the trip, I longed to stay. I never thought I would have so much fun. During that week I learned so much, met so many people and experienced so many wonderful things. I even dared to speak in front of everyone... in English! Needless to say, I'm thrilled that my English improved so much. Seeing all that progress is motivating me to continue.

I learned that being open minded is necessary not only for society to advance, but also for each and every one of us to grow as individuals. Meeting all these young people from across Canada has really broadened my horizons. I now see what I have been missing out on by staying in my shell. Even though I'm a girl who has always hid behind her book or music, I now have more confidence in myself and I am ready to reach out to others. I would like to take concrete steps to make a difference; thanks to everyone I met, I have found the strength to do that. I'm able to say that I spent time with wonderful people of all cultures, nationalities, temperaments and personalities... I've come to realize that, united and together, we are much stronger. Breaking a single thread is easy, but many intertwining threads are almost impossible to break.

My grandmother asked me: “How can you understand human rights when you're only 15?” For her, it's all about experience. But for me, it's all about awareness. Before, I never really cared about the rights of minorities, particularly those of Native people. Although there are no First Nations in my community, I discovered that, according to oral history, when Acadian settlers first arrived on the archipelago around 1760, Native people



already had a seasonal presence.* I realized that even today, in 2017, we continue to push them aside. I was struck by the fact that such things are happening in Canada, and now I want to learn more about it.

These two trips will have and already are having a positive impact on my life. Without the benefit of hindsight, however, I cannot tell you to exactly what degree. I'll just have to write another text when I'm 50.

**- MAGALIE FOURNIER,
BASSIN, ILES-DE-LA-MADELEINE, QC**

*(Histoire des Îles-de-la-Madeleine [History of the Îles de la Madeleine], Jean-Charles Fortin and Paul Larocque, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2003, p. 60).

I'VE COME TO
REALIZE THAT.
**UNITED AND
TOGETHER.**
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STRONGER.

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Lawren S. Harris North Shore, Baffin Island II, c. 1931 Oil on canvas, 104.3 x 127.2 cm, NGC, Ottawa Gift of the artist, Vancouver, 1960. Photo © NGC

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"Spectacular. Life-changing. Impactful. If someone asked me to describe my Canada 150&Me experience in three words, those are the ones I would choose. My name is Zuhayr Abbas, and I was one of the 150 participants that attended the national forum in Ottawa from June 24 to July 3, 2017.

To get to Ottawa, I had to submit an online entry that discussed how our nation can progress and improve over the next 150 years. I also attended the Immigration and Diversity forum online. At the time, I wished that I was actually interacting with my peers in person, and engaging in some thought-provoking discussions with them. I remember thinking, "Oh well, at least I was given the opportunity to attend online. Chapter closed." Or was it really?

One day, I came home from school, checked my email, and was ABSOLUTELY thrilled to receive my acceptance letter to attend the National Forum in Ottawa. Wow, life never fails to surprise you, eh?

Little did I know about the immensely fantastic journey I was about to embark upon when I boarded the Via Rail train to Ottawa from Toronto. This experience was in all ways completely unparalleled.

The people I met at the event were so humble, intelligent, kind and compassionate. We worked hard, but we also had fun together. Within 36 hours, we created thought-provoking presentations for the Governor General of Canada. Pretty awesome to think about, if you ask me.

Every day we had something unique to do. We visited the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of History and the Canadian Museum of Nature, toured downtown and attended the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards as keynote guests (to name just a few of our excursions).

However, by far the best experience was—yes, you guessed it,—Canada Day. Wow! What an incred-

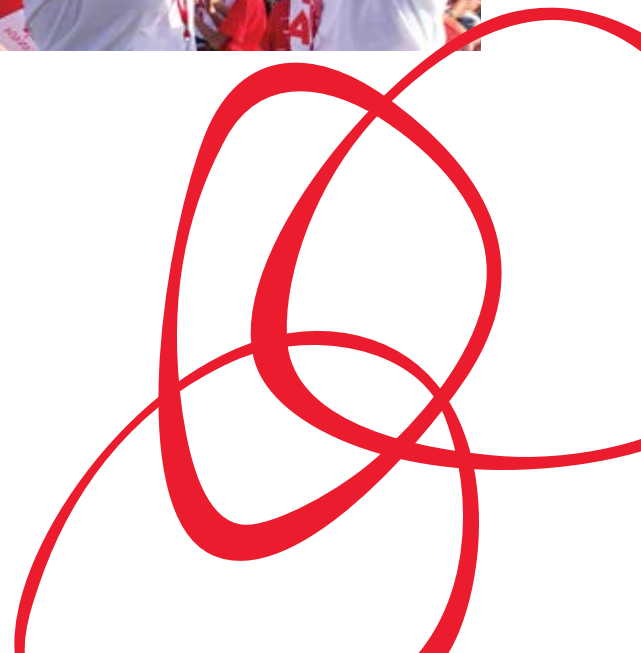


ible 24 hours those were! We managed to have the time of our lives on a wet and muddy Parliament Hill. Instead of going home early, we embraced the weather and the mud (both literally and metaphorically)! I have some pretty amazing (and unforgettable) memories from that day.

The youth ambassadors were fantastic. They were so relatable and accessible! They did their best to help make the whole experience—particularly Canada Day—as safe and enjoyable for us as possible. So, kudos to them! Great job, guys!

Finally, I would like to thank Experiences Canada for giving me this incredible opportunity to interact with some of the most talented youth from our country. The sponsors—that funded the entirety of this trip—were very generous, and because of them, Experiences Canada's staff, the youth ambassadors, and most importantly the 150 youth, I can easily say that these were the best nine days of my life!"

**- ZUHAYR-HUSSAIN ABBAS,
MAPLE ON**







CANADA'S
150TH BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATION WAS
AN EXPERIENCE
TO REMEMBER
AND A MEMORY
TO SHARE!

Canada's 150th birthday celebration was an experience to remember and a memory to share! Everyday during this week was unforgettable, but Canada Day in particular, was unbelievably wild for us with the rain, mud, dancing, singing and mud sliding. Coming to Ottawa and celebrating Canada's birthday was like having a dream come true. Also when I found out that all 150 of us would be performing on Canada Day on Parliament Hill, I was both excited and curious as to what we were going to do. The first day of rehearsal at the school gym, we met Marie Mai, the French singer, with whom we were going to perform. At the end of the session, everyone started to take pictures with her—and I did as well. Even though at first I didn't know who she was, I eventually found out that she is a French singer. I don't know French that well, but the song Marie Mai sang on Canada Day was so good that I don't have words to describe it! As July 1 drew closer, I became a little nervous—not about performing on stage, but because I did not want my flag to go in the wrong direction during the

show. Everything went well in the end, and my family even got to see me on TV, performing on stage at Parliament Hill. This day will always be a day to remember for me! Just looking at the pictures and videos of Canada Day, brings back the excitement and good times. Now I can definitely say that it was worth getting wet in the rain, getting mud all over me, and ruining my new shoes! Lastly, I wanted to thank Experiences Canada 150&Me for giving me this wonderful opportunity to go to Ottawa and explore my country in a different way. It was truly an honour to be selected as one of 150 youth across Canada to represent Canada 150 in Ottawa. Not just Canada Day, but everyday in this trip gave me the opportunity to start choosing different paths and journeys for the future. If there was any day that I would want to relive, it would be Canada's 150th birthday. This was truly outstanding experience!

- HARJOT KULAR,
SURREY, BC



ALWAYS
REMEMBER TO
BE BOLD AND
BE BRAVE. LET
YOUR VOICE
BE HEARD AND
FOLLOW YOUR
PASSIONS.

It was 8:30 a.m. when my plane departed from Vancouver, BC. Thousands of emotions swirled in my mind and I could not even imagine what to expect from this opportunity that knocked on my doorstep. Surrounded by a cloud of curiosity, I knew that someday I would reflect on this moment and say that I had made the right decision to go on this adventure of a lifetime. Once my plane arrived in Ottawa, I quickly grabbed my luggage and made my way with the rest of the Canada150&Me youth participants to enjoy by far one of the most unforgettable weeks of my life.

From kicking the week off with the performances in front of His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada about the challenges we, as youth, feel Canada is facing, to hearing all the inspiring speakers at the national forum, and getting an exclusive preview of the Canada Hall at the Canadian Museum of History, was truly a dive into what has played a role to shape the Canada we see today and in the future. It was such an honour and privilege to have conversations with parliamentarians during the forum reception, attend the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards, and perform on the same stage as our prime minister and several renowned artists I am proud to call Canada my home.

Every moment of my stay in Ottawa will always hold a special place in my heart. It was truly a fun-filled experience—from running to get soft-served ice cream, to swimming, shopping, and relaxing in the lounges. Visiting the Aga Khan Foundation and getting hands-on farming experience, along with volunteering on the bridge also sparked my interest as I was

able to give a little back to the world while enjoying myself at the same time.

Another memorable activity was hiking in Gatineau Park, which was only possible with all the layers of bug repellent (although I guess there was always the alternative of becoming friends with the mosquitos). Without a doubt, I have never had so much fun on public transit, which included bus karaoke, photo shoots and escapes from Ottawa's bipolar weather. Even more fun was had as we searched for ponchos, ate baguettes, and waited in long lines to get BeaverTails.

No words can express how thankful I am to the dedication and the efforts of the incredible youth ambassadors, and Deborah, Tom, Karine, Erin and Experiences Canada for making this a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I look forward to future events and opportunities.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO ALL THE PARTICIPANTS:

Whether I had a conversation with you once or multiple times, I will cherish the moments I have spent with everyone and hope that someday our roads will cross and we shall meet again. Although every one of us parted with a heavy heart, we must not forget the times we spent together, the moments we shared, the knowledge we obtained, and most importantly the things we have learned from each other and everyone we met.

Always remember to be bold and be brave, let your voice be heard and follow your passions. Every single one of you is a leader who has the potential to go out there and make a difference.

**- PARVIN MALHI,
SURREY, BC**

To celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary, youth from across our nation were given the opportunity to submit a project of our choice in response to the following question: "What is Canada's greatest challenge or opportunity facing your generation?" I am a 16-year-old Ontarian student, my project was selected and I won a trip to Vancouver, BC. From the moment I received the email from Canada 150&Me, I had embarked on an incredible journey.

Upon arrival, staff and youth were eager to interact with one another and build conversations. We would discuss a myriad of topics—from sociological issues, to our daily lives—our discussions were enlightening. It was inspiring to listen to people share their visions and ambitions for Canada's future.

Coming from Ottawa, we don't have the luxury of gazing upon BC's majestic mountains every day. Despite the many times I have travelled to Vancouver, its natural beauty never ceases to fascinate me. As a nature lover, riding the Gondola and snowshoeing in Squamish were my favourite activities—nothing beats a cloudless day on top of mountains with friends.

Although a week of living together made it easy to build lifetime friendships, it made parting more difficult. However, nothing has stopped us from keeping in touch with one another. Even to this day I send my close group of friends pictures and texts to make sure they'll never miss a special moment in my life.

Being part of Canada's 150&Me project was a phenomenal experience. The leaders, organizers, staff and youth were all such important factors in making the week a memorable one. One day, I hope and plan to work alongside all these incredible individuals in order to shape Canada into an even greater nation.

**- EUNICE YONG,
KANATA, ON**



IT WAS INSPIRING
TO LISTEN TO
PEOPLE SHARE
THEIR VISIONS
AND AMBITIONS
FOR CANADA'S
FUTURE.





PARENT TESTIMONIALS

As I spend my last day with my student Amalie from New Brunswick I can't help but reflect on our week. She has definitely stolen a piece of my heart and I am having a hard time letting her go. She is like one of my own now and I wanted to thank you for this amazing opportunity and allowing her to share in our life. She hasn't been used to an Indian family and she was placed in a loud, fun loving Indian family and got to enjoy our culture and food. We to go out for Indian food and I think it was a great opportunity for her to see Vancouver and to see how we live. She was an incredible gift to us during this week and we are all going to miss her tremendously. I just wanted to say thank you for this wonderful opportunity. I was very nervous at the beginning but the minute she came into our house I knew she was going to fit in perfectly and she did. i've already shed a few tears and I know i will shed a few more tomorrow morning as I say my final goodbye. I just wanted to thank you and your team for organizing this. I know the girls will have memories that they will remember fondly years and years to come so thank you very very much for this and I know we will stay in touch with our Amalie. Thank you again. It was a blessing taking in such a sweetheart who will be greatly missed by all of us.

SURB ATWAL
SURREY, BC

Dear Experiences Canada,

On behalf of my daughter, I would like to thank you so much for including her on the Ottawa trip.

She has learned so much. Every day was action packed with activities and events that will stay with her for a life time.

I was extremely worried about safety and accommodations and you took the time with great respect to involve and reassure me that all was covered as you replied to each and every email I sent to you.

I am so happy I allowed her to go and am pleased that her experience was a happy one. The moments she shared with the other participants have made her a better person on life's journey.

Thank you so much for all of your hard work in making this possible for our children.

You will be remembered and our gratitude will shine through our children and the beautiful experience you provided for them for many years to come.

Kind Regards,

JENNIFER MOUSSEAU
MOTHER OF JUSCENTA HALIGOWSKI
NATIONAL FORUM PARTICIPANT

AN ISSUE
LIKE CLIMATE
CHANGE KNOWS
NO POLITICAL
BORDERS.
ETHNICITY,
SEXUALITY, OR
SOCIOECONOMIC
STATUS...



CANADA 150 & ALL OF US

As a young adult who's passionate about tackling issues that extend much beyond myself as an individual, it can become easy to feel at times as if I'm alone in my outlook and understanding of the world. Conversations among people my age often tend to revolve around gossip, celebrity drama, or the latest products and trends. Coupled with mainstream media's representations of youth as being apathetic, lazy, and interested in nothing more than partying, I can't help but wonder sometimes if I'm different in a bad way.

Canada 150&Me changed that. Whenever someone asks me what the best part of the entire experience was—from spending a week in Vancouver for the Regional Forum on the Environment, to the National Youth Forum in Ottawa during Canada Day celebrations—I don't reply with the name of a building or a tourist attraction. It always was, and always will be the conversations and memories I was fortunate enough to create with the other youth involved in the program.

It was priceless to have the opportunity, both Vancouver and Ottawa, to sit down with youth from across the country and hear about their experiences and opinions. We tend to adopt such a microscopic view on the issues that affect us, when in reality, these breakout discussions and presentations demonstrated that the greatest

challenges and opportunities of our generation extend much beyond our communities. An issue like climate change knows no political borders, ethnicity, sexuality, or socioeconomic status—it only makes sense to tackle it with the same mentality of overlooking our differences, and working together towards creating a solution.

It was refreshing to see and hear this understanding that collaboration is important from the other incredible youth that I had the opportunity to meet through Canada 150&Me. When it came to brainstorming solutions for the issues that Canada faces as a country, everyone understood that by helping others, we end up helping ourselves. There was no "us vs. them" mentality; at the end of the day, we are all Canadians, looking to make the country that we live in the best that we possibly can.

I'd like to end with a piece of advice. If you have an idea for a project, an invention, or an event that will make the world a better place—whatever it may be, act on it. As a young adult, don't let your age be your weakness. Let it be your strength, and use it to inspire others, so that the journey to helping other people is a little less lonely, and infinitely more fulfilling.

**- PRACHIR PASRICHA,
MISSISSAUGA, ON**



WE ASKED YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK ABOUT THE PROJECT—

AND YOU PROVIDED IT!



Experiences Canada values the feedback of its participants, and so we invited participants in both the regional forums and the national forum in Ottawa to tell us about their experience through an online survey.

REGIONAL FORUM PARTICIPANTS

Forty per cent of our regional forum participants replied to our survey, with a relatively even distribution of respondents from each of the four locations: Vancouver, Montreal, Halifax and Winnipeg. Nearly all of the respondents participated onsite—with only 1.5 per cent of respondents participating online.

By far, the best part of the forum experience was the opportunity for youth to talk amongst themselves with 40 per cent ranking the break-out sessions their favorite part of the day and over 80 per cent saying they were personally involved in networking and talking with other youth. Our keynote speakers also received high marks from respondents with 31 per cent of them indicating that the keynote speakers were the highlight of the day.

Seventy-nine per cent of participants rated the forum “very interesting” or “extremely interesting” and 82 per cent felt the overall experience at the Youth Forum was “very good” or “excellent.”

Indeed, the only area where participants thought we could have done better was to provide more opportunities on Forum Day for youth to speak with each other, and to share their ideas. We will definitely take that to heart for future forums!

HERE ARE A FEW MORE COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEY:

- In order to get the full potential from all youth, I would strongly recommend factor-

ing another 20 minutes to half hour for our discussion groups! And another suggesting is to consider selecting a process with all youth ambassadors on which order to go around the room instead of having an ambassador choose who they wish!

- I got to learn more about Canada and the people in it in that one week at Montreal than I ever had before!
- It was amazing being able to challenge myself to speak out. I also greatly appreciated being able to converse with the youth leaders, as each one had such incredible life advice to offer. Furthermore, I am grateful to have been able to meet students from across the country and hear different advice on how to run events, and how to make a difference. This experience has greatly benefit me in many ways, as I can apply what I've learned to my vice-president position on student council, and also use what I learned during the team building exercises in the future.
- It was an incredible experience in Winnipeg. I liked that our breakout session questions came from the top two human rights concerns in Canada. Our discussions were eye-opening towards Indigenous rights in particular.
- The forum was a priceless opportunity for youth from across the country to come together to discuss issues facing our generation... it was clear that different environmental issues face different Canadian youth, and that a collaborative effort is essential to establishing policies and laws that will benefit the entire country.
- I am so grateful for this experience. For the people I met, for the beauty I saw, and the stories I heard. This experience has given me hope for Canada's future. The youth of this country are not the future, we are the present, and I think that I became aware of that in the past weeks. I will never forget this time.

40%

RANKED BREAK OUT SESSIONS THEIR FAVOURITE PART

31%

SAID KEYNOTE SPEAKERS WERE THE HIGHLIGHT

79%

RATED FORUM VERY OR EXTREMELY INTERESTING

82%

FELT OVERALL EXPERIENCE WAS VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT



NATIONAL FORUM PARTICIPANTS

One hundred and eight people, 72 per cent of all National Youth Forum participants in Ottawa, responded to this more detailed survey. We wanted to know what they thought about scheduled activities, facilities and staffing, highlights and top experiences. The comments and scores they shared will help us shape future programming at Experiences Canada.

Participants felt that their week in Ottawa was a resounding success—it was an excellent opportunity to meet new friends, discuss relevant and timely topics and explore the nation's capital. Eighty-one per cent gave an overall ranking of 10/10 or 9/10 and said that there should be more programs like this one!

The Governor General's Awards for the Performing Arts, the National Youth Forum Day and Canada Day (in spite of the weather) ranked highest on the list of activities. On the other hand, we were all disappointed that the Picnic on Bridge was rained out and left us looking for something to do. We also heard that participants would have liked more time! More time to discuss current affairs, receive a proper tour of the parliament buildings, spend more time with members of parliament and senators, and explore all the sites in the National Capital Region. (Finding time to squeeze everything in will always pose a challenge, but we'll keep working on it!)

Almost all participants acknowledged that the project changed their views about Canada. Sixty-two per cent of respondents felt that their

understanding of Canadian politics and public policy improved greatly while another 30 per cent said their understanding improved slightly. Eighty-seven per cent said their knowledge of Canada more generally changed, and 80 per cent indicated their attachment to Canada also grew.

But the biggest impact of the project, according to youth was the inspiration to get more involved in public issues. Their desire to increase community involvement was the highest-rated project impact with a score of 9.2 out of 10! Since Canada 150&Me in Ottawa, 22.35 per cent of participants have become more involved in their school, group or community, 20 per cent have created a group and 46.88 per cent have volunteered with a local organization.

YOUR FAVOURITE THINGS!

- "My favourite part was getting to meet and listen to individuals from all over Canada. Everyone was involved in different things and was so passionate and dedicated. It taught me a lot more about Canada, but also about what I can do in my own community."
- "Meeting like-minded participants that care about issues facing Canada and the world."
- "Performing on stage and meeting all the new people."
- "The youth ambassadors! But every aspect of Canada 150&Me has been amazing. I thought that the excursions were extremely well chosen and fit the theme we were discussing."

81%
GAVE AN OVERALL
RATING OF 9/10
OR 10/10

87%
SAID THEIR
KNOWLEDGE OF
CANADA CHANGED

80%
INDICATED THEIR
ATTACHMENT TO
CANADA GREW

9.2/10
STUDENTS DESIRED
TO INCREASE
COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT

GUIDED HIKES | WORKSHOPS | WORKBEEES | AND SO MUCH MORE!

SEE THE PARK LIKE NEVER BEFORE!





ALUMNI/ NEXT STEPS

Experiences Canada is committed to supporting all of the youth who participated in the Canada 150&Me project. Throughout the spring and summer of 2017 we heard a lot of great ideas for community projects, and were truly inspired by the initiatives that so many young people are already leading or involved with in their communities.

During the National Forum in Ottawa, participants were encouraged to join a Facebook Alumni Page (search **Canada 150&Me Alumni**.) We've already noticed a lot of activity on the page—alumni sharing links to other projects, contests and scholarship funds you may not otherwise hear about; members discussing how to build on some of the great ideas from the forums (like how to talk to the mayor about starting up a youth council in your own community); and people helping each other with surveys and research projects. We've even seen the official launch of a new app created by some of our Canada 150&Me alumni! Check it out today!



We hope this space will always be there for you to reconnect, recharge, and gain new inspiration for remaining the passionate positive change advocates we've come to know you to be!

Experiences Canada is also interested in keeping in touch with you so we hope you will respond to the occasional surveys we send just to check in a get your thoughts on issues and ideas. Of course we are always happy to hear from you at any time so feel free to share your news via the Facebook page, or by email to us directly at info@experiencescanada.ca



FOREVER WITH ME: CANADA 150 & ME

Arriving in Ottawa was a whole new experience,
I was excited, afraid, amazed and curious!
There was not a person I knew,
Or anyone to talk to...

But immediately I felt that I was where I belonged.

Each one of us, I quickly learned, saw Canada through a different lens,
Yet we all quickly became the best of friends.
When we planned our national forum presentation,
I realized we all wanted one thing for our great nation—

A brighter, better future in which we corrected past injustices.

The environment, reconciliation, diversity and equality for all
Were just some of Canada's issues we thought were critical.
Through our presentations we displayed passion and ambition—
We didn't just want to be heard; we wanted to be part of the solution.

On that stage, we were incredible, unstoppable... the leaders of today and tomorrow.

During our stay, we also learned a great deal from each other
Like, that each community in Canada was a little different from another.
But our few differences made each one of us unique
But there was one unifying thing in our hearts, so to speak:

We all loved the country we shared and called home.

At Aga Khan we discovered Canada's role internationally,
And at the National Art Gallery I saw the importance of supporting Canadian
art and creativity.
The Governor General Performing Arts Awards left us in complete awe
Then we volunteered our time to support Gatineau Park and the picnic in Ottawa.

Lucky we were to be able to all these incredible things, a once in a lifetime experience!

For me the highlight was Canada's 150th Birthday...
It was my dream to experience Parliament Hill on that day!
From performing on stage, to mud-sliding in the rain,
To seeing the PM talk and Canada's greatest artists sing.

All of us—youth, ambassadors and Experiences Canada—were a family that night.

Who could've dreamed of such an opportunity?
To express our voices, meet people from across Canada and be part of
the 150 legacy.
Forever these memories will be a part of who we are,
Whether we become tradespeople, doctors, teachers, prime ministers or superstars.
But there is one thing Canada 150&Me showed us we would always be:
leaders with the power to impact the next 150.

WE DIDN'T
JUST WANT
TO BE HEARD:
WE WANTED
TO BE PART
OF THE
SOLUTION.

**BY LILA MANSOUR,
PRINCE GEORGE, BC**

We care about our community.

At WestJet, we're always looking for ways to enrich the lives of everyone in our world. We're passionate about giving back in the communities where we live and work.

As a proud partner of Experiences Canada, we're committed to helping youth explore our country, connect with others across Canada and start shaping the future of tomorrow.

CANADA 150

**Canada 150 proudly celebrates
the future of Canadian youth.**



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada 