



GUIDING CANADIAN TEENS THROUGH CANADA'S PAST

Elgin Girl Guides of Canada leader Pat Watson Wins Experiences Canada Award to be Presented at the Governor General's History Awards

(OTTAWA – Wednesday, January 16, 2019) Pat Watson, a geologist and group organizer for the Kingston, Ontario-based Girl Guides of Canada 1st Nova Scotia 2017 Independent Trip unit has been awarded the 2018 Experiences Canada Award, presented annually as part of the Governor General's History Awards administered by Canada's History Society.

In addition to the \$2500 travel credit she can use towards the registration costs for her next group exchange, Ms. Watson will travel to Ottawa to participate in the two-days of Governor General's History Awards events scheduled for January 27-28, 2019.

"Every year, Experiences Canada recognizes exemplary leaders from among the hundreds of volunteer organisers who work with us to provide these transformative educational experiences for young Canadians," said Deborah Morrison, President and CEO of Experiences Canada. "What stood out about Pat's programme was how she seamlessly connected ideas of community stewardship – both formal and informal, historic and in present day society."

This is Pat's second Girl Guides exchange with Experiences Canada. In collaboration with her twinned Girl Guide group in Nova Scotia, she built a very interesting itinerary that focused on a greater understanding and appreciation for Canada's history and heritage through visits to historic sites in Ottawa and Kingston, as well as learning about the natural heritage of the region through camping and canoeing activities. They visited key sites such as the Parliament buildings, the War Museum, and the Royal Canadian Mint, Queen's University, Fort Henry, Kingston Penitentiary, and Sir John A Macdonald's home. And, in keeping with Guiding traditions, they also participated in a community service project. The youth made colourful fleece capes for a local women's shelter so that the young children who might end up having to spend time there could have a toy to play with and something warm and soft to comfort them.

"I really don't understand how you can do an exchange program without talking about history and heritage," Pat Watson explained, "It is intrinsic in everything we experience of the world around us, from the ways people interact with one other, to the geology of the earth that underpins and informs the landscapes we live in. All you have to do is look at your surroundings with a different eye and imagine someone else being there for the first time. What would they see? How would they understand? That's how you make your heritage and history come alive and give these young Canadians an educational experience that will expand their horizons and resonate with them for the rest of their lives."

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“Pat Watson is a woman of dedication. For decades she has given her time and effort to the development of young girls in her community through Girl Guides of Canada, particularly working to keep opportunities alive for girls in rural Eastern Ontario. Her wealth of scientific and historical knowledge have provided exceptional experiences for girls from across Canada to learn about the culture and background of her region” says Megan McKeever, former Administrative Community Leader.

Experiences Canada is also pleased to recognize three honourable mentions for the 2018 Experiences Canada Award. Each honoree will receive a \$100 credit toward group registration fees for a future exchange.

Samara Worth, École Forest Grove School, SK

Samara Worth is a teacher at École Forest Grove School, in Saskatoon. She wrote her itinerary with the goal of creating an appreciation for Canada’s regional diversity and developing second language skills. The week was filled with interesting activities that were not only educational but engaging for youth. By travelling to Saskatoon, École des Pionniers learned about the local First Nations cultures at the Wanuskewin Heritage Park. They also learned the First Nations beliefs, traditional medicines, games and ended their visit by participating in a teepee raising. Another exciting activity for the school groups was a visit to the Moose Jaw Tunnels where they learned the struggles Chinese immigrants had to face when they established in Saskatchewan. Lastly, the groups learned about the history of the prairies by touring the Western Development Museum.

Krista Campbell, Horton High School, NS

Krista Campbell is a teacher at Horton High School in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. While planning the exchange, Krista wanted her activities to showcase a sense of Canadian pride as well as showcase the diversity of Canada. Once Fraser Lake Elementary Secondary School landed in Nova Scotia they started the exchange with a hike followed by a few team-building activities. On the second day, Krista took her twin group to see Pier 21 and to the local Circus school. After letting each youth spend a day with their host families, they saw the Body Worlds Exhibit at the Natural History Museum. Then, they drove to the famous Peggy’s Cove. The trip terminated at one of the UNESCO world heritage sites, Grand Pré. Krista was able to show the west coast what the east coast has to offer all while having fun.

Pier-Olivier Boily, Collège de Lévis, QC

Pier-Olivier Boily is a teacher at Collège de Lévis in Lévis, Quebec. Pier-Olivier’s primary goal was to showcase his twin group, Glenmary School from Peace River, Alberta, the Quebec culture. Even though Canada is a big country he wanted to show that there are many cultures within Canada. Upon their twin group’s arrival, the groups started their exchange by exploring the Vieux-Québec, the Parliament of Québec and, of course, the Carnaval de Québec. Each of those activities showcased the Quebec culture firsthand. Lastly, they finished the week sliding at Village Vacances Valcartier, eating some traditional food at a local sugar shack and admiring the Montmorency Falls. Not only was this exchange a great learning opportunity for both parties, the activities were well planned with the youth in mind.

About Experiences Canada

Experiences Canada is a national charitable organization that offers young Canadians ages 12-18 authentic, experiential learning opportunities to explore their country in ways they may never have imagined. With the financial support of Canadian Heritage, 5000 youth and their chaperones travel to another part of Canada through their reciprocal group travel and exchange program every year. Experiences Canada also offers individual travel opportunities for high school youth to develop their leadership skills, gain volunteer experience and deepen their civic engagement such as this year’s Youth

Leadership Forum on Diversity and Inclusion to be held June 29-July 6, 2019 in the Greater Toronto Area.

About the Governor General's History Awards

The Governor General's History Awards are administered by Canada's History Society and are the top honours in the field of history. In partnership with Canada's leading national history organizations, including the Canadian Historical Association, the Canadian Museums Association, Experiences Canada and Historica Canada, the awards recognize excellence in five categories: Community Programming, Museums, Popular Media, Scholarly Research, and Teaching.

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