

Don Davies, MP Takes Kingsway Students to Ottawa



(L-R: CYC 2015 Winners Harriet, Triana and Kira)

The 2015 submissions are in for Don Davies, MP's *Create Your Canada* contest, and three Vancouver Kingsway students are the lucky recipients of an all-expense paid trip to Ottawa to participate in Canada's Parliament.

Started by Davies in 2009, this is an annual contest open to all Vancouver Kingsway students in Grade 11 or 12. A completely on-line process, *Create Your Canada* challenges students to propose ideas that they feel will make a better Canada, or a better world. The winning ideas are then submitted by Davies to Parliament where they are drafted into actual Private Member's Bills. Once drafted, Davies then flies the students to Ottawa where they watch as he introduces their bills in the House of Commons.

"This is a great way for youth to share their vision for our country," said Davies. "I think it's also a fun and engaging introduction to Parliament and the legislative process."

Davies also takes the student on a jam-packed two-day tour of Parliament where they visit the House of Commons, Senate, Library of Parliament and meet many politicians from all parties.

This year, the two winning entries were submitted by Harriet Crossfield, a student from Sir Charles Tupper, and a joint project of Triana Segovia and Kira Bennett, from Windermere Secondary.

Harriet was chosen for her idea to create a National Disability Employment Awareness Strategy.

"I noticed there were lots of programs already in place to encourage people with disabilities to apply for jobs," said Harriet, "but there are no strategies in place to encourage awareness in the private sector about the benefits that can be gained from employing people with disabilities. Supporting these programs does not cost much and everyone stands to benefit," she added.

Triana and Kira were selected for their proposal to help students by reducing interest on federal student loans.

"We were inspired by countries with programs for loan repayment that are more efficient, and we wanted to find an appropriate solution for Canada," said Triana. "We were looking for a feasible solution, something that would help students and suit our country's needs," added Kira.

"Listening to Canadian youth about their concerns for our country is really important," said Davies. "Parliament is well-served by these proposals and I am proud to bring the voice of youth into our debates."

All three students expressed great enthusiasm for their upcoming trip, which is scheduled to take place in early June.

Honourable mentions for the 2015 *Create Your Canada* Contest go to:

- Sarah Liu and Celina Huynh from Gladstone Secondary for their idea to eliminate the voluntary National Housing Strategy and change back to the mandatory long-form census.
- Rhys Rustad-Elliott from Eric Hamber Secondary School for his idea to repeal Section 296 of the Criminal Code of Canada, which criminalizes blasphemous libel.
- Rebecca Gao from Sir Charles Tupper Secondary for her idea to ban the use of microbeads in facial cleansers, soaps, moisturizers, exfoliators and other products.
- Mabel Huang and Lily Lee from Windermere Secondary for their idea to prevent wild animal habitat destruction.

Davies funds the *Create Your Canada* program himself, and no taxpayer funds are used.