



FEBRUARY 8, 2021

What Gives Canadian Youth Hope?

by Contest Winners - Rhea and Ryan



Youth have an essential role to play across Canada and around the world. They are the compassionate leaders paving the way for a sustainable and just future for all. To celebrate the 31st International Development Week (IDW) with Global Affairs Canada, we wanted to hear directly from Canadian youth. **So we held a contest and asked them, “What makes you hopeful that Canadian youth can make a difference in the world?”** The responses were inspiring. Check out the winning entries for a big dose of hope.

Rhea | Manitoba



Artwork painted by Rhea

Raising awareness of injustices related to Indigenous people has always been my passion. As a non-Indigenous person, numerous speeches and drives with organizations have helped me understand the cruciality of all Canadian citizens uniting to respect Indigenous cultures. However, there was a point in my life when I often struggled to find like-minded youth; youth who use their passions to make their voices be heard.

This changed when I attended the Youth Parliament of Manitoba a few months ago. Bills on pertinent issues were debated, and intense discussions took place. But, it was after my inaugural speech that I truly felt inspired by youth. In this speech, I introduced myself and spoke

about the devastating ways Indigenous people are treated. Afterwards, the second debate occurred on a bill for reforming prisons. To my shock, during their debates, members used the content of my speech in regards to the disproportionate rates of incarceration amongst Indigenous people. I was stunned by everyone’s ability to grasp the topic I talked about and use it in such an eloquent and powerful manner.

This experience made me hopeful that Canadian youth can come together to make a difference. When young people involve themselves in issues that are only discussed by adults, that itself is proof that they are the changemakers of tomorrow. But, when they demonstrate listening skills and use them to foster healthy dialogue, that is proof that they are striving to become better changemakers than the ones we see today.

Ryan | Quebec

What gives me hope about the future is young people on the frontlines fighting alongside people of all races, genders, religions and nationalities, demanding change. What gives me hope is people of all ages who devote their lives to science and conservation, to protect and conserve the environments we inhabit today. What gives me hope is organizations like The Jane Goodall Institute, who use their platform to invigorate our youth to become the future leaders of global change. What gives me hope is the power of human connection, which provides the ability for us to come together and not give up until the change that we want is the change that we see. I am hopeful for a future filled with the idea that global change isn’t an infallible idea. I am hopeful.

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JUNE 20, 2019

Roots & Shoots in Action: Restoring the Grand River Watershed

by Hanna Smit, JGI Canada



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In early April, some 40 eager students in grades 5 and 8 were taken on a tour of the Laurel Creek Nature Centre. The nature centre falls within southern Ontario's ecologically fragile Carolinian zone and is part of the Grand River Watershed. Working together, staff with the Grand River Conservation Authority and JGI Canada showed the budding young naturalists the diverse plants and animals that depend on the watershed as well as the non-native species that are encroaching on the area.

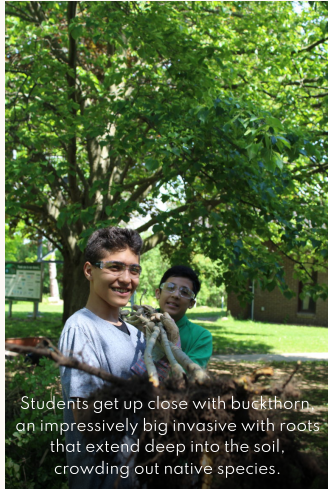
The youth were part of the **Friends of the Watershed initiative**, a Roots & Shoots project generously funded by Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada (TMMC), which supports habitat restoration in an area heavily affected by urban development, agriculture and climate change.

In June, the students of St. John Catholic Elementary got down to work. Joined by a team from TMMC, everyone pitched in to plant trees, replenish the soil and wildflowers in the pollinator garden, and remove invasive buckthorn plants. The results of their efforts contribute to a healthy habitat that also serves as a protective buffer from nearby residential developments.

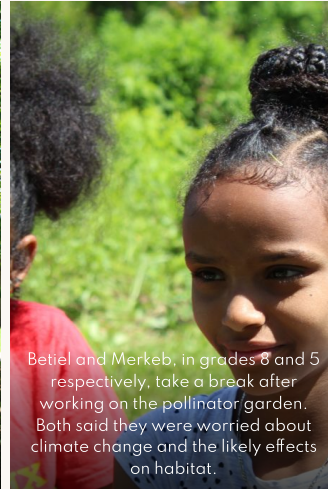
By putting classroom learning into practice, students were able to see for themselves that they could each contribute to the conservation and ecological health of an important habitat. As one teacher said, ***“The ability to connect with nature and to see first-hand the impact of human activity and the impact of invasive species on other plants and animals was very powerful.”***



Grade 8 students, Eyobel and Hebron, survey their handiwork removing buckthorn.



Students get up close with buckthorn, an impressively big invasive with roots that extend deep into the soil, crowding out native species.



Betiel and Merkeb, in grades 8 and 5 respectively, take a break after working on the pollinator garden. Both said they were worried about climate change and the likely effects on habitat.



Students learn about the impact of nearby urban development and diminished forest habitat on bird populations.



Derek Kidnie, general manager at the nearby Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada (TMMC) facility, digs in. TMMC generously supported the Friends of the Watershed project and employees joined forces to help rehabilitate an important eco-region.



Alex and Mark, two grade 4 students from St. John Catholic Elementary School, plant cedar trees to help reforest key areas in the Laurel Creek Nature Centre.



Mirna, a grade 8 student, suits up to remove buckthorn and other invasive plants that threaten to diminish the nature centre's biodiversity.



A young participant wheels soil and woodchips to Laurel Creek's pollinator garden to prepare the soil for native wildflowers that attract bees and butterflies.

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