

Dear LEARN sponsor,

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Panorea Theodorakakos and I am in secondary 4 attending Lauren Hill Academy in Montreal, Quebec Canada. I discovered Encounters With Canada through an advertisement that my school shared with all of the students, I then found out that someone would be coming to our school to inform us about this program. I met Regional coordinator Ms. Lorena Morante, she told me about the incredible opportunity that I could have if I enter a competition by submitting a writing piece. If I was one of the lucky winners chosen LEARN would sponsor my trip to Ottawa. I thought that this was incredible. I really wanted to go during the Medicine and Health week since I am considering it as a future career and this opportunity would be perfect for me to learn about this field and speak to specialists and meet students from all over Canada that have the same aspirations as I do. This is when my friend and I, Debbie Fitopoulos, decided to enter this competition together but I must admit we were doubting ourselves that our article wouldn't be good enough. We loved the concept of having to write about someone we look up to and admire. We chose Emma Watson and worked countless of hours on our piece. Truthfully, we thought we would never be one of the lucky winners but we were! Debbie and I were so excited and we couldn't wrap our heads around it. We were so honoured that LEARN chose us for this once in a lifetime opportunity. It was the most educational experience in my life. When I arrived to Encounters I did not expect for all of the provinces from Canada to be completely different and we all learned from each other's values and way of life. I did not think that it would be special to meet girls and boys from different province but it was. These students were very kind and respectful to each other. They all had the same aspirations and similar plans for their futures. I met teenagers that are taking university courses for medicine after their normal day as a high school student, students that live so far into the suburbs that they live in farms and only have 50 students in their high schools! As well as students that skipped several grades and are still in high school but have already begun practicing medicine in advanced teen programs! It was incredible to hear their stories and how informed they were. My most favourite part of the trip was visiting the Montford Hospital. My French is nowhere near perfect but I chose the only French activity that day to challenge myself and visit a hospital with workshops. I learned how to take X-Rays on different parts of the body, CPR and how to intubate a patient. Words can't describe how joyful and educational the experience was. I spoke with doctors, medical students, immunologists, radiation technologists and a cancer biologist during my trip. I have learned so much from this experience and I was instructed how to enter this career path. Without LEARN sponsoring this trip I wouldn't have been able to learn so much about medicine and speak to these specialists. I don't have this opportunity back home and to get the chance to be part of this spectacular program was an honour. Plenty of other students in Quebec would also appreciate having this opportunity for them to be exposed to different cultures, learn about their career paths and learn how to live independently. Please continue offering this competition to the students of



Quebec, they don't know what they are expecting and are going to be blown away once they get the chance to be part of the LEARN sponsor competition and the Encounter With Canada program. This is an experience that I will never forget and I have shared all of my incredible stories with my family and friends. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity and I hope you continue to offer it to other students in Quebec. Below I have attached some pictures during my stay attending cultural activities with my close friends that I made. Thank you so much for choosing my partner and I as one of the winners in Quebec. Have a wonderful day!

Panorea Theodorakakos, LaurenHill Academy – Pictures were attached to letter