

Dear LEARN,

I'm one of the luckiest people that was able to go to Encounters with Canada and my ambition was fulfilled thanks to you. I am forever grateful that you gave me, as well as other contestants, this opportunity to go to Ottawa and I will always remember you whenever I think about Encounters with Canada.

I went for the Science and Technology week from February 17-23. It was a little difficult to adjust to the fact that I will be travelling alone to Ottawa, even though the train lasted 2 hours. However, it was also a good thing because I wouldn't always have to rely on one participant when there are so many there. I met so many people and it felt like we all knew each other for a long time. They were all very nice and optimistic. We got to take a tour of historical attractions in Ottawa such as the War Museum and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I got to visit the House of Commons and it was beautiful because of the calm and quiet atmosphere. I wish we got to take a group picture at the Parliament since it was an Encounters with Canada tradition but we couldn't because of the Pipeline Protest where trucks from Alberta drove all the way to Ottawa.

Anyways, I got to meet the director general, Linda Brunet, and her dog Foxy. She was so cute. I was lucky to meet her because she was going to retire in a month. I got to learn more about Indigenous people and the stories were very exciting to hear about. The presentation about the Canadian Coast College was interesting as well. Another memorable part of that week was the Vignettes of Canada where groups of participants had to create a skit that represented their province/territory. Ours was funny because we kept arguing about how poutine is pronounced and we chanted "vive le Québec." It was enjoyable and I constantly laughed. I went skating on the Rideau Canal. It was fun and scary because I haven't skated in years but when will I come to skate on the Rideau Canal? I got to go bowling too!

I was always with a group of Quebecers and I was able to improve my way of speaking of French. Whenever we had free time, we always head to the games room and play foosball. We were able to have conversations in French (even though they speak a little English), something that I wasn't comfortable with back home.

I learned a lot about Science such as the Canadarm 2, how astronauts lived their daily lives in space and different reactions when mixing Dr. Pepper in different solutions that turn it to Jell-O. I learned more about Canadian history, like different architectural sites, planes that were used during the two Works and the fact there is a tomb in a museum where the Sun would shine on it at 11 am on November 11.

Once again, LEARN, you can't imagine how grateful I am that you've covered the cost of this trip and giving my seven straight days of fun! It was a week where you could never stop smiling. I was very independent and not afraid of being alone. I give all the credit to LEARN for making me live this experience which I thought I'd never live. You should keep continuing these contests because everyone



should have the opportunity to go to take part in Encounters with Canada. I would definitely recommend this to anyone. This program has increased my knowledge about our country and I am proud to be Canadian.

Thank You,

Tahsin Islam, Vincent Massey Collegiate