

Citizenship experience in Ottawa

Jennifer Stevely only marked her 18th birthday on August 11, 2015, and she has already had several rewarding Canadian experiences.

To add to her Canadian travel resumé, this spring, from May 3 to 6, 2015, she was one of 200 young Canadians participating in the Rotary Adventure in Citizenship Program in Ottawa. Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Tavistock, Jennifer was able to gain a better understanding of our country through meetings with political leaders, senior officials and others in Canada's capital.

"I loved learning more about Canada," she said. "I brought back a love for my country, a better understanding, and experienced things I would have never been able to do otherwise."

Along with a student from Arva, Jennifer was billeted with a couple, the wife being a translator in the House of Commons. They arrived in Ottawa on Saturday and were taken to their host homes.

Sunday morning they were welcomed by Mr. Charles Melchers, Chair of the Rotary Adventure in Citizenship Program.

MCpl Jody Mitic, Retired, was the keynote speaker at the Alumni Theatre at the University of Ottawa, where she spoke about the "Never Quit Foundation." The students then travelled to the Canadian War Museum for a tour followed that evening by dinner and entertainment at Camp Fortune. Le Ridane, a traditional Quebec folk band presented an interactive show with students called on stage as well as



BILL GLADDING / TAVISTOCK GAZETTE

Jennifer Stevely with her renewed Candian citizenship certificate acquired during her Adventure in Citizenship experience in Ottawa in May courtesy of the Rotary Club of Tavistock.

line dancing and square dancing for all.

"I already knew how to do some of these things," Jennifer said, having learned square dancing at high school. "It was the most fun."

Monday they learned the role of Pages in the House followed by presentations by the Clerk and Speaker of the House of Commons. There were group photographs taken and a full group picture on the steps in front of the Centre Block. A luncheon included a presentation by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Motivational speaker Robert Forest spoke to the theme "Living Passionately ... Make Your

Dreams Come True." Later, at the St. Stefan Serbian Community Centre a coffee house and talent night was held. Elections Campaign "premier" selections were held for a Mock Election event the following day at the University of Ottawa. Presentations were given by Dr. Peter Singer, Grand Challenges Canada; Mr. Nalal Oudeh, Peace and Conflict Resolution, First Nations, Elections Canada, as well as a Canada Quiz hosted by the Rotaract Club of Ottawa at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health.

The most memorable event Jennifer recalls was meeting the Governor General, David Johnston.

"He was very down to earth," she noted. The students were in the Tent Room at Rideau Hall when a dog came running in with a man chasing behind. It was the Governor General. Confused, everyone stood around and listened as he related some interesting personal stories.

The final day of the Adventure included a special session of the Citizenship ceremony where each student received their renewed Citizenship Certificate along with about 50 new Canadians. Jennifer then joined her host family on a bicycle ride around the city and along the canal. Here, she learned interesting bits

of information about the city.

Jennifer had been in Ottawa three years before attending "Worshiplude," a three-day youth program through the Huron-Perth Presbytery of the United Church of Canada.

Other United Church youth events Jennifer has attended were Go Projects in both Vancouver and St. John's, Newfoundland. Volunteers spent 11 days at mission sites, food banks and soup kitchens around the cities.

"I've always wanted to travel," she said, and next year will be her first trip off the continent. Jennifer will be participating in the Canadian Educational Exchange Foundation (CEEF) youth exchange to France. On August 13,

French student Elvire Houdeville will be staying with the Stevely family.

Jennifer is in her fifth year at Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School. Then in February she will be off to France for 3 months.

Following high school, Jennifer would like to attend University to study engineering, accounting, or maybe even become a flight attendant.

A daughter of Deb and Bill Stevely of Tavistock, Jennifer is the youngest of four children - Katrina (David Isern) Kitchener; James in Saskatchewan; and Deanna attending Queen's University in Kingston.

For her fourth summer now, Jennifer is working as a counsellor for 5 weeks at Camp Bimini.

Jan Haase, RIB

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