



Board of Education

Media Information

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Two Kelowna Secondary School Students Are Provincial Debating Champions

Kelowna, BC: Debate has a long and well-respected tradition in Western education. Research and analytical ability as well as speaking skills are all tested as debaters passionately plead the case for one side of the topic then the other. Last weekend, two Kelowna Secondary School students won top honours in the Province's most prestigious tournament: the Law Foundation Cup.

Congratulations to Grade 10 students Tyler-Rae Heathcote and Megan Udala who won first place in the junior division team competition on March 7-8. As a team, they debated four rounds on two topics. Tyler-Rae won first place in the individual competition; Megan placed tenth. As a result of her first-place finish in individual competition, Tyler-Rae has been invited to a tournament this fall at West Point Grey Academy where debaters will be chosen to represent Canada at the World Debate Championships.

"This is the fourth time that Megan and I have been to the Provincials and the third time we've worked together, says Tyler-Rae. "We really collaborate and work off each other's strengths and weaknesses. I believe this is the first time any student from Kelowna has won the provincial competition."

"These students have been debating since Grade 7 at KLO where they studied with Jacqueline Loyd," says Andrea Taylor who teaches English and debating at KSS. "Students who participate in debate are typically honour students who are socially conscious." The prepared topics for debate by these two students were the abolishment of statutory prisoner release and science is the answer to everything. Both topics have legal, moral and social implications.

This year's Law Foundation Cup took place in Victoria at the Glenlyon Norfolk School. Approximately 160 students from all across BC took part in the competition. Each year, the Cup is held in one of six regions of BC: Vancouver Island, Interior, Southern Interior, Kooteneys, Lower Mainland East, and Lower Mainland West. In order to participate in this tournament, students have had to win competitions at their school and regional levels. This year, KSS had an impressive showing at the Law Foundation Cup with six seniors and four juniors.

"Typically, the private schools in the Lower Mainland and on the Island 'own' this competition, but not this year," says Taylor. "This is the first time in the 15 years that I have been teaching here that our students have won first place at the provincial tournament. It's quite an accomplishment."

“We would like to thank our teachers and coaches,” says Megan. “In particular, Jackie Loyd from KLO Middle School who coached us for the first three years (from Grades 7 to 9) and Andrea Taylor this year. We also want to thank Mrs. Gallo, our chaperone on this trip.”

As for the future, Megan and Tyler-Rae are keeping their options open. “I think it [winning at the Provincial tournament] will look great whether I pursue law or not. I’m interested in journalism. That’s probably my main focus. I think debate is a great skill to have no matter what you’re doing.”

Students in the debating class at KSS will now shift their focus from debate to public speaking. Grade 11 and 12 students will have an opportunity to compete in the Sullivan Law Cup for public speaking.

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