

## News Release

June 15, 2020

### **Despite COVID-19, young students participate in national program to showcase important Canadian histories Canadians invited to view their video entries and vote for their favorites**

When the COVID-19 pandemic swept Canada this spring, students were forced to deal with sudden closures and cancellations as everything from classes and concerts to school trips and sporting events were shut down.

For thousands of students, this also meant missing out on their annual heritage fair — a public exhibition of student research projects about Canadian history. Approximately 80 heritage fairs take place each spring in every province and territory, bringing together students, teachers, families, museums, and community organizations.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, many students continued their schooling at home and carried out ambitious research projects for the Young Citizens program – the national program for Heritage Fairs that encourages students to make short videos about key moments in Canadian history.

"Canada's stories are made up of diverse experiences and perspectives," said Janet Walker, President and CEO of Canada's National History Society, the not-for-profit organization that coordinates the program. "It is extremely inspiring to watch the range of topics explored by these young citizens and to see how they have taken ownership of them in a very personal way."

Visitors to [CanadasHistory.ca/YoungCitizens](https://CanadasHistory.ca/YoungCitizens) can view the entries and vote for their favourites until July 1, 2020.

The online vote will make up part of a student's final score. Following the vote, judges will review the videos and select four recipients, who will travel to Ottawa for the Canada's History Forum.

Since the creation of the program in 2012, students have created more than 1,100 videos. The videos have been viewed 400,000 times and close to 300,000 Canadians have participated in the online vote.

The Young Citizens program is administered by Canada's National History Society, with the support of Canada Life and The McLean Foundation.

***For media requests:***

***Canada's History will obtain permission from families before providing contact information to media. To arrange an interview or for more information, please contact:***

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### **About Heritage Fairs and Young Citizens**

Give students a camera and a chance to explore Canada's past, and they will come up with moving, funny, clever, thought-provoking videos that enlighten others as well as themselves. That's the premise of Young Citizens, a program run by Canada's National History Society. Now in its ninth year, Young Citizens showcases the work of students from Heritage Fairs all over the country who have been given the opportunity to expand their projects by telling their stories on video. The students must be in Grade 4 through Grade 11 and participate in a local or regional Heritage Fair. The Heritage Fair program is undertaken by a network of volunteer teachers and community history organizations. Heritage Fairs began as a pilot community project in Winnipeg in 1993 and have grown to involve more than 100,000 students each year in schools-based and regional exhibitions in more than 100 communities across Canada.

### **About Canada's National History Society**

Canada's National History Society is a national charitable organization devoted to popularizing Canadian history. In addition to presenting the Governor General's History Awards and publishing *Canada's History (formerly The Beaver)* magazine, as well as *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*, the Society also produces a number of educational and online programs to encourage more discovery, celebration, and understanding about our rich history and culture. More details can be found at [www.canadashistory.ca](http://www.canadashistory.ca)