



For Immediate Release

Canadian Students Turn a Critical Eye on our Past in History Videos *Online Voting Underway to Select National Forum Participants*

Women’s ability to vote. Indian residential schools. LGBTQ rights. The treatment of prisoners and people with mental illnesses. Missing and murdered Indigenous women. Students don’t shy away from the tough issues of our past or their modern implications in remarkable videos created as part of the Young Citizens program. Participants chose a wide range of subject matter for their videos, which include profiles of famous and no-so-famous Canadians, personal family stories and far-reaching national ones, all made vivid and relevant by these young historians.

Students from Grade 4 to Grade 11 who had outstanding Heritage Fair projects used video cameras to highlight an aspect of Canada’s past that interested them, including the arts, sports, politics, war, science, immigration, famous people, community heritage and more, in their choice of French or English. Visitors to **YoungCitizens.ca** can vote for their favourites from among the resulting 200 videos representing all provinces and territories.

“This is a very socially conscious group of students. Even if their project doesn’t deal explicitly with injustice, you can see how captivated they are by the past and how it relates to them,” said Janet Walker, president and CEO of Canada’s History Society. “And of course their technical skills are excellent, so the videos are also a lot of fun to watch.”

Canadians can vote for their favourite videos at **YoungCitizens.ca**. Voting begins June 12 and runs until July 7. One recipient from each province and territory will be chosen by popular vote, while a panel of judges will choose another. The 26 honourees will receive a trip to Ottawa in the fall, where they will participate in a national youth forum. There they will have an invaluable opportunity to meet and spend time with other Young Citizens, exploring Ottawa’s historic nooks and crannies with dedicated guides and learning about our country from each other.

“The Young Citizens program encourages young people to explore Canada’s history in a deep, personal way,” said Debbie Down, Manager, Community Relations for Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life. “As we celebrate Canada’s 150th anniversary, it’s heartening to know that in telling the stories of our past, students are showing the way to an inclusive future.”

This year’s **Young Citizens** projects available now for viewing online include:

- Mi’kmaq dance traditions (Myranda, Hebbs Cross, N.S.)
- the true inventors of the lightbulb (Marc, Richmond, B.C.)
- Canadian spies and spying (Kylan, Calgary, Alta.)
- Immigration to the Northwest Territories (Madison, Yellowknife, N.W.T.)
- Little-known Ukrainian-Canadian war artist Leo Mol (Kameron, Winnipeg, Man.)



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BACKGROUNDER

About 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 History Society. Now in its sixth 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. Wholly undertaken by a network of volunteer teachers and community history organizations, the program benefits from funding support from the Department of Canadian Heritage; and Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life. 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 Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life

Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life offer a broad portfolio of financial and benefit plan solutions, and serve the financial security needs of more than 13 million people across Canada. As an Imagine Caring Company supporting the principles of corporate citizenship and benchmarks for community investment established by Imagine Canada, the companies donate a minimum of one per cent of average pre-tax profits to non-profit, charitable and community organizations each year. Learn more about the organization's [corporate social responsibility](#) at www.greatwestlife.com.

About Canada's History Society

Canada's 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, and *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*, the Society also produces educational and online programs to encourage more discovery, celebration, and understanding about our rich history and culture. For more information, please visit www.canadashistory.ca

Canada's History will check with families before providing contact information to media. To arrange an interview or for more information, please email or call:

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