

This semester OCENET and OCDSB schools are hosting international students from 47 countries around the world...with international students in 22 high schools and 38 elementary schools throughout the OCDSB

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ICP Korea Forum explores what it means to be a global citizen



The International Certificate Program (ICP) Korea Forum was hosted at the Korean Cultural Centre on December 7, 2018. Many students enrolled in the ICP from across the OCDSB, along with their ICP Teacher Advisors and OCENET staff, learned about cultural awareness from academic speakers and fellow ICP students, including four OCDSB students who reported on their recent experience of participating in the Jeju Youth Forum in South Korea.

INTERVIEW: Geoff Best reflects on 20 years as Executive Director of OCENET and international education in the OCDSB

Geoff Best has served as Executive Director of OCENET since 1999, and in this feature interview, he looks back at some the challenges and successes in this significant 20th anniversary year.

#1: What were the origins of OCENET?

GB: "Originally established in 1992, OCENET was largely focussed on the publication and sale of curriculum documents developed by local educators in order to generate revenues for the school board. Competing with the big publishing companies proved very difficult. In September 1999 I was hired to recruit students from overseas to OCDSB schools. I had considerable experience in Western Canada in working with language schools, overseeing a Homestay program, marketing, and the placement of foreign students in Canadian schools."

#2. What were some of the challenges in the early days of establishing an international education program in the OCDSB?

GB: "When we started there was no website, no computer, or any colour brochures. It was a one-person, bare bones operation. There were few school boards who were recruiting students at that time and educational recruitment fairs were rare. One of the key challenges in developing a program for international students is determining the structure for Homestay accommodations.

Another challenge was that in 1999 the OCDSB was a newly amalgamated school district and considerable networking needed to take place to ensure schools were able to receive international students. In addition, in the early years, there was

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OCENET celebrates 20 years in international ed. (cont'd)



Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) President and CEO Karen McBride (far right) and CBIE Board of Directors member David Ross (far left) presented the CBIE Excellence Award to OCENET Executive Director Geoff Best and OCENET International Education Coordinator Kathy Scheepers at the CBIE Annual Conference 2014.



OCENET Executive Director Geoff Best (right) met with His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, former Governor General of Canada, to discuss the OCDSB International Certificate Program and the many other international education initiatives in the OCDSB

“At the beginning it was a ‘blank slate’...we started at zero.”

- Geoff Best,
Executive Director, OCENET

no “infrastructure” at the beginning — no brochures, application forms, legal documents, etc. Fewer districts were recruiting international students then, but fortunately there was a great deal of collaboration and sharing of ideas and practices.”

#3: Over the 20 years, what are some of the significant changes in international education?

GB: “One obvious change has been the growth of international education in the

OCDSB and across Canada. When OCENET started marketing its international student program there were about 35 Canadian school districts actively engaged in marketing their programs — now there are about 140 school districts in a very competitive field.

Another change involves where our international students come from. When OCENET started recruiting international students, the primary market was South Korea; at that time there were no students from China, for example. We have been very intentional about recruiting a diverse international student population; this semester we have international students from 47 different countries.

Also, changes in technology have enabled more efficiencies such as creating databases of information that can be readily retrieved.

There are lots of moving parts and the unexpected can happen with government policy changes or health concerns, such as the SARS outbreak in 2003. Each day brings variety; every day is different and that makes the work very interesting.”

#4: OCENET is widely recognized as an international education leader both in Canada and overseas. How has this reputation been achieved?

GB: “OCENET is the OCDSB to the outside world, and the OCDSB has a great reputation because the international students who come here are well served by our schools. Word of mouth cannot be underestimated. If a school is welcoming to an international student, the message gets out and other students will follow. These days, with the immediacy of texting, first impressions count, and OCENET and Ottawa schools receive very few complaints from parents who are sending their children to study here. One of the main reasons for our growth is the reputation of our school district.”

#5: You have spoken about the “reciprocal benefits” that international students and teachers bring to the OCDSB. What are some of those “reciprocal benefits”?

GB: “International students bring different perspectives about their country and share them



YOUR SCHOOL'S INTERNATIONAL LEARNING PARTNER

- International Student Placement and Support
- International Certificate Program
- School Partnerships (K-12)
- Student Exchanges
- Cultural Competency Workshops
- International Teacher Training
- Global Education Support



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The “Your School’s International Learning Partner” banner provides a succinct summation of OCENET’s many key roles in the OCDSB

OCENET celebrates 20 years in international ed. (cont'd)

as they get to know local students here. Friendships are made. In speaking with schools and Homestay families, I am aware of many cases where Canadian families will travel to another country to meet up with our international students and their families overseas. These are often visits to countries that local families would never have gone to in the past.

Also, more and more teachers are encouraging our international students to share facets of their home culture and thus bridge cultural understanding. We've also had teachers go to other countries to do some teaching and we are trying to encourage more of these opportunities."

#6: What challenges have come with the growth in the number of international students?

GB: "With close to 1,000 international students, as well as the short term groups, and several 100 people directly or indirectly involved in supporting our international students, OCENET is a very busy place. OCENET is truly a "network," involving our local staff, OCDSB schools, Homestay families, educational agents in other countries, governmental agencies, and many others.

With growth has come issues of capacity and ways of placing the students strategically to support schools with declining enrollments

and to spread the opportunities for cultural diversity across the district. We are more conscious about which countries students come from to avoid relying upon just one or two countries, and we are working on ways to build long-term sustainable partnerships with select schools abroad."

#7: As Executive Director of OCENET, what are you most proud of?

GB: "OCENET has grown a great deal in 20 years, and I am proud to say that we have a dedicated staff who has grown and adapted to the challenges. Many staff members have been here for 10-15 years and have helped forge the positive reputation we have both nationally and internationally. OCENET continually strives to improve and innovate. We work hard to serve the inbound students well and, at the same time, we are encouraging more students to go abroad with initiatives like the International Certificate Program and the student and staff international education bursaries."

#8: What is the future direction for OCENET?

GB: "OCENET will continue to maintain and improve its present course, and promote the value of Canadian students having opportunities for learning experiences in other countries and developing cultural competencies."



OCENET's Geoff Best with Intercultural development Inventory (IDI) workshop facilitator Hamelin Grange at a cultural competency workshop for OCENET staff



Greeting Spanish teachers sponsored by the Fundación Amancio Ortega (FAO) upon their arrival at the Ottawa International Airport



(l-r) Geoff Best and Kathy Scheepers of OCENET, with John-Patrick Healey, teacher chaperone, with the Yamate-Gakuin student exchange

International education bursary for staff opens up new learning opportunities



Samantha Conley at the 21st Century Learning - Global Education Leadership Summit in Bangkok, Thailand with conference presenter Nick Janna who is on leave from the OCDSB and presently teaching in Ethiopia

OCENET and the OCDSB established the **International Education Bursary** for OCDSB employees program in 2014-15, and to date over 45 staff have received a bursary to support international learning initiatives.

Past issues of *Global Connections* have featured articles on the experiences of OCDSB staff who have received a bursary. In this issue, the focus is on Grade 6/7 teacher Samantha Conley from Featherston Drive PS who attended the 21st Century Learning - Global Education Leadership Summit this past March in Bangkok, Thailand. The conference was attended by 200 educators from 21 different countries, and it focussed on best practices for innovation in education.

Following keynote speakers and breakout sessions during the day, delegates participated in evening excursions to explore the cultural traditions of Thailand. One of the many highlights of the conference was meeting with teachers from countries such as Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Tanzania, the Middle East, Australia and India, and sharing both similar and different pedagogical ideas.

Ms. Conley was most appreciative of the International Education Bursary program and indicated that without this bursary this unique international learning experience would not have been possible. She found that the bursary application process was simple and that approval of the application was timely. She highly recommends that OCDSB staff interested in pursuing an international education opportunity consider applying: www.ocenet.ca/en/page/show/bursaries

Travelling Tales project connects student stories from around the world

In 2015 the United Nations member countries adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to provide a blueprint for all countries to work together in partnership to address poverty, inequality, food security, health, education, clean water, air pollution, among many other world issues, as a way of improving global peace and prosperity (see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>).

The SDGs have provided a unique catalyst for educators around the world to engage their students in world issues and learn about global citizenship. One of the innovative educational initiatives that has evolved from the SDGs is the *Travelling Tales* project whereby students in different countries collaborate to highlight one or several of the SDGs through storytelling. Educators from various countries agree to create a project and their students add contributing segments to an emerging story. One group of students will select SDGs, write a script and prepare accompanying drawings to support a narrated story that is recorded on video. After this beginning segment, another group of students will contribute an additional piece of the story which presents a problem, and this segment will then be forwarded to another group of students in another country who will develop possible solutions. Yet another group will conclude the narrative. In this way a final video is produced and shared which is a true collaborative effort of many student voices from around the world who learn from each other about important global issues.

Telling Tales at Bell High School

The EFI grade 7/8 class of teacher Mme. Allison Fuisz has been involved in several Telling Tales projects in both English and French. Here is a link to one of their Travelling Tales entitled "Le soleil est!" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1DQz6xcfX0>. Mme. Fuisz really finds the students are highly motivated to work on these types of projects "because they are all focussed on the SDGs so the age of the students or their location doesn't really matter; the students have a shared vision of learning and actioning for a better world." The most recent student project has involved Bell HS, two schools in Luxemburg, a school in Vietnam and a school in the US. This project involves SDGs #3, (health) #11 (sustainable cities), #13 (climate action) and #15 (life on land) and can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbcIEjvOIPi>

Bell High School students (l-r) Ethan, David, Lucas, Gloria, Jack and Julia setting up to record their Traveling Tales script for their most recent collaboration with students in other countries



Travelling Tales at Featherston Drive Public School

Grade 6/7 students in Samantha Conley's class at Featherston Drive Public School have contributed to two Travelling Tale projects, one on SDG #14 Life Under Water and more recently on SDG #5 on Gender Equality. The Travelling Tale on Gender Equality involved a collaboration of students with other schools in India, Ukraine, Spain and the United States. The students like how they can plan and organize themselves to take on different roles and showcase their skills, including script writing, recording the narrative and drawing

the supporting artwork. Student Rokayah commented that the SDGs show how "the individual SDGs are actually all interconnected together. The SDGs connect to things in everyday life. The Travelling Tales project allows us connect with other countries, students and people who are also passionate about how the world can develop." Many of the students felt that the Travelling Tales project and the SDGs provided a meaningful way to learn about global issues and understand the news, as indicated by Mariam: "The SDGs make me think.... I notice more things now." The Traveling Tale on Gender Equity can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LByzWdUHQY&feature=youtu.be>

Standing in front of their Travelling Tale bulletin board on SDG #5, Gender Equality, are (l-r) Edris, Ms. Samantha Conley, André, Rokayah, Mariam from Featherston Drive Public School



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OCDSB INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE PROGRAM DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

JOIN US FOR OUR 2019 INFORMATION SESSION

WHO: OCDSB Students in Grades 8-12 and Parents/Guardians & OCDSB Staff
WHAT: International Certificate Program Overview
WHEN: Thursday, November 14
 6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. — Visit Hall of International Opportunities (20+ Exhibitors)
 7:00 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. — Formal overview of program
 7:45 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. — Visit Hall of International Opportunities

WHERE: Confederation Education Centre Cafetorium
1645 Woodroffe Avenue

Now in its 8th year, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's International Certificate Program (ICP) continues to grow. This global citizenship initiative gives students direct access to intercultural opportunities at the local, national and international levels.

For more information
visit our website:
<https://goo.gl/23VDBD>



Global Citizenship
Intercultural Competency
Global Mindset

@OCENET Ottawa

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Phone: 613-239-0592



Life as an international student in Ottawa

Each issue of *Global Connections* highlights the experiences of international students or educators who visit Ottawa and attend OCDSB schools through OCENET. In this issue the focus is on three international students who are also enrolled in the OCDSB International Certificate Program.

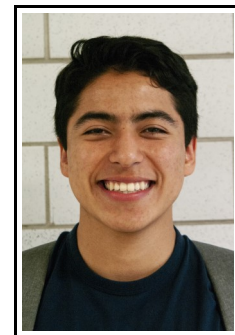
Jueun @ Earl of March Secondary School

Jueun has attended Earl of March SS as an international student for the past 3 years. She is from Seoul, South Korea, but also attended school in Japan for several years prior to coming to study in Canada. In Japan, one of Jueun's teachers was Canadian and suggested that she attend school in Ottawa. One of Jueun's initial challenges was "finding a place to fit in" but she quickly learned that being willing to try different activities was the best way to make connections with Canadians and make new friends — she was soon skating, skiing and snowboarding! She also became involved in a wide variety of school clubs and activities, including Students' Council, the school musical, and the Girls' Rugby Team, among many other extracurriculars. The International Certificate Program (ICP) was of interest to Jueun because it appealed to her interest in languages and multiculturalism. She especially enjoyed being involved in the United Nations program through the ICP. She likes that Canadian schools are student-centred and that "teachers encourage students to take the path that fits with the person." Upon graduation this June, she will pursue a degree at UBC in Media Studies with the possibility of a career in photojournalism.



David @ Brookfield High School

From Mexico, David has been an international student in Ottawa for 2 years and is about to graduate from Grade 12. David comes from Mexico and a close friend who had previously attended Bell high School as an international student encouraged David to come to Ottawa to study. David loves how welcoming and multicultural his school is and enjoys meeting people from different cultures. Some of the initial challenges for him involved joining a circle of friends, but he quickly overcame any homesickness by getting involved in sports. He has made many close friends through the wrestling team. He finds the teachers at Brookfield very friendly and helpful and says "they really seem to like their jobs working with students." His English language skills have improved greatly and his Homestay family will review his homework when he asks for help. He thinks Brookfield has a great community feel and likes that there is a wide variety of courses students can choose from. He joined the ICP because he likes the idea of being a global citizen and may follow a career in international relations or the environment in the future. He considers his experience as an international student "life-changing" because it has helped him to become more mature and independent, and he is more appreciative of family and home.



Graziella @ Glebe Collegiate Institute

Graziella is from northern Italy. This is her first year in Canada as an international student and she will be graduating from Grade 12 in June. Graziella first learned of the international student program by attending an educational fair and she was attracted to Ottawa because it is both Anglophone and Francophone as she wanted to develop her French language skills as well as improve her already strong level of fluency in English. She does not feel she experienced much culture shock, though she thinks that Canadians are a bit obsessive about the weather! She quickly made friends and felt comfortable at her school and finds the educational system less stressful, with less homework and more time to get involved in school life and to socialize with friends. She likes that the ICP is flexible enough to acknowledge that the comparable courses and experiences she has completed in Italy can be credited towards her receiving the International Certificate. Along with some other students, Graziella is involved with a school group called *Ensemble* which collects donated clothes for those in need. Next year Graziella will attend the University of Amsterdam to study political science.



OCENET thanks International Education Coordinator Kathy Sigmund-Scheepers

Following six years as the International Education Coordinator, Kathy Sigmund-Scheepers has decided to return to the classroom. She leaves a legacy of significant contributions to international education not only within the OCDSB, but also with her leadership roles in national and international initiatives. Through networking with local schools, she guided the growth of the OCDSB International Certificate Program (ICP) to all of the high schools in the district; more than 450 students are currently enrolled in the ICP. She also was the lead teacher in organizing several major international student exchange programs, including those with Aix-Marseilles in France and with Yamate-Gakuin in Japan. OCENET greatly appreciates her hard work, leadership and dedication to encouraging global citizenship and cultural awareness for students and staff across the OCDSB.

Meet OCENET: Dahlia Liwsze



Dahlia Liwsze,
Project Coordinator
Academic Programs

Each issue of *Global Connections* includes a feature interview with one of the OCENET team

1. What are some of your main roles at OCENET?

I am a “jack-of-all-trades.” Some of my main roles include entering payments and refunds into QuickBooks, doing wire transfers, issuing invoices and letters of acceptance, and processing applications.

2. What aspects of your job do you enjoy most?

First and foremost, I love the team I work with. They're great people. I also like the variety of tasks that I do, whether it be helping to process applications or payments, writing articles for the newsletter, or getting to know the students when I help chaperone a student trip.

3. What have been some of your accomplishments at OCENET that you are most proud of?

I'm happy to have worked in two of the three main departments at OCENET. I covered a maternity leave at the Young People's Language School (YPLS), which gave me daily contact with international students (and often with their host parents as well) and experience in helping to support students and the YPLS department. The bulk of my time at OCENET though has been spent working in the Ottawa International Student Programs (OISP) department with a larger group of colleagues and where the majority of international student applications are processed for student placements in OCDSB schools.

4. What new projects are you working on at OCENET?

I am working on coordinating OCENET's fifth annual International Education Info Fair. It involves having contact with the schools, sponsors, presenters, and exhibitors and making sure all of the other details such as workshops, catering, registration, etc. are taken care of. I am grateful to my wonderful co-workers who are helping me.

5. What are some of your interests outside of work?

I love concerts and live music and try to go to as many shows as I can. I volunteered at the Ottawa Fringe Festival for the first time last summer and hope to volunteer again this year. I also love reading, writing/blogging, travelling, watching movies, and spending time with family and friends.

International Education Fair returns November 2019

by Dahlia Liwsze

As our world continues to change and get smaller due to technological advances and other factors, our role as global citizens becomes even more important. This is what OCENET's popular annual International Education Info Fairs strive to relay to student participants. Through workshops and exhibitor booths run by organizations such as the Aga Khan Foundation Canada and YES Canada, students learn

about exchange opportunities and ways they can help make a difference in the world both locally and globally. They also receive information about the International Certificate Program (ICP) offered at 23 OCDSB schools.

“We wanted to highlight opportunities that were both local and international in order to show that developing global citizenship skills does

not necessarily mean that travel is essential; thinking global but acting local has always been at the heart of the fair,” said Kathy Sigmund-Scheepers, the International Education Coordinator and ICP program director, who coordinated three of the past four info fairs.

Unfortunately, a snowstorm forced the cancellation of the fair in 2018, but the Info Fair will be back in November 2019.

OCENET staff rally for the Education Foundation of Ottawa



Team KHAN-uks (l-r)
Kari Hanes, Geoff Best and
Kevin Orange

For a few weeks this coming summer, three adventuresome OCENET staff will take on 10,000 kilometers through 12 different countries in a 19-year-old Toyota Yaris to raise funds for the Education Foundation of Ottawa.

They are tackling the Mongol Rally and will start in Prague, travel through many borders, cross Mongolia, and finish in Russia. There's no backup, no

support, and no set route; just their team (and almost 500 other rally teams following their own routes!) in a tiny car with a 1200cc engine the team bought in England.

Team KHAN-uks have been busy preparing by learning about map-reading and navigation with a compass, brushing up on shifting gears on a manual transmission, as well as basic car maintenance.

The rally team wishes to thank the students and staff at Gloucester High School for their help in setting up a website and helping to promote this charity rally.

Follow along with the adventures of Team KHAN-uks on their website and please consider making a donation to support the Education Foundation of Ottawa at: <https://khanucks.com/team-khanucks/>

OCENET Tip Sheet #13

Using “International Days” For Teaching Global Issues



While there are literally thousands of inane and mundane “International Days” such as World Toothache Day (February 9th) and International Hug Your Cat Day (June 4), there are many other days throughout the year designated to serious global issues. These dates, can serve as a way for raising awareness amongst students about world concerns. Used in combination with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>], these “International Days” can support learning outcomes.

Here is a sample calendar which indicates just one important “International Day” per month:

January	February	March	April
24th: International Day of Education	21st: International Mother Language Day	22nd: World Water Day	7th: World Health Day
May	June	July	August
3rd: Press Freedom Day	5th: World Environment Day	17th: World Day for International Justice	12th: International Youth Day
September	October	November	December
8th: World Literacy Day	24th: United Nations Day	16th: International Day for Tolerance	10th: Human Rights Day

Additional information and resources can be found at the following links:

<https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/international-days>

<https://gradeup.co/important-national-international-days-dates-ssc-exams-i-3ed489cd-5b01-11e6-99ff-f7386cdc481a>

<https://kalender-365.de/international-days.php>



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OCENET Bulletin Board

OCDSB STAFF:

OCENET has completely revised its handbook for schools entitled "What you need to know about welcoming and hosting international students and educators: A Guidebook for OCDSB Administrators and Teachers." **Look for it in September 2019.**

STUDENTS: OCDSB/OCENET International Study Abroad Bursaries

Application Forms, FAQ's, Application Deadlines, Contact Information, etc.
Information is available at:
www.educationfoundationottawa.ca/helping-students-2/bursary/ocdsbocenet-international-study-abroad-bursary



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Canada Homestay Network
Incorporating Canada Homestay International
Serving Canada from Coast to Coast

Thinking About Becoming A Homestay Host?

Among the many benefits of being a Homestay host:

- make a significant difference to the life of a student from another country
- learn about people from other cultures
- make friends across the world
- introduce your children to an intercultural experience
- share Canadian culture and life in Ottawa
- Host Support 24/7
- receive an honorarium to cover expenses

Visit "Hosts" at www.canadahomestaynetwork.ca

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S LANGUAGE SCHOOL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Academic English
Leadership and
Outdoor Education Programs
Summer Study

If you have an international education story that should be included in *Global Connections*, let us know.

Please direct any comments, questions, or suggestions to:
ross.laing@ocdsb.ca



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