

This past semester OCENET and OCDSB schools hosted international students from **48** countries around the world...with international students attending **20** high schools and **19** elementary schools throughout the OCDSB.

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## OCENET rebounds following the worst of the pandemic



Students participating in the OCDSB's Aix-en Provence exchange enjoying their experiences in the Ottawa area at the Museum of History with the iconic view of Parliament Hill in the background across the Ottawa River. Following the travel restrictions imposed by the pandemic, OCENET is pleased to see the return of in-person student groups and teacher training programs. See their stories on pages 2, 4, and 5.

## Korea Forum 2022 hosts over 70 International Certificate students

Following an “interruption” of several years because of pandemic protocols, the ICP Korea Forum returned on November 24 at the Korean Cultural Centre (KCC) on Elgin Street. More than 70 International Certificate Program (ICP) students from many of the 23 OCDSB secondary schools that offer the ICP were in attendance.

The event began with an address from the newly appoint-

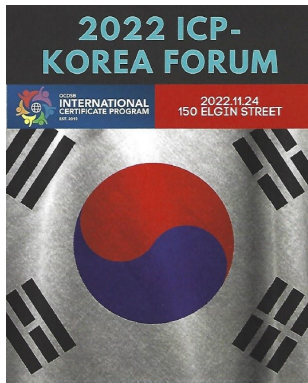
ed Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Lim Woongsoon. Ambassador Lim emphasized the importance of the sharing of information between different cultures to foster understanding and cooperation. His Excellency’s address to the students was his first official duty as Ambassador, as he had only just presented his Letter of Credence to the Governor General of Canada, Mary Si-

*continued on page 2*



Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Lim Woongsoon, welcomed the audience of 70 OCDSB International Certificate students to Ottawa’s the Korean Cultural Centre on Elgin Street

## ICP Korea Forum 2022 (cont'd)



ICP students at the closing of the Korea Forum 2022 – photo by Hayoung Cho

mon, the day before.

KCC staff members Ms. Sungeun Lee, KCC Director, and Ms. Min Jeong Kim welcomed the students to the KCC and hosted an entertaining and interactive online game about Korean traditions and popular culture.

Sean Oussoren, OCENET International Education Coordinator, then introduced each ICP student presentation about Korea. Over the course of the morning and early afternoon a wide range of topics were explored in 10 student presentations. Anya Wat-

son and Dina Keshavarz from Nepean HS presented on the topic *Secondary Education in South Korea*. Jessica Schmidt of West Carleton SS delivered a presentation entitled *Korean Language 101: Introduction to Hangul*. A vigorous debate amongst six students from five different schools addressed the issue of *South Korea's Mandatory Military Service*. Students Jana Othman, Elif Kilic and Cindy Zhao from Earl of March SS, AY Jackson SS, and Merivale HS provided insights into their experiences as participants in the the *Jeju Youth Forum*. These are just a few of the informative presentations delivered by the ICP

students.

The day concluded with a group photo and a lunch of a variety of Korean foods.

As in past years, the Korean Cultural Centre was a generous supporter and partner with the OCDSB International Certificate Program. Many thanks to Ambassador Lim and the staff at the Korean Cultural Centre. In every respect the KCC lives up to its mandate, which is “to enhance Korea-Canada relations by promoting mutual understanding between Koreans and Canadians through the sharing of Korean culture.”

## Ottawa-Provence student exchange back on track



Students on the Aix Provence exchange received new t-shirts at South Carleton HS



On a beautiful day in late October, students on the exchange learned new skills including cooking hot dogs over a fire and making S'mores at the MacSkimming Outdoor Education Centre

Since 2018-2019, with the exception of the pandemic hiatus, OCDSB secondary schools and partner schools from the Provence and Nice region in southern France have participated in an international student exchange program. This exchange program is facilitated by OCENET International Education Coordinator, Sean Oussoren.

The program has grown from 15 local participants in its initial stages to 40 students now in the exchange program representing 13 OCDSB secondary schools. These students and their families hosted French students for 5 weeks this Fall and the Canadian students will be travelling to the Provence area from March 25–April 29 for the reciprocal part of the exchange.

While in Canada the French students saw many aspects of life in Ottawa as well as experiencing Canadian culture by living with a local family and attending an OCDSB school. They saw a Senators hockey game and enjoyed 5-pin bowling as well as trip to visit Niagara Falls, the CN Tower, and Montreal.

There are many benefits of this type of international student exchange. The students are learning to apply their language skills with much more confidence in real world settings as well as learning to problem-solve and experience a new culture over a prolonged period. Along with all of these attributes of the exchange, the students and their families develop intercultural connections that endure for many years.

### **International Exchanges**

**Explore opportunities for OCDSB students to participate in group or individual exchanges!**

**Visit:**  
<https://ocenet.ocdsb.ca/exchanges>

**Contact:**  
**Mr Sean Oussoren**  
**International Education Coordinator**

**613-239-0314, Ext. 2108**



## Ottawa-Chengdu partners in *People-to-People* educational initiatives



The OCDSB Director of Education, Camille Williams-Taylor, delivering her opening address to the Ottawa-Chengdu People-to-People Exchange Month at the newly opened Maple Leaf Kindergarten in Chengdu, China

For the past six years, OCENET has been a partner with the Chengdu Chenghua District Education Bureau in sharing educational ideas and practices.

Each November there are a series of events and educational activities that take place during the Ottawa-Chengdu People-to-People Exchange Month. This year the opening and closing ceremonies took place at the newly opened Maple Leaf School with a student population of 300 kindergarten students. Many of the students contributed with performances for the audience of educators.

Several OCDSB and OCENET staff were involved in this project and presented at discussion forums with Chengdu educators. Sarah Pope, Principal at W.O. Mitchell ES, delivered a presentation entitled “How do schools use community resources to

carry out educational activities.” Following her presentation she indicated she was honoured to participate and “the questions from other participants provided me with a chance to reflect on aspects of my teaching practice that I had not fully considered.” OCENET’s Constantine Ioannou presented on PD and inclusive classroom practices. Pinecrest



Ms. Xiumei Zhou, Head of the Preparatory Team for Sino Canada Schools addressing the audience of educators in Chengdu and Ottawa

Public School Principal Naya Markastaskis contributed to the exchange of ideas with a presentation entitled “Working with Community Partners, Improving Student Engagement, and a Sense of Belonging.” Each of these presentations were translated, and educators from both locations had an opportunity for questions and answers.

OCENET was involved in several other events that took place throughout the People-to-People Exchange Month. In keeping with the opening of the new Maple Leaf School for kindergarten students, two online workshops developed by Vivian Bibby about practical applications of the Ontario Kindergarten Program were delivered online to Chenghua kindergarten teachers.



A screenshot of Janice Xue, Director of Studies, UASK Education (bottom left) and Vivian Bibby, OCDSB Principal (bottom right) presenting to Chengdu educators.

Much of the organization of the educational events and initiatives during the Ottawa-Chengdu People-to-People Exchange Month were coordinated through and translated by Mr. Alex Mao of UASK Education. His many contributions to the evolution of this successful partnership and its continuation have been greatly appreciated by all involved.



Opening Ceremony in Chengdu



OCDSB students at Parliament Hill's Centennial Flame at the Opening Ceremony



Pinecrest Public School Principal Naya Markastaskis addressing the educators in Chengdu on “Working with Community Partners, Improving Students Engagement, and Sense of Belonging”



Closing Ceremony in Chengdu featuring a performance by students in the strings orchestra from Canterbury HS



Closing Ceremony in Chengdu



## Teacher training returns to in-person educator visits

The first of two groups of 45 teachers from Galicia, Spain, arrived in October and are shown here taking a short rest to pose on the steps of the East Block on Parliament Hill following a walking tour of the downtown area. These teachers are assigned to observe OCDSB teachers and their classes to study Canadian teaching practices with a particular focus on ways to enhance their English language teaching with their students in Spain. The second group of Galician teachers arrived in November. OCENET is pleased to see the return of teacher training groups.



## Spanish teacher reflects on Ottawa PD opportunities



*Carlos has participated in six visits to Ottawa to attend OCENET teacher training programs*

For nearly 15 years, groups of experienced educators from Galicia in northwest Spain have been coming to Ottawa to participate in OCENET's renowned teacher training programs.

These visiting teachers work in a variety of schools from elementary to post-secondary in Spain. The focus while in Ottawa is on language education using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The teachers are here for four weeks, first attending professional development sessions at OCENET followed by assigned placements in local schools with mentoring from OCDSB teachers.

One of the Galician teachers is Carlos who has just recently completed his

sixth time in the teacher training program.

He first participated in 2010 and has found the learning so beneficial he has continued to reapply. Carlos currently teaches computer science to post-secondary students in Santiago.

He is reflective about his professional development opportunities in Ottawa and indicates that each visit has been very different and what he has learned each time has influenced his teaching practices.

This time his placement has been with Continuing Education at 440 Albert St. and he observed many ESL language classes for students just beginning to learn English. Many of the students are refugees from war torn parts of the world and he

was struck by how remarkable the local teachers are in creating a positive and safe learning environment for people who have endured so much trauma. He describes the students learning in "an oasis of peace."

Carlos says that he will apply many of the teaching strategies with his own students, especially using empathic understanding as a way of motivating students with learning challenges.

Carlos loves Ottawa and has stayed with the same host family, with whom he has developed a close friendship, on all six of his teacher training courses.

He noted how he has been impressed by Canada as an example of a country where diversity is truly valued.

## *In their own words: Spanish teachers on teacher training in Ottawa*

Most issues of *Global Connections* highlight the experiences of OCENET international students studying in OCDSB schools or educators participating in one of OCENET's teacher training programs.

### Lidia



A vice principal in Ferrol, Lidia is currently a teacher of English for advanced students at an Official School of Languages. During her time at OCDSB schools she had the opportunity to observe classrooms at Henry Munro MS, Gloucester HS and Colonel By SS. In the many classes she attended she saw the ways in which OCDSB educators teach ESL, English, Spanish, Core French, among other subject areas. She found the teachers at all three schools she visited to be welcoming and helpful, and was particularly interested in strategies teachers used, including games, to motivate their students. She definitely will use many of the pedagogical techniques she observed in her own teaching in Spain. She also observed that she was surprised to find the Canadian system tends to allow teachers more flexibility than in Spain.

***"I wanted to learn about the educational system in Canada and was interested in the different types of schools. All the lessons I attended were highly enriching and will help me with my teaching methods in the future."***

- Lidia,  
vice principal and teacher  
from Galicia

### Arcadio



Arcadio hails from Ourense, but is currently working in A Coruña, a beautiful port city in the northwest of Galicia. At his school in Spain, Arcadio teaches Ethics, Philosophy and Psychology to students from Grades 7-12. During his time in the Ottawa area, Arcadio attended Bell High School and observed Grade 7-12 classes in a wide range of subject areas, including ESL, French Immersion, Music, Arts, English Politics and Science. He was very appreciative of all the teachers at Bell HS, and especially the mentorship of immersion teacher, Allison Fuisz. He applied to attend OCENET's teacher training program to improve his English language skills and learn new teaching methodologies. He finds that Canadian teachers have more autonomy in the classroom than in Spain. He very much enjoys Ottawa and its diverse population.

***"I have learned some practices to foster a creative environment and an effective partnership between teacher and students that supports students' leadership through deep learning tasks."***

- Arcadio  
teacher from Galicia

### Auria



A teacher of adult students in a large language school in Galicia, Auria was assigned to observe at Brookfield HS and was notably impressed by the ways in which her mentor teacher, Michael Kellerman, motivated his students in his English classes. She also appreciated the opportunities to visit ESL and French classes. In the second part of her placement she attended ESL classes comprised of students new to Canada and also saw how language classes could effectively be taught through online instruction. She feels she learned more skills about how to be an empathetic and effective teacher. One big difference she noted is that Spanish language instruction is more focussed on content and correct grammar whereas Canadian language teachers stressed skills and applying the language. Auria wishes to return to Ottawa again.

***"It is great to see what other educators are doing in other places doing different things and how they deal with other realities. This experience has been important for my professional development."***

- Auria,  
teacher from Galicia



## OCENET Champion: Carolyn Turner, Gloucester High School



- Carolyn Turner,  
Student Services,  
Gloucester HS



International students held a farewell party for Ms. Turner (front row center) in the Student Services offices at Gloucester HS

*Starting in this issue, Global Connections will highlight individuals who have been key in supporting OCENET international students.*

### What are some of your roles with the international students?

My main roles include welcoming our international students to Gloucester HS, orientation, arranging class timetables, and liaising with Homestay. In addition, I work with international students on next steps, such as post-secondary plans and scholarships if they choose to continue studying in Canada. In short, I fulfill the many roles of a guidance counsellor including addressing mental health issues when they arise.

### How long have you worked with international students?

I have worked as the main contact between Gloucester HS and OCENET for the past 12 years. Since I started Gloucester's number of international students has grown from 25 students to 160 just prior to Covid, including many short-term and one semester students. Currently there are 67 international students at Gloucester. Over the years I have seen many changes in the growth of the international student programs, including the accommodation of several transgender students.

### What are some of the reasons you decided to become involved as a lead support person and advocate for international students?

I joined the staff at Gloucester as an ESL teacher in 1997 and had international students in my ESL classes, and this experience motivated me to become more involved with the international students. In my view and that of the Gloucester staff and students, the international students add so much to the culture of the school in terms of the different perspectives people from other countries bring and the enduring friendships that evolve....everyone benefits with the presence of the international students.

### What are some of the initiatives that your school has taken to serve international students?

We have many ways of supporting the international students at Gloucester, but one of the key initiatives has been the increasing involvement of the international Certificate Program (ICP) students who are of great assistance in providing peer support. One recent initiative has been the creation of an International Friendship Club which meets every Friday to play games and offer social connections.

### Which aspects of your work with the international students do you find most rewarding?

It is rewarding to see the international students grow and succeed and that I have

had a role in their progress. Many students arrive with limited English language skills and make significant improvements. Graduation is always very special. At Gloucester, we strongly encourage international students to get involved in extra-curricular activities such as sports and drama. The international students who get involved seem to be the most fulfilled and happy and tend to make strong friendships amongst themselves and Canadian students.

### What has been the impact of your work with the international students upon you and what have you learned from them?

I've learned so much from international students. Most of all, I have learned the value of risk-taking since every one of the international students has taken a big risk in choosing to come to a foreign country where everything is different, including language and culture in many cases.

### What is next for you?

I have recently accepted a secondment with DND and will be serving as a Guidance Counsellor for the children of armed services personnel who are posted internationally. It's sort of a twist on what I have been doing here at Gloucester HS except that the Canadian students will be becoming the "international students" where their families are posted. I will greatly miss the international students at Gloucester and working with staff at OCENET.

## ICP students see diplomacy first hand at the Greek Embassy



Members of the staff at the Greek Embassy in Ottawa, Global Affairs Canada and nine ICP students participated in planning the visit for a diplomatic visit

The International Certificate Program (ICP) introduces OCDSB secondary students to wide range of leadership opportunities, both internationally and locally.

On December 6th, nine ICP students from seven high schools visited the Greek Embassy and were involved

in learning about Greece's politics, culture and businesses by observing embassy and Global Affairs staff make preparations for the visit of a senior ranking diplomat to Canada in order to recognize the 80th year of Greece-Canada diplomatic relations.

This was a unique learning experience for the ICP students. Following opening remarks from Her Excellency Ambassador Konstantina Athanassiadou, students collaborated with the Directorate Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in Greece) and Mr. Michael Bonser, Director

General, Europe bilateral Relations and Advocacy, Global Affairs Canada. The students were privileged to get an inside look at many of the protocols and logistics involved in planning a diplomatic event. The students greatly appreciated the experience.

This is an example of the opportunities available to the almost 700 students enrolled in the International Certificate Program in 23 OCDSB schools. To learn more about the ICP, visit:

[www.ocdsb.ca/icp](http://www.ocdsb.ca/icp)

## OCENET staff learn intercultural competencies

by **Dahlia Liwsze,**  
Administrative Assistant

As someone who values learning, education, and communication, I jumped at the opportunity to enroll in Bow Valley College's Intercultural Competencies for Leaders certificate program. The offering through the Calgary-based college is comprised of four online courses that take 48 hours to complete.

My first course this fall was Intercultural Competence I where I developed an awareness of the basic skills needed to interact and work more effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. These included learning about culture, stereotypes, cultural bias, and

different communication styles.

I have just completed my Indigenous Awareness: Engaging Diversity, Equity, and Reconciliation course where I learned about the history and worldview of Indigenous peoples and treaties. I was also reminded of the discrimination and hardships that Indigenous peoples continue to face today and how important reconciliation is.

I look forward to continue my learning by studying the two next courses, Intercultural Competence 2 and Supervisory Skills in Intercultural Teams, next winter and spring respectively.

Being more interculturally competent is extremely important in my daily work with international students and their agents as it ensures that I will be respectful and effective in my communication. I will be attentive and a better listener and a more caring and empathetic person to students who are in a new country, often learning a new language, and adjusting to a new culture. I love working with international students and want to do whatever I can to better help them with their academic endeavors.

## OCENET Photo Contest Winners

Each semester, as part of their student orientation, new international students attend an online photography tutorial followed by a contest. Below are recent winners in each of the three entry categories:



At School Category  
- Lennart Mallon



Around Ottawa Category -  
Yiqing Chen



With Homestay Category -  
Mick Steppe



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## OCENET Bulletin Board

### STUDENTS!

Interested in learning a new language, earning a high school credit, and completing the language requirement for Component I of the International Certificate Program?

See the link below for registration information about the OCDSB Secondary International Languages Program:

<https://forms.ocdsb.ca/Forms/Secondary-International-Languages-Program-Registration>



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

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## Divisions of OCENET



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INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS  
Elementary School  
High School  
University Preparation



OTTAWA INTERNATIONAL  
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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](mailto:ross.laing@ocdsb.ca)



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