

# An adventure in governance

## ■ ROTARY CLUB PROGRAM GIVES STUDENTS A CLOSE-UP LOOK AT FEDERAL POLITICS

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Ottawa is filled with some of the nation's greatest historical landmarks, but what really caught Kristen Groom's eye during a recent visit was the country's freshest arrivals.

Touring the capital in Rotary Club's Adventure in Citizenship, the Fonthill 16-year-old found the last day of her jam-packed itinerary, at the Library and Archives of Canada, a highlight where she and her fellow travellers welcomed newly-sworn citizens.

"That was my favourite part of the whole trip, just to see the smiles on their faces after having it written in pen that they were now citizens of Canada," Groom said Tuesday to members of Rotary Club of Welland, which sponsored her as local representative for the July excursion.

The Adventure in Citizenship program, which dates back to 1951, sends outstanding senior high school students from across Canada on a four-day trip to Ottawa that is designed to develop their potential as community leaders.

According to Rotary's website, more than 10,000 students to date have participated in the program, including now Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, former prime minister Joe Clark and former federal NDP leader Ed Broadbent.

Groom, a student entering Grade 11 at E.L. Crossley secondary school, started her April 30 to May 4 trip of a lifetime with a 30-minute Airbus ride



STAFF PHOTO J.T. LEWIS

**Rotary Club of Welland's youth services director Cheryle Thompson presented Kristen Groom, 16, of Fonthill, with a certificate following her Adventure in Citizenship. The program saw about 200 young people from Rotary clubs across Canada spend four days in Ottawa learning about our government.**

from Toronto to Ottawa, where she met her host Rotary family and later mingled with some of the more than 200 teens who were participating in this year's Adventure in Citizenship program.

Her agenda included a law and citizenship "mock trial" to illustrate the court process, a tour of the city that included stops at the World Pavilion and Canadian Museum of Civilization, and a true French-Canadian dinner at Camp Fortune, where she also learned a few customary dance steps.

At the House of Commons, Groom and her crew met with pages, had an informative talk about what the House clerk does and heard an address from

the Speaker of the House of Commons, Peter Milliken, before touring the Parliament buildings.

"We had to be there early because the security was worse than at the airport," Groom quipped of a day that started with tired teens assembling at Centre Block at 7:45 a.m.

Groom, who in an interview said she finds herself now paying closer attention to federal politics, said the trip also afforded them the opportunity to visit the RCMP Technical and Protective Operations Facilities, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to hear presentations from a panel of foreign diplomats and the University of Ottawa to speak with professors.

She also witnessed the RCMP Musical Ride.

"That was quite impressive with the choreography and how they trained the horses for the performance," said Groom.

Her trip to Ottawa was her second excursion with the assistance of Rotary Club of Welland, which also helped send her to a mission in Mexico, where during the March break in 2004 she helped build two shelter homes.

"I am truly fortunate to have such a strong and wonderful relationship with Rotary," Groom said.

"I hope it will continue for years to come and as I get older can in turn help youth of tomorrow."