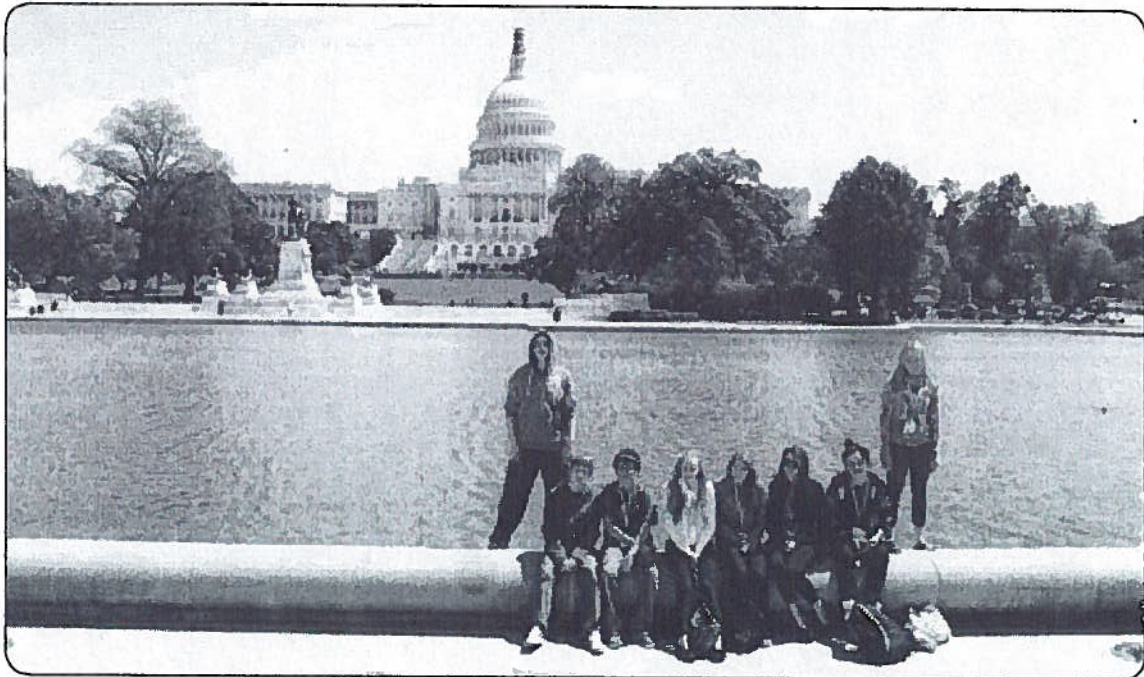


History comes to life on Washington trip



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In front of the U.S. capitol building, left to right, Junior high students Jack Purvis, Noah Curle, Quinn Thomas, Mckyla Poponick, Sarah Brunette, Ari Kowalchuk, Stevie-Rae Mowat and Jessica Eblie. ESJH teacher Kathleen Elgar and principal Wayne Davies accompanied the students on the trip.

By Donna Maxwell

He's only in Grade 9 but Noah Curle might already have taken the trip of his lifetime.

Curle was part of a group from Ecole Selkirk Junior High that travelled to Washington, D.C., and witnessed their classroom lessons come to life.

The trip, sponsored by the Asper Foundation, gives students the opportunity to visit places of historical significance like the Holocaust Museum, the Smithsonian Institute and the Lincoln Memorial and Curle says it was an amazing journey.

The museums were impressive, he said, but standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I have a dream" speech in 1963 couldn't be topped.

"You stand there and look out and you can almost imagine," Curle said.

"It was a really special feeling."

Eight students, along with principal Wayne Davies and teacher Kathleen

Elgar, took the May 22-25 trip, along with hundreds of other students from across Canada.

Elgar said the trip, which offers students a deeper understanding of the human rights issues they learn about in school, is open to Grade 9 students.

It's partially funded by the Asper Foundation, but students who choose to go have to do 16 hours of volunteering and either fundraise or pay for part of their own trip.

Though she's been to Washington before Elgar said experiencing the sites with her students was a blast.

"It was amazing," she said.

"I think one of the coolest parts was just seeing the reactions of the kids, how awe struck they were."

Jessica Eblie said the museums were incredible but she also enjoyed meeting like-minded kids from across the country.

The trip used to be open to Jewish schools only but was opened up to

others a few years ago.

Eblie said talking with Jewish students brought a new perspective to the Holocaust, which she said was "hard to talk about" with them.

"It was pretty heart wrenching."

Elgar said she was impressed with how quickly the students made friends with other kids from other provinces.

And since their daytime schedules were full of really heavy topics, they tried to provide some lighter entertainment in the evening, like performances at the Kennedy Centre for Performing Arts.

The four-day trip was packed and Curle said they were on the go from 7 a.m. to about 11 p.m. everyday.

"When we came back we were spent," he laughed.

The students shared their experiences with their peers this Tuesday during the school's second annual Holocaust Memorial Service in the gym.