

Historical immersion in Washington, D.C.

For the past eight years, WHS students, through support of the Asper Foundation, have visited the Holocaust Museum

By Jason Wilson

If the past is prologue it's still part of the overall story.

That's why for eight consecutive years Woodstock High School (WHS) has sent a group of students to Washington, D.C. to visit the Holocaust Museum and other historical landmarks. These students are learning about history in a way that simply reading about it from a textbook may not do justice.

"I just think the experience will stick with you for the rest of your life rather than just learning it out of a textbook," student Colby Seely said. "I think that it will stick with all of us for the rest of our lives and it will stick with future generations to come."

The trip provides a balance to classroom learning, a hands-on piece of travel that mixes enjoyment with education.

"It was an amazing opportunity and experience," teacher Trudy Stiles said Wednesday night at their retrospective at the high school theatre. "We had an excellent group of young women and men. I have already had emails from the Asper Foundation. We're welcome back any time because the kids are exemplary. They set the bar very, very high."

The Asper Foundation, the partner for the trip since the school first got involved in 2003, will no longer be involved in trips to Washington, D.C. after 2013. The foundation is currently in

the plans to build the Canadian Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg, the city where the foundation formed.

The plan is that WHS will take part in the next two years of trips to Washington and if the Asper Foundation continues its program with the move to Winnipeg, WHS expects to continue to take part.

The eight months of planning and fundraising proved to be worth it for the experience for the students involved. It provided them with a glimpse into the past and a desire to learn from it to ensure the future isn't a result of repeated mistakes and human atrocities.

"Ever since Grade 8, I was basically fascinated with the Holocaust and I've been fascinated with history since I was a little kid," Seely said. "What I really liked about the trip was learning what happened and what humanity did and how we can correct our wrongs and things we can look forward to preventing."

A total of 40 student went to D.C. and Stiles said while some of the volunteering and fundraising got off to a rocky start, by the end those involved were charmed by the project.

"I thought it was really interesting and that I'd enjoy it," student Alisha Boucher said. "There was a bunch to learn about human rights and the Holocaust program."

The annual journey down to our southern



PHOTO BY JASON WILSON

Most of the 40 students who travelled to Washington D.C. to visit the Holocaust Museum and other landmarks and historical sites shared their experience last week in the WHS theatre. The trip for Grade 9 students has gone for eight years in conjunction with the Asper Foundation, teaching the importance of global human rights.

neighbour to visit the museum, the Washington Monument, the Smithsonian, the Lincoln Memorial and more landmarks is entertaining and educational but on a level beyond academic.

"Education of the Holocaust is so it never

happens again and that the human rights of people around us and around the world are not infringed upon," Stiles said. "It's to develop an awareness of global community."