



Above and Beyond

CANADIAN STUDENT LEADERSHIP NEWS AND VIEWS

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Don't Let Change be a Bug

Intel introduced their first-generation microchip in 1971. It is now 90,000 times more energy-efficient, 3,500 times faster, and 60,000 times lower in cost. Intel engineers calculated that if a 1971 VW Beetle improved at the same rate, it would go about 300,000 miles per hour, get two million miles per gallon of gas, and it would cost about 4 cents to purchase. The change that has occurred in our present world of technology has been exponential, while other things have not changed as much.

Very few VW Beetles are being driven today, but those faster microchips and the AI software they now use are changing everything from the device in our pocket to the fridge at home. We don't realize how exponential this change really is because we are living it and attempting to adjust to it as the challenges come straight at us.

CSLC 2023

Join us for CSLC 2023 – Harboursing Leadership – in beautiful Saint John, New Brunswick! From Oct 11-14, 2023, student leaders and advisors from across Canada will join us in-person for keynote speakers, workshops, leadership development, local experiences and more! This conference will be a hotel-accommodation conference for both students and advisors.

Visit www.studentleadership.ca for more information. CSLA Members will have first access to register.

To join, please contact Dave Conlon – dconlon@studentleadership.ca

Check out our website for more info.

The tech challenges we experience are not being accompanied by the societal changes that are necessary to keep up. Just ask today's parents about how they are coping with the use of and access to digital technology with their children and adolescents. Our societal change moves in a linear increase, and we are already behind the curve on adapting to this newer, faster, all-encompassing world of connectivity and information. We experience this challenge daily, and many people are choosing to go to the political fringes of the right or left for their answers to societal changes.

Leadership students are at the forefront of this world of change as they are living it and experiencing it in our schools. Student leadership has always been more than learning how to run a successful dance or spirit rally, but now the real impending challenge is for our students to be ready to adapt and live within their changing world.

CSLA is here with the skills and tools to help our students build a better world. Trust our leadership conferences to bring keynotes that will challenge thinking and provide information on how to cope. The amount of change we now experience is not a bug in the system: it is the new world. Trust CSLA's support to help your students learn new programs, skills, and approaches for success.

Dave C.

Rotary Youth Exchange

One of the great gift of sports
is learning how to fail in public.

James Clear

We are told the world is more interconnected now than at any time before. We connect, yet we seem to have trouble understanding one another – which doesn't solve any problems, it just creates more! That's where programs like the *Rotary Youth Exchange Program* help – it connects youth with peers from around the world and allows them to become a part of and build their own community in another country.



The program sends around eight thousand 15-18-year-old students around the world each year on a year-long exchange program where they are completely immersed in the culture of another country. Students live with 1-3 host families throughout their year and attend school in their new home, allowing them to learn a new language, become comfortable in a new culture (and culturally competent in general!), and experience life in a new place.

The greatest part of the program is letting you create a life in a completely different place. In a year, you can become a part of a community where they speak a different language, use different hand gestures, have a different sense of humour, all of which you'll understand too. You can order your favourite drink at a local café, go shopping and understand the signs, and maybe have someone ask you for directions because you look and sound like a local. You can find a host family that will come to feel like real family members that you cherish and stay connected with far beyond your exchange. You can make friends at school and connect with them about issues that are important to you as well as issues that you never before considered. Ask questions about important topics and understand matters from a completely different perspective – which will help you contribute to a more understanding and connected world of the future! In a very short time, you can develop friendships with people from so many other countries. You may make plans to visit them, and truly make the world a smaller place by knowing someone – knowing a friend, on every continent.

These connections with friends, families, community members, will follow you throughout your life. They can open doors, make new opportunities possible – and maybe make you consider choosing paths you never would have glanced at before. The *Rotary Youth Exchange Program* holds promise for every youth. There are scholarship opportunities to ensure everyone has access to the program, and each student is prepared before leaving and upon arrival to ensure they are safe and ready to take on the challenge of a youth exchange year.

Are you ready to connect? We're ready to help you. Reach out to your local Rotary Club to ask about their application process; you won't regret this opportunity of a lifetime.

Alida Campbell

SLIDE PRESENTATION SKILLS

Rehearse your material. Your first time through the slide deck should not be your first time presenting.

You are the expert – not your slide. The more you depend on your slide the more it looks like the slide is the expert.

Be conversational and likeable. Be yourself. You are not a news bulletin. You are a podcast.

Don't read your slides!!! The slide should be a headline and you discuss the bullet points listed without reading them.

Respect copyright. Don't use any copyrighted images. A watermark from a photo site means you have not paid for the image.

Use the same font family throughout your presentation. Use the same theme and style of graphic images throughout your presentation.

Human Rights Travel Opportunity

EF Educational Tours is an education company that uses experiential travel to bring learning to life. At the core of EF's philosophy is the importance of creating empowering journeys that show students they can make an impact in the world.

That's why EF Educational Tours Canada is thrilled to offer a new six-day Human Rights Leadership program designed for Canadian educators and system leaders who want to make a difference.

Open your students' eyes to a different perspective on Canada and the world through an immersive leadership program at the world-class Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. Plus, deepen students' understanding of the diverse cultural groups in Manitoba when you visit French-speaking St. Boniface, admire the collection at the Qaumajuq Inuit Art Gallery, and participate in a workshop with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

The experience of a lifetime is waiting for you and your students!

To learn more and sign up for this impactful Human Rights Leadership program, please visit: eftours.ca/wpg

About EF Education First

Founded in Lund, Sweden, in 1965, EF Education First is the world leader in international education. EF offers students every imaginable way to see the world, experience a new culture, learn a language, or earn an academic degree. With a mission of opening the world through education, every EF program helps people build bridges across borders and cultures, spark mutual understanding, and create new opportunities for themselves. EF Educational Tours is a product that is part of the EF Education First family of companies. Today, EF has 52,000 employees working across 600+ schools and 119 countries.

For more information, visit eftours.ca.



photo: Mike Peters

It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it.

Lena Horne

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE FOR SPIRIT

Changing the language rather than cancelling an event is a healthy way to promote spirit and inclusivity.

Consider:

- Instead of *Red Neck Day* promote *Wear Flannel* or *Country Time*
- Change *Cross Dress* or *Gender Bender Day* to *Mix it Up*
- *White Out/Black Out* days become *Wear All White*, *Wear All Black*
- *Muffins with Mom* or *Doughnuts with Dad* can change to *Goodies with Grown-Ups*

Language does change, so don't be afraid to change your approach.

Be a TRUE Influencer

As I travel across Canada speaking to youth, I always take time to spend some 1-on-1 moments with the young people I'm about to do a presentation for. During these moments, I often ask them: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The number one answer I get back from them is: "Famous. I want to be famous."

We live in a world where young people are striving to increase their viewership online. They want more "followers." They want more "likes." They want to be seen as an "influencer." When I get this answer from young people, I immediately ask, "Famous for doing what?" And, 9 times out of 10, they respond with, "Anything. It doesn't matter. I just want to be famous."

I don't like this response. It goes against everything in my being. I share this feeling with the youth I'm talking to. And I tell them why.

When I was a kid, I dreamed of being a professional wrestler. My idols were guys like Hulk Hogan, Jake "The Snake" Roberts, and Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat. These men were my heroes. These were my "influencers." The amazing feats of athleticism and charisma they displayed in the wrestling ring inspired me. It developed a passion



for performance in me that I never lost. I just knew in my five-year-old childhood brain – "I have to do that."

I never grew up wanting to be a professional wrestler because I wanted to be rich and famous. I grew up wanting to be a professional wrestler simply because I loved it. I was passionate about it. I found something in wrestling that captivated my attention. And spawned my imagination. I found something I truly loved. And I just had to do it. Being "famous" for doing something I loved never crossed my mind.

Fast forward over thirty years. After years of determination, perseverance, and hardship, I find myself living my dream. I now find myself wrestling on a television show that airs

worldwide in 120 countries, in 150 million homes. And, I also find myself getting to share my adventures and lessons I've learned along the way with thousands of youth across North America as a professional speaker. A lot of the youth that I speak to are enamoured with the fact that I'm on television because in their eyes, it means that I'm "famous." I've achieved what they desire – to just be famous. It's in these moments that I find the need to share with them what really matters in life. And it sure isn't being "famous."

The truth is: it does matter that we become influencers. But, not the kind that just accrues an online following because of the clothes we wear or the shoes we're sporting. What matters is that we be a positive influence in this world rather than a

negative one. And we all have the power to be a positive influence in this world – if we simply make that choice.

I started a grassroots charity fundraising campaign called “Giv’er for Charity.” I began partnering with young fans I was meeting at wrestling shows and raising money for different local children’s charities. I was able to recognize the sphere of influence I operated in. Children looked up to me, and I wanted to use that positive influence and be able to spread it to others. Since I started “Giv’er for Charity” in 2018, together with young people I’ve connected with at my wrestling events, we’ve been able to raise over \$18,000 for different children’s charities across the country. I don’t tell this fact to youth to brag. I tell them this fact because I want it to inspire them. I want it to teach them a valuable lesson: You don’t have to be in the “big time” to make a big difference.

I wasn’t wrestling on national television when I started “Giv’er for Charity.” I wasn’t in the “big time.” I was essentially wrestling in the “minor leagues” of professional wrestling. The shows I wrestled on only had a few hundred people in attendance – not thousands.

As I started to focus on the quality of my human interactions rather than the quantity of my digital ones, my influence started to grow. The quantity of my influence grew because I focused on the quality of it. I used my influence with young people to try to help other people and be a light in the world. And guess what happened? A few years after I did that, I signed a contract with a major wrestling company and started wrestling worldwide. And my influence grew exponentially. But that was never the goal. The goal was to simply do what I love. Be a professional wrestler. And help some people along the way. Quantity follows quality.

When I share these stories with youth, the typical statement of, “I just want to be famous” changes. I start to hear from the hearts of young people. I start to hear that they actually desire to make a difference in the world. They want to help people. They want to inspire people to make the world a better place in some way.

I have a new passion now. I still have a passion to perform as a professional wrestler. The same passion that I had as a young five-year-old boy. But my passion has evolved. I have a passion to share stories with young people that ignites a newfound passion in them. A passion to be a true positive influencer in this world. I’m living out this passion every day. And I couldn’t be more grateful.

So yes... it’s true... everybody today wants to be an “influencer.” But I take pride in the fact that I have the ability to change some young people’s perspectives about what this really means. They want to be an influencer. A positive influencer. One that inspires good in those around them. And, in doing so, the cycle of positive influence continues. This is the key to being a TRUE influencer.

Cody Deaner
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The Power of “Are you Okay?”

Fairy tales are more than true:
not because they tell us that
dragons exist, but because
they tell us that dragons
can be beaten.

Neil Gaiman

MOONSHOT GOALS

As the spacecraft hovered over the moon, Michael Collins turned to Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin and said, “It’s amazing how quickly you adapt. It doesn’t seem weird at all to me to look out there and see the moon going by, you know?”

Three months later, after Al Bean walked on the moon during Apollo 12, he turned to astronaut Pete Conrad and said, “It’s kind of like the song: *Is that all there is?*” Conrad was relieved, because he secretly felt the same, describing his moonwalk as spectacular but not momentous.

Most mental upside comes from the thrill of anticipation – actual experiences tend to fall flat, and your mind quickly moves on to anticipating the next event. That’s how dopamine works.

If walking on the moon left astronauts underwhelmed, what does it say about our own earthly goals and expectations?

Morgan House

I strolled into the kitchen one midday to a barrage of directed frustrations from my mother: “why haven’t you done the dishes!? Or cleaned up around here!? You aren’t working, why don’t you do anything!?” Before I could get a word in, she continued, “You’re so selfish and lazy. You don’t do much of anything. You’re this... You’re that...”. This was uncharacteristic of my mother, and so I allowed her to finish her rant and storm off, allowing myself a moment to think.

My first inclination was to defend myself, naturally! Thinking to myself, ‘It was a day off work. I was only visiting home for the month. They were not my dishes. I am 22 years old, I can do whatever I want to with my room. And, I do contribute! Although I may not always be the model son, I do care.’ But then I considered how unlike my mum it was to have an outburst like this. She knew these things were not my fault. I knew I was not at fault. So, after giving her a few minutes I went to her bedroom, where she had retreated. I sat on the bed and asked, calmly and earnestly, “Mum, are you okay?” My mum looked at me, tears brimming, and began to cry. She sat down beside me and shared that she was, in fact, not okay. She apologized for taking it out on me. I forgave her. We hugged and smiled, wiping tears away. I encouraged her, told her I loved her, and asked if she needed anything from me. Having asked for some time, I left the room.

Asking the question held space for what she was really feeling and resulted in deeper connection, trust, and respect between us. Responding to her defensiveness with love, vulnerability, and a desire to understand created the safety for her to identify what was really going on. This was such a small moment, but one with a powerful and intimate impact. This is the opportunity of empathy.

Leadership often prioritizes the “big” or “important” traits and practices, but it is the small practices of leaders with their people that achieve the greatest impact. Receiving a defensive outburst or projection from a family member, friend, colleague, or student is all too common. Asking the question “are you okay?”, disarms a situation and provides a safe place. It says, ‘I see you’, and ‘you matter’. This is the small practice of empathy. It is intentionally setting aside our ego and need to defend, being willing to believe the best of someone even when their best is not on display. Empathy is a pivotal leadership skill that builds trust and connection, a cornerstone of the leader-follower relationship. The ability for a Leader to employ empathy, whether individually or in a group context, entails not merely awareness, but the capacity to understand and most importantly respond. Top 10 lists for leaders often include empathy, but what does it look like? Well, sometimes it looks like simply asking, “Are you okay?” And that can make all the difference.

Nikolas Wood

Academic Development Projects Coordinator

Renaissance College, UNB



Converting Potential to Leadership

Just because you don't have a title, that doesn't mean you're not a leader.

Here are five ways to demonstrate leadership, so you can recognize those moments, act on them and use them to make the argument on why you're the leader that your group needs:

1. Take responsibility

Take initiative when new assignments appear and be the first to volunteer for new tasks that are applicable to your skill set. Note: You don't need to volunteer for everything and you shouldn't. Take responsibility for your contributions – even when projects go wrong. Too many people try to shift blame and make excuses, but great leaders take ownership of problems and work to find lessons and solutions.

2. Include other people

Every organization wants leaders who believe that the success of the team outweighs the success of any individual. The best way to demonstrate that is by making sure others are included in meetings, brainstorming sessions and key decisions. The level to which you can involve others on your projects or offer to help others with their projects shows the level to which you're ready for leadership.

3. Speak up

Be willing to share your ideas in meetings, be willing to offer feedback to fellow students and your advisor, and be willing to champion ideas (yours or others) in meetings when decisions are being made. You don't have to be a loud, extroverted person who is constantly sharing your thoughts, but you do have to get your ideas out there. If you have trouble getting your voice heard during a group meeting, you can speak up privately with the people you want to hear your ideas – either during a one-on-one conversation or via email.

4. Ask questions

Asking questions isn't just a way to speak up when you don't have an idea to offer – although that can be the reason and it does work. Asking questions also shows your dedication and enthusiasm to the team and your ability to see things others may not see. And it provides you with the chance to make a contribution even when you're not submitting an idea.

5. Deliver

Always deliver what you promise. Get your work done on time and to the standard that's expected. When you volunteer for new assignments, make sure you can deliver on them as well.

If you practice the above 5 things, you'll become a leader – even before you're given that title – who is able to help your team do their best work ever.

David Burkus

Leadership is about creating an environment that good and hard-working people can come to work, grow, be challenged, feel safe and recognized for their value.

Sam Glenn

CHANGING MINDS ONLINE

Getting people to change their online stance on an issue is hard but possible. Here are some tips:

- Successful persuasive arguments tend to use calm words rather than emotional words.
- Words that are emotionally neutral or slightly “downbeat” are more persuasive than upbeat, happy words.
- Using words that are different from the ones used by the original poster is more effective than using the same words. Different words signal a different point of view.
- In back-and-forth dialogues between the original poster and a responder, the results are crystal clear: If you haven't persuaded the person by the fourth round, you never will.

Denise Cummins

Be impatient for action but patient for outcomes.

Maureen Bisognano

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To learn more about membership, go to: www.studentleadership.ca

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Canadian Student Leadership Association

Resources

Be sure to visit the CSLA website for more lesson plans, activity ideas, and a complete list of resources. studentleadership.ca



Canadian Student Leadership Association

Enough Leadership

There are enough opportunities for leadership in our school for everyone to have a seat at the table. Over the years, I have had many students tell me that they can't get involved in something because that position is already taken, or they already have too many people in that role. The students don't see an opening for their skills in the leadership team.

This is part of the reason that we don't have titles or positions on our Renaissance team at KVHS. We want every student to feel like they can belong to the team and be a leader. We provide every person on our team the opportunity for leadership, no matter their grade level or past experience. Sure, there are many different types of leadership, but we need all types on our team. Everyone brings different skills and leadership styles to the team, that is what makes us strong and unique. It also provides the students an amazing opportunity to learn from each other, and that leadership positions are not just for those with the extroverted school spirit approach.

We need leaders behind the scenes and on the sidelines to help guide the ones on the front lines. We need artistic leaders, musically inclined leaders, traditional leaders, and leaders who think outside the box. We need silent leaders and those who are willing to provide their opinions. We need all types of leaders. We need to change the view that leadership is only for certain people. Leadership is for all, and there is enough for everyone to have an opportunity to lead.

You are a leader. Through good days and bad, you are still a leader. A classroom teacher, custodian, educational assistant, cafeteria worker, office assistant – you are a leader – no matter your subject area or how long you have been in education. Be passionate, bring opportunities to others for leadership, celebrate moments that matter and work together. Being a leader is some of the hardest and most rewarding work you will do. Being a leader matters every day.

Melissa Wright

From her book: *inspired: moments that matter*
Melissa is a teacher at Kennebecasis Valley High in Rothesay, New Brunswick. She is the former chair of the New Brunswick Student Leadership Association and has been inducted into the Jostens Renaissance Hall of Fame.



You can order a copy of her book from her website: melissawright.ca/the-book

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