

# Best FIELD-TRIP Ever!

Reading this article will be the best decision you make today. Seriously! After reading it, and, once you decide to apply to be a Monitor for the Encounters With Canada Program, at the Terry Fox Centre for Canadian Youth, in Ottawa, your experience in Ottawa will be your best Field Trip EVER!

Remember when we were in the classroom and the opportunity for a field trip came up? Many of us jumped in with both feet to set one up. Others shied away completely. As a field trip supporter, I relished the opportunity to take students out of the classroom to have them experience some practical aspects or applications of, in my case, the Physical Education or Leadership Class curriculum. For over two decades I organized field trips to provincial and national leadership conferences. I organized a three night Snow Cave Winter Camping trip at Sun Peaks. Yes we built and slept in snow caves. These trips became traditions when I taught Phys Ed and a Leadership Course at Westsyde Secondary in Kamloops. Thus, getting students interested was not a problem. Each trip was, however, the start of consent forms, fund raising, transportation booking, liability waivers, teacher permission forms to miss YOUR class, and so on. After 20 years of going through the same tedious, but necessary steps, year in year out, I eventually had all the wrinkles pretty well ironed out. If you ever organized a field trip, you know what I mean.

For you, this trip to Ottawa, will have none of the tedious aspects of a field trip. For starters, you will not travel with any students. You do NOT have to arrange for a TOC or ask your AO for permission. Just get yourself to the airport on time and it will be a most rewarding experience. For me, it was so rewarding in fact, that I have been back to Ottawa, as a Monitor, 15 times over the last two decades. Your travel arrangements, food and accommodation are completely taken care of, at no cost to you. Your suite at the centre will have a lounge chair, a window with a view, a computer, telephone, a comfy bed and will be a quiet area where you can put your feet up for a few moments at the end of each day.

ENCOUNTERS WITH CANADA is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. The program is offered in both Canada's official languages. EWC is the largest youth forum in Canada. Each year 3,300 students from all corners of Canada experience a theme week that may turn out be their career choice. To ensure the program runs smoothly, EWC invites six Monitors, (always Educators), three male, three female, three Bilingual and three Anglophone. Monitors meet with their group of 20 students each morning as well as during discussion seminars for some weekly core units of study. A hard working, dedicated staff of 20 individuals create an environment at the Terry Fox Centre that is welcoming, exciting, secure and backed by a newly established Foundation. Each student, no matter where they come from in Canada,

pays the same fee of \$675.00, including travel, for their all inclusive week. EWC is a leadership, personal growth and social networking opportunity that many students claim to be the best week of their lives. The EWC experience, when added to a Curriculum Vitae, will be a certain attention getter for a Human Resources individual perusing their job application. For you, it will be a chance to meet colleagues and students from across Canada and see Ottawa like you never have before.

You choose when to go for your Monitors weeks (usually for two weeks) based upon which season or which theme week you want to enjoy while in Ottawa. Perhaps Winterlude in February, Canada Remembers, November 11th, a Sports and Fitness week in September or the RCMP week in February. Maybe the Vimy Ridge Week, Politics in Canada, Journalism or Law will peak your interest. Skating on the Rideau Canal or walking through colourful maple leaves that fall in October. There are 12 theme weeks to choose from, 26 weeks of programs in total, that begin early in September, break during December, and conclude in early May.

EWC Website: [ewc-rdc.ca](http://ewc-rdc.ca)

The writer is Ken Purvis. Ken taught 33 years in School District #73, retiring from that district in '02. After retiring he hired on as a TOC in the Gold Trail District from 2004 - 2008. He fully retired in March of 2008.

Ken is one of seven Provincial EWC regional coordinators who act as a liaison between a practicing colleague in each participating school and the student applying to attend EWC. Ken's region includes 60 some odd schools, plus on line students and educators, in the Thompson, Okanagan and the Bulkley Valley School Districts.

Since retirement, he has travelled widely in his Fifth wheel with his wife of 46 years Jill. Ken is currently a member of the Bulkley Valley Retired Teachers Association. In March Jill and Ken are moving from Smithers, where they have enjoyed a log home life style on 5 acres for the last six years. They are returning to the Westsyde area of Kamloops to a town home that they can lock and walk away from while enjoying their fifth wheel life style.

Ken was recently awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal for his involvement with the EWC program over

by Ken Purvis, Bulkley Valley RTA