

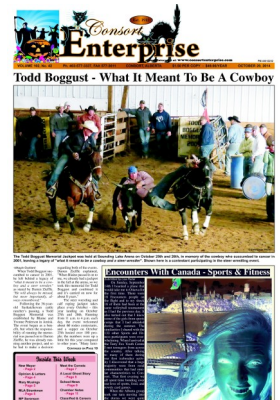
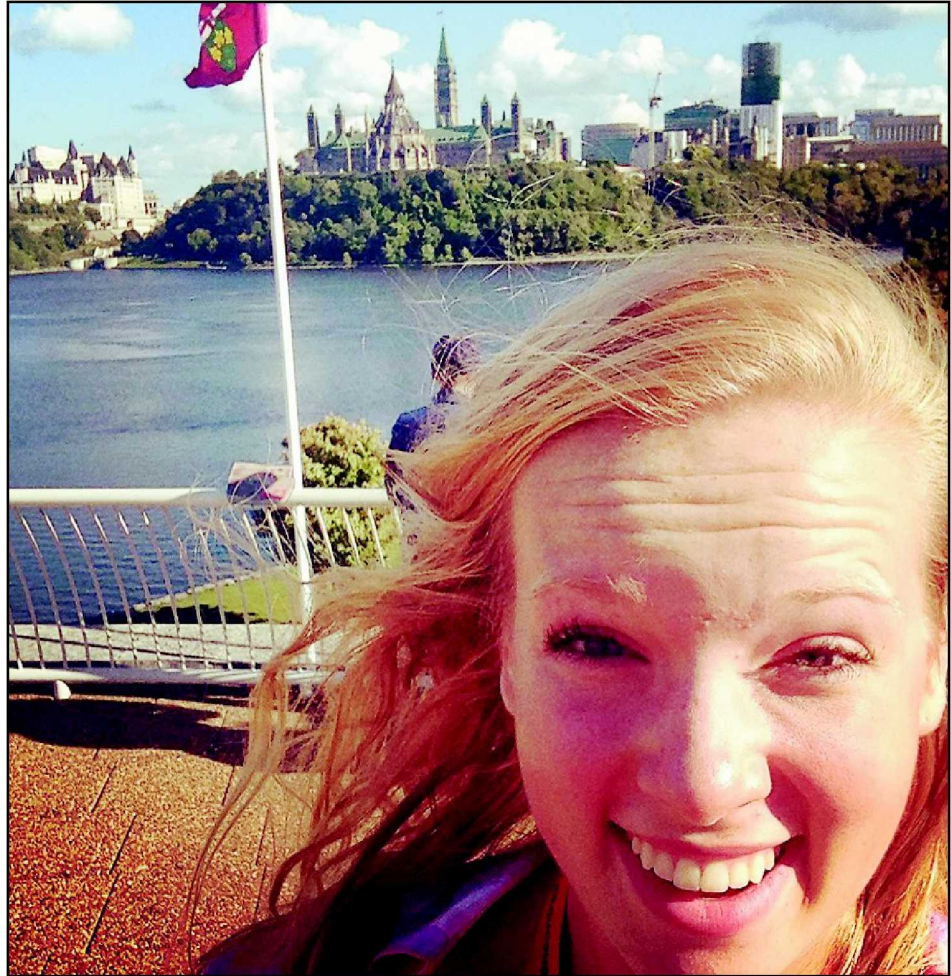
# Encounters With Canada - Sports & Fitness

Submitted by Lisa Redel

On Sunday, September 14th I boarded a plane that would take me to Ottawa for the first time. There were 18 Encounters people on the flight and to my shock 16 of them had been at the same volleyball tournament as I had the previous day. It also turned out that I knew some of the girls from sports camps that I had attended during the summer. The similarities I shared with the 133 other Sports and Fitness participants were overwhelming. When I arrived at the Terry Fox Youth Centre I met teenagers from across the country. After talking to many of them during our first icebreaker activity I discovered that a huge majority were from rural communities that had similar characteristics to Consort. That first evening we all spent time bonding over our love of sports, food, and rowdy card games.

When the Alberta group took our turn moving into the dorms we were quite

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**CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE** shocked at their design. Throughout the week I shared 2 bathroom stalls, 2 sinks, and 6 showers with 40 other girls. This created a unique experience in the morning when we all attempted to get ready at the same time. The meal line ups were also quite entertaining. I discovered quickly that almost every other person staying at the centre ate as much or more than I did, and this resulted in a Hunger Games style battle at every meal to be near the front of the line. When it came time to pick our activities for the week, similar events took place. In that moment I was extremely grateful for my basketball training because many of the less aggressive participants ended up being pushed or carried to the back of the first come, first serve lines. Many of the monitors and staff were shocked at our competitiveness and they told us at the end of the week that we were one of the loudest groups they had ever heard.

In keeping with the theme of the week I got to experience many new sports. I attended the African Dance class on Monday night and was shocked at how different it was from any of the other styles that I had tried. I am sure that what I was doing looked more like a cross between the chicken dance and calisthenics than actual African dancing, but I had a great time and learned quite a bit about the style. On Tuesday we went to The Dome (which is basically a gigantic white tarp that has

been secured to the ground and had air blown into it) for a boot camp. We participated in soccer, capture the flag, frisbee, and tug of war activities. I have always wanted to try rock climbing and when I had the chance to experience it, it more than lived up to my expectations. We visited an old church that had been renovated to house several different climbing apparatuses to try out the sport. After we warmed up with bouldering (smaller walls that you climb without a harness), we moved into what the staff called 'the adrenaline junky's paradise'. Basically it was a huge room filled with different themed walls. Shockingly, my favorite part about it was actually the dismount after the climb. Once you reached the top of any particular obstacle, you simply jumped off and free fell toward the ground until your harness caught you in the last couple meters. My favorite climb was walking up a set of Mario Pipes that were spaced about 2 feet apart and gradually increased in height. The next day my arm work out continued as I went Dragon Boating. I didn't realize before I went, but there is a large spray every time the paddles hit the water. We sat in rows of 2, one rowing on each side, and this resulted in me being soaked from head to toe on the right half of my body. Both the water and the wind were cold while we rowed, and so after we were done we followed proper Canadian procedure and went and got hot choco-

late at Tim Hortons to warm up. That afternoon the sun came out and it was gorgeous while we did the 5km Terry Fox Run. I thought it was incredible to participate in a cause that Terry started, and to stay at a Center that bears his name.

In addition to sporting activities I partook in some cultural events. I listened to a speech given by the captain of the men's gold medal sledge hockey from Turino and had the opportunity to hold his medal, which was incredible. We took a bus tour of the city and visited several memorial sights. The architecture of the Canadian War Museum was astounding. On November the 11th at 11:00 a.m. the sun shines through a skylight, then a window in a cement wall to perfectly outline the gravestone of the unknown soldier. We also had a peace ceremony at the Canadian War Cemetery, which for me was the highlight of the tour. I visited the Holten Canadian War Cemetery when I was in Holland and to see the nearly identical one at home really moved me. I also had the opportunity to listen to the Junkyard Symphony, and take a haunted walk through downtown Ottawa.

My 2 favorite parts of the trip (besides meeting all the incredible people) were actually both involving politics. Federal government has always intrigued me, so I was over the moon when I was able to watch question period. I thought it would be interesting, but kind of boring. I could not

have been more misguided. With the Conservatives on one side and the opposition led by the NDP on the other, the House of Commons resembled a girls basketball game. Each side took a turn sharing their opinion while the opposition screamed and pounded on their desks. Steven Harper happened to be present when I watched, which made the discussion even crazier. When he stood up to talk he was cool as a cucumber, but we could barely hear him over the jeers of the opposition. As soon as he sat down all his cabinet ministers scrambled to answer the oppositions offense. It was like the score was extremely close and one mistake could cost either side the game. The whole time I found it extremely difficult not to jump out of my chair and start cheering. The other highlight was the tour of the Governor General's estate. A tree is planted every time a dignitary comes to visit so the walk way to the house resembles a park. While we were taking pictures of the mansion, a very authoritative security officer came over to talk to our group leader. He explained that the Prince and Princess of Denmark were arriving to meet with the Governor General soon and that we would have to leave. As we began to walk away a convoy of black vehicles rolled into the driveway. Security looked startled and instructed us to be quiet and stand on the grass. As we did the Prince and Princess got out of one of the cars. We all yelled and waved



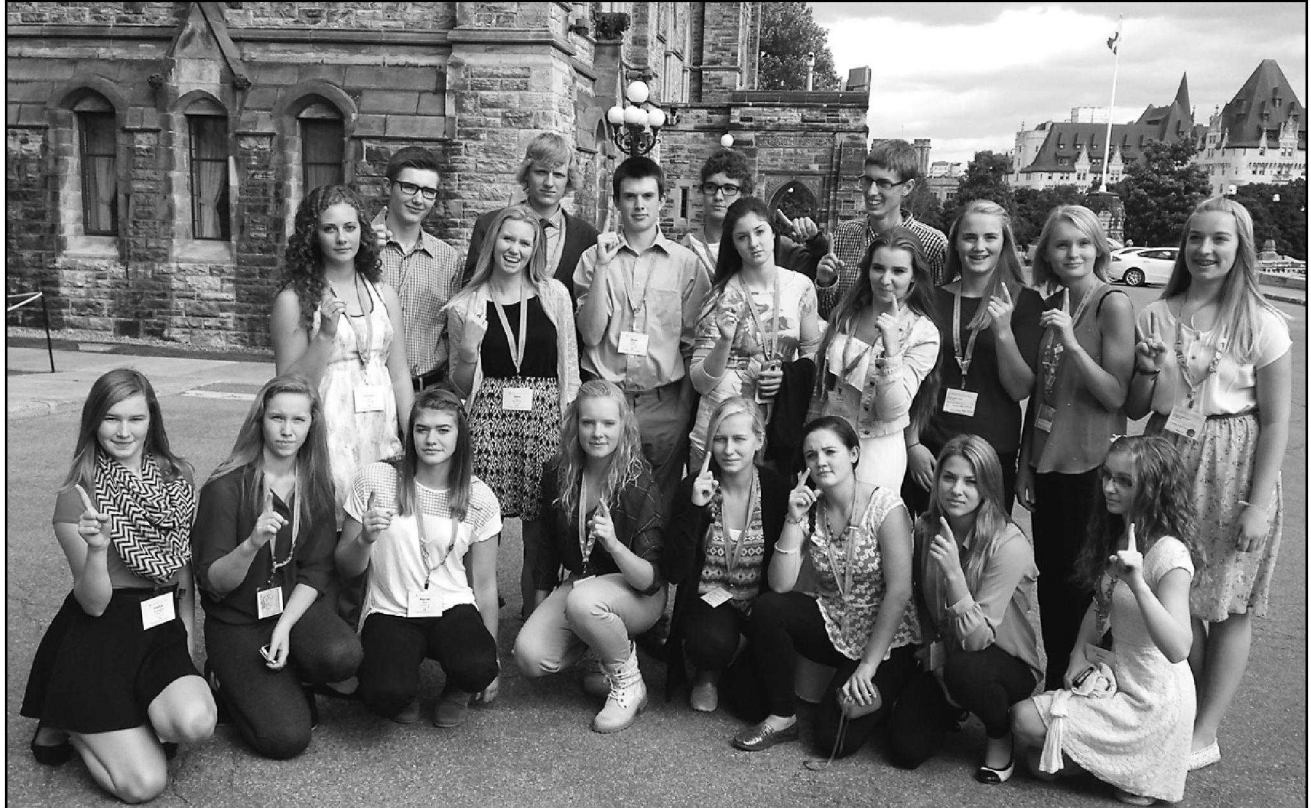
**Once you reached the top of any particular obstacle, you simply jumped off and free fell toward the ground until your harness caught you in the last couple meters**

hello to them, and the princess smiled and gave us a queen wave back.

I would like to thank everyone who sponsored this trip including Consort School, Jr. and Sr. High

Students Union, Village of Consort, Consort Lions Club, Consort Oilmen's Association, and the Neutral Hills Ag Society. I would also like to thank everyone who generously sponsored

my Terry Fox Run. Encounters with Canada was a truly incredible week. To meet people from across the country who value academics, athletics, food, and laughter as much as I do was a dream come true.



**Lisa can be seen in the front row, fourth from the left, with the Alberta group near the Parliament Buildings**