

CDS Debating Team Places 2nd at Internationals



By Kim Sillcox

Veteran debating coach Kerstin Wyndham-West raised the bar once again yielding a 2nd place finish overall for the three-person Country Day School team at last weekend's International Independent Schools' Public Speaking Competition (IISPSC) in Vancouver.

Grade 12 student and 2nd at World's last year, Olivia Railton of Aurora, placed 1st overall and won top speaker for the second year running.

In Vancouver, she qualified for finals in all three of her categories, finishing 1st in Persuasive and 3rd in Dramatic and Debating. Outstanding performances on all fronts contributed to CDS' strong finish as 2nd place overall (CDS finished 4th last year) and 2nd Canadian team. Crofton House School of Vancouver placed 1st.

New to public speaking this year, Grade 10 student Maeve Tebbutt finished 4th in Dramatic Interpretation and was 9th Canadian overall at her very first public speaking or debating competition.

Her Persuasive topic was about the high infant mortality rate in Canada, particularly in the Aboriginal community.

Up-and-comer Grade 9 student Maddy Ganzhorn of Aurora addressed the way in which elderly are being abused in long term care facilities in her Persuasive speech. Maddy is now in Grade 9 and has been a CDS debater since Grade 7.

Co-debate coach Sagalina Doré had nothing but praise to offer all three girls.

“They all chose heavy Persuasive topics that are very timely and current – real problem/solution based themes,” she said. “In fact, Olivia's topic of how the criminal justice system is failing victims of sexual assault was a segment on CBC News last night, and Maddy's topic is all over the news as well.”

CDS has placed among the top four schools for the past four years. In total, 140 students representing 45 teams from 8 countries participated at the annual IISPSC this year. Olivia's top standing qualified her to compete at Nationals in Winnipeg in February, which will be the route she needs to take to qualify for World's in Sydney, Australia in April for her third consecutive year.

Maeve's finish was two spots shy of qualifying for World's, but she will have a chance to qualify again on home turf next month.

CDS is hosting the Ontario qualifier for Nationals on Thursday, November 24th from 4.30 – 9 p.m.

If you are interested in coming to see some high-level speaking, please consider joining us as a judge by contacting Coach Kerstin Wyndham-West at events@cds.on.ca.