

CDS Debaters Shine on the World Stage in Malaysia



The Country Day School proudly celebrates an extraordinary achievement as all three of their debaters advanced to the finals at this month's 37th World Individual Debate and Public Speaking Championships (WIDPSC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

This marks the 18th consecutive year that CDS has qualified at least one student for the prestigious World Championships ? and the fifth time they've sent three.

Guided by coaches Ms. Wyndham-West and Mme Davidson, Diviya Amarnath '25, Jack Brown '25 and Ananya Kapur '26 thrived both on and off stage ? gaining not only competitive success, but also unforgettable cultural experiences while doing what they love: debating.

?It was a truly magical trip,? shared Ms. Wyndham-West.

Behind the scenes, CDS's third coach, Mr. Robinson, played a pivotal role managing tournament logistics and operations.

Each student competed in four categories ? Debate, Impromptu Speaking, Persuasive Speaking, and Interpretive Reading ? ultimately placing in the top 25% of their strongest event, among 126 competitors from across 13 countries.

Diviya, a returning WIDPSC competitor, reached the finals with a powerful interpretive reading from Sarah's Key, portraying a heart-wrenching scene in which a 10-year-old girl is taken from her home by the Nazis during the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup. Having launched her debating journey in Grade 7 and making the finals in Durban, South Africa two years ago, this full-circle moment was bittersweet ? and she has nothing but gratitude for her coaches' unwavering support throughout her journey.

Jack impressed in the finals of the impromptu speaking category, delivering a compelling six-minute speech on the theme of ?madness? with just two minutes to prepare.

According to his teammate Ananya, he ?absolutely killed it.?

Reflecting on his debating career, Jack shared that the experience was not just about competition ? it was about forming lasting friendships, both among his CDS teammates and with students from around the world.

This year's debating trips to Bermuda and Malaysia have made an indelible mark on him.

Ananya took the finals stage with a hard-hitting persuasive speech on the global crisis of counterfeit medication, warning that even over-the-counter drugs like Tylenol could be contaminated ? especially when purchased online.

She described the two-week journey as ?life-changing,? noting how it helped her come out of her shell and connect with others through a shared passion.

The CDS team traveled alongside peers from Branksome Hall, Armbrae Academy, Bermuda High School, and Saltus Grammar School.

The journey began with a few days of sightseeing and prep in Singapore, before continuing to Kuala Lumpur for the main event. Amidst the rigorous preparation, the group made time to explore ? from a scenic tour of Singapore to visiting a durian fruit orchard in Bentong, climbing to the Batu Caves' sacred temples, and touring traditional Malay Kampung homes on stilts and village life.

One highlight was working together to build chairs for a local school, a meaningful gesture of cross-cultural collaboration.

The CDS team returned to Canada with their hearts full, impressed by the diverse and accepting nature of Malaysia, and enriched by new friendships and all they witnessed.

Congratulations to Diviya, Jack, Ananya, and their dedicated coaches ? your passion, poise, and perseverance once again made CDS proud on the world stage!

By Kim Sillcox