

Country Day School's Health Sciences Club joins forces with SickKids



Last week, Country Day School Senior School students were given an extraordinary opportunity through the school's Health Sciences Club to participate in a Canadian healthcare initiative led by SickKids known as CALIPER.

This project was created to establish a database of normal blood test values in children. Previously, there had been a gap in this knowledge, leading to the use of adult reference values in diagnosing children, making evaluating sick children less efficient and more inaccurate. Seventy-three CDS students stepped forward to donate their blood for this wonderful cause.

Victoria Sealey, SickKids' Clinical Research Project Coordinator for Paediatric Molecular Medicine, and eight other SickKids staff and volunteers were onsite Tuesday to help make the experience as positive as possible for everyone. For their involvement, each student received a \$10 honorarium, 2 community service hours, and a choice of a T-shirt or teddy bear. "The only way we are able to do this is by having brave students like yours step forward to demonstrate what healthy blood should look like," said Sealey.

As Co-Coordiators of the Health Sciences Club, Grade 11 student Harkin Porter and Grade 10 student Alessia Malfara were thrilled when SickKids approached the school about hosting a clinic.

"Through donating a small sample of blood (about one tablespoon), students were able to contribute to the important work done through this project - the improvement of pediatric healthcare across Canada and the world," said Harkin. "I feel absolutely honored to have been involved in a project that is doing such important work. This will surely be an opportunity and experience that I will cherish and remember for years to come, and I look forward to continuing to take part in such initiatives throughout our school in my upcoming final year at The Country Day School."

Fellow Health Sciences Club Co-Coordinator, Alessia agreed. "Participating in CALIPER brought tremendous gratification, knowing that every donation makes a difference in a kid's life. Additionally, volunteering in this clinic was a simple and quick process with guidance from the excellent SickKids staff each step of the way."

Thank you to faculty members Kathleen Griffin and Christelle Ah Sen for helping to coordinate this day-long initiative, and to all the students who participated!

By Kim Sillcox