

Hartman student has brush with politics as Legislative Page



Rohan Goel has always had a passion for politics and giving back ? and, earlier this spring, passions collided for the Grade 8 student at Aurora's Hartman Public School when he was selected to be a Legislative Page at Queen's Park.

The Legislative Page program is open to 150 students from Ontario each year, designed for ?outgoing, high-achieving, community-involved students who have demonstrated responsibility and leadership,? says the Legislature.

As an active member of his community, including participation in Air Cadets programs, Rohan put his application forward and was thrilled to be picked.

?We had to write an essay about why we should be selected and the characteristics we bring to the program,? says Rohan. ?I do Air Cadets, basketball, and I wrote about my volunteering because last year I volunteered in the temple, my extra-curriculars and my interest in politics.?

To say Rohan was excited to get started in the new gig was something of an understatement ? even if it did warrant a big change to his student routine for a couple of weeks.

?We woke up at 5.30 a.m. every day, changed into our white-collared shirts and black pants,? he explains. ?I met with my group at the GO train and then we took the train into Union every day, and from Union took the subway to Queen's Park. We had our own badges, so we would scan them, go to our page quarters, and get ready in our three-piece suits until briefing at 8.15. After that, we went to our classroom and learned until 10.15 and then we got a break and went up to the Chamber to serve from 10.30 a.m. to 12 noon. After lunch, we went back to the Chamber and served from 12 to 4.?

It was home to Aurora by 7.30 p.m. ? a long stretch by any measure!

Being in the Legislative Chamber, he says, was a memorable experience, he says, if not a challenging one as he had to memorize the names and faces of all Members of Provincial Parliament, as well as where they sat. A few days into his term, however, the NDP seating arrangement changed, so it was back to the books!

?It was very cool to hear all the debates that happened,? he says. ?I got to deliver bills, motions and petitions. We got to learn about

what happens in the Chamber and we listened to debates going back and forth. We got to talk to various MPPs, which was really interesting, and we took a photo with Premier Ford, which was really cool.?

Now as he looks ahead to the last two months of his time at Hartman Public School, Rohan is focused on the future and is looking forward to attending Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School in the fall ? even if he'll be ?re-starting from scratch for high school because you go from the highest in Grade 8 to the lowest in Grade 9,? he says with a laugh.

While it's still early days to say what he wants to do with his post-secondary education, he says he has his sights set on becoming either a politician or a doctor.

For more information on how to apply for the Ontario Legislature's Page Program for the fall term, visit www.ola.org/en/visit-learn/programs/about-page-program. Applications will be accepted through June 15, 2023.

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