

Alumni Update—Maggie Knight



I graduated from Selkirk in 2002 (with the biggest graduating class ever up to that time, of 15 students), amidst the reorganizing of the Victoria education system to include middle schools. I did a year of correspondence before entering into Esquimalt High School's Challenge Program.

The skills I learned at Selkirk--and especially from Gigi and Shannon in the SE class--carried me through that transition with flying colours. I already had good study habits and knew how to manage my time well from the Montessori method of teaching (crucial for learning by correspondence!). I also had confidence in my own abilities (and knew where my weaknesses lay) from having always been challenged to do my personal best, and from being given the chance at Selkirk to do work at higher grade levels to make sure I was really stretching my mind. This gave me the confidence to get permission from Esquimalt to take more challenging courses--in my second semester of grade 10, I revelled in History 12 and English Literature 12, and in grade 11 I excelled in Math 12, Calculus 12, and French 12.

This left me the space in my grade 12 schedule for some spares, which I used to apply for the scholarships which in turn allowed me to attend McGill!

I'm now in my fourth and final year of an Arts & Science Honours degree in Environment and Economics, and I hope to pursue a career in environmental policy. The confidence and independence I developed at Selkirk has served me well in Montreal.



Photo: Maggie questioning David Suzuki on environmental issues.

Unlike many of my fellow students, at 18 I moved 5 provinces away without my parents financing me or even helping me to move in. They were only a phone call away, but they knew I had the skills to make it on my own. I'm still getting permission to take courses I'm not supposed to be allowed to take (like a 600-level grad course entitled "Civilization and Environment") and this December I'll be one of 25 youth representing the concerns of young people across the country as part of the Canadian Youth Delegation to the United Nations climate change negotiations in Mexico.

No reflection on my time at Selkirk would be complete without mentioning all the friendships I made. My friend Alice and I have been "best friends" since I was in grade 2; this summer she returned from a year in Germany and moved in with my boyfriend and me.

While nobody else from Selkirk came to my high school, I still get together with many of them for Christmas parties or camping trips every time I come back to the West Coast. Selkirk taught me so much beyond the curriculum. I learned to always ask questions, how to manage my own time, that school systems could accommodate "accelerated" learning, that true achievement is measured by what you learn rather than the letter grade you receive...and even how to read Gigi's cursive handwriting! So a huge thanks to everyone at Selkirk who helped me grow into who I am today--I'll be sure to come visit next time I'm back in Victoria.