

Dear future Beyond Borders student,

Beyond Borders is the perfect mixture of experiential learning, business leadership, community environment and personal growth. These four aspects combined together had created a life changing semester for grade twelve students in the Guelph community in which they are pushed to succeed and learn the value of hardwork. This program can ignite a change in the lives of students and inspire them to participate in kind, hard work.

Personally, the Beyond Borders leadership program has impacted my life in ways that I could not have imagined. It has provoked a change in my adaptability, my work ethic, my stress management, and my passion. After the past five months, I am more motivated than ever to seek success and realize my true potential. Without this program I would have continued in the routine of the regular classroom and would not have been exposed to the life changing opportunities I have experienced this semester. From team bonding at the top of a mountain to encountering business executives in Toronto, students are exposed to the real world. They are able to take their learning beyond a textbook and into real life scenarios. This allows for the students to absorb all the necessary lessons, instead of memorizing and regurgitating the information.

Through the guidance of the teachers, and your peers, each student is able to grow individually in a supportive and benevolent community dynamic. The students are able to ask for non judgmental support from the programs teachers, which allows for an open line of communication and more of an opportunity for growth. With one-on-one meetings, teachers are involved in your education and can ensure that you are on track to success. Teachers are also very trusting of students, which creates independence and work ethic in the students, as it is either sink or swim. Although it is a demanding program, it simulates and prepares each student for post-secondary while still giving students the opportunity to build upon any failures. Failure is usually

seen as a negative, but in Beyond Borders it is seen as a starting point. Throughout the program each student will endure a series of challenges, which will be personal to them, and they will learn in the supportive environment to overcome challenges and recover from their failures.

Without this program, students are losing the opportunity to gain skills that would be much harder to grasp in the regular school. This is mainly seen in the community atmosphere of the program. When you have the support of your teachers and peers, you are able to strive for things you would not have due to a lack of fear. It is not that in the regular school your teachers do not support you, but in Beyond Borders they foster a dynamic between students through challenges and hard work. It is not until you fail together that you can reach success together. When you are struggling through a tough assignment and have forty-five other students who are also struggling, you become close very quickly. It is as if they use Darwinism on your weak characteristics, in order to succeed in the program you must be the best you can be. Each student wants to succeed because the atmosphere makes you believe you can.

Every year students leave this program better than they arrived, and each year the program improves. From Hogwarts Challenges to incredible trips to a \$35,000 charity event, students do not even realize they are learning, but grow in knowledge and understanding. This program has allowed not only myself, but many other students, to gain self-awareness and come to the realization that the world is theirs to lead and inspire.

Joining Beyond Borders is the best decision you could ever make, and I hope you can be as inspired as I was,

Maddy Godin

Beyond Borders Alumni 2016/17