

Canadians Join One Million Students in Eighty Countries to Celebrate Global Dignity Movement

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

Toronto, October 16th, 2019 – Today, Wednesday October 16th, thousands of Canadian students and young leaders gathered to celebrate Global Dignity Day alongside one million of their peers in 80 countries.

This year's global event, hosted at the WE Global Learning Centre linked ten sites and 2,000 students, from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, through a live video-conference. Approximately 30,000 students participated via live-stream in Canada.

“The theme of Global Dignity Day this year is centered on raising awareness about autism and building inclusive communities,” said Her Excellency The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, former Governor General of Canada and Global Dignity Honorary Board Member.

“Today I was delighted to join students at l'École du Carrefour in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. For these young people from the province's French-speaking and Acadian minority, being able to study in French is a part of a struggle for the respect of their dignity, heritage, history and identity. This right recognized in 1991 is an act of fundamental inclusion in the Nova Scotian and Canadian society.”

Highlights of the national celebration included the following special guest speakers and performers:

- Her Excellency The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, former Governor General of Canada and Global Dignity Honorary Board Member
- Jaden Lake, 2019 National Role Model, by way of his father the Hon. Mike Lake, Global Dignity Champion and Edmonton-Wetaskiwin Member of Parliament
- Kara Eusebio, World Economic Forum Ottawa Global Shaper and leader passionate about building inclusive communities;
- Meagan Commonda, 2019 National Role Model and the Indigenous Liaison for Canada's Treasury Board Secretariat's Talent Cloud
- Morris Hayes with a musical performance as part of the global peace building documentary World Symphony For Peace, with Finnish composer and Global Shaper, Perttu Polonen and singer songwriter, Jennie Laws

The guest speakers shared their dignity stories in Halifax, Toronto, Ottawa and Kitigan Zibi respectively. It also included a musical performance by Morris Hayes representing World Symphony For Peace.



“In a world often divided by politics, religion and differing views, the message from Global Dignity Day this year is clear: to build a more dignified world, just love each other and be kind,” said Giovanna Mingarelli, the National Chair of Global Dignity in Canada and member of the international Board of Directors.

“Inclusion is an expression of love and kindness. Love yourself, love your family, love your pets. Be kind to your friends, neighbours and co-workers - it’s easy to do!”

The work of Global Dignity is guided by a simple set of principles, that every person:

- Has the right to pursue their purpose and meaning in life, and to reach their full potential.
- Deserves to live in societies that provide humane access to education, health, income and security.
- Has their life, identity and beliefs respected by others.
- Has the responsibility to create the conditions for others to fulfill their potential, acting to strengthen the dignity of others, building a foundation of freedom, justice and peace for this, and future generations.
- Believes that dignity in action means standing up against injustice, intolerance and inequality.

Partners of Global Dignity include: TakingITGlobal, the Queen Elizabeth Centre for Global Education, WE, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, YMCA Canada, Right To Play, the World Economic Forum's Global Shapers Community, Kind Canada, Bright Minds Education and World Symphony for Peace.

“It’s important to put love and kindness into action: that’s what building inclusive communities is all about!” said Olivia Bechthold, the Executive Director of Global Dignity in Canada.

“You can show someone you love them by opening a door or helping them with their homework. It’s easy.”

Established in 2005, by HRH Crown Prince Haakon of Norway, Operation HOPE Founder, Chairman and CEO John Hope Bryant and Professor Pekka Himanen, Global Dignity is linked to the 2020 process of the World Economic Forum, in which leaders from politics, business, academia, and civil society join efforts to improve the state of the world.

Global Dignity is an independent, non-profit, non-political organization with the aim to instill a positive, inclusive and interconnected sense of value in young people that will guide them as they grow, as well as promote the idea that every human being has the universal right to lead a dignified life.

More information and a livestream of the video-conference can be viewed at www.globaldignity.ca.

For more information:

Lauren Fine, Media Liaison

Global Dignity Canada | media@globaldignity.ca | 613-878-8968