

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### **LOCAL STUDENT AWARDED \$100,000 SCHULICH LEADER SCHOLARSHIP**

COWICHAN VALLEY, BC – Excited and grateful is how 18-year-old Helen Spry describes her feelings toward her most recent accomplishment—being awarded a \$100,000 scholarship to the University of Victoria, where she will be pursuing an engineering degree.

Spry, a Grade 12 student at Lake Cowichan School (LCS), was nominated in the fall for the Schulich Leaders Scholarship. This prestigious entrance scholarship is awarded to high school graduates who are enrolling in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) undergraduate program at participating universities in Canada.

“I feel really honoured, grateful and excited to have been given this opportunity,” said Spry. “Lake Cowichan School is a really awesome school, the teachers here are great and they have really helped give me a positive experience.”

Spry earned the nomination after being identified by two LCS teachers as being a top STEM student who was also planning to attend a post-secondary institute that was part of the Schulich program. The University of Victoria, where Spry applied, selected her as their engineering recipient.

“The Cowichan Valley is home to some of the brightest students in the province, and Helen Spry is a shining and humble example,” said Candace Spilsbury, Chair of the Board of Education for the Cowichan Valley School District (SD 79). “The Board extends their sincere congratulations and wishes her much success as she begins working towards her degree.”

Prior to enrolling at LCS in Grade 10, Spry had never attended an actual school—she completed her education primarily through homeschooling and the South Island Distance Education School (SIDES). After her positive experience at a school she attended in Japan in her Grade 9 year, and her own recognition that she did not know what Canadian schools were like (a question often asked of her by her Japanese classmates), Spry decided she wanted to attend a “brick and mortar” school when they returned to Canada.

Despite having to adjust to a different learning environment, Spry has continued to excel in school and has shown her dedication to the engineering profession. For the past two summers, she volunteered at the University of Victoria’s Science Venture program, a hands-on, minds-on science, engineering and technology camp for youth entering Grades 1 to 12.

“STEM programs provide students like Helen with an opportunity to learn very traditional curriculum like math in an engaging, hands-on way,” said Rod Allen, Superintendent of SD 79. “The modernized curriculum in B.C. is focused on engaging our learners and supporting them in transitioning to post-secondary, training, work or life. Helen is a wonderful example of how STEM programs offered in schools translate to real-life opportunities.”

Recognizing the increasing importance and impact that STEM disciplines will have on the prosperity of future generations, businessman and philanthropist Seymour Schulich established this \$100 million scholarship fund in 2012 to encourage the best and brightest students to become the next pioneers of global scientific research and innovation. This program awards 100 scholarships annually, valued at more than \$7 million. High schools across the country put forward more than 1,300 nominees for 50 Canadian scholarships.

For more information on this scholarship, visit <http://www.schulichleaders.com/>.

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