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New Brunswick students visit remarkable places during breaks from school

Trips to Greenland, Spain expand educational experiences far beyond the classroom

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (December 20, 2016) – The education provided by New Brunswick Public Schools can lead its students to some truly fascinating places ... like, for example, Greenland and Spain.

This past summer, New Brunswick High School senior Dilcia Hernandez spent nearly a month (June 28 – July 19) on the remote island of Greenland, after being accepted to participate in a National Science Foundation program focused on geography, ecology, and biology. She first learned about the opportunity from one of her science teachers.

In Greenland, Hernandez interacted directly with scientists from Denmark and also the U.S. – who represented Harvard and Rutgers universities, and Dartmouth College. Fifteen of her days on the world's largest island were spent at the Summit Station research base, located at the summit of Greenland's massive ice sheet.

"While I was there, I met kids from Denmark, the U.S., and from Greenland itself," Hernandez explains. "It was really interesting to speak with so many people from outside New Brunswick, and to see their different perspectives."

Hernandez's trip to the Arctic included a six-hour flight aboard an LC-130 cargo plane. And it was well worth the time and effort.

"Before flying to Greenland, I wasn't sure about my future and what I wanted to do," says Hernandez, who is considering submission of applications to Princeton, Cornell, and also Rutgers. "Now, I know I want to get into the sciences, conduct research of my own, and maybe find answers to things like global warming."

Also during the summer of 2016, 11 New Brunswick High School students spent 10 days (August 22-31) in southern Spain, focusing on the historic region's varied cultural influences. They toured cathedrals constructed atop Moorish mosques, and visited multiple castles and walled towns.

"I saw so many new things – things I wasn't even aware existed," says New Brunswick Health Sciences Technology High School junior Grecia Moncado. "The most memorable thing for me was visiting various places, from famous, tourist locations to regular towns."

Sponsored by the Civic League of Greater New Brunswick with the support of students' families, public contributors, and the school district, the trip originally had been slated to also include travel through Morocco. But, unrest in North Africa made that impossible.

"It's terrific we're able to work with the students' parents and the community on this initiative, which is all about empowering our young people," says Civic League representative Sean Hewitt. "These students and families had a goal, they worked toward it, and it became a tangible experience."

For New Brunswick High School junior Nehemiah Weeks, the highlight of visiting Spain wasn't any famous site or shrine. He was more focused on an experience that brought the group together.

"One day we did a scavenger hunt right outside a castle," Weeks recalls. "It gave all of us time to get to know each other better, to build trust, and that made the whole trip so much easier."

The students prepared to visit Spain by doing extensive reading books and periodicals. This created a foundation of understanding that was finally made real by actually setting foot in historic locations.

"Once you've visited another country, you tend to become more open to learning," says Tamiko Neal, a New Brunswick Middle School educator and Civic League member who assisted in coordinating the international initiative and accompanied the students on their trip. "You become more tolerant and accepting of the differences between people, more understanding, and more respectful of different practices."

Neal – who serves as an advisor for several Civic League programs – notes that travel is beneficial both educationally and socially, and can have a profound impact on a young person.

Photos:

[Image 1 \(link\)](#) – A group of students after taking a tour of Toledo, Spain

[Image 2 \(link\)](#) – Students touring the Alhambra palace/fortress in Granada, Spain

[Image 3 \(link\)](#) – The rugged, LC-130 cargo plane that transported Hernandez to Greenland

[Image 4 \(link\)](#) – Summit Station research base, Greenland, where Hernandez spent 15 days

About New Brunswick Public Schools

The New Brunswick, NJ public school district consists of two high schools (New Brunswick High School and Health Sciences Technology High School), a middle school (New Brunswick Middle School) and nine elementary schools (Lincoln, Lincoln Annex, Livingston, Lord Stirling, McKinley, Redshaw, Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson schools, and Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts). New Brunswick Public Schools offers a comprehensive educational program for students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve and serves more than 10,000 students.

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