

Future World Leaders Summit

It is a quite stunning achievement that for the fourth year in the last five a Ballycastle High School pupil was invited to take part in the Future World Leaders Summit in Washington USA.

President Eisenhower set up this annual conference in 1956 for students of 'outstanding scholastic merit and leadership potential' and this year representatives from sixty five countries took part. Deputy Head Girl Sarah McAllister followed in the footsteps of Keith Douthart, Margaret Ann McCook and Richard Hargy in being invited to take an all expenses paid trip to the United States capital. Sarah has sent us an account of her experiences.

"In March of this year I was give the unique opportunity to attend the week long 'Future World Leaders Summit' in Washington DC and this proved to be literally the experience of a lifetime. I was one of three hundred delegates chosen from across the world and we were divided into working groups of thirty members each. My group was given the issue of World Health to investigate. Much of the week was spent researching this topic and we spent long hours interviewing officials, reading papers and discussing this very complex issue. After we finalised our report I was nominated to present it to the other delegates in a plenary session.

"Standing on that podium in front of an audience of 300 people including senior US government officials was definitely one of the most terrifying experiences of my life! Much to my surprise however my report was passed unanimously. Morale among my working group was certainly high because our report was one of very few that was accepted.

"The visit allowed me to see and experience things which previously I could never even imagine. Being shown around the most famous buildings of Washington including the White House seemed, at times, surreal.

"I was also given the unique chance to venture inside Capitol Hill. Here we were addressed by Mr. John Robert Lewis, member of congress and Martin Luther King's right hand man during the civil rights campaign. Sitting in Congress, surrounded by fine paintings of historical figures we hung on his every word!

“Being part of the Future World Leaders’ Summit was one of the best experiences of my life. I thoroughly enjoyed working with young people from all over the world, examining global issues, interviewing major political figures, seeing the major tourist sights of Washington and even having salsa dancing lessons from a genuine Puerto Rican!

“It was a real privilege to take part but I have no doubt that had it not been for the encouragement and support I received in Ballycastle High School this experience would never have been possible.”

A group photograph in front of the Capitol building in Washington. The Ballycastle High School delegate is towards the left.



The photograph shows the Ballycastle delegate along with some colleagues outside the White House



The Ballycastle delegate to Future World Leaders with a senior officer in the US army at the Washington Monument