

Youth from across PEI come to YDAY

A day to talk about working on PEI, to learn from others, and share stories

by Cody McInnis and Gloria Welton

The second-annual YDAY youth summit gave young Islanders the opportunity to be engaged and involved in decisions affecting them.

Across PEI, The Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning has two ongoing initiatives revolving around youth engagement: the Youth Futures Council and YDAY.

The Youth Futures Council meets monthly to advise and make recommendations on provincial programs and policies. The 12-person council helped plan this year's YDAY and played an active role in the event.

"The council represents all youth on PEI," says **Nicole Mountain**, Youth Futures Council and YDAY committee member. "This day is incredibly beneficial to generate ideas and to hear from our peers on a large scale about the issues they face and the changes they want to see."

Actions taken since YDAY 2016:

- Creation of the **Career Connect** program, which allows PEI university students to receive Employment Insurance benefits while in post-secondary
- Expansion of the **Community Service Bursary** to include grade 10 students and increase the maximum bursary to \$750
- Creation of the **Ellevate** program, an internship for young females pursuing a career in entrepreneurship
- Expansion of the **Graduate Mentorship** program, a temporary wage subsidy which helps create long-term employment opportunities for recent post-secondary graduates.

For more about YDAY, visit www.ypei.ca



Student shares his story

Sam Bailey is a grade 10 student at Grace Christian School. He attended YDAY to share his experiences, ideas, and concerns about youth entrepreneurship on the Island.

Since July 2016, Sam has been working on a small business that buys and sells Supreme brand clothing. Supreme is an online fashion retailer that makes a very limited amount of everything they sell, and so there is a very high demand. Sam got the idea while researching online. "I have an interest in fashion. I saw that there was a market for this, so I jumped into it."

Sam has had some challenges starting out in business. "First and foremost is access to startup capital. It's also very competitive; you can't count on always getting product. Some weeks, I end up with nothing."

For now Sam is treating his business as a side venture. "I would like to go to the University of Waterloo, and perhaps study advanced engineering and business. Business is something that I have always been drawn towards. I feel like I have the mind for it."

Sam talked about the rewards of starting a small business. "Supreme is a cool brand with some really nice clothes. Secondly, I am learning aspects of business such as taking risks and learning about failure."

For more information, visit Instagram [@supremeofthenorth](https://www.instagram.com/supremeofthenorth)



Sam Bailey is a grade 10 student at Grace Christian School.

Recent graduate talks about wanting to stay on PEI

Via Reyes came to PEI from Manila, Philippines in 2013. "I chose UPEI's Bachelor of Arts English program. My parents were very supportive of my decision to pursue my education elsewhere."

Via admits she didn't know about the employment situation on PEI before coming here. "When I came here and started to make connections with people, I realized I wanted to stay here. Now that I have graduated, I am trying to take the best steps to make a living here."

"I am the only one in my family and in my circle of friends who is currently living in Canada. Fortunately, I am the type of person who never wants to stand still, so coming here alone worked for me."

"Even though I have a few friends here, I admit I am having a hard time getting involved and getting out of my comfort zone to make connections. It was easy in school, but once I graduated I felt I was on my own because I wasn't really involved with anything in the community. Coming to YDAY has helped me make connections, learn how government structure works, and what programs and services are available."

"The city I grew up in has a population of almost 2 million people. I miss my family, and friends, and big city life, but I want to stay on PEI because I can see it growing and I can see myself growing with it."

"PEI is becoming more welcoming for newcomers. I see the openness from government, and employers seem to want to be involved. I want to stay here to see what direction PEI will go. I want to be involved in that process in any way I can as a newcomer who is trying to become a permanent resident. I want to contribute to help make it easier for newcomers to settle here."

For over a year, she has been working as Student Engagement Coordinator for the Chartwells Management team at UPEI. She is currently working on her application for permanent residency.

"International students are the perfect candidates to become residents of PEI after they graduate. They need support and awareness of the services and programs across PEI and assistance in making more connections."

UPEI graduate Via Reyes is starting a photography business. "I would love to be a photographer full-time," she says.

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