

Friends & Neighbours

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Cramahe student heads to the Legislature

Brittany Hesmer accepted as a Legislative Page

BY ANDREA FERGUSON
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COLBORNE -- Colborne resident Brittany Hesmer has been recognized for her outstanding academic achievements.

The 14-year-old Grade 8 student at South Cramahe Public School has a passion for school and that helped her to stand out among the hundreds of applicants for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario Page Program. She is the school's second student to earn a legislative page spot in the past two years. She will serve at Queens Park, May 22 to June 5, during which she will take a leave of absence from school.

"I filled out the application and I had to write an essay on why I believe I would make a good page," Brittany said. "The essay probably took me the entire summer."

The good news arrived on Feb. 13.

"They gave me pamphlets of all the members - there's 120," she said. "I have to memorize all those by first, last, the party they're in and by their face."

But until the May 1 orientation, she isn't sure what her upcoming role will entail.

"They'll be telling us what she'll be doing and what her responsibilities are," said Joanne Hesmer, Brittany's mother.

While at the legislature, Brittany will learn about processes, social studies, the arts and she will be tutored in math.

"I think she's going to learn a lot about politics in general and whether or not she decides she wants that to be a part of her future," Ms. Hesmer said.

Brittany wants to become a teacher.

"I want to go to Africa and teach in the undeveloped countries," Brittany said. "And

FAST FACTS

To be a Legislative Page

The Legislative Page program is open to high achieving Grade 7 and 8 students, whose current level of academic standing is a Level 4 (80 per cent or higher). Applicants must be actively involved in extracurricular activities, both in and outside of school, show an interest in current affairs and get along well with both their peers and adults. They must also be residents of Ontario. Students who meet the above requirements must request and complete an application package. All applications are evaluated twice yearly, once in January for the spring session of Parliament, and again in July for the fall. A package and further information can be obtained by phone: 416-325-7457, by mail: Rm 191, Legislative Building, Queens Park, Toronto, M7A 1A2, by e-mail: page_program@ontla.on.org, and

then I'll come back here and just teach here."

Those aren't Brittany's only goals, however.

"I'm going to go to ENSS," Brittany said. "I want to try and get into South Cramahe to do co-op there with one of the Kindergarten classes."

"Then I want to apply for an exchange," she added. "After I'm done with that, I want to apply to Queens University and get my teaching certificate there."

School has always been a fun experience for Brittany, her Mom said.

"Brittany's always been great at school. When she was little, I would constantly read to her," Ms. Hesmer said. "There were nights when I would read her six or seven books just to put her to sleep."

She recalled the day her daughter's Kindergarten teacher told her Brittany is the type of kid who will always love school and that it will always be one of her priorities.

"And you know what, I've never had to push her to do anything," Ms. Hesmer said.



BILL TREMBLAY / THE INDEPENDENT

COLBORNE -- Brittany Hesmer, 14, will head to Queen's Park in late spring to intern as a Legislative Page under Northumberland-Quinte West MPP Lou Rinaldi.

"It's just been one of her goals to achieve to the best she can be."

The Legislative Page program is a non-residential program. It is the student's responsibility to secure accommodation while there.

"I'm getting the arrangements done of how I'm going to get there, where I'm going to stay, and how I'll get there every morning," Brittany said.

One of Brittany's favorite things to do is read. Ms. Hesmer encourages any parent who wants their child to succeed to get them reading.

"Reading makes you smarter - I believe it - and I never used to believe it," Ms. Hesmer said. "But I do now, because that's what I did with Brittany. I read to her."

About 400 students apply each year, and about 10 per cent of the applicants are accepted and then divided between the two terms.

"To be chosen out of 400 kids that could have possibly applied, that's a pretty big feat in itself," Ms. Hesmer said.

"So yeah, I'm proud of her, and her dad's proud too."

3