



STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

Katie Skyvington of Stouffville Secondary will be in England next week and Japan in May as part of a Canadian youth delegation addressing G8 environment ministers.

Environment needs more help locally: student

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environmental issues and their communication skills. The competition was run by 2 Degrees C Inc. of Guelph and the finalists were assessed by the British Council.

Staff at Stouffville Secondary encouraged Miss Skyvington to enter because of her environmental work and leadership skills shown at school.

After writing essay questions on climate change, the field was narrowed to 26 students from across Canada. They were given phone interviews to pick the three-member team heading to Japan.

As a student at Ballantrae, Miss Skyvington helped institute a no-idling zone at the school.

At high school, she sits on a number of councils including environmental and sustainability groups.

One of the biggest successes has been the introduction of scrap paper bins in classrooms that ensures paper is

used on both sides.

Money was raised for the World Wildlife Foundation through the sale of organic and fair trade products.

But the biggest reward comes from changing attitudes.

"Just to see students turning lights off when they leave classrooms," Miss Skyvington said. "That wasn't happening before."

She proudly points to recycling bins in the office of her school and has kind words for students at St. Mark Catholic School in Stouffville who fought for the return of blue boxes to their school and another school last year.

But there's more that can be done.

"It would be so easy to have green bins in our schools like we do at home," she said, acknowledging the large amount of waste produced during lunch hour.

Back at Ballantrae Public, where she is working on a co-op credit, a teacher collects student waste and puts in a green bin at home.

She's like to see the town re-institute

the environment committee it dumped last year and she'd like to be on it.

"The environment is so important to everything we do," she said. "Without a healthy environment, we really have nothing."

To prepare for Japan, the international students are meeting in London, England, for a week starting Monday to talk to experts in climate change and discuss the Kobe Challenge they will present to the environment ministers.

She hopes to work in education or perhaps medicine and pledges to wave the environmental flag in whatever she does.

"Something must have been implanted in me at an early age," said the 90-plus student. "I can do the same thing (with young students)."

"We are impressed by the passion an

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organization to promote education and cultural relations. It operates at arms length from the British government.

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