

RELEASE

Canada Life sends hundreds of high school students to “A conversation with Michelle Obama”

Winnipeg School Division shares 470 tickets among 12 high schools; Copy of *Becoming* donated to Argyle Alternative High School library.

Winnipeg, September 19, 2019. . . Today, Grade 12 students in Winnipeg School Division got a surprise gift from Canada Life – an opportunity to attend a fireside chat with Michelle Obama, former first lady of the United States from 2009 to 2017. The local insurance company will provide 470 free tickets to the event taking place on Tuesday, September 24, 2019 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. at Bell MTS Place.

“Events like [A Conversation with Michelle Obama](#) are a great example of experiences that can help inspire youth to grow as leaders and individuals, but we know many students and their families may face financial or scheduling barriers to attending,” says Brad Fedorchuk, Executive Vice-President of Group Customer at Canada Life. “These tickets help bridge the gap and give students from different walks of life across the city a chance to hear Michelle’s messages of inclusivity, diversity and healthy living in person. What’s more, stocking a copy of Michelle’s book *Becoming* in the school library lets students in other grades learn from Mrs. Obama in a personal way, too. All of us at Canada Life hope these gifts will have a lasting and positive impact on young Winnipeggers.”

Rob Riel, Director of Indigenous Education with Winnipeg School Division and Jamie Sarailon, an Argyle Alternative High School student in Grade 12, accepted a copy of Michelle Obama’s 2018 book *Becoming* from Brad Fedorchuk at Canada Life.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to hear Mrs. Obama speak in person, sharing her messages of inclusivity, diversity and healthy living, messages that align with curriculum in several subject areas,” said Mr. Riel. “We’re very grateful to Canada Life for making it possible for so many of our students to be part of what could be a life-changing experience.”

Grade 12 students will attend the event and up to 50 educators and support staff may attend to supervise. The high schools in the division sending students include:

- Argyle Alternative
- Children of the Earth
- Collège Churchill
- Daniel McIntyre Collegiate
- Elmwood
- Gordon Bell
- Grant Park
- Kelvin
- R.B. Russell Vocational School
- Sisler
- St. John’s
- Tec-Voc

"I'm looking forward to hearing Michelle Obama speak in Winnipeg and appreciate the opportunity to go see her," said Jamie Saraillon, an 18-year-old student at WSD's Argyle Alternative High School. "I think she is inspiring to women and girls especially with her Let Girls Learn initiative."

An additional 30 tickets will go to post-secondary students involved in the James W. Burns Leadership Institute at the University of Manitoba , bringing the total donation to 500 tickets.

Canada Life is the presenting sponsor of A Conversation with Michelle Obama, an event hosted by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

About Great West Life, London Life and Canada Life

Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life are leading insurance, wealth management and benefits specialists, focused on improving the financial, physical and mental well-being of Canadians. Under the new Canada Life brand, we help Canadians achieve their potential, every day. Our customers across Canada have trusted us to provide for their financial security needs and deliver on the promises we have made. Together, we serve the financial security needs of more than 13 million people across Canada and provide a wide range of products and services for individuals, families and business owners.

As an Imagine Caring Company, we support the principles of corporate citizenship and benchmarks for community investment established by Imagine Canada. Our companies contribute at least one per cent of pre-tax profit in support of the communities where our employees and customers live and work. This includes \$13.3 million in contributions to non-profit, charitable and community organizations in 2018.

About Winnipeg School Division

Winnipeg School Division (WSD) was established in 1871 and currently has 78 schools, 33,000 students and 6,000 employees. Its purpose is to provide a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student's potential and provide equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

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