

Youth-to-Youth War of 1812 Campaign



Lauren Hoffman, a recent Nardin Academy graduate and intern for the Canadian Consulate General's Office, created the Youth-to-Youth 1812 campaign.

Robert Kirkham/Buffalo News

Educational campaign focuses on local history during War of 1812

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Some of the bloodiest fighting of the War of 1812 occurred on the Niagara Frontier — a fact being dramatized by the Youth-to-Youth 1812 Campaign in a series of educational presentations for area high school students. The initiative was developed by recent Nardin Academy graduate Lauren Hoffman, under the aegis of both the Niagara 1812 Legacy Council and the Consulate General of Canada. Its goal is to encourage students to explore local history as the war's bicentennial draws near.

The series focuses on local bloodshed and lore rooted in the War of 1812, a conflict between Britain and America that lasted almost 1,000 days.

"It seemed like one of the best ways to get students involved is with another student," said Kerry Mitchell, program manager for political/economic relations and public affairs at the consulate, who added that the buildup to the bicentennial was creating a lot of interest on both sides of the border.

According to the 1812 Legacy Council, the war's bloodiest battle was fought at Lundy's Lane in Niagara Falls, Ont., and the war's longest siege was at Fort Erie. Half of all reported casualties during the war occurred within 35 miles of the Niagara River.

Since then, the border between the United States and Canada has also been one of the most peaceful.

"A big part [of our campaign] is that we want schools and students to connect across the border and mirror that friendship," said Hoffman.

Hoffman, who will be attending Yale University in the fall, is pursuing this project as part of her second year of internship at the Canadian Consulate General.

The educational series focuses on other battles, including the Burning of Buffalo and the Battle of Lake Erie. Hoffman also wants to encourage students to get involved in the war's history by visiting monuments as well as the Peace Garden Trail — a system of at least 30 community gardens being developed by the 1812 Legacy Council in Ontario and Western New York.

The multimedia Youth-to-Youth 1812 Campaign, which debuted this month at Nardin Academy, was to be presented to at least three other high schools—Niagara Falls, Grand Island High and Tapestry Charter School — this school year.

To this end, Hoffman has organized a team of seven high school juniors to work on the campaign after she leaves her internship with the consulate.

"The best experience for me is coordinating with other schools and mobilizing the youth," said Hoffman, who wants to be an advocate for local history.

Information about other 1812 bicentennial events sponsored by the 1812 Legacy Council can be found at

www.discover1812.com .

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