

## Key Club District Convention 2018 in Halifax, Nova Scotia

Written by AY Jackson Key Clubber Angela Wang with contributions from attending DCONers

As a new member to both Key Club and the District Convention (DCON) this year, I didn't know what to expect. I had an idea of what Key Club did and what I contributed as a member event by event, but I didn't understand how far my efforts when I participated in volunteering activities and fundraisers went. Through DCON, I learned just what being a member of Key Club really meant. The experience began at the airport while waiting to board the airplane. The Key Club members



AY Jackson Key Clubbers and Mrs. Hassam

who were going to DCON wanted to photo and we were trying to find someone to help us take the photo. We asked a teenaged boy to help us because he was wearing his Key Club's club shirt. I hadn't initially noticed he was there, but afterwards I began to realize just how large of a convention DCON was. Even within our own city, and on our flight to Halifax, we met many students from the Toronto area as well as outside Toronto who were part of Key Club. I didn't know any of these people, but all of the other AY Jackson Key Club members were friends with many of them which surprised me.

When we arrived at the hotel where the convention was held, we attended the meet-and-greet session where we met a multitude of people from Key Clubs from all across Eastern Canada. There were a surprisingly large number of people from Prince Edward Island, despite their small province size, which illustrated how large Key Club was, to my astonishment again. This notion that Key Club was a massive global organization was further emphasized later



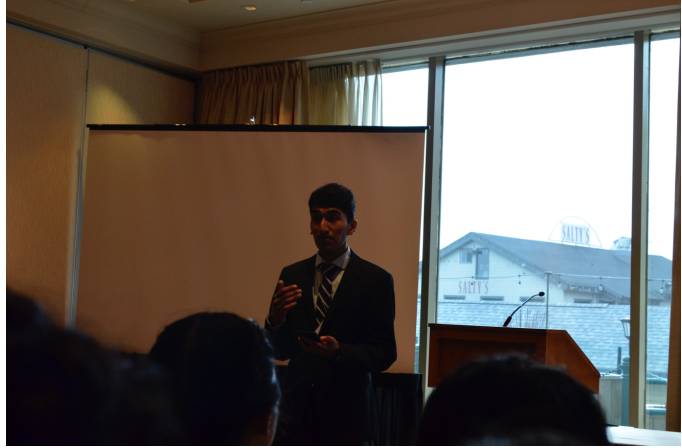
2017-2018 District Governor Yong Da Li with a rabbit head



Key Clubbers having a balloon fest

when I found out that many Key Clubbers also had international Key Club friends. I was also pleasantly surprised by how everyone at the convention was very welcoming. People would take the initiative to walk up to you, smile, and introduce themselves. They also played group games together, despite many of them not knowing each other, and were very inclusive.

The second day, after breakfast, was caucusing. Those who were running for Eastern Canada district positions, such as lieutenant-governor or secretary-treasurer, had to give speeches in front of everyone else in order to be potentially voted into the position. A lot was learned about how other Key Clubs were run. Some clubs have service projects every other week. I learned that Key Club is largely student run. If the students can conceive the ideas and take the initiative to implement them and bring them into fruition, then their ideas will become a reality. This was something that I didn't know was realistically possible because in my own experience, a lot of clubs were teacher led. The candidates' speeches inspired new ideas for service projects, and encouraged me to take the initiative to find service opportunities on my own for my club. They also showed me that it's possible for me to go through with an idea and make it a reality if I'm willing to put in the effort. Moreover, one of our own A.Y.J. Key Clubbers, Lakith Ranaweera, ran for district secretary-treasurer!



Lakith giving his speech as a district secretary-treasurer candidate

There were several workshops to choose from, however, I attended the SCAW and the Eliminate Project workshop first. SCAW stands for Sleeping Children Around the World. It's a non-profit organization that raises money for bed kits to send to children around the world who are sleeping on the streets. It's known as the 100% charity as all proceeds go towards buying the bed kits; delivering them and other jobs are done by volunteers. SCAW helps children not simply by giving them a better night's sleep, but also in unforeseen ways. The blankets provided in the bed kits may also be given as part of the children's dowries when they wed, so the bed kits are very valuable to those who receive them. The Eliminate Project aims to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus. Tetanus is disease that may cause a horribly painful death for both mother and child. Even while the baby is dying in pain, they cannot be held or comforted by their mother as merely touching their mother would cause them more pain. In Canada, and many developed nations, the tetanus vaccination is easily accessible, whereas in many developing countries it is not. The Eliminate Project aims to go into these developing countries where the vaccine isn't easily available and vaccinate mothers and babies against tetanus, saving lives and preventing future deaths. Through this workshop, I became more aware as a global citizen about what problems still persist today in other countries that I don't have to worry about, being a fortunate resident of a developed country like Canada. It also helped me to realize how much as little as two dollars, that many people often take for granted, can do for someone else, since it only costs US\$1.80 to vaccinate and educate a mother against tetanus.

The second activity I participated in was writing the narration for a colouring book to give to children in hospitals. I worked in a group with other Key Clubbers from other provinces. We decided on the characters' names, the plot, and the message together. We settled on a story about a girl named Suzy who was a bully, and her friend Bobby who introduced her to service for the community and helped her change her ways. Initially, Suzy didn't enjoy volunteering, but by the

end, Suzy was happy to help other people in her community. It was really enjoyable putting together something that other people could enjoy and learn from, especially with new friends who also felt similarly. The activity encouraged my own desire to help my community.

The third workshop I attended was called “Key-rative Writing,” although there was also a workshop about public speaking. In this workshop, everyone in attendance first started by writing about what colour Key Club was to them. I wrote that Key Club was every colour because it was inclusive towards every person, it was compassionate towards everyone, and it could even empathize with everyone given its magnitude. Key Club was yellow for the joy felt by Key Clubbers helping others as well as by those who received help, it was red for the love and kindness it showed others, it was blue for the sorrow Key Clubbers felt for other people in need or in horrible living conditions, it was purple for the value Key Clubbers placed on others that was equivalent to royalty, etc. This was my impression of Key Club, yet I had only joined earlier this school year. In addition to what colour we thought represented Key Club, we did an activity where Person A and Person B have conversation. They used to be lifelong friends but there was now a rivalry for the same scholarship for university between the two. Both committed shameful deeds of either rigging a Key Club district election or stealing an item from Halifax. Both try to keep these deeds a secret from the other party. It was a challenge finding discreet ways to lure the other person away from their shared hotel room where the evidence was. It was an activity that helped teach creative communication skills, something very important in Key Club whether within a club’s members or with other organizations and people.

AY Jackson Key Clubbers Halifax 2018





One of the final events of the second night at DCON was the awards ceremony. AY Jackson received numerous certificates for their submissions to the various contests held by Key Club, as well as several recognition awards. These included:

First place in Club T-shirt Contest  
First place in Club Poster Contest  
Second place in Club Video Contest  
Recognition for contribution to UNICEF  
Top Club recognized for the Governor's  
District Service Project Award for our  
fundraising efforts for SCAW  
Distinguished Club Award  
Silver Award for R.A. Cageorge  
Achievement Contest (work over the last  
year in Service Projects)



Overall, DCON was an amazing experience filled with new friends, new possibilities, and a new desire for doing service, whether by fundraising, volunteering, or just caring about other people. I learned so many new things regarding my duties as a global citizen, world problems that so many people are ignorant about, and what I can do to contribute even by a little bit. I also learned new ways to be a leader in my community, as well as how to take action if I have an idea that addresses a need. I learned that Key Club, and its associated organizations such as Kiwanis International that Key Club falls under, are about the exact things that DCON, for me, was filled with this year: new friends, new possibilities, and caring about people through doing service.

AY Jackson's certificates from Key Club 2018 contests

DCON in Halifax was made possible by contributions for the Kiwanis Club of East York and AY Jackson Secondary School.