

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

QMS Students Win \$5000 Grant for Cowichan Food Basket Society

Philanthropic Grant Will Help Local Food Bank Make Ends Meet

February 13, 2014 - Duncan, BC, Canada – Providing experiences that engage young people in creating social change and helping them grow compassionate communities is the goal of the *Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)* in Canada. Now, thanks to the hard work of three *Queen Margaret's School (QMS)* Grade 9 students, one of our vital charities in Duncan will benefit from a \$5,000 grant.

Each year, the YPI offers grants to fund grass-roots based charities, solely based on the efforts of high school aged students from around the world who act as their advocates. YPI is the signature program of the Toskan Casale Foundation which is based in Toronto, Canada. The Toskan Casale Foundation manages YPI in Canada and the United States.

QMS students Robin Fleming, Alessandra Mateos and Maria Paula Garcia selected the Cowichan Valley Food Basket Society for their YPI research project. The Duncan Food Bank was started in 1988 by a broadly based group of Cowichan Valley residents who saw a great need for a coordinated answer to hunger in the area. Clearly there is a need as the society offers 150 bowls of soup and sandwiches each day to those who enter their doors, and 420 food hampers are given to families each month.

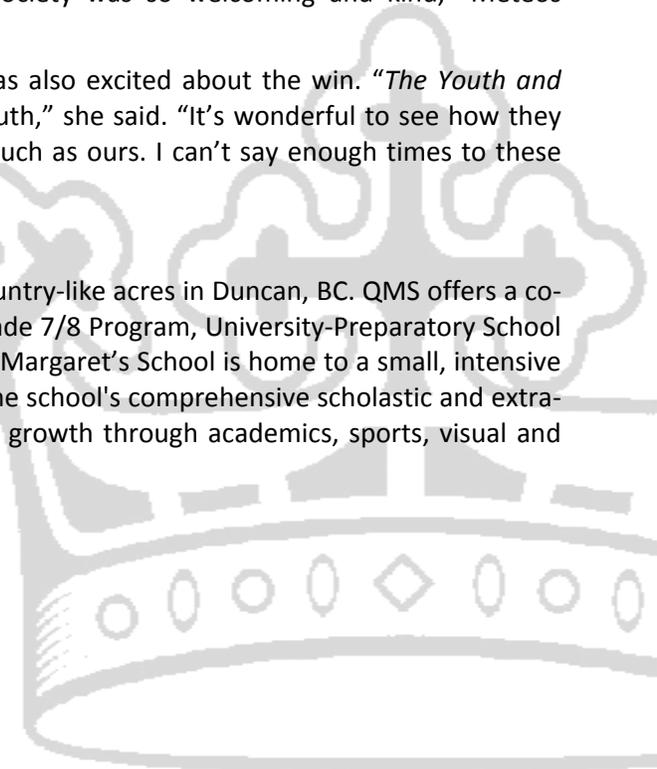
Fleming, Mateos and Garcia were required to engage in research on the food bank through personal interviews and visits then present a compelling argument in front of a panel of student peers, faculty, staff and Vancouver Island YPI representative, Fiona MacInnes. They faced intense competition for the grant dollars as other QMS student teams were battling for various local charities such as Glenora Farm, Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, Clement's Centre, Cowichan Valley Hospice Society, the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association and the Community Options Society.

"We discovered that it costs the food bank a lot each month to keep their doors open," said Alessandra Mateos. "This money will help them buy fresh produce, meat and perishables that are very expensive." The group was thrilled with their charity being selected for the grant. "Everyone at the basket society was so welcoming and kind," Mateos continued. "They deserve this money!"

Colleen Fuller, Manager at the Cowichan Valley Food Basket Society was also excited about the win. "*The Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)* is such a positive reflection of our global youth," she said. "It's wonderful to see how they are very aware of, and become connected with, community initiatives such as ours. I can't say enough times to these girls...thank you."

About Queen Margaret's School

Established in 1921, **Queen Margaret's School (QMS)** is located on 27 country-like acres in Duncan, BC. QMS offers a co-ed ECE Program, co-ed Junior School (Kindergarten-Grade 6), all boys Grade 7/8 Program, University-Preparatory School for girls (Grades 7-12) and all girls Boarding School (Grades 6-12). Queen Margaret's School is home to a small, intensive ESL Program and Canada's *only* on-campus Equestrian Riding Program. The school's comprehensive scholastic and extra-curricular program provide opportunities for achievement and personal growth through academics, sports, visual and performing arts, riding and community service.



For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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Photo: From left to right: Grade 9 students Robin Fleming, Maria Paula Garcia and Alessandra Mateos jumped for joy after their presentation at the YPI finals won the Cowichan Valley Food Basket Society a \$5,000 grant from the *Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)*.



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