



News Release

May 6, 2019

The Inaugural Race Rocks Challenge is on!

Come on in, the (chilly) water's fine!

On Saturday, May 25, a group of [Pearson College UWC](#) students are set to take on a largely-unprecedented long-distance, open-water swim from [Race Rocks Ecological Reserve](#) to the main dock at the College on Pedder Bay.

"These seven students are training hard and are keen to meet the challenge of a six-kilometre swim in the chilly late-spring waters of the Salish Sea," said Corey Teramura, Seafront Activities Coordinator and one of the many people on the Metchosin campus working to make this challenge a success.

"The students involved are all experienced and strong swimmers. Their stamina levels are high, their enthusiasm is inspiring to the entire campus and they are all experienced swimmers who have trained long and hard in both the winter waters of the North Pacific and in calmer waters at the College pool."

Teramura is quick to credit the idea for [The Race Rocks Challenge](#) to student Hayley Touchburn, a first-year student from New Brunswick, who organized the swimmers with inspirational and practical support from Faculty member and Marine Sciences teacher Laura Verhegge. Growing up on the east coast, Hayley said swimming was always an integral part of her life.

"I was about 2 or 3 when my mom would bring me to a community pool while my brother was at school. Years of summers at the beach, swim lessons, competitive swimming and ultimately triathlon all started at St Pat's Community Pool and Parlee Beach in Shédiaac -- which was basically my backyard!"

Touchburn is being joined by six peers: Mara Bohm (Manitoba), Mikella Schuettler (Canada), Tess Casher (Yukon), Andrew Littlejohn (Newfoundland and Labrador), Sarah Lewis (Newfoundland and Labrador) and Dvir Maimon (Israel).

Collectively, the participating students explained their motivation in a short essay, "In addition to our individual reasons for taking on what we've coined, **The Race Rocks Challenge**, we hope to use this ambitious and exciting experience to help the College raise funds for new pool equipment, to reach out to alumni and to generate positive attention for the College."

Teramura added students are honoured to be [training with](#) and mentored by [Susan Simmons](#), who is volunteering her time with the Pearson swimmers. Well-known on Vancouver Island, Simmons works extensively with Special Olympics participants, including the Spirt Orcas team which is currently training for a relay crossing of the English Channel and the [Great Bear Swim](#) training camp.

“Safety is the highest priority for ***The Race Rocks Challenge***,” added Teramura. “All swimmers will be wearing full-body wetsuits and we will literally have a flotilla of safety personnel and observers in powered craft and certified guide-staffed kayaks surrounding the swimmers every metre of the way. We are working with all agencies, including the Canadian Coast Guard, with responsibilities for the marine environment and shipping traffic.”

A swimmer experiencing any signs of distress will trigger an immediate response. A variety of communications systems, including VHS radios and cell phones, will be in place to coordinate any needed water or land responses.

An open-water swim of this nature is highly dependent on water and weather conditions and the Swim Director has ultimate authority to make the go/no-go decision on the morning of May 25. If these are not optimal, the Director can decide to cancel, delay or adjust the course.

“***The Race Rocks Challenge*** is a mental and a physical challenge,” said Teramura. “It demands focus, dedication, toughness and resilience – the qualities that all students bring to Pearson.”

Touchburn added that the, “challenge, the excitement, the beauty of the area...the possibility for team spirit and camaraderie are what attracted me to open water swimming. I want to leave my mark at Pearson and I think ***The Race Rocks Challenge*** is a way to do that. I want to bring a team together, raise money for this place that has meant and given me so much over two years, and leave with a bang!”

About Pearson College:

In 1974, Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific was founded on a forested campus along the shores of Pedder Bay in Metchosin. We are proud and grateful to be living and learning on the unceded territory of the Scia’new (Beecher Bay) First Nation. Pearson is one of 18 United World Colleges (UWCs) worldwide.

Pearson’s mission – *To make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future* – is transformational. Pearson is a two-year pre-university school for nearly 200 students aged 16 to 19 selected from up to 160 countries and all Canadian provinces and territories. This year, nearly 90% of students attend on full or partial scholarships made possible through individual and organizational donors. The non-profit, charitably-registered school’s commitment to deliberate diversity draws students from regions of conflict, refugee backgrounds and often from challenging socioeconomic backgrounds.

Pearson College UWC offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, the most recognized and respected high-school diploma in the world. Students embrace a whole education that pays equal respect to academics, service, leadership, physical pursuits, creative expression, experiential learning and the lessons of learning and living together. To date, 14 [Pearson alumni](#) have gone on to become Rhodes Scholars.

For more information or to arrange an interview:

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