

Jim MacCarthy Coho Scholarship

Whether it be my commitment to karate for 6 years, being actively involved in the ultimate frisbee team at school, theatre production, and as Chair of the Environmental Protection Network Club, my student life has been a colorful one. Friends and members of my community have described me as a dedicated and passionate student - and I recently received the Horatio Alger Scholarship and Principal's Award of Merit for being an all rounded student at school. Within all of these activities, what stood out most to me was the experience I gained with the Salmon Survey Streamkeepers organization.

Many people are aware that BC has an abundance of salmon, but many do not realize the salmon in their own backyards. As Chair of the Environmental Protection Network at West Vancouver Secondary, and Liaison and Lead Statistician for the West Vancouver Streamkeepers Society, I learned the importance of conserving habitats for wild species. A collaborative volunteering project involving students and adult Streamkeepers in the community, it is currently one of the largest non-profit organizations that focus on conserving wild salmon in BC with over 200 members. Data is compiled from organized volunteer groups counting salmon in our local creeks. I then present the data alongside the President of the Streamkeeper Society as a delegation to the district council and mayor. We provide important insight to the current population of salmon as well as raise awareness of trends over the years. I have seen houses being built closer to the shores of fish spawning creeks despite regulations put forth by the district, the amount of waste on the river banks accumulating, and constant presence of invasive plant species overtaking the balance in ecosystems. Over the three years that I have volunteered with Salmon Survey, protecting the environment has become an integral part of my vision for a future I want to promote. Therefore, I want to marry my passion with environmental protection and aspirations to be an architect, to influence a modernized urban design that co-habits with nature. I will be studying Urban Forestry at UBC in September of 2018, and hope to enter Environmental Design at UBC in my third year. My future goals are susceptible to change, but I hope that I will be able to use my experience with the Streamkeeper Society as inspiration for a better environmental design. Perhaps my weekly salmon counting could spawn a future where we can be sure of taking care of our backyard neighbors.