

Izzy Doll Workshop – Encounters with Canada

During Remembrance Week 2016, the [Izzy Doll Project](#) had another great opportunity to introduce its work to some of Canada's youth. Conducting a Workshop as part of the "Encounters with Canada" forum provides a great opportunity to educate our youth on the humanitarian work of the Canadian Forces – with emphasis on helping children around the world who may be living a life of misery and despair as a consequence of war or natural disaster.



"Encounters with Canada" is our country's largest and foremost youth forum. Every week of the school year some 120-150 teens aged 14 to 17 years assemble in Ottawa from across Canada. Here they discover their country through each other, learn about Canadian institutions, meet famous and accomplished Canadians, explore exciting career options, develop their civic leadership skills and live an extraordinary bilingual experience. The Remembrance week session has a special focus and is sponsored by Veterans Affairs.

Encounters with Canada is one of the many acclaimed programs of Historica Canada, and is recognized and endorsed by the Ministry of Education in every province and territory. The conduct of an Izzy Doll workshop over the past eight years has provided an unparalleled opportunity to interact with 1000 of Canada's engaged students and likely leaders.

The workshop is conducted by Shirley O'Connell who is ably assisted by a group of 'Assisting Angels' that she recruits from Perth and brings to Ottawa. Activity starts with the telling of The Story of the Izzy Doll primarily through the video [The Story of the Izzy Doll](#). The students were very attentive while learning of the life of Master Corporal Mark Isfeld and his personal efforts to help overcome the distressing situations that he observed in the war-torn areas where he was deployed. You could hear a pin drop!

Students then moved to the hands-on phase of the workshop where each is provided a basic kit with the knitted components of an Izzy Doll and it is their challenge to complete the fabrication of the doll. Raised hands are the norm and many will never even have threaded a needle in their life!

A theme of these workshops is "Make a Difference." Through learning of Mark Isfeld's story the student can appreciate in a small but personal way how they can each be a humanitarian and contributing to help a child in need in a remote part of the world.

The future of Canada will be in good hands based on the quality of the youth who participate in the Encounters with Canada program. Their new familiarity with the Izzy Doll Projects has helped in their development and will help them to "Make a Difference."

