

## THE ROME TRIP

Every spring, thousands of students and professors travel to Rome to expand their cultural awareness in an international setting. This unforgettable trip includes participating in an international student conference, visiting the cultural, religious and historical sights that lie at the roots of our own culture and getting the chance to meet and discuss issues with students from across the globe. PEV provided sponsorship for this annual trip for young women living in and around Toronto. University and college student participants describe the opportunity as an educational and cultural experience that brings to the fore PEV's goal of fostering good education and values in today's young women. It also helps them to develop into well-rounded and driven people that give back to society through their family life, professional work, and community action.



“There is a beauty in the culture, people, and interactions you experience that leave you with the greatest education of all. Saying that Rome is my favourite place in the world would be an understatement,” said Natalie Orellana, a fourth year political science student at the University of Toronto. Orellana was among the scores of university students who gathered in Rome this year.



The international conference is held every year and focuses on a specific topic which invites students to think about current issues and then share their ideas and thoughts with other students from across the globe. Students from the University of Toronto, the University of Guelph, Ryerson University and Seneca attended in 2010, when the topic was “Global Culture”. The theme for the 2011 conference will be “*Living Freedom Decisively*”.

“There are many aspects in which we can inspire the world. At the conference this year, we learned that we can inspire the world through different types of mediums such as

advertisements and little things like novels such as “The Lord of the Rings” and books written by G.K. Chesterton,” said Kristine Lauro, a second year human biology student travelling from Toronto.

Lauro also learned more about the difference between the Italian and North American cultures. “I can't explain this difference in words,” she says, “You have to experience it to believe it.”

This is especially relevant to one of the aims of PEV which is to help young students make good decisions using their freedom, responsibility, and great potential. The Rome conference supports this goal by encouraging students to use their critical thinking skills to gather facts and write essays relating to a specific topic which they then present to fellow students from around the world. The students then use these ideas to help them make their own decisions about how to address today's issues in society.



Orellana sums up her whole experience this way: “Participating leaves you with an overwhelming sensation that as a young woman and student you are part of something bigger. You are truly a citizen of the world.”