

YOUTH | Millennials illuminate Vancouver with 'BIG' ideas

Winners named in video contest, followed by a conversation with community leaders

BY HAYLEY WOODIN

After the Company of Young Professionals' annual Leadership Forum and inaugural BIG Idea video contest event, one thing was undeniably clear: Greater Vancouver's next big thing is its young professionals, their skillsets, and their fresh perspectives.

Since January, the signature program's Peer Leadership Forum groups have been talking to regional leaders, local organizations and young professionals to both identify some of the biggest challenges facing the region's millennials, and to prepare their "BIG Ideas" for how to address them.

Nine teams produced nine videos that impressed both in style and in quality of content. On May 18, the top three teams were recognized at the sold-out Leadership Forum, which capped off a momentous day of events, announcements and achievements for the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

The winning team was Team 5 which, with a stunning video,

asked how to keep young talent in Vancouver in an age where talent is fluid. Government incentives for hiring new graduates and millennials, a student loan deferral plan, and increased partnerships between industry and post-secondary institutions were among their winning ideas.

The people's choice winner, as voted by viewers, was Team 8, who surveyed over 100 millennials to find out what young professionals in Vancouver need in order to stay in the city. Encouraging employers to offer young employees greater flexibility, such as options for self-funded leave and earned days off, were part of their big pitch, and it resonated.

A special honourable mention went to Team 3, who argued that including young professionals on governance and policy committees, increasing density, and implementing a strong vacancy tax would help retain young talent in the Greater Vancouver region.

Aptly titled Illuminate Vancouver, the event also featured a distinguished panel of speakers who shed light on the greatest challenges facing young professionals.

They also drew on their extensive expertise and first-hand experience to offer insight into what CYP members can do today to get ahead tomorrow.

Moderated by Farhan Mohamed, Editor-in-chief of Vancity Buzz, the panel featured Janet Austin, CEO of YWCA Metro Vancouver, Michael Geller, President of The Geller Group, Meredith Powell, Co-founder of The Next Big Thing, and Manu Varma, VP of Human Resources for Traction on Demand.

As with past CYP Leadership Forum events, 20 of the program's most dedicated members graduated with their Engaged Leadership Certificate. The program recognizes those who meet specific criteria in the areas of leadership, networking, volunteerism and innovation. **SB**

Hayley Woodin is a freelance journalist and media specialist at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. She sits on the CYP advisory committee, and chairs the program's events committee.

Like and join CYP on Facebook and LinkedIn for details about CYP's upcoming summer social event. To watch the final BIG Idea videos, visit boardoftrade.com/bigidea.



A panel of community leaders take part in a May 18 discussion on how Greater Vancouver can attract and retain more young professionals.



Board of Trade President and CEO Iain Black joins CYP Members who have completed the program's Engaged Leadership Certificate.



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