

## **OLIVIA SQUIREWELL – Barron Collier High School - GIV 2016**

UNFORGETTABLE. This is the one word I used when I was asked to describe my experiences at the Governor's Institute of Vermont. From making lifelong friends, memories that will last a lifetime, and learning how I can be an influence in global social issues not only shaped the person I am today but influenced the person I would like to become. Listening and learning about national and international viewpoints on current issues shaped how I see the world. Climbing out of my comfort zone and completely emerging myself into a progressive environment taught me a new way to see the world. Not everything in this world is black and white. To truly see the different colors of the world one must be willing to look through a kaleidoscope.

Waking up at three a.m. to catch a plane ride to Vermont was unpleasant to say the least. While sitting in the airport with my fellow scholarship winners and I to Vermont was unpleasant to say the least. While sitting in the airport my fellow scholarship winners and I started to contemplate who are roommates and fellow campers were going to be. Personally, I was excited to hear the different accents and dialects of the English language. The Floridians were first to arrive on campus, which meant we got a first look at everything! The campus overlooks an impeccable view of the Black Mountain, in which I did not mind waking up to every morning! After the international students from Bosnia, Spain, Germany, and Ireland settled in the American students bonded immediately with the international students.

The bonds that were made between each and every student were nothing less than significant. Personally, I felt I had something in common with each and every student. Over the twelve day time period I got to build relationships that not only furthered my knowledge concerning political issues, but to strengthen and build up my confidence. Throughout the week and a half many camper, as well as I, found that we could confide in our new friends. By the end of camp many of us campers felt closer to each other than our friends back home. Thus making it heart breaking to have to leave each other.

With the tears, I also remember the memories I had made at the Governor's Institute in which I would not change in a heartbeat. The relationships and knowledge I have gained from this experience have shaped me into the person I would like to see myself to become. The camp not only lets you see the world from your eyes but also makes you look from a kaleidoscope. Looking at the world from various perspectives not

only gave me a greater appreciation for the world I live in, but also showed me how I am able to change the world.