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King's Communications interns win IABC Award for Bell Let's Talk Day

Former King's Communications interns: Lourdes Hurtado, and King's alumni Kylie Castle '19, Aysenur Kurt '19 and Zirda Kikki '17 of Fanshawe College's post-graduate certificate in Public Relations and Corporate Communications have received acclaim for the work they did on the 2020 Bell Let's Talk campaign at King's. They have won the Virtuoso Award of Merit in Division 4: Communication Skills, Category 20: Special and Experiential Events from the London Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). They submitted their detailed communications plan in the student category of the competition.

The Interns were supported in their project by the King's Communications staff including Spenser Henstock, a King's student and intern completing a Western writing internship in the Communications department. As well, they were supervised by Chantal Quagliara, Digital Content Coordinator at King's.

"Going through this experience has taught me that working in teams is fantastic when everyone collaborates and sets high-achieving goals. We worked hard during our internship and put much effort into creating a great Bell Let's Talk Day communications plan and event. I am also very grateful for the Communications department's support at King's during my time there," says Hurtado.

"I'm very proud of my team. It was all possible thanks to the great efforts of my teammates and our mentors. Bell Let's Talk Day taught me a lot about communication and myself as a future public relations practitioner. My internship experience at King's helped me understand and feel the sense of community and engagement," says Kurt.

As part of Bell Let's Talk Day, held on January 29, 2020, the interns, with assistance from the King's Communications team, Human Resources, Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development (ACSD), the King's Wellness Team, Jack.org and others organized a number of events, including information booths, a "Bell Let's Toque Wellness Hunt, a Yoga Class and a Wellness Tour of King's.

The goal of the Bell Let's Talk Day was to highlight the wellness and mental health resources at King's and raise money for the Bell Let's Talk Day campaign. As part of Bell Let's Talk Day, held each year on January 29, Bell donates five cents for every applicable text message, call, tweet, social media view and the use of their Facebook frame or Snapchat filter toward mental health initiatives. Bell's total donation to mental health programs now stands at over \$100 million.

King's Manager of Communications, Jane Antoniak, extends her congratulations to these interns for helping the department with event communications planning and implementation. "These interns brought creative new ideas to our annual Bell Let's Talk Day which they successfully planned and implemented. They developed their campaign in the first few weeks of their internship with a sharp focus, energy and hard work. I wish them all the best in their future careers," says Antoniak.

Their course coordinator at Fanshawe is Jackie Westelaken. She and Antoniak have worked together for six years, bringing interns from Fanshawe for placements at King's Communications.

"One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching is watching the growth and success of students. Fanshawe and King's have formed a great working relationship where a number of our PR students gain valuable experiential learning opportunities during a field placement with the King's Communications Department where they work alongside Jane and her team as well as some Western students in similar programs. The students are given a variety of real-world communication projects including the one for which they won the IABC award. Jane and her team welcome everyone and are valuable professional resources. The IABC Virtuoso Award is a recognition by our peers in the industry in terms of the students' skills," says Westelaken, Professor / Coordinator, Public Relations – Corporate Communications Graduate Certificate Program.

Presented every year by IABC London, the Virtuoso Awards are Southwestern Ontario's premiere professional awards celebrating excellence in communications and the best in creative strategy and design. Since the program's launch in 1995, Virtuoso has revealed local communications, marketing, and creative professionals as 'ones to watch.' The full list of winners, including the former King's interns can be found at <https://twitter.com/iabclondon> or <https://www.instagram.com/iabclondon/>.

For more information on the 2020 Bell Let's Talk Day at King's, please visit <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/media-and-communications/newsroom/bell-lets-talk-promoting-wellness-at-kings/>

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