

# Fostering peace for a younger generation

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## Thinkers' Lodge home to institute for teachers

AMHERST – It was fitting the first conference following the recent restoration of Thinkers Lodge, cherished for a legacy of world peace and understanding, featured a team fostering peace among young citizens.

A group of teachers involved in the graduate studies program at St. Mary's University was in Pugwash for a week of sessions at historic Thinkers Lodge, where scientists from both sides of the Iron Curtain first congregated more than a half century ago at the summer home of U.S. industrialist and Pugwash native Cyrus Eaton.

"This group of teachers has gathered to learn what peace is and how to implement it into their classrooms and communities as well as in their schools," Prof. Sherida Hassanali said.

Hassanali said it only made sense to bring the conference to Pugwash since it's the home of the Pugwash Conferences and the movement that brought some of the brightest minds together to talk about greater understanding at a time when Cold War tensions were at their highest.



A group of graduate students is participating in a peace institute sponsored by St. Mary's University at Thinker's Lodge in Pugwash. It was the first conference in the newly refurbished lodge. Participants included: Mark Coffin (left), Jessica McKenna, Jody Bucci, Jacqueline Laba, Tanya Joyce, Prof. Sherida Hassanali, Robbie Comar and Monique Ouellette. Darrell Cole – Amherst Daily News

"This is where it all began. It's a historic tradition of bringing intellectual thinkers from around the world to talk about peace," said Hassanali, adding participants have been engaged about learning and working on a video they plan to upload to YouTube for other teachers to use. "Between our discussions and the video and lots of networking we have brought people together to talk about peace."

John Eaton, whose grandfather organized the first peace conference in Pugwash, spoke to Hassanali a few years ago and came to the realization that using the lodge for studies centered around the peace process made perfect sense.

"A lot of people know about my grandfather's interest in peace but he was also very interested in education," Eaton said. "Bringing people together in a setting like this is key to bridging

differences so that we understand at the end of the day, as Bertrand Russell would say, remember your humanity and forget the rest.”

Eaton said his grandfather firmly believed that one person can make a difference and he’s confident participants will go back to their communities and schools and help foster peace.

Mark Coffin of Halifax believes the problems that happen schools eventually become community problems.

“If we don’t have peace in our schools we won’t have peace in our communities,” said Coffin. “The experiences we had here will help the students my colleagues teach have a greater understand of what peace is and how important it is to understand others.”