

MEET THE MENTOR: INJY



OUR NEWEST RECRUIT

Who are you?

My name is Injy Johnstone. I'm a 22 year old Dunedin bred Wellingtonian with a passion for empowering people to take action on climate change. I enjoy finding interdisciplinary solutions to climate change that span law, science and policy and have worked doing this everywhere from the United Nations down to local kiwi communities. I am currently working in Colombia as a Prime Minister's Scholar on climate change adaptation workshops and next will be heading to the US in August to undertake a Masters in Environmental Law. Due to my lived experience as both, I also work with Government as an advocate for empowering foster children and those with access needs.

What are three words you use to describe yourself?

Innovative, Enthusiastic, Independent.

How would you describe your high school journey?

Whilst I had always loved school, the start of high school was very tumultuous for me as I was kicked out of home, put into foster care and diagnosed with my autoimmune condition. School provided a source a certainty and stability, and I put my all into it by getting involved in everything I could- academics, sports and cultural events. This led to incredible opportunities such as attending my first United Nations Conference at the age of 16 and knew from then that this is what I wanted to dedicate my life to.

What do you wish you'd known when you were in high school?

Two things, one that I didn't need to stress out so much and second to be practical about next steps. At highschool and with NCEA it can be easy to work harder and harder. Every year I passed with excellence by May or June and instead of doing more and more credits, really I should have explored doing some university papers or extra learnings outside the classroom. Also I had my heart set on going to university in England, but didn't face up with myself about the fact that I actually couldn't afford.

So I flew all the way to Oxford University for the interview and staying over there, which meant saying goodbye to a lot of the scholarship offers I had here for getting Dux. The lessons for me from both these experiences was to really love what you are learning, and to be open to taking up opportunities where they lie.

What number one piece of advice would you give someone in high school now?

The learning you do outside the classroom is often the most important. I don't remember all of the achievement standards I did at high school but what has lasted is the experience and connections from taking up any and all opportunities that came my way. In saying this, don't just do this for the sake of your CV- be truly intentional about what you want to invest your time in. For me this was my volunteering, leadership activities, conferences and work experiences.

I understand you've won an award for leadership. What does leadership mean to you?

Leadership to me means empowering people. This means doing whatever you can to bring out the best in a person or team, sometimes this looks like listening, other times this looks like offering advice or setting the direction. Leadership looks different for everyone, so my advice is to find your style of it and from there become self-aware about how you can best enable the people around you.