A life changer
On March 13, 2018, Becca Blachut (BCom ’18) attended Leading Change’s Forum for Emerging Environmental Leaders to explore career opportunities. As it turned out, the day-long event expanded more than her network.

“The conference was amazing!” she enthused afterward. “The number of young inspiring social and sustainable entrepreneur delegates was incredible. There was opportunity to network with business people from many industries and fields, and everyone was kind, genuine, and eager to learn and brainstorm.”

The panelists were entrepreneurs, government officials and chief sustainability officers from major corporations, and as well as a chance to hear them speak, the day also offered participants a speed-mentoring session that provided one-on-one engagement.

After years of trying out different fields of study, including international development and environmental studies as well as business, Becca feels like she found her people.

She heard from C-suite players at companies like Coca Cola and BASF and from start-up social entrepreneurs that having broad interests is a good thing, that being adaptable is a strength. She also learned that there’s potential for a small change in a big organization to have more reach than in a small firm or start-up. And lesson number three is to come to the table not with “You suck,” but instead with “What are you doing?”

The experience was such a game-changer, in fact, that Becca is already planning to attend next year’s event in Toronto.

And what transformed Becca in another way is The Blanket Exercise. A key step toward reconciliation of Indigenous-colonial relationships, the Blanket Exercise covers more than 500 years of history in a one and a half hour participatory workshop. Participants take on the roles of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Standing on blankets that represent the land, a facilitator walks them through pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance, with varying outcomes that physically move people through the landscape. The emotional and intellectual engagement educates at the same time it increases empathy amongst participants.

“It’s easy to think about reconciliation in the abstract,” Becca says. “This was the opposite of theoretical. It was so personal. So personal. It was very powerful.”

In fact she concludes, “I will never be the same.”

Resilient communities: some actions
Surfrider Rally to Rise Above Plastics
Friday, April 13, 5-6 pm, Victoria Conference Centre

Film screening of Plastic China, followed by panel discussion on tackling waste locally.
Friday, April 13, 6:30-9:15 pm, Vic Theatre

PIT passenger rail expansion:
Vancouver to Victoria
This year, the litany of environmental disasters around the world will reach an all-time high. The increase in severe weather, from thunderstorms in Australia to severe heatwaves in China, shows the ongoing impact of climate change.

The world looks different from here.
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