

## **Cullis-Suzuki is still inspiring others**

From the United Nations at 12, to Cochrane last week

### [Cochrane Times Article](#)

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Wednesday October 18, 2006

Cochrane students were treated to a special guest last Friday as Severn Cullis-Suzuki-daughter of internationally renowned environmentalist David Suzuki-showed them how their actions can evoke change.

“I think for some students it will get their mind around how there are tiny things that they can do in the community that can lead to big changes,” said Cochrane High School Grade 12 student Natasha Weisner. “It shows us that you don’t have to be some super hero to try and bring about big change.”

Cullis-Suzuki, who also spoke at Bow Valley High School, presented her personal experiences, starting from a young age, of how she got her voice heard.

At eight-years-old she traveled with her family to the Amazon, a trip that led her down the path to following in her father’s footsteps as an environmental activist.

As the family was departing from their trip in a small village they flew over the vast rainforest only to see a part of it covered in thick smoke filling the tiny plane and masking the bright sun.

“I just felt that it was wrong,” said Cullis-Suzuki of what she remembers seeing. “It was so unbelievable that this incredible world that I had just discovered was being destroyed.” Upon returning back to her home, Vancouver B.C., Cullis-Suzuki and a group of classmates founded a club called the Environmental Children’s Coalition (ECO).

A few years later, through fundraising, the group managed to get enough money together to set up a booth at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro where they would “talk to anyone who would listen” about their ideas.

The trip was successful for the group who earned more attention from the media and attendees because of their tender age.

As the ECO group were en-route to leave the country they received a phone call stating if they could make it back they would have five minutes to address the whole group.

“I told them that I was twelve and that I had already witnessed some pretty scary effects on my future--and that it worried me. And that before their goal as politicians, as professionals, as businessmen, as businesswomen--their first responsibility is to be parents,” remembered Cullis-Suzuki.

By the end of her five minutes Cullis-Suzuki said people were standing and tears were falling down the faces of many, including the security guards.

The one moment in her life led to many other speaking engagements and now Cullis-Suzuki is an accomplished TV host with the Discovery Channel, an author, and holds a B. Sc. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Yale University all at the age of 26.

The speaker used the examples from her life to show that young-people who are passionate about a subject can bring a change to their school, community or even the world.

Cullis-Suzuki offered three key pieces of advice for the students to take with them including getting outside and being with the environment, getting educated on what can be done for the future and start asking questions about things such as where the food you eat is from? And who grows it?

“Like I said before what you eat is a product of your environment and becomes part of your body. Find out who is growing it and know the environmental and social issues surrounding that,” she said.

CHS presented the speaker with a \$100 donation to the SkyFish project which is a think-tank for people to connect and share ideas on living a balanced and better way of life. Cullis-Suzuki kindly accepted the cheque only to turn around and return it back to the schools sustainable development program.

“It’s awesome,” said Cullis-Suzuki to the Times. “I was at the youth conference in Kananaskis and a 13-year-old girl asked me what they could do at their school to make a difference and I said talk to the Cochrane High School students about what they are doing.”