

This interview was conducted on June 19th 2012 via email. We thank Mohit for taking the time to do this interview.

1. Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

I'm Mohit Aasi, I came to Canada in 2002 from India. Now I am a Parkdale resident, attending grade 11 at Western Technical Commercial School. Life was very different for me when I first got here. I had to get used to new teaching styles and meet new people from various backgrounds and cultures. I realized that people had to change with the time and environment they are faced with. Like they say when you're in Rome do like the Romans do.

2. What is your involvement with the Newcomer Youth Program?

I was a summer program youth participant in 2010. I attended the program activities the whole summer attending various workshops and outdoor activities with about 15 other youth. We had writing competitions along with outdoor sports, potluck picnic and visits to High park and Centre Island. We ended the program with a newcomer youth exhibit where I made a short video presentation.

3. What has been your motivation in bringing commitment and persistence to your work?

This is easy, if you actually love what you are doing then you don't need any motivation or a pat on the back because it's what you love to do and you are getting paid for it either in cash or kind. So do what you love nothing less. Growing up is not all about getting mature and learning from your mistakes, it's also about doing the things what you said you would do when you're older. (don't get me wrong, I am still under 18!)

4. How would you describe your experience being involved in Parkdale Newcomer Youth Program?

My experience in this program gave me an experience I believe I couldn't find anywhere else. I learned to work with many type of people, working in a diverse environment, making the community aware of the things that are happening around the world and learning about many other factors about our communities and neighbourhood, Canada and the world many of which I wasn't aware of.

5. How do you think the program has helped you develop?

The program has given me the edge that I believe no other program would provide, an amazing youth settlement worker who helps every single one of her member to the fullest and wants each and everyone of us to succeed in everything we do. She has given me many opportunities to be aware of and help in my community, she gives us frequent updates on jobs that we are applicable for and helps us in anyways possible. Her name is Kalsang!

6. What are some of the challenges you faced as a newcomer and how did you overcome them?

I would sum up my challenges this way, "you don't wait for opportunities, and you have to make your own opportunity". In other parts of the world jobs would come to you in most cases if you are educated enough but in Canada you have to go, seek them, market your skills and qualities and show them that you are the best for the job. That is my opinion for so far!

7. How has your experience in the newcomer youth program contributed to your success?

The experience I've earned contributing in the program was working with other youth of various ages and backgrounds to solve problems and overcome certain similar obstacles in a safe and supportive environment. Also on learning from others too, I've learned on different ways to take on certain challenges from how other look at obstacles and challenges through their perspectives and working in a very diverse program.

8. Would you recommend the Parkdale Newcomer Youth Program to anyone?

I would believe that this program would be more than beneficial to anyone in the community. You learn new ways of solving challenges and are given many opportunities on various projects giving you ideal experience in various projects like video making, public speaking, communication and other foundational and life skills you can use in your daily lives as well as build on them for your future career.

9. If you were given a chance to go back and change one thing to enhance your success, would you do it?

Why or Why not?

No certainly not, going back and changing my work habits, as you grow older you may think about the things you could have done better. But, when you were little or young, you would have surely made many mistakes and also learnt from them. Making mistakes is only good when you can learn from them and not repeat them again.

10. Could you tell us a bit about your upcoming student summer job?

My summer job is called Youth In Policing Initiative (YIPI). It's a job that promotes youth participation in and exposure to the work environment through diverse, educational, and productive work assignments through the Toronto Police.

11. How did you manage to get your summer job?

I got this job thanks to my brother, he is a current member of the newcomer youth program too and Kalsang gave him the youth newsletter link with details about the job and he passed it onto me. I jumped for the opportunity, asked questions to Kalsang and applied for it.

12. Being a newcomer not too long ago, how does it feel to have a job and already be part of the working class?

I had moved to Canada as a child in 2002 with my family from India, but it feels great to finally have a job so I can start having an experience in a professional working environment.

13. How has your achievement affected your perspective of your future goals and desires?

My goals are still the same; this is experience which would help me pursue my goals giving me an exposure to a professional working environment. But after finishing my summer job, I believe I would greatly benefit from it since I love working with my community and it will give me an idea on how to work in a job and get experience that I could use for my future in any career field.

14. What does success mean to you?

Success means to me when you set a reasonable goal to achieve, you then work very hard sacrificing many things to get it and after a lot of work and dedication you finally get your goals. If you ever want to get something in your life, get ready to work hard for it, get ready to sacrifice many things to achieve what your desire.

15. Do you believe that you are a role model for the youth of today and the leaders of tomorrow?

I believe so, I really can't say for the others. But I learn from my mistakes, take the advice of people who I look up to and try to become the best I can be in helping others, helping the community and becoming a better person as a whole.

16. When you look back on your experiences since moving to Canada, what were the most memorable moments that you would like to remember and cherish?

Some of the things I cherish are the fun times I had with many of my friends at schools and communities and the learning opportunities from teachers and class mates. The Field trips we were on where we had fun times with each other and learned many things I was interested in like math and designing.

17. Any advice you can give to the newcomer youths reading this?

My only advice is, don't wait for the opportunity go make your own opportunity. Most of the times people aren't going to come to you, you have to go to them.

Wow, that was a long interview but thank you for the chance to share my success story as a youth and I hope that my youth peers will gain something from it.