

**Could you tell us a bit about yourself?**

My name is Norbu Tsering and I am currently studying Psychology in York University. This fall, I will be going to my 2<sup>nd</sup> year on the hope to receive my BA degree after 3 more years. I am currently employed as a Youth engagement Worker at the Parkdale Community Information Centre. I also work in McDonald's as a Team Leader and I have been working there for about four years. I am always looking for a learning experience and my job at PCIC as definitely provided that. I have become a more effective communicator, a better leader and a team player.

**What is your involvement with the Newcomer Youth Program?**

Currently, I am one of the team leaders for the newcomer youth summer program. I was one of the volunteer judges for the youth movie review contest for STOM-R youth-led project that completed in June this year.

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

I believe that in order for a person to commit and bring their whole hearted passion to their craft, there has to be a source of inspiration. For me, just the idea of being a youth has been very motivating. I have always wanted to be part of something greater than myself, something that would give me confidence and hope to have a better tomorrow. In the context of my work experience, working with the youth and being a role model for them has definitely given me that inspiration and it pushes me to be my best self.

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

The Newcomer Youth Program has given me a lot of exciting experiences since I first joined the family. I have learned the importance of team effort, the responsibilities that come with different positions and the appreciation that comes with working alongside the youth. Being the team leader for the youth community project was a highlight of my experience with the Newcomer Youth Program because it consisted of all the different responsibilities and activities that cover my whole experience within the program. I got the chance to take leadership, mentor fellow youth and also work alongside them to a sense of team effort.

**How do you think the program has helped you develop?**

The Parkdale Newcomer youth program first seemed only as a source of that could just help me move through high school. However, the people I have met here and the experiences I have had showed a different perspective of community. I have learned that community never starts with self. It always begins with the effort of an individual for one another. With this focus, I began to enjoy being part of the program. The newcomers joining the program became the source of my development because they taught me how to become a better leader and mentor.

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

I came to Canada in the summer of 2005. The one thing that I found hard to get used to was the different kinds of cultures and races. I was born and raised in Nepal where the majority of the people are Tibetan, Nepali and a few foreign tourists. Toronto's multicultural vibe became a challenging and a learning experience. It was a challenge because of the culture shock. It was obvious for me that since the people have different ethnicities, they must follow their alternate norms and beliefs and I have to make the effort to appreciate where they come from. I am not sure if this is the idea that other newcomers shared but from how I was raised, I learned that to live in a community or amongst caregivers, one critical necessity is to understand where everyone comes from. Only then will you truly appreciate their presence. That was my goal and the fear of being left out and rejected amongst the youth who have been here for a longer time pushed me back a little. So, I remained persistent on the beliefs that I carried all my life and that motivated to meet new people and develop relationships with my classmates, teachers and the fellow citizens.

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

Being part of the newcomer youth program for a long time gave me the chance to learn about the people that I was working alongside with. The team work that we built together in the community project and the tutoring club gave me a lot of self-confidence and it motivated me to work even harder to bring my best effort. Some of the youth that I worked with became my inspiration. They showed me that with the right mindset and proper motivation, one can accomplish many goals. This brought me success not only here working as a Youth engagement worker but also academically as I became more focused on understanding the materials taught in school.

**Would you recommend the Parkdale Newcomer Youth Program to anyone?**

I would not recommend this program to everyone because I believe that being part of a community program or any kind of association is one thing but being mentally focused is another. People who want to develop a sense of their own position in the community would benefit from this program because they would get the chance to engage with the newcomers who have their own stories and experiences. From that, they bring their skills and interests. This can be an inspiration for any member of the program.

**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?**

I do not think I would like to go back and change anything in my past. One thing certain about our life is that life itself is uncertain. You can work as hard as you want and try your best to maintain your success but somehow things will get out of control. If I had wanted to change something in the past, I surely could do it but how certain am I that this change would bring me greater success. This uncertainty encourages me to simply appreciate the effort that I actually put and celebrate my success.

**Is there anyone in your life who has inspired you or motivated you to be your best?**

When I was little, my father used to take me to the monastery every weekend for prayers and helping the monks with holding cultural ceremonies. Although I wasn't much of a help, I learned many things from talking to the monks and especially meeting one of the monks who was of a higher position. He is called a Rinpoche. He always told me about the beliefs of Tibetan Buddhism and the importance of being a good person. Before I came here to Canada, I promised myself that whatever I do in the future and whatever accomplishments I have, I will always strive to be the best person. This is not only in terms of being a kind individual, it also means being there to contribute and take initiative in enhancing the community and the people's lives around me.

**Could you tell us a bit about your new job?**

The position I received for my new summer job is called youth engagement worker. I work in the PCIC located in the Toronto Public Library in Parkdale. My responsibilities are working with the youth during the newcomer youth summer program under supervision of the youth settlement worker, doing outreach for donations and preparing for the annual rummage sale. I also attend meetings affiliated with PCIC and help them with hosting ceremonies and events for the community.

**How did you manage to get your summer job?**

Before getting the position as a youth engagement worker, I only noticed the job posting thanks to the newcomer youth committee supervisor, Kalsang. I have been part of the program for about two years and with the good connection that I maintained with the program, I learned about the new position for the summer. After applying online and sending the resume, I was called for an interview. The interview went very well even though I had some difficulty in answering questions about my availability. I was not quite sure how I should have felt after the interview. However, I received another chance which gave me more confidence. After a week or two, I received an email from my supervisor saying that I had received the position and my initial reaction was just

laughter because I got so excited. I had always wanted to be a staff in the library even though I am not an actual library staff.

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

Even though I have been in Canada for 6 to 7 years, I still feel new to what Canada has to offer for its citizens. I think it is because I haven't been in other provinces in Canada except for Quebec. I still feel like I am part of the Canadian culture and community. In terms of having a job, my first job was McDonald's and I was in grade 9 at the moment. It was a little scary for me because I felt like I was moving into a field that I did not expect to be part of. There were more new faces with new characters and work ethics. Therefore, learning to interact with them and know them better was an amazing experience.

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

My achievement in getting the summer position gave me more self-confidence. I have begun to have more trust in myself and my skills. I feel like I can do so much more in the future and considering that the responsibilities I have for my position are so useful for my future aspirations, it gives me more hope and joy.

**What does success mean to you?**

Success to me means getting back everything and more that you gave to your goals, aspirations and work. I perceive it as a cycle. It would not be success if I received the summer position without even applying. If I give in 100 %, I will receive 120%

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

I would not call myself a leader of tomorrow because I am still developing my leadership skills. However, I would say that the path I took to become a team leader and now a summer staff could be followed by anybody but what the youth should work towards finding their motivation and the drive that pushes them to be their best. In that sense, I could offer them advice and help them in reaching their goals.

**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?**

The most memorable moment was being a citizen of Canada. Everyone would agree that receiving a citizenship certificate is like receiving a new life. It opens so many doors and offers you hope and trust for the future and the wellbeing of your loved ones. The other memorable moment was receiving the summer position as a youth engagement worker. Even though McDonald's was my first job, it did not feel like an accomplishment. I think that all the years I have been to Canada, my hard work and expression of my passion for my work and hobbies has ultimately lead to my success in being a PCIC staff.

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

I think any newcomer youth that read this could relate to the experiences of being new and a stranger to a strange society. I hope it is motivating if not inspiring and I would like to advise the youth that whatever experiences you have had, good or bad, leads up somewhere and it is up to you to make sure that those experience are worth remembering and cherishing.