

1. Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

My name is Agar Tenzin; I am a 2nd year BA (Sociology) student at York University. I've lived in Toronto for about ten years now and it is one of the best cities in the world. I love the fact that the cultures here are so diverse, and they all contribute to the Canadian values. I like to play all kinds of sports, especially basketball. I currently work for Greenest City as a Youth Green Squad Coordinator for the summer and it's an amazing job where there are new things to do and learn every day.

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

Throughout my late high school years I started volunteering with the Newcomer Youth Program, and I loved being a part of it because it had lots of informative workshops and interesting things to learn every week. In the summer of 2010, I worked for Parkdale Intercultural Association under the Summer Students Jobs program as an office assistant for Newcomer Youth Summer Program under Kalsang's supervision. It was a great learning experience as I was doing things that I wasn't accustomed to, and it helped me in developing many employable skills such as team leading, communication, organizing and presentation.

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

My motivation has been leaving a great impression wherever I worked, and not only to impress people but also, so that I could use that place as a reference for future jobs or opportunities. Kalsang always told me your current job is a reference for the future jobs and I have used that as motivation to bring commitment and persistence to my work.

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

It was one of my most rewarding experiences as it taught me various skills and gave me valuable experience in life. Participating in the program introduced me to several youth, with whom I had not associated with before, but also taught me how to interact with people who you're not familiar with.

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

When I first came to Toronto in my early teens, I was basically a fish out of the water, as I wasn't accustomed to the different culture and system here. It took a long time for me to grasp the different lifestyle and it wasn't easy. One of the main issues was the language barrier as at the time my English wasn't as good. But I kept practising and making new friends which helped speed up my learning of the language. I have always been a friendly person so making friends wasn't that much of a big deal for me.

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

The Newcomer Youth Program has given me a tremendous amount of self-confidence when approaching people or just small talk. It has given me more knowledge when it comes to communicating with youth and also during interviews, I have more confidence in what I am saying and more experience with interviews; which help me get the jobs I want.

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

I would recommend this program to anyone who is interested or having difficulty communicating their thoughts and feelings, as it provides a great platform for youth to improve their interpersonal skills and also helps them learn life skills with the provided workshops and other kinds of settlement related assistance.

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

If I were given a chance I would go back and note down the key points that were taught in the important workshops or classes in school. Although I believe I have a good memory, it helps to record things down, in case my memory isn't reliable. So, take notes or remember what you learn is what I would like to do if I could go back in the

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

My parents are my main inspiration as they have worked hard their entire life and have provided for their children. If I am going through tough times, they are always there to support me, and that motivates me to work harder in life and make them proud.

10. Could you tell us a bit about your new job?

As a Youth Green Squad Coordinator, I basically help and assist the youth with gardening, cooking, and learning ,as well as guiding them through the job. I have to plan what the Youth will be doing for the remainder of the summer and also supervise their work, as they are young and can be a little out of control at times. All in all, it is a very rewarding job as I am put to task on many things I haven't experienced before and it gives me the opportunity to grow and help grow the youth too.

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

I am familiar with the program manager, Emma, and she recommended that I should apply for the job. I decided to apply since I had nothing to lose and I was selected for an interview. I did the interview after doing proper preparation and provided my references.

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

It feels good, as I am learning every day and also, I am working in Parkdale. It is the neighbourhood I grew up in and I love working with the people that I am familiar with. I hope that by working as a Coordinator, I can be an inspiration to the younger generation, and show them that they can achieve anything if they put their mind to it.

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

It hasn't really affected my perspective as it has enhanced my abilities in order to reach my goals to be a Youth worker and provide support to troubled Youth.

14. What does success mean to you?

Success means, learning from experience and using what you learn from experience. Success doesn't always have to be winning or making loads of money. I believe if you make a mistake and you learn from it, and come out stronger. That is success because you are saving yourself from making another mistake and it helps you grow. Also achieving what your goals are, I believe is a big part of success, because you set something in your mind to do and you get it done, which isn't always easy as it sounds.

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

I believe I am a role model as I want to be able to provide guidance and direction for the leaders of tomorrow. I believe it is important to have role models in your community because youth are easily influenced and having a role model can be an inspiration that gives them motivation to work harder and think smarter.

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

My advice would be to work hard at whatever your passion in life is, and carefully organize your daily activities. It is good to hang out with your friends but make sure that you have priorities and things to do before you hang out, because if you keep yourself busy it makes you a more reliable and organized person. Also, aim for the highest goal possible; I know it sounds cliché but nothing is impossible and you are the only person who can set the limits. Any goal that is set is achievable, but you have to work hard towards it. That is my advice.

All the best and have a wonderful summer!