

SUCCESS STORY INTERVIEW with Tsewang Dhargyal

By Tenzin Namsel

1. Would you like to introduce yourself to all the readers out there?

My name is Tsewang Dhargyal and I am currently in grade 12 waiting to graduate from high school and enter the sophisticated university life. I have been a member of the Newcomer Youth Program for more than 2 years now and it has been the most valuable experience where I have learned to grow and develop skills that are essential in the community. After a number of team leadership roles I got to play along with other valuable opportunities through the program, now I am hired as a part-time after school CAP (Community Access Program) Youth Worker, where my role is to provide support to peer youth through the weekly sessions, tutoring, workshops and others.

2. I would like to congratulate you for your job as a CAP youth worker in Parkdale Community Information Centre. Could you please tell me a little bit about your job and how do you like it?

As a CAP youth worker, it has been a great experience to be able to work closely with my supervisor Kalsang Dolma. . I find my work challenging and a great learning platform to move me further up into my career path. This job opened up more responsibilities that have really helped me and the training I got will definitely be very helpful. I also get to tutor youth one on one and be an academic mentor which was a totally new experience for me. I would like to thank my peer youth, PCIC, PIA and all the staffs for making this happen to a newcomer youth, like myself.

3. Could you tell a bit about your involvement in this Parkdale Newcomer Youth Program?

As every newcomer youth, I started this program as a youth member for the weekly language and tutoring program. However, with the help of this program I have been able to step up every year and grown from a volunteer, member, contributing editor, team leader, youth ambassador to a part time staff as a CAP Youth Worker today. This can't be happening without the great resources and opportunities that you are given through this program and the only important thing to add is your interest and determination.

4. As a newcomer youth, what kind of problems, in adjusting to the new culture have you faced in the past?

On April 2010 when I came into Canada, I could basically describe myself as most newcomer youth who is struggling in communication and adjustment in the totally different culture. In school, it was a challenge in understanding the fluent English spoken by the teachers and I would basically hang out with students from my background and speak our own language that is Tibetan. That would definitely be one of the most prevalent issues in relation to a Newcomer Youth.

5. What is the most interesting aspect of this Newcomer youth program?

This program is not only a place to attend communication or leadership programs, involve in the tutoring program and participate in the youth led projects but there is a lot more to it! The most interesting one would certainly be meeting other newcomers, youth peers and getting to have friends, team mates from all different backgrounds and working with them throughout the program as members or volunteers. Friends at the newcomer youth program are more like someone who knows what you are going through as a Newcomer Youth. There are mentors who will guide you and other peers who will support you sometimes simply with their presence. I basically hang out with the friends that I met from this program and some of them have become my good friends.

6. Before you came to Canada, what are the thoughts you had about this new country?

This is a very interesting question and I really remember talking about this with my friends last year. The best part is that we all shared the same idea about Canada before coming here. I should blame the media for that reason because they are the ones who usually portray countries abroad like Canada as this "tall buildings" "super tidy" and almost everything would look at its best. Downtown Toronto somewhat captures the image. I was also very excited with the similar scenario of my neighborhood in my mind and it didn't actually turn out the same way which was really interesting to discover.

7. When you first came to Canada, how did you get involved into this program?

I was at the library to get some information about the community in PCIC and I met Kalsang there and she told me about the youth program, encouraged me to participate in the Communication & Leadership program and I started attending the weekly sessions after two weeks.

8. Any final messages you would like to share with the readers?

I would like to wish you all "Happy New Year 2013!!"

My final message especially to all Newcomer Youth: "Make the best use of all the great opportunities and facilities that this new country is providing you and you will never regret with the outcome" THANK YOU!