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MY VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Since coming to Canada I have been very fortunate and blessed to have had the chance to volunteer, not only to make friends but to make a meaningful contribution to the community which I was going to call my new home. Having the opportunity to come down to Canada I felt so fortunate and blessed and I wanted to get a more hands-on experience, but the challenge I was always going to face was adapting to the culture and embracing it to make a meaningful contribution. My volunteer opportunities have helped to mould me into the person I am today, helped me be more concerned and aware of the problems facing not only the world we live in, but the communities that we live in and to appreciate all that we are blessed with. The biggest challenge I faced was definitely balancing my time, but one thing I told myself was that with every challenge lies opportunity, and in this case the opportunity to grow as an individual, manage my time more efficiently, and learn from the people around me and making a meaningful contribution that I can look back on in life and be proud of the contributions I made.

My volunteer experiences

Project Example 1: For the past two years I have been going to a school called Store Front School in the North Shore, where I have been mentoring at-risk youth. I felt I could relate well with them from my background coming from Africa, and I was right. The students had come a long way from their many different backgrounds and tough upbringings. My role was to mentor them, help them with life skills that they could apply to their lives like resume and cover letter writing and teaching them how to be more financially literate through interactive games, and we also had a TRU day for them where we brought them to TRU and took them on a tour of the University, trying to encourage them to pursue post-secondary education with the help of TRU instructors who helped us with brief lectures of how an education could better their lives. I feel that the TRU day was a success because at the beginning of the fall semester last year two of the students enrolled into TRU.

Project Example 2: My involvement in ENACTUS has helped me as a business student apply a lot of the in-class knowledge I have gained to real-life situations. Between the fall and winter semester I have the pleasure of assisting two projects. The first involved helping an entrepreneur named Evan to start out his business in putting together a business plan that can not only help him move in the right direction, but also help him to have a successful business. The second was with a new venture called Groceries-to-Go. We were able to help this company with marketing ideas and finding ways to be more profitable.

Project Example 3: My other volunteer experience has been through International Student Ministries (Focus Club). I have been very fortunate to have been involved with this club since my very first year of university, from being a regular member to presently being a Leader. FOCUS Club is a Christian student club that provides unconditional friendship to all international students and a place to explore the Bible. My role has been leading table discussions, creating interactive games and helping out some of the second-language English-speaking members with their English conversational skills. The reason I enjoy being involved with Focus Club was the fact that when I first moved to Canada it was not easy for me to adjust to the culture, school system, and making new friends in a foreign land and I was very thankful to Focus Club members for being my family away from home. Therefore, I promised myself to be that person to someone else, be their friend and mentor and maybe leave a lasting impression in their lives.