VIP Community Event

By: Harsh Thakkar
VIP Student Coordinator

Helping the community in which we live is indeed our moral responsibility. As valued citizens of the London community and as responsible Western students, VIP volunteers undertake initiatives to serve their community. This fall, VIPs went out to celebrate Halloween with the Children’s Museum on Thursday, October 30, 2008.

The London Regional Children’s Museum is a special place for children and grown-ups to play and learn together. It’s filled with hands-on, interactive exhibits that encourage children from infancy to age twelve to explore and discover heritage, the sciences, arts and more. VIPs enjoyed helping out with different activities like trick-or-treating in “Street Where You Live”, Skeleton Fishing in the Arctic, Lollipop Ghosts, Ghost Bowling, making super slime in science and many other crafts and activities.

The VIP participants commented that they “loved playing with children” and that being surrounded by children reminded them of their childhood. They added that the “most exciting and entertaining part of celebrating Halloween with children was seeing them in their colourful and interesting costumes.” Not only did VIPs end up having a lot of fun, but Erica Vilon, Coordinator of the Children’s Museum, really appreciated our help to make the Halloween event enjoyable and successful.

As said by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, “if our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking, we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever.” I truly agree with Mr. Annan. Let us make our community better and safer by serving and helping it, and stand out as a true Western leader.
Celebrating 25 years of Success at Western

By: Kaitlynn Hodgins, VIP Program Assistant

Student Development Services’ Volunteers In Progress Program started as a summer project funded by a government Summer Experience Program and was implemented by a group of Western students in 1983. Since then, the program has grown into a large and successful volunteer program, providing opportunities each year to over 100 Western students.

For 25 years, the VIP Program has been enriching and complementing students’ academic life by providing them with the opportunity to develop skills and gain career-related work experience. Over the years, through the creativity, commitment and hard work of close to 2,000 volunteers, SDS has been able to provide unique programs and services as well as a high quality of support to the student community at Western.

On Friday, January 23, 2009, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in Conron Hall, University College, the VIP program will be celebrating the helping spirit, dedication and contribution of Western students and reflecting on 25 years of success by inviting current and former VIPs, VIP supervisors, and Western staff. Complimentary hors d’oeuvres, beverages and cake will be served.

Please RSVP by January 12, 2009 to khodgin4@uwo.ca.

The special guest performer of the evening, Brenda McMorrow, is a singer, songwriter and former VIP who will entertain guests with her inspiring music.

Originally from B.C. and now based in Guelph, this gifted songwriter, vocalist and guitarist has recently returned from three creatively magical years in Korea, Thailand and India. Brenda has released two acclaimed albums and has shared festival rosters with Bruce Cockburn and Great Big Sea.

Her most recent record, Ameya, is a collection of ancient Sanskrit chants set to original melodies.

For more information and upcoming performances visit: www.brendamcmorrow.com

A message from the Volunteers In Progress Program Coordinator

In honour of the VIP Program’s 25th Anniversary I would like to take this opportunity to thank current and former VIPs and VIP Supervisors for their enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to the program over the years. We are looking forward to many more years of success by providing Western students with meaningful community involvement in the Student Development Services and in the Western community.

Sandra Pehilj
VIP Program Coordinator

Helping Hands Fall 2008
Events

Orientation
By: Sameera Chaudhary
VIP Student Coordinator

The 2008-2009 VIP year started off with the smashing success of our VIP Orientation which was held on Thursday, September 18th, 2008 from 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm. The orientation was very informative and showcased all the services Student Development Services has to offer students, as well as the different areas that VIP volunteers can help in. Afterwards, VIPs headed down to the Wave for the first social of the year, the Meet & Greet. VIPs had the opportunity to meet the VIP staff, the student coordinators, and many of their fellow VIPs. Thank you to everyone who came; it was an evening of good food and great conversation that did not end until almost 9 pm!

HOLIDAY PARTY
By: Sameera Chaudhary
VIP Student Coordinator

On Wednesday, November 26th, VIPs came together to mark the end of a successful fall term with our annual Holiday Party. It was an evening full of great conversation and friends who enjoyed drinks and delicious desserts. A thank you to the VIPs who came out to our tasty celebration!
The Impact National Conference is Canada’s premier student event which attracts students from secondary and post-secondary institutions as well as young entrepreneurs from across Canada to partake in a two-day national celebration of entrepreneurship. The conference brings over 500 youth leaders from across Canada to learn, discuss and network with their peers and distinguished members of the entrepreneurial community. It aims to motivate youth to participate in entrepreneurial endeavors while equipping them with the skills needed to become ambassadors for entrepreneurship in their communities.

This year the conference was held at the Westin Harbour Castle (Toronto, Ontario) on November 21st and 22nd. The conference featured excellent keynote speakers like Rebecca MacDonald, co-founder and executive chair of Energy Savings, Leonard Brody, co-founder and CEO of Now Public, and many other speakers who encouraged and inspired young entrepreneurs at the conference. Speakers not only shared their success stories and experiences, but also expressed the hope of opportunities for youths in current financial crisis.

The Impact Entrepreneurship Group is also committed to rewarding outstanding students and notable entrepreneurs for their stellar achievements through Impact awards. The Impact Awards reflect the five themes of EWC: Social Entrepreneur, Technological Entrepreneur, Green Entrepreneur, Woman Entrepreneur, and Arts Entrepreneur.

Delegates from UWO were also inspired by the conference, and with the intent to stimulate the spirit of entrepreneurship at Western and help Western students in their entrepreneurial endeavors, an application for establishing an Entrepreneurship Club at UWO has been submitted for approval. Western students will indeed benefit from this!

By: Roza Hassanzadegan

On October 31, 2008, ISS held a Halloween Party during its monthly Tea & Information Session for spouses and partners of international students.

Attendees were in two groups for carving pumpkins and it was really fun!

I hope everyone enjoyed Halloween - thanks for joining us that afternoon.

Roza Hassanzadegan is the ISS Assistant Facilitator for Spousal Events, VIP’s newest position!
Time flies. It’s already the end of the semester. However, there must be a lot of students who still fondly remember their happy time in the past summer. I also have a vivid memory of my very exciting and significant summer experience as a volunteer in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games during August.

I am so glad that I got the opportunity to volunteer in the 2008 Olympic Games as the assistant for the Canadian Olympic Committee. My job was to assist Canadian team members with daily affairs they faced during the games, for example, registering for validation cards, directing traffic, and attending opening and closing ceremonies.

As a Chinese student studying at the University of Western Ontario, this volunteer experience was very unique and significant to me. When the Canadian Olympic athletes found out their Chinese assistant was a Western student, they were very surprised and happy. We built a good relationship with each other during those twenty days.

Sometimes when the athletes had spare time, I also accompanied them for walks and shopping and introduced them to traditional Chinese food to help them get to know more about China. I really appreciated this volunteer experience and it will always hold a special place in my heart.
A Message from the Student Coordinators

Our fall term has come to an end and it has been a great success. We’ve had opportunities to enjoy fun socials as well as make a difference in the London community with our community involvement day. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our VIP supervisors for their support and hard work. Additionally, a big thanks to you, our volunteers, for all your time and dedication; you are the reason that we are able to continue to provide first rate services to our fellow students.

Happy holidays VIP and see you in the New Year!

- Sameera, Harsh, and Jessica