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The annual VIP Orientation was a great success! To jump start the year, VIPs were refreshed with the variety of services the Student Development Centre and Western International has to offer. With a growing team of VIPs, it was rewarding to hear our program coordinators and supervisors speak about past VIP contributions.

Who knew throwing plush around a circle could help remember names? Pumping up the evening with a couple of ice breakers, VIPs became acquainted with both new and returning members. Along with a delicious lasagna dinner and a live music performance by the VIP team, the evening was nothing but enjoyable.

Until next time… all the best to a fabulous year!
**Yo-Yo’s Night**  
*September 20, 2012*  
*By: Joe Lin*

Our first social event kicked off at YoYo’s Yogurt Café. VIPs got the chance to create their own frozen yogurt dessert by choosing among an assortment of flavours and toppings to finish off a dessert masterpiece! It was a nice and relaxing night to get to know each other a little better.

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**Halloween Party**  
*October 25, 2012*  
*By: Joyce Lai*

Several days before Halloween, VIPs had an exclusive encounter with Iron Man, the Hulk, and countless witches, fairies and princesses at the London’s Children Museum Halloween Party! Alongside other student volunteers from the London community, VIPs helped create an unforgettable night full of fun, treats, and spooky surprises for over 200 children and their families. With activities such as cookie decorating, monster bowling, and a haunted house tour, there was something in store for everyone to enjoy!

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**Budapest Dinner**  
*November 7, 2012*  
*By: Joanne Lac*

In early November, VIPs escaped the impending Canadian cold to enjoy the warmth and food of Hungary! Requiring only a short bus ride to the Budapest Restaurant in downtown London, VIPs enjoyed an authentic and delicious 3-course Hungarian meal. Combined with the cozy atmosphere, live piano music, and new friends, it was a night to be repeated soon!
Ashley Kewayosh Samuel

Ashley is the Internalization Programming Coordinator and the English Conversation Program Coordinator for the International & Exchange Student Centre. She is originally from Walpole Island First Nation, Ontario.

Favourite Dish:
Coconut curry soup.

Most Exciting vacation:
St. Lucia, West Indies. My husband is from there and it is nice to visit his family.

If you had a yacht, what would you name it?
“Free Spirit”

If you could travel back in time, where would you go?
I would like to travel back 500 years ago to North America to spend time with my ancestors.

Choose a super power:
Flying.

Joanne Lac

Joanne is the Assistant Coordinator for the Volunteers In Progress Program. She was born and raised in London, Ontario.

Favourite movie?
“Lord of the Rings Trilogy” and “500 Days of Summer”

Most Exciting vacation?
When I worked at Disney World, Florida for 3 months. On my days off, all employees had free access to the parks!

Do you have any useless talents?
I can wiggle my pinky toe without moving any of my other toes.

Favourite childhood Halloween costume?
Lamb Chops, from “Lamb Chops Play-Along”.

If you could travel back in time, where would you go?
The early 19th century; the time period in Jane Austen’s novel Pride and Prejudice.
Eve is the International Learning Coordinator for International Learning. She is originally from Nova Scotia but recently moved to London, Ontario this August.

**What scares you the most?**
The bottom of the ocean.

**Favourite childhood Halloween costume:**
Bubble gum machine...I came up with it all by myself!

**Met any celebrities?**
I used to work in film. I have met Kevin Spacey, Christina Applegate, Harrison Ford, Julian Moore. I am old friends with Ellen Paige.

**Who/what is your biggest inspiration in life?**
Kofi Annan; the best secretary for the UN.

**Choose a super power:**
Teleportation, because I have a lot of friends all over the world whom I miss!

Sandra is the International Student Advisor for International and Exchange Services, and the VIP Program Coordinator. Sandra is originally from Mostar, Bosnia.

**Favourite movie:**
“The Red Violin”

**Favourite thing about London:**
Great place to raise a family.

**Do you have any useless talents?**
I am very good at imitating others.

**Met any celebrities?**
My husband is a huge Formula 1 fan. We have met a lot of drivers including Michael Schumacher, Lewis Hamilton, etc.

**Choose a super power?**
I would like to have the power to eliminate poverty in the world.
1. **Tell us about yourself (Which VIP positions you held, when you graduated from Western, where you work/study).**

- I was an English Conversation Leader [from June 2010 to Summer 2012].
- I was born here in London, and loved the city so much that I never left.
- I graduated with a Bachelors in Honours Physiology and Pharmacology in 2009 (UWO).
- I went on to pursue a Masters in Cancer Research, which I defended in 2011 (UWO).
- I am currently a Medical student (UWO).

2. **What was your first day like as a VIP?**

It’s almost been 3 years, but I still remember my first day as an English Conversation leader. I met up with my two participants at the UCC, and we played the “Tell Me About Yourself” Board game. My anxiety was minimized because of the excellent training that we had received, as well as all the resources we had at hand in the IESC office. We had an enjoyable afternoon and just spent the entire session learning more about each other.

3. **What are the most valuable skills in achieving your goals? How did the VIP experience enable you to develop these skills?**

Being a medical student, it is necessary to have good communication skills because this is important when dealing with patients in the clinic. Not only do you need good listening skills to extract information from patients when making a diagnosis, but you also have to speak clearly in order to educate them, and sometimes reassure them if you have bad news to break. Getting to interact with ESL individuals weekly, I got to practice “knowing my audience” and adapting the way that I convey my message so that it is appropriate for the people that I am talking to. Being an English Conversation Leader gave me many opportunities to improve my own communication skills.

4. **If you were to return the VIP Program next year, which VIP position would you choose and why?**

I know that there are many great programs that VIP offers. However, I would actually continue doing the English Conversation Program. The program has a lot of personal significance in that my mom is ESL and seeing how much she struggles to express herself in public really motivated myself to join the program. At the end of each term, I always had participants tell me how much more confident they felt conversing in English, and it gave me a lot of personal satisfaction knowing that I made a true difference in someone else’s life.

5. **How would you introduce the VIP program to new students?**

I think the English Conversation Program sells itself. Growing up, I was enrolled in a French Immersion program, and I realized that the best way to learn a second language was to immerse myself in that language and practice speaking to others whenever the opportunity came up. The ECP program offers a low-pressure environment for individuals to practice conversational English and learn about Canadian culture.
One goal of the VIP Program is to enhance the professional development of our volunteers. Hence, a workshop was organized in which Meghan U’Ren from the Student Success Centre demonstrated the Do’s and Don’ts of resume and cover letter writing in order to land that interview! Some useful tips and advice that were presented include:

- A resume is 1 or 2 full pages long, and specifically tailored.
- 4 main rules of resume writing: Relevant, Aesthetically pleasing, Accomplishment-based, and Easy to read.
- A cover letter is generally 3 paragraphs. First, talk about the “me” (your skills). Then talk about the “you” (the company). Finally, explain the “we” (how you and the company can make a good linkage).

With the Winter Holiday just around the corner, VIPs celebrated the end of a successful semester of volunteering at the annual VIP Holiday Party! It was a festive night full of food, drinks, treats and fun! A dessert potluck was held and many students got into the spirit of giving by bringing in delicious treats to share with their fellow VIPs. We also enjoyed a music performance by Joyce Lai and Terrence Chang, and some classics that were played included Frosty the Snowman, Winter Wonderland, and Jingle Bells. It was a casual get-together where VIPs from different services and programs got to know each other a little better and enjoy a relaxing night away from the stress of the looming exam period.

Best of luck on all of your exams and Happy Holidays!

From,
The VIP Team
VIP Interviews
...with Current VIPs

Angelica Ng
Indigenous Services Office Assistant

I am in my second year of MIT Studies. As the Indigenous Services Office Assistant, I have had the opportunity to build a diverse set of skills. This position has allowed me to break into the office environment and helped me learn the importance of work culture, professionalism, and effective communication. Some things I am really passionate about are writing and fashion! I was able to intern at Stylust Magazine this past summer as the Calgary Contributor for the online blog. I am also involved in other organizations on campus such as holding the VP Communications position in the Fashion & Lifestyle Society. I am also on the executive team for USC’s Fuss on the Bus. I believe all my experiences, including VIP, allow me to work towards my aspirations of working at a fashion magazine.

Sara Ataya
English Conversation Group Leader

I am a third year political science student passionately working towards my aspirations of working with the UN in the Human Rights Commission. As an active member of society, I love working with people whether in a school, work, or volunteering capacity. That is why I am truly grateful to be a part of the VIP and ECP Program this year! As an English Conversation Leader, I have the opportunity to work with fellow international students and learn about their cultures, ethnicities, and worldly experiences. I am also currently working with the City of London through their Spectrum Program. I work with children under the age of 12 and provide them with recreational activities such as cooking, arts and crafts, sports and dance. Something that inspires me is a quote by Antoine de Saint-Exupery: “A goal without a plan is just a wish.”
VIP Interviews continued...

Alson Ng  
*SDC Marketing Assistant & Student Partnership Member*  

As a fourth year Business student at Ivey, I am constantly looking for opportunities to get involved and contribute to my school through managerial roles. SDC’s Student Partnership Member Program allows me to do just that! Through this program, I have learned how integral the SDC is to a student’s university life. I am able to see the structure of the university from a manager’s point of view, and learn about university operations, forecasts, and yearly budgets. This role has taught me how to make good decisions based on stakeholder needs, financial constraints, and time constraints. While specializing in accounting, I aspire to work with Non-Profit government organizations as well as explore entrepreneurial ventures. Something that keeps me motivated is the belief that you don’t know where life will take you…thus I choose to live in the moment and stay positive!

Vincy Kwong  
*IESC Newsletter Assistant Editor, IESC Newsletter Illustration Artist & IESC Photographer*  

I am currently in my fourth year of studies in Digital Media, Communication, and Technoculture with a minor in Creative Writing. Within the VIP capacity, I hold many positions that enable me to use my skills and showcase my talents. I am the IESC Newsletter Assistant, IESC Newsletter Illustration Artist, as well as the IESC Photographer. The main reason I applied to become a VIP was my desire to get involved and do more as a university student. The various roles within VIP just happened to fit perfectly with what I enjoy and what I want to pursue in the future. I definitely enjoy my time with VIP and that’s one of the reasons why I have been involved with it for the past 3 years!
ARTS CORNER

Creative Snapshots and Artwork Crafted by your very own VIPs!

Photo Contest Winner
Sara Lee

Photo Contest Winner
Ange Burns

Ink Painting
Joanne Lac

Photography
Joe Lin

Clay Pots
Marya Shabbir

Fall Photo Contest

With all the beauty that the autumn season holds, gave VIPs the advantage of participating in a Fall Photo Contest!

Congratulations to Sara Lee and Angela Burns for winning the top two prizes!

Want us to feature your art in the next VIP Newsletter?! Send them to mchar@uwo.ca!
Thank You Volunteers...

For all the hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm you bring to the V.I.P Program!

Volunteers In Progress Student Coordinators
Volunteers In Progress Social/Community Event Coordinators

Student Development Centre Office Assistant
Student Development Centre Marketing Assistant
Student Partnership Members

Indigenous Services Office Assistants
Indigenous Services Communications Assistants
Indigenous Guest Services Assistants

English Conversation Circle Leaders
English Conversation Group Leaders

International Student Activity Coordinators
IESC Newsletter Assistant Editors
IESC Newsletter Illustration Artist
IESC Photographer
IESC Spousal Events Assistant Facilitators
IESC Transitions Program Assistants

International Learning Administrative Assistant
International Learning Marketing Coordinators
International Learning Volunteer Coordinator
International Learning Assistant Coordinator
International Learning Communications Coordinator

Learning Skills Assistants
Learning Skills Assistant (Indigenous Services)

Services for Students with Disabilities Peer Mentors

Writing Support Centre Peer Writing Counsellors