Each year, the VIP program seeks opportunities that allow us to expand our volunteering efforts off-campus and into the London community. These opportunities let us offer support beyond the Western ‘bubble’ and provide us the chance to meet London community members and organizations. Through our volunteering efforts, we expand our knowledge and appreciation for those around us and are more aware of the needs of the London community. This past summer, we had the opportunity to partner with the Boys and Girls Club of London in support of their summer day camp. During this fun filled day, we got to face paint, play video games, make arts and crafts and play games with the kids alongside their regular volunteers and staff. For our volunteers in attendance, this was a wonderful fun-filled afternoon that allowed them to see a different side of London.

**RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE**

This fall, a group of VIPs enjoyed some time in the kitchen when we returned to the Ronald McDonald House.

The Ronald McDonald House has continued to be our most popular volunteer excursion. The VIPs’ enthusiasm for this initiative was present throughout the night. Between the batches of oat carrot muffins and we channelled our inner Martha Stewart, dividing into teams to bake almost 100 muffins!

We had a great time baking and getting to know one another – all for a great cause!
VIP understands the demands on student volunteers and recognizes the need for personal wellbeing. VIP has increased its efforts to increase the amount of wellness initiatives. We hope by introducing these initiatives, we can help our volunteers balance the stress of the student workload and other life commitments. Our focus on wellness has expanded to include yoga nights along with our other volunteer opportunities. Our hopes are to continue to promote mental wellness and increase the awareness of the important of self-care and hopefully reduce the stigma surrounding mental wellness. Volunteering is a great way to start this process and enjoy the joy of giving back to others.

For the first time, VIP held an event in collaboration with a Western USC Club; The Purple Yogis. The collaboration led to an hour-long de-stressor Yoga session. Open to all VIPs and Purple Yogis, this Wellness Night offered a brief reprieve in the midst of the hectic midterm season. It was a unique opportunity for students to disconnect from the stress around them and focus on their physical and mental well-being. We look forward to future collaboration with The Purple Yogis and other clubs to offer diverse opportunities to match the diverse interests of our VIPs.

Energy flows where attention goes. - Anonymous
TERM-END TEAM POTLUCK

After a great but busy term, it was wonderful seeing so many of our VIPs at our VIP Potluck! Despite being busy, so many of our volunteers came out and enjoyed the wide variety of food and sweet treats. Our Team Potlucks are our way to touch base with everyone before the holiday break and give our thanks for all your efforts. Thank you to everyone attended, we hope you enjoyed it and we look forward to seeing everyone next term!
Let’s hear from our supervisors

We asked Yvonne Fuller some questions about The Writing Support Centre’s first semester:

Describe your VIP experience in five words.

Effective, efficient, rewarding, enjoyable, and inspiring.

How has VIP helped you give back to the Western community?

VIP has allowed us to tackle projects and connect with students in a way that just wouldn’t be possible without our volunteers.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of your position and what part do you enjoy the most?

It has been rewarding to meet ambitious Western students who want to gain new experience. I enjoy sharing in their enthusiasm for the Western community and helping them acquire new skills.

Why do you think volunteerism is important?

Volunteering is important because it provides a way to explore opportunities and personal goals. It can be hard to know "what you want to be" but having the chance to try different experiences can provide a lot of direction and inspiration.

What’s influenced you to continue participating in the supervision of VIPs?

The effectiveness of the program.

If you had to encourage someone to be a part of the VIP program, what would you say?

I encourage all students to volunteer at some point while at Western. Volunteering can lead to many great opportunities and pave the way for future job prospects.
“Communication is a huge part in people’s lives and I learned so much from different people throughout the term[,] we all became friends at the end.”

“I became more aware of various resources offered at Western.”

“[VIP] has allowed me to become more involved [the] Western community [and] allowed me to develop stronger interpersonal skills.”

“The program has helped me gain relevant experience in teaching and mentorship.”
“[VIP] helps connect me to more people, [and] learn more about others and myself.”

“I learned the value of teamwork and cooperation during my participation in the VIP program.”

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**Here are some events to look forward to in 2017!**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Recruitment Period</td>
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<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Therapy Dogs</td>
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<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>Ronald McDonald House</td>
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<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Study Session</td>
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<td>Mar 30</td>
<td>Recognition Banquet</td>
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**SAVE THE DATE**