In its third decade, the VIP Program has recruited another enthusiastic and motivated group of students whose desire to help others and devote their time to SDC is exceptional.

Reflecting on the spring recruitment, the most fascinating learning experience for me was that students' main reason for joining the program was to meet new people and make friends. This summer, we saw proof that friendships gained in the VIP Program can last lifelong. Kin Wong and Murray Baker, the VIPs from 1984/85, came from Vancouver to visit us in SDC. So the immense value of the program goes far beyond as it offers our volunteers an opportunity to connect and gain lasting friendships.

SDC’s International Student Services created two new volunteering positions: ISS Website Developer and Maintenance Assistant and ISS Marketing and Promotion Assistant. Volunteers recruited in these positions bring exceptional knowledge and experience in the areas of marketing and web design.

The VIP program welcomes Kanna Shintani as a new VIP staff member for the upcoming year. As the VIP Assistant Coordinator, Kanna will help with overall supervision and general program management. A graduate from UWO with a degree in Administrative and Commercial Studies, specializing in Human Resources and Psychology, Kanna brings an excellent combination of skills and experiences to the position.

Our VIP Assistant Coordinators, Cynthia Chu, Allie Hobbs, and Ryan McLeod, are planning some interesting social activities for the upcoming year and welcome your ideas and suggestions!

I am looking forward to an exiting and productive volunteering year and invite you to enjoy your experience with SDC - "A warm and easy-to-work-in atmosphere" (from VIP evaluations 2003-2004).

Sandra Pehilj
VIP Program Coordinator

VIP SOCIAL

Meet other VIPs! Food! Prizes!

Our First VIP social will be
Thursday, September 16 at 6:00p.m.
(right after the VIP Orientation) at the Wave

See you there!
Hello from Ryan:

I hope that everyone's summer is going great and that you are all getting ready for an exciting year of volunteering. I'm Ryan McLeod, one third of the new VIP Assistant Coordinator team, and I'd like to welcome you to the VIP program, (quite possibly the best volunteer program Western has to offer).

The VIP program is a great place to make friends, help out, and get the experience needed for your future dream job. As well, volunteering can be a ton of fun and it's an amazing opportunity to learn many interesting things about campus, other cultures, and even yourself.

As VIP Assistant Coordinators one of our duties is to plan social events. However, nobody's perfect so if you think of any great ideas for activities or events that we have failed to mention, please let us know. I look forward to meeting all of you at VIP orientation in the fall, but until then have a great time during the rest of your summer!

Hello from Cynthia:

I would like to take the time and welcome all the returning and new volunteers! I hope you all have a terrific summer and are resting for the upcoming school year.

My name is Cynthia and I will be one of the three VIP Assistant Coordinators for the upcoming academic year. I am extremely excited to be involved in the VIP program. Last year I was an English conversation Leader and a Student Partnership member. I am delighted that you have decided to join our team; it is truly a gratifying experience.

As VIP AC’s it is our duty to address any questions or concerns that you may have regarding the VIP experience. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us, as your opinion and concerns are very important to us in order to help develop and improve the success of this program. With that said, it is going to be a great year for all! I look forward to working with you soon! Take care and see you in the fall!

Hello from Allie:

Hey VIP's! I'm Allie Hobbs -- one of your VIP Assistant Coordinators for the upcoming year. This will be my second year as a VIP and I'm happy to be back because volunteering in this program was a great experience in my first year at UWO. My favourite part about being involved in the VIP program is how the volunteers are made to feel truly valued in the SDC for their dedication throughout the year. And, given the range of areas that the SDC provides support to students for, the chances are high that at some point in our university careers, each of us will rely on SDC in one way or another. So, it feels great giving back to a service that benefits us all!

I'm looking forward to meeting everyone at our orientation. Along with Cynthia and Ryan, I'll be thinking up some fun, creative social events we can all enjoy together. For now, whether you're slaving away at a summer job or passing your days basking in the sun, I hope everyone enjoys their summer vacation, and I'll see you in September!
Thank You to All of Our Summer Volunteers

Qing (Clara) Bian  Ryan McLaod  
Melanie Calldwell  Agata Piekosz 
Sanjeev C. Khanna  Diana Porter 
Sivia Krulc  Jing Qing 
Yu Li  Manav Singhla 
Jessie Luo  Sonia Sousa 
Martha Leblanc  Cecilia Tran 
Namrata Maraj  Diana Vulcanescu

Volunteer Positions still available for September

English Conversation Leader, Conversation Circle
4 positions open
& Learning Skills Services Assistant
2 positions open

International Volunteer Experience

By Jessi Luo

It is my last year now at The University of Western Ontario, which is also my last year with the Student Development Centre. As an SDC Information Assistant for summer 2004, my main responsibility is to respond to inquiries at the front desk. Working at the front desk is a challenge because English is not my first language, however I really enjoy working with the people in the centre and I enjoy contributing my skills and knowledge to help people.

When I first started attending Western, I was eager to find a position that could help me become more involved in the university life. When I got involved with the Volunteers In Progress program, the positions in the centre helped me relate with the real world. I started volunteering as an Exam Assistant with Services for Students with Disabilities.

This position helped me gain knowledge of basic administrative skills and it also helped me develop my communication skills. In 2003-04, I was a VIP Resource Assistant and a Student Partnership Member. With these positions, I had the opportunity to implement my previous experience of graphic design. I had a chance to help make changes to SDC’s appearance from a graphic aspect with the help of my supervisor, Alison, who helped me put my experience to use.

My years volunteering in SDC were very enjoyable, the experience that I gained will add colour to my resume. I will value these experiences and they will always be sweet memories.
Who are the Learning Skills VIPs?
By Coleen Dalton (Learning Skills Counsellor)

Learning Skills Assistants are an integral part of the services we provide in the Learning Skills Clinic. Together with the Learning Skills Counsellors, our VIPs help over 1100 students with their studies each year! VIPs assist students with everything from working with text books and lecture notes to exam taking and time management strategies. Our VIPs also develop effective listening, problem-solving and inter-personal skills themselves! Many of the Learning Skills Assistants work with us yearly while they are at Western then move on to graduate programs, medical school, or other professional programs. We are continually impressed and amazed by the students who volunteer with us!

This year we are excited to introduce a new VIP position with Learning Skills Services: a Marketing and Communications Assistant! The addition of this new VIP position enhances our ability to reach UWO students and inform them of our services. The Marketing and Communications Assistant will help promote Learning Skills Services through the development of advertising, campus mail outs and web site enhancement. Our first Marketing and Communications Assistant has been chosen for next year and we are eager to have her join our service!

On behalf of the Learning Skills Counsellors, I would like to thank all of the VIPs who have helped us over the years! Your dedication to helping other students contributes to making the Learning Skills Clinic an on-going success. We look forward to meeting and working with our new VIPs this fall!

Oh, the places you’ll go...

By Rachel Crowe (English Conversation Program Coordinator)

Did you know that being a VIP could take you overseas? Volunteering as an English Conversation Leader can help you gain the skills and experiences you need to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) in another country. It can also help you decide if teaching ESL is for you.

This coming fall SDC’s Volunteers In Progress will offer an information session for interested VIP volunteers on ESL teaching overseas. We’ll look at some of the things to consider when deciding which schools and companies to apply to, some of the extra certificates you can earn (like the TESL and TESOL certificates), and issues like culture shock. We will be sending details about this information session to all our VIPs in the fall.

Curious about the English Conversation Leader position? Visit www.sdc.uwo.ca/vip for a full description.

A summer ECP Circle Leader with his Circle participants