Hey VIPs! Thanks so much to all of you for your hard work this year! We had a lot of fun at the Hallowe'en Party and our Theatre Outing. With your effort and commitment, you’ve enriched the lives of fellow students at Western. It is our hope that you have gained as much from this program as we have and you have realized your goals for volunteering! If you have any comments about the Program, we would love to hear any feedback. Good luck with final exams. Have a safe and happy summer. For those of you who are graduating, good luck in your future endeavours; for everyone else, we’ll see you in September!

Thanks for all your help!
Adam, Olivia & Kala

Thank You For Choosing SDC

On behalf of Student Development Centre I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your involvement with the Volunteers In Progress Program. With your determination to help others and your willingness to give back to the Western Community, you contributed to the success of each individual who used our services and also to the general success of SDC. We in the Program feel fortunate enough that you were able to refine your skills to help achieve your career aspirations. I hope that this volunteering experience has been a memorable and rewarding one for you. Have a wonderful summer and good luck in your future endeavors.

Special thanks to Adam, Olivia, and Kala for their cooperation and support in managing the program.

Sandra Pehilj
VIP Program Coordinator
In late October, the casting call came out for auditions to be in Theatre Western’s production of West Side Story. Over 170 people went to the audition, where we were told to sing, dance, and read lines. It was a very exciting night and was I thrilled when I received a call a week later saying I had landed the role of Diesel, one of the Jet boys. From November until March, we had three rehearsals a week, and let me tell you, they were tough at times. However, the cast and crew are such an amazing group, and the talent level was greater than I could have ever imagined.

The week of March 19-26, we finally began performing for audiences and we sold out most of our shows. The crowds were energetic, and we received several standing ovations. It is so sad to be finished with this show. So much effort was put in by all involved and in the end the show was even better than any of us expected! I want to give special thanks and congrats to all the cast and crew, especially director Justin Quesnelle, choreographer Jeanine Henderson, music director Imraan Haq, Mike Ferro, Robyn Thornley and everyone else who made this show as great as it was for me.

I highly recommend that students audition for next year’s production because it was so much fun and I met so many awesome people. Plus, I learned that deep inside I have some talent too!!! Thanks again to everyone and thanks to VIP program for supporting WSS!! "They’re coming any minute now!!!"

Anthony Macaluso "Diesel", Student Partnership Member

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What do Student Partnership Volunteers do?

They serve in a consultative process with members of SDC and other student partnership representatives to deal with general overriding issues affecting students and SDC’s response to these issues.

What do Members have to say about their involvement?

Volunteering is a very pervasive feature of our culture but to find one that supports your ideas and allows assessments and criticisms from you is very rare. The Student Partnership position encompasses all these characteristics and more. It has helped shape my year and personality. Thank you.

-Afua Bonsu, Student Partnership Member
What it means to be a VIP…

Jenna Dawson, International Work Program Assistant

Volunteering has always been important to me. I remember canvassing for the Cancer Society, being a Brownie leader, and most importantly at Western, as a Soph, with all its early mornings, late nights and the good stuff in between. I’ve always had a blast and met some really great people. Being a VIP at SDC is no different. I work with Lyall King, Resource Coordinator (Career Services). I’ve spent my time helping people discover opportunities abroad, from teaching English in Taiwan to volunteering with CARE Canada in the refugee camps in Africa. I never realized how many opportunities were available to Western students; I have a pleasure of discovering them! One of the perks in this position is receiving mail from all over the world describing cool new adventures and challenges that are there for the taking. I’ve put some of the most interesting opportunities together in the International Section of our resources and to my sheer joy, people are actually using them! As I continue to get further into my job, I feel like I’ve just barely scratched the surface of the vast possibilities, just waiting to be discovered. Awesome people, cool opportunities that even I can take advantage of, and a feeling of satisfaction knowing that I’ve helped someone. **VIP has been the best volunteer position I’ve ever had**, and I hope that I’ve been able to help someone get an experience that changes their life for the better. What could be a better feeling than that?

VIP Volunteer Award

The VIP Program would like to recognize the volunteers who have contributed their time and effort for 2 years and more. Congratulations from Student Development Centre!

**Volunteers for 2 Years**
- Aleeza Gerstein
- Alissa Raphael
- Amira Saeed
- Anita Tang
- Daisy Chan
- Dori Zener
- Emmy Lam
- Kyla Lamarche
- Liane Porepa
- Gao Fei
- Sherry Masters

**Volunteers for Over 2 Years**
- Anushka Alleng
- Kala Patel
- Olivia Lee

VIP Outing

University, what’s it about? Good friends, fun and new experiences. On Wednesday, March 20th, some LCP leaders got together and had just met up with other VIPs at the SDC. Dinner was pizza, lots of it - and some great conversation. We all related a few stories from university, and spoke of the end of our years here, which was coming rapidly for all of us. We wistfully recalled those wacky first-year stories and (YIKES) what we planned to do in the REAL WORLD. Next we headed to Talbot Theater and checked out West Side Story, the first play I’ve ever seen. Anyone who hasn’t seen it seriously missed out. I was blown away by how talented our fellow students here at Western are. The songs! The dancing! All very entertaining! All in all, a great night, something to be remembered on those days when the rat race will make me wish I was back here. Ah the good old days, we’re creating those memories right now, so make the most of them! Zahira Zahid, English Conversation Leader
A Wonderful Opportunity
Katie Alter, English Conversation Leader

I am a volunteer with the English Conversation Program and truly believe that it is one of the best programs that Western has to offer. By being a Conversation Leader, I have become more aware of other cultures and customs while educating my groups about the Canadian culture. During time with the program I have noticed many changes within myself. Increases to my level of patience, interpersonal skills and compassion to international students have all occurred because of my involvement with the English Conversation Program. However, my own benefits cannot compare to the vital skills acquired by the students. During a recent session, I asked a few of my group members for their personal opinions about the program. One student said: "The program increases my self-confidence and helps me overcome my fear of speaking the English language." Another student says, "I appreciate the opportunity to practice my oral communication since I speak only Japanese and do not have many chances to practice my English." All participants agreed that they now have an easier time engaging in conversations and can comfortably pick up slang words that are common in North America. It is such a wonderful feeling to know that a program can have such a positive effect on a person's life. Everyone involved with the English Conversation Program benefits from the wonderful opportunity to acquire essential skills and knowledge that will help them in their future endeavours.

"If the autumn has gone away, I will miss you in the winter, If the earth has gone away, I will miss you in the paradise, If you have gone away, I will miss you in my tears." from: www.csd.uwo.ca/dong_han.html

In Memory of
Dong Han

Dong Han, a Masters student in Computer Science, passed away on February 21 as a result of a traffic accident. He was riding his bicycle and was struck by a car. He was involved with the English Conversation Program since September 2001.

VIP Survey Results

1. What is the best restaurant in London?
- Angelos
- Jack Astors
- Fellini Koolini’s
- East Side Mario’s
- Stobies
- Michael's on the Thames
- Jambalaya
- Albert’s Diner
- Nove Nove
- Blue Ginger
- Mongolian Grill

2. What is your favourite hangout on campus?
- UCC
- The Spoke
- The Wave
- Off-Campus Don office in Stevenson Lawson Building
- Centerspot
- Nat Sci library
- Grad Club

Correction:
The author of the article "Fun Ideas for Your EC Group" in the Fall edition of the Helping Hands newsletter is Cheryl Low, not Cheryl Leung.