

## .....A CAREER



## Co-op / Pathways News

## Spring 2019

## Creating Community Connections for YRDSB Co-op Students

*By Candace Smith, Head of Community Based Education (Co-op), Newmarket High School*

Co-op teachers are always looking to find new community partners and increase placement opportunities for students. So, as Head of Co-op at Newmarket High School, I was keen to meet with Tracy Macgregor Walter, President/CEO of the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce, to discuss how to connect High School Co-op programs with Newmarket area businesses. Turns out the Chamber had been receiving questions from employers regarding how to connect with High School Co-op departments! With a need and desire on both sides of the Co-op placement equation, Tracy generously offered to host an information event for employers and Co-op teachers, perhaps a Lunch and Learn at the Chamber offices. At that point, I connected with the Co-op Heads at the other three Newmarket High Schools, to see if they would like to join us, and all three did.

We found a date and time that worked for all and then my marketing Co-op student at the Chamber created an e-vite that was sent out to all the members of the Chamber. Very quickly, the Chamber received many affirmatives; so many, that we had to find a larger venue to accommodate over 60 employers! Our Curriculum Consultant, Kim Vrensen, booked us a large room at the YRDSB Centre for Leadership and Learning. We ordered lunch from a local caterer and put together an information package with everything that employers needed to know about YRDSB High School Co-op programs and students.

On June 26, 2018, all four Newmarket area YRDSB Co-op departments welcomed over 60 employers for lunch and a presentation that included: general information on how the Co-op program works, a video of Co-op students in action, an actual Co-op student to share her experience and answer questions, an FAQ document and small group breakout sessions to answer individual questions.

The event was a great success! Many employers were very happy to learn more about High School Co-op and eager to connect with the four schools. We have developed many new Community Partners as a result of this event. The Newmarket High School Co-op departments and Newmarket businesses are very grateful to Tracy Macgregor Walter and the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce for hosting the Lunch and Learn that has established new community partnerships where students gain real world skills that truly prepare them for their futures.



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## Exploring Career Opportunities in Healthcare



**By Chahat Pannu**  
**Co-op Student, Tommy Douglas Secondary School**  
**Placement : Mount Sinai Hospital**

For my Cooperative Education placement, I was given the opportunity to work and learn from the staff at Mount Sinai Hospital. As a returning Co-op student, I was looking to be placed in a department that was more specialized in terms of what I would like to pursue in the future. My interest in children and fetal medicine resulted in me being placed in the High Risk Antenatal department.

I am an aspiring pediatrician and I understand that there will be times where it will be difficult to treat and care for children with terminal illnesses. Before my placement, I thought that I would remain unaffected by the emotional strains involved with sick children. It was through my current placement however, that I was able to understand how to deal with the emotional factors of medicine. I was able to motivate myself to move forward and to help the next patient coming in.

It was a privilege to work with the staff at Mount Sinai Hospital for a few short months. Being in the hospital was a learning experience that taught me so much compared to sitting in a classroom. It gave me the practical experience and offered me lessons that I will be able to carry with me through my journey to becoming a physician. Most of my learning stemmed from shadowing different medical professionals like nurses, physicians, researchers and many more. They were able to answer my questions and allowed me to observe the procedures that were held on the floor.

Some of the most exciting procedures that I was able to witness were vaginal births, cesarean sections and fetal blood transfusions. All procedures were an indescribable experience and were also some of the most exciting parts of my placement. Aside from the numerous procedures I witnessed, I was able to establish a daily routine that consisted of restocking the medication room, checking on patients to see if they needed anything and attending to other tasks.

Through the Co-op program, I was able to enhance my employability skills, maturity and passion for the medical field. It gave me an unimaginable experience that I would not be able to have while sitting in a classroom. It taught me how to use my passion and ambition to bring proficiency to the business and to provide the best services to my patients and their families. My profound curiosity for medicine and disease, as well as my time at my placement, has piqued my interest to pursue a profession in obstetrics or pediatrics.

I can now attest that the Co-op program has confirmed my ability to reach for my ambitions and to pursue a career that I am passionate about. It gave me the push that I needed in order to strive to be the best health care provider to my patients. I am grateful for all that my placement has taught me and how excited my placement made me to pursue my future endeavours.



# Hats off to the International Co-op Program of years past!



Jameela with her host family in Ecuador

**By Jameela Pereira**

**Senior Manager, Project & Operations, WE Charity (formerly Free The Children)**

Past Co-op Student, Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School and  
YRDSB International Co-op Program (ICE) Ecuador Alumnus 2007

Although it has been over 10 years since I participated in the International Cooperative Education (ICE) experience to Ecuador offered by my high school, Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School, I always look back on that opportunity as a pivotal moment in my life that has helped to shape my life's direction and refine my passion for international development and cross-cultural relations.

I remember being completely elated when Ms. Kelly LeBlanc, Teacher/Coordinator of the ICE program at the time, reached out to notify me and my mother that I had been accepted into the program. I have always been a determined person, but this would be the first time I really experienced my true ambition and independence in such a transformative experience and with a significant commitment. I stayed with a wonderful family in Conocoto in Valle de Los Chillos, Ecuador and worked at a local bakery. It turned out to be one of the best experiences of my life to date, and the overwhelming sense of accomplishment and independence I gained through it all led to me furthering my interest in cultural immersion. I travelled to Ireland to live abroad after high school and then moved to Monterrey, Mexico to complete my third year of university (Tecnológico de Monterrey).

After graduating from York University with a Trilingual International Bachelor of Arts (iBA) in Sociology, I began my professional career at a management company in Richmond Hill where I further developed management and leadership skills, taking on the role of Project Manager. Five years later, I had the opportunity of a lifetime to join WE Charity - an international charity which empowers people both locally and globally, and the charitable division of the WE movement. Through our international work, I am once again reunited with my deep love for Ecuador, which is one of the nine countries in which we partner with local communities, implementing our holistic model for sustainable development.

It truly feels like it has all come full circle for me. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had a program like ICE available to me during my formative years, as well as a network of support from Kelly and my mother (Ms. Pereira, Teacher at Milliken Mills HS) who encouraged me on my journey.





## CO-OP STUDENT VOICES

experience...learn...reflect

### Placement: Robert Munsch P.S. Autism Classroom

Megan also did a previous Co-op at  
Glen Cedar P.S. in the  
kindergarten classroom



Megan (L) and her Placement Supervisor

*By Megan Bellamy*

### Co-op Student, Huron Heights Secondary School

Over the last year at my placement, I have learned so much and I have enjoyed working with wonderful staff and students in a field of study that I'm interested in. I had an overwhelmingly positive Co-op experience and as a result, I have decided that Special Needs with a focus on Autism is definitely something that I want to incorporate into my future career. With this in consideration, I have applied to post-secondary programs that will give me future opportunities to work with children with special needs. I found that working with these children was difficult but very rewarding when they have success. I want to help more children with exceptionalities succeed and live their best life.

Taking Co-op three times, in different settings, has really given me a clear idea of what future career I want. Co-op provided me many hours of hands-on experience working with children which has helped me in obtaining employment, and made me a more desirable candidate for post-secondary programs. I think Co-op is a wonderful program that any student, regardless of whether or not they have an idea of what career they want, should take. It gives you a taste of that career and helps you decide if it's right for you before you pursue it.

*By Sohail Shiraz*

### Co-op Student, Dr. John M. Denison Secondary School

As part of my Cooperative Education placement at the Bayview Diagnostic Imaging - Newmarket Vascular Lab, I had the opportunity to interact with several health care professionals and complete many tasks which helped me grow as an individual. From job shadowing to compiling the Laser Safety Program, my placement has enabled me to expand my knowledge in the field of medicine.

At the lab, they provide vascular and general ultrasound. In job shadowing a vascular ultrasound tech, I learned that many health related complications which a person may have could be because of a problem with their blood flow. Class IV lasers are used in the lab for the treatment of varicose veins and a laser safety program was a requirement for the clinic under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. I was responsible for scanning medical documents into the Abel Med program and verifying appointments using that program as well. As well, I downloaded all on hold patient requisitions through the Vellox Imaging program to help keep them secured in one place and I typed verbal dictations from the vascular surgeon in the clinic.

Through my experience, I had the opportunity to closely explore the medical field while growing my skills at the same time. I learned that in order to discover new things it is important to keep an open mind to new tasks. I would like to thank my supervisors and my Cooperative Education teachers for allowing me to have such a wonderful experience. It was truly a pleasure to work with such an amazing team and I am grateful for this opportunity as I now have experience working in a field that I have an interest in.

### Placement: Newmarket Vascular Lab



# Co-op Placement Supervisor Testimonials...

Placement Supervisors reflect on hosting Co-op students in their workplaces.  
Photos feature Pierre Elliott Trudeau H. S. students at their work placements.

"Partnering with the Co-op program allows us to keep current with the upcoming generation and exchange new creative ideas as well as provide students with a structured introduction to the workplace."

**Loni, Placement Supervisor at Silver Leaf Day Spa**

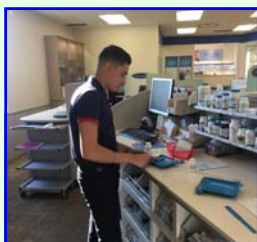


"I am a firm believer in the Co-op program. As a former Co-op student myself who is still currently employed by the organization that I did my Co-op placement at 22+ years ago, I can honestly say that it works. I am proud to say that over 50% of my staff are former Co-op students. This is a program that truly works for the students in such a positive way."

**Chris, Placement Supervisor at Flato Markham Theatre**

"It's always a pleasure working with the students - watching the ones who show interest in their field even if it's a little bit different from what they'll actually study later on. I've been lucky with my Co-ops - they all showed such interest in the business that I've hired 3 of my students for part-time positions in the past 2 years."

**Aliscia, Placement Supervisor at Markham 2000 Decorating Centre**



"Partnering with the Co-op program has always been rewarding. Teaching and guiding students to develop their work and interpersonal skills is a mutually beneficial experience. When you are mentoring a student in the workplace you also become a learner yourself!"

**Warren, Placement Supervisor at Shoppers Drug Mart Pharmacy**

"There is such value in partnering with Pierre Elliott Trudeau HS to support the Co-op program, because we believe that providing an enriched environment where students can gain valuable experience is a key area to their future success. As students learn so many skills during their placement, they also have the opportunity to see if they are interested in pursuing a future career in the area they have committed so much time to. Apart from the valuable benefit to students, the Co-op program allows our workplace to have an extra pair of lending hands to our team. Our students bring with them an eagerness to learn, their own skill sets and amazing attitudes which only add to the success of our workplace."

**Renuka, Placement Supervisor at Joint Rehab**





## Specialist High Skills Major Program (SHSM)

SHSM is a Ministry-approved specialized program that allows students to focus their learning on a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements to graduate from secondary school.

YRDSB SHSM website: [www.yrdsb.ca/shsm](http://www.yrdsb.ca/shsm) Ministry SHSM website: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/morestudentsuccess/SHSM.html>

### Health & Wellness SHSM

*By Tommy Ngo*

**Co-op/SHSM Student, Tommy Douglas Secondary School**

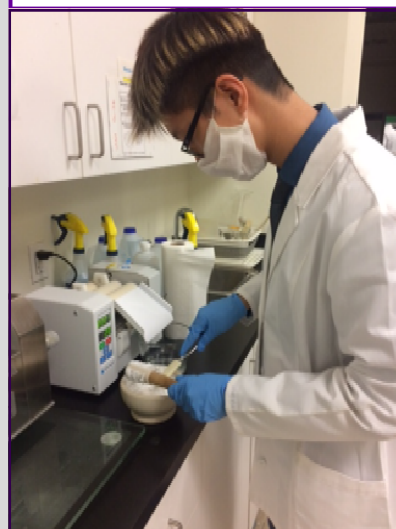
Ever since I was little, my mom, being a registered nurse, would push me into choosing a career relating to health. So I gravitated towards the sciences in school, but it wasn't until Grade 11 when I found out that I really enjoyed learning about Biology and Chemistry. When I heard of the Specialist High Skills Major program, I decided to apply in order to gain practical experience in a Health and Wellness field through Co-op. It's a long process to be admitted but it was well worth it because I was able to learn many new skills and attend career-related workshops over the course of my high school career. It was all leading up to my 2-credit Co-op placement during my Grade 12 year at Langstaff Pharmacy.

I was terrified of messing up at first but after getting used to the people and the work around me every day, I started getting good at my job at Langstaff Pharmacy. I kept logs of medications, counted pills, and did a whole lot of paperwork throughout my time at my Co-op placement. I also learned a lot from my friendly co-workers such as tips and tricks on how to speed things along and many valuable life lessons too. They would tell me, "At the end of the day, as long as we do what we can to help our patients, we're doing our job" and it's true. My managers would spend hours on the phone to confirm something or take extra care when packaging blister packs for some patients because the patients prefer it a certain way.

I really like to help people in any way that I can and through my Co-op placement, I was able to get a glimpse of what it's like behind the counter at a pharmacy. It's a fast-paced environment where the pharmacist is running back and forth to sign papers and double check prescriptions and talk to patients while the pharmacy assistants and technicians help the pharmacists complete those tasks. But, we also shared laughs while we worked. Everyone at Langstaff Pharmacy is like a big family and I felt like I was a part of their family despite my short time there.

I suggest taking Co-op if given the opportunity because there is a lot to learn that can't necessarily be taught at school. Plus, as a Co-op student, it's free and a great way to gain or improve on skills like time management and communication.

**Placement:  
Langstaff Pharmacy**



**SHSM works!**







## Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

Accelerated OYAP combines the Co-op experience with instruction at the college / training institute. It is offered in Semester 2 and is open to students in their graduating year.

YRDSB OYAP website: [www.yrdsb.ca/oyap](http://www.yrdsb.ca/oyap)

Ministry OYAP website: [www.oyap.com](http://www.oyap.com)

### Carpentry Accelerated OYAP Program... *wood work for you!*

**By Nicholas Di Meo**  
**Co-op/OYAP Student, King City Secondary School**

**I**n Grade 11, at King City Secondary School, I took a two credit Co-op and worked at a furniture design and build company (*Credible Upholstery*) building prototypes or small numbers of units of customized furniture, primarily for the hotel and restaurant industries. I took Co-op to try and gain more experience and knowledge in what I would choose to do for the rest of my working life. In Grade 12, I signed up for Co-op again, opting for the Carpentry Accelerated OYAP (Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program). Joining this program was the best decision I have ever made through all my years in high school!

I have a love and passion for carpentry, and Carpentry Accelerated OYAP sounded to me like I would be starting my career in carpentry. Through personal experiences, my Grade 11 Co-op and then at the beginning of my Grade 12 Co-op through a two week placement at another location (*Lido Construction*), I loved having new experiences in different aspects of the carpentry trade. I thought things were really good, and **then** I started my eight week Carpenters Basic Level 1 Certification course at Local 27 Carpenters Union facility. This 'college' experience put my love and excitement of learning about working with wood over the top: I simply did not want the 'schooling' to end as I felt like I could have learned so much more if I could have stayed longer. After eight weeks, I was invited to spend an extra two weeks to learn about 'trim carpentry'. At Local 27, I have learned so many skills and furthered my understanding of the Carpentry trade. I also earned valuable and mandatory career certifications such as WHMIS, Working at Heights, Working in Confined Spaces, and Basic Occupational Health and Safety. Did I mention that the Ministry of Education paid for all of my certifications and time at college experience? I also earned six credits towards my Ontario Secondary School Diploma in one semester, four Co-op credits, and two Dual Credit (college level) credits. Near the end of the ten weeks, Local 27 even set up meetings for me with employers in the industry, and thus I am now employed as a paid apprentice with *KAD Carpentry* and onto the next stage of my career.

I really encourage others to consider grabbing hold of the amazing opportunity of **Accelerated OYAP** because it gives you a chance to explore your passion as you pursue your career. I believe that by taking this program your chances of reaching your career dreams will significantly increase. Soon you will be working the job you love. I feel extremely fortunate to have participated in this program.



**"Soon you will be  
working the job  
you love!"**





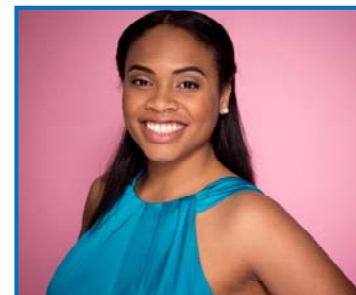
# Where Are They Now? . . .



**By Jonelle Sills**

## **The Glenn Gould School - The Royal Conservatory of Music**

Past Co-op Student, Milliken Mills High School and  
YRDSB International Co-op Program (ICE) Ecuador Alumnus 2011



In 2011, I had the opportunity to live and work in Ecuador for three months as a student with the YRDSB International Cooperative Education Program. In my placement, I assisted the English teacher of a private elementary school in the town of Yaruqui, Ecuador. The support I received from the faculty while I was in Ecuador allowed me to have one of the best experiences of my high school education.

Living in Ecuador gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in a new language and vibrant culture. Learning a new language (Spanish) was humbling, but it allowed me to challenge myself and grow as an individual. My experience in Ecuador allowed me to develop confidence and independence that was necessary for my post secondary studies.



In 2016, I graduated from York University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Specialized Honours in Music, and Education. Currently, I am completing my second year at The Glenn Gould School, The Royal Conservatory of Music in the Voice Performance and Opera Artist Diploma Program (ADP) under the mentorship of Stephanie Bogle and Rachel Andrist. This March, I will sing Rosalinda in J. Strauss' Die Fledermaus in Koerner Hall with The Glenn Gould School.

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### **Interested in hosting a Co-op Student?**

**Call: 905-727-0022 ext. 3438**

**or**

**Online: [Employer Placement Profile](http://www.yrdsb.ca/Programs/Coop/Pages/Employer-Placement-Profiles.aspx)**

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/Programs/Coop/Pages/Employer-Placement-Profiles.aspx>

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