Sparking Change Across the Province

Krisandra Reid
Product Care Association

I spent my summer traveling across the province, and getting paid to do it; that’s a pretty golden opportunity, if you ask me! During my summer work term as an ElectroRecycle Ambassador, I visited twenty different cities outside of Metro Vancouver, and was able to experience BC all the way from the coast to the Alberta border. This co-op placement was an incredible opportunity, and possibly the best way I could have spent my summer.

ElectroRecycle is small appliance and power tool recycling program, with over 140 depots province-wide; it is one of BC’s many product stewardship programs run through the Product Care Association. As one of six ElectroRecycle Ambassadors, I helped increase awareness of this free recycling option across BC, and gained feedback on how to improve the program moving forward.

This required meeting with collection facilities, retailers, regional governments, and municipal governments. Additionally, we participated in a variety of community events, organized classroom presentations, and performed numerous media interviews. The media coverage we received over the summer was plentiful and overwhelmingly positive, and my hometown even took up my story for a full-page inter-
This co-op position was all about making genuine connections and networking with people all over BC, making it the ultimate job for that people-person who can’t stand to spend their summer stuck in an office all day long.

To top off an amazing work term and learning experience, I feel like I am a better person because of it. After spending all of my time thinking about recycling, diverting waste from landfills and environmentally responsible options, I have completely renewed my sense of social responsibility and the environmental impact of my own decisions. If I walk away with just one thing from this summer, it will be an awareness of what I can personally do to help keep BC beautiful.

Hands down, this co-op placement was the most rewarding way for me to spend my summer in BC, and unless you are a robot that is allergic to the sun, I highly recommend it. You know what, I’d even recommend it to the robot.

Fostering Families at Capstone Youth

Lesley Richards
Capstone Youth and Family Services

Prior to returning to school to complete my degree in Criminology, I was making a living as a dog trainer. Studying animals and their behaviour, as well as guiding fearful and anxious dogs to a path of confidence is a fascinating and rewarding experience. When I saw the job posting from Capstone Youth and Family Services for a respite worker with at risk youth, I was drawn to it and felt that it could be a great fit given my background with animal training. While many cringe to have dog training compared to child rearing, it was the fundamental abilities required in each of these processes that drew me to Capstone’s job posting, and them to me as an employee.

Capstone fosters at-risk youth in a home environment, offering the knowledge and guidance necessary to either reunite that youth with their family, or provide them with the skills they need to live independently. Patience, understanding, and an ability to remain calm in tense situations are all characteristics that serve as major assets when working with both animals and youth.

My role with Capstone is to support the foster parents in their overall goals with the youths during the 24-hour shifts in which I work, as well as maintain a structure as similar as possible to their typical routine. The kids attend school, do chores, engage in extracurricular activities, and spend time with the other residents of the home as a family. Activities are planned to keep them physically active, such as playing soccer or hiking; activities which emphasize learning or engaging them in these processes.

It was no surprise to me that the greater complexity of the human brain would test me in ways that dogs could not; I too have learned a great deal during my first work term with this organization. One of the most valuable skills I am developing is the ability to confront and resolve conflict in an assertive manner. Open communication is a necessity due to the nature of living with youth who have

“I am developing the ability to confront and resolve conflict in an assertive manner.”

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identified behavioural challenges. When a conflict arises it is discussed and explored so that the youth can understand why they responded the way they did, and can learn how to react more productively in future situations. In addition to providing me with life skills, this experience is particularly relevant to my interest in a career in conflict resolution.

Combined with having the opportunity to play a role in the positive development of young people, I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to apply my studies to a work context with such a respectable organization.

Reaching out in the Lower Mainland

Hannah Schofield
John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland

This job is not for everyone. This is not meant as a statement to scare you; the John Howard Society is a non-profit organization with a valuable purpose in our society, and my work term with them has been one of the best experiences of my life. However, working as an Outreach Worker is demanding, and requires a person to not only be patient and understanding, but also willing to think outside the box to solve problems.

As a part of the Outreach team, I work directly with clients to learn social skills and positive behaviours that would help them in the long run. The people supported by the John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland have Developmental Disabilities or a Mental Health diagnosis. Some also have some form of legal involvement that they require support to manage and to navigate the intricacies of the Canadian legal system. Outreach workers provide support that helps these clients to manage their day to day lives and engage in activities that many of us take for granted. These things can be as simple as shopping for healthy food and accessing services from a doctor, but also as complex as applying for a passport or engaging in a job search. Our clients are people with an extreme range of skills and deficits and as Outreach Workers we look to help promote the areas that they are capable in and also support the areas that they are not.

This is a very brief and simplistic description of the work that I have done as an Outreach Worker for the John Howard Society, but as in any job that involves the support of individual people the type of support required is as varied as the people supported. This position requires the utmost of flexibility, patience, and understanding. It requires a wide array of knowledge of social supports that can be accessed to help make people’s lives better. It requires a willingness to work outside the box and to try new things. Most importantly, it requires the ability to see the people that you work with not as a label, but as a person who has specific strengths and weaknesses that you can support to help make their lives better.

This job might not be for everyone, but for those inclined to gain experience in the legal system, and the support of people with mental illness or developmental disabilities, the Outreach Worker position with the John Howard Society is an invaluable experience.
ARTS CO-OP CONNECT
news and views from arts co-op students and employers

Upcoming Events

Nervous about entering the job market? Do you have questions unanswered about securing employment in the Arts and Social Sciences field after you graduate? Check out one or both of these great events to get insider info on working in the Non-Profit or Public sectors!

WHAT CAN I DO IN GOVERNMENT

A unique opportunity to connect with one of the largest employers of Arts students in Canada!

Connect with representatives from multiple levels of government who have experience working and networking in the public sector.

Sign up for one of two sessions where you’ll have the chance to sit down with numerous representatives to talk about exciting job opportunities, tips for successful job applications, the different government departments and so much more.

Thursday, January 30
Session 1: 12:30-2:00
Session 2: 2:30-4:00
WMC Atrium (3rd floor)

Register on sfu.ca/wil/symplicity

WHAT CAN I DO IN NON-PROFIT?

What’s it like working in the Non-Profit sector? What does it take to get there? Get the answer to these questions and more at Volunteer Services’ Working in the Non-Profit Sector panel! Hear from industry professionals and converse with your fellow students about this exciting field. Stay tuned for more event details to come!

Wednesday, January 29
12:30-1:30pm
The Halpbern Centre

Register on sfu.ca/wil/symplicity

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