

Humans of UCalgary

Celebrating 50 Years



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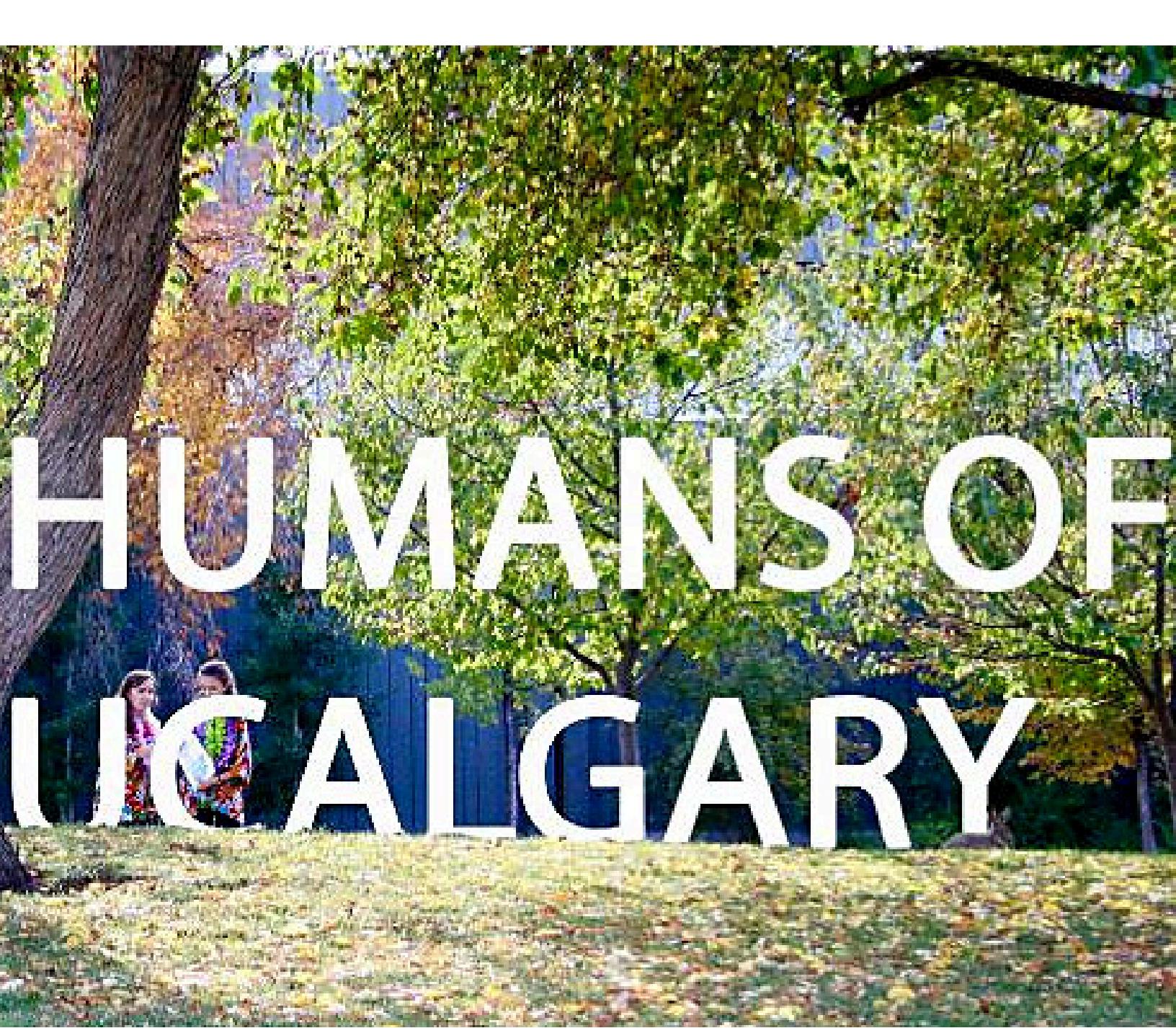
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First and foremost, thank you to you, our readers and our followers on the Humans of UCalgary page. You are a member of an exceptional community, and you are the reason we created this project.

Humans of UCalgary is inspired by Humans of New York (HONY). Working under the Champions for a Healthy Campus Grant, we aim to build a strong and compassionate culture here at the University of Calgary.

Through photojournalism, we celebrate different perspectives of the members of our campus, and through these, share a sense of belonging and unity. We work to let individuals on campus know about the benefits of student involvement with certain campus services and events, and how these experiences can improve their own well-being. Ultimately, we hope to increase student engagement with both each other and school resources, encourage open-mindedness to new perspectives, and create a cultural legacy.

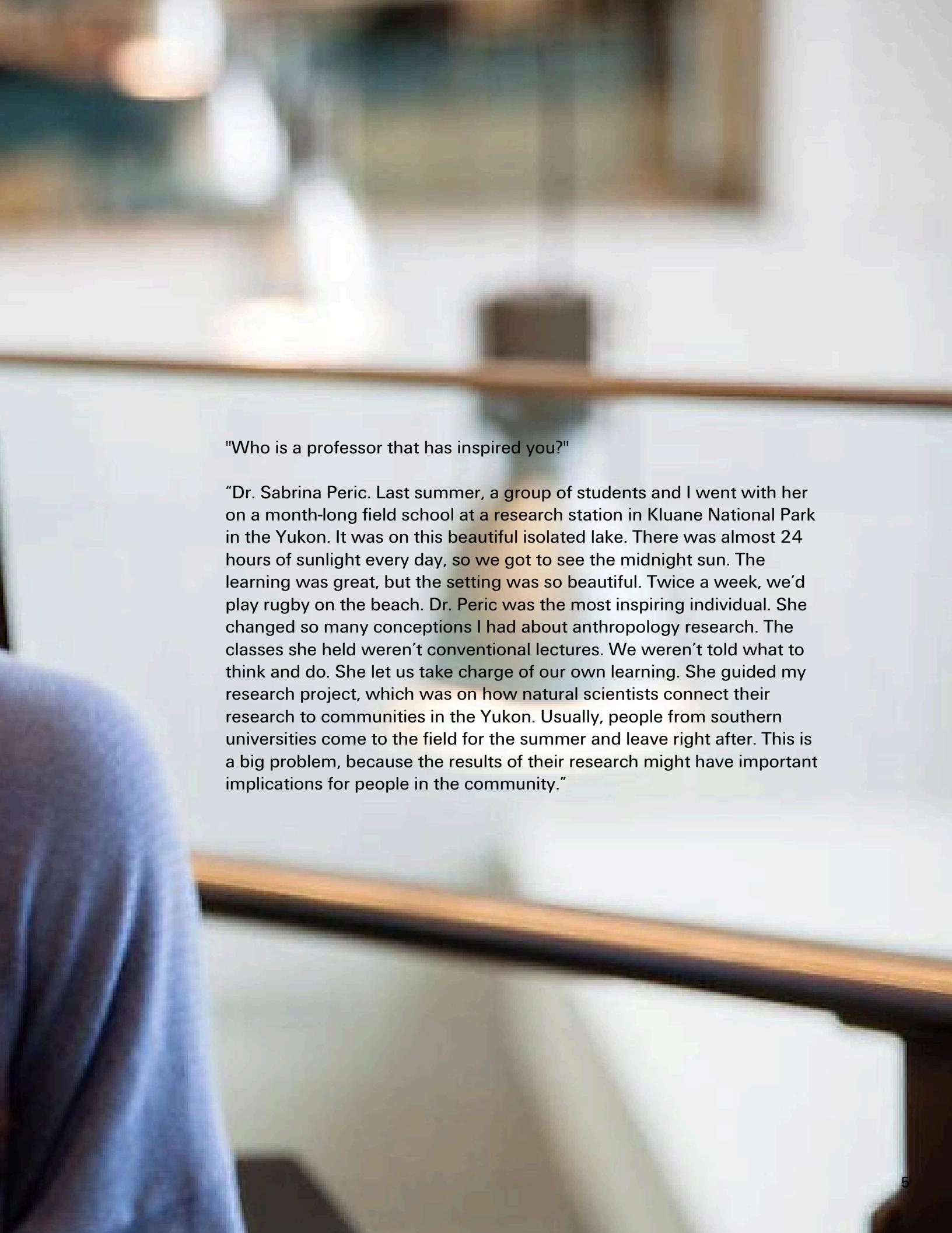


HUMANS OF UCALGARY

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Last but not least, we would like to thank everyone who has generously shared their time and stories with our community. Please follow Humans of UCalgary on our Facebook page to continue to hear our updates and stories.





"Who is a professor that has inspired you?"

"Dr. Sabrina Peric. Last summer, a group of students and I went with her on a month-long field school at a research station in Kluane National Park in the Yukon. It was on this beautiful isolated lake. There was almost 24 hours of sunlight every day, so we got to see the midnight sun. The learning was great, but the setting was so beautiful. Twice a week, we'd play rugby on the beach. Dr. Peric was the most inspiring individual. She changed so many conceptions I had about anthropology research. The classes she held weren't conventional lectures. We weren't told what to think and do. She let us take charge of our own learning. She guided my research project, which was on how natural scientists connect their research to communities in the Yukon. Usually, people from southern universities come to the field for the summer and leave right after. This is a big problem, because the results of their research might have important implications for people in the community."

"I've always had a thing for Asian culture. In high school, I took Chinese classes during lunch hour. During university, I spent three months studying Chinese in Taiwan. I enjoy anime, J-pop, K-pop, and reading Chinese light novels. One day, in my biochemistry lab, we performed cheek swabs and sequenced our genomes. Through gel electrophoresis, we could then determine our ethnicity. I checked mine and saw a line that indicated 'Chinese'....there must have been a mistake. My swab was probably contaminated.



I came home and joked about the incident with my mom. My mom then told me she never mentioned that my great grandmother was Chinese, and that I was given a Chinese name at birth. I had an identity crisis. Coincidentally, my family had scheduled an appointment with a genetic counselor for formal genome sequencing - and indeed, I was part Chinese."

"I took a couple of drama classes taught by Patrick Finn. One of the perspectives we discussed is that when figuring out your career path, you should find the intersection between what you like doing, what you find meaning and purpose in, and what you're good at. Of course, for a hobby, you can just do what makes you happy. And it's okay if people think you're a little bit odd while doing it.

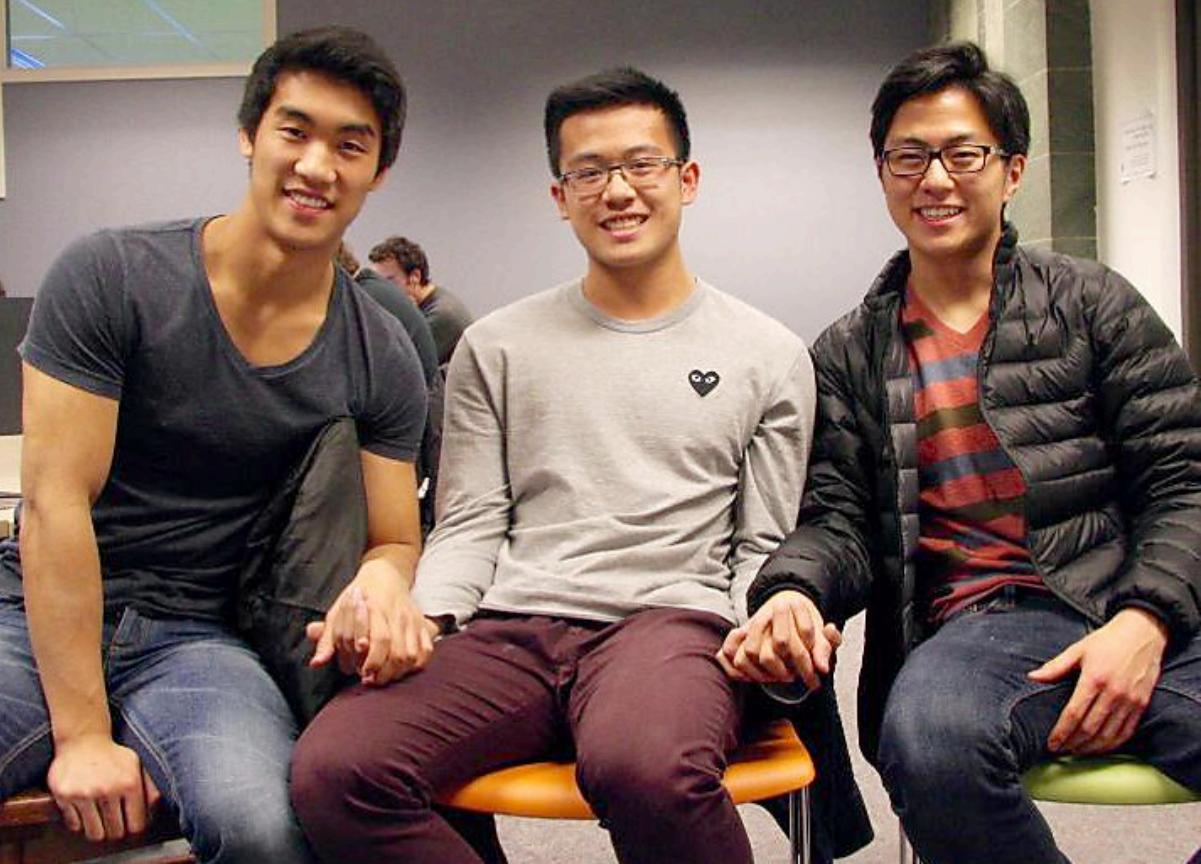


When I learned ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arranging, I would carry flowers and vases through snowstorms and across the city on public transit. Once I even brought my flowers into a Korean restaurant while I was on my way back home. Sure, they looked at me strangely, but doing unique things is part of what makes life fun."



"How did you get into photography?"

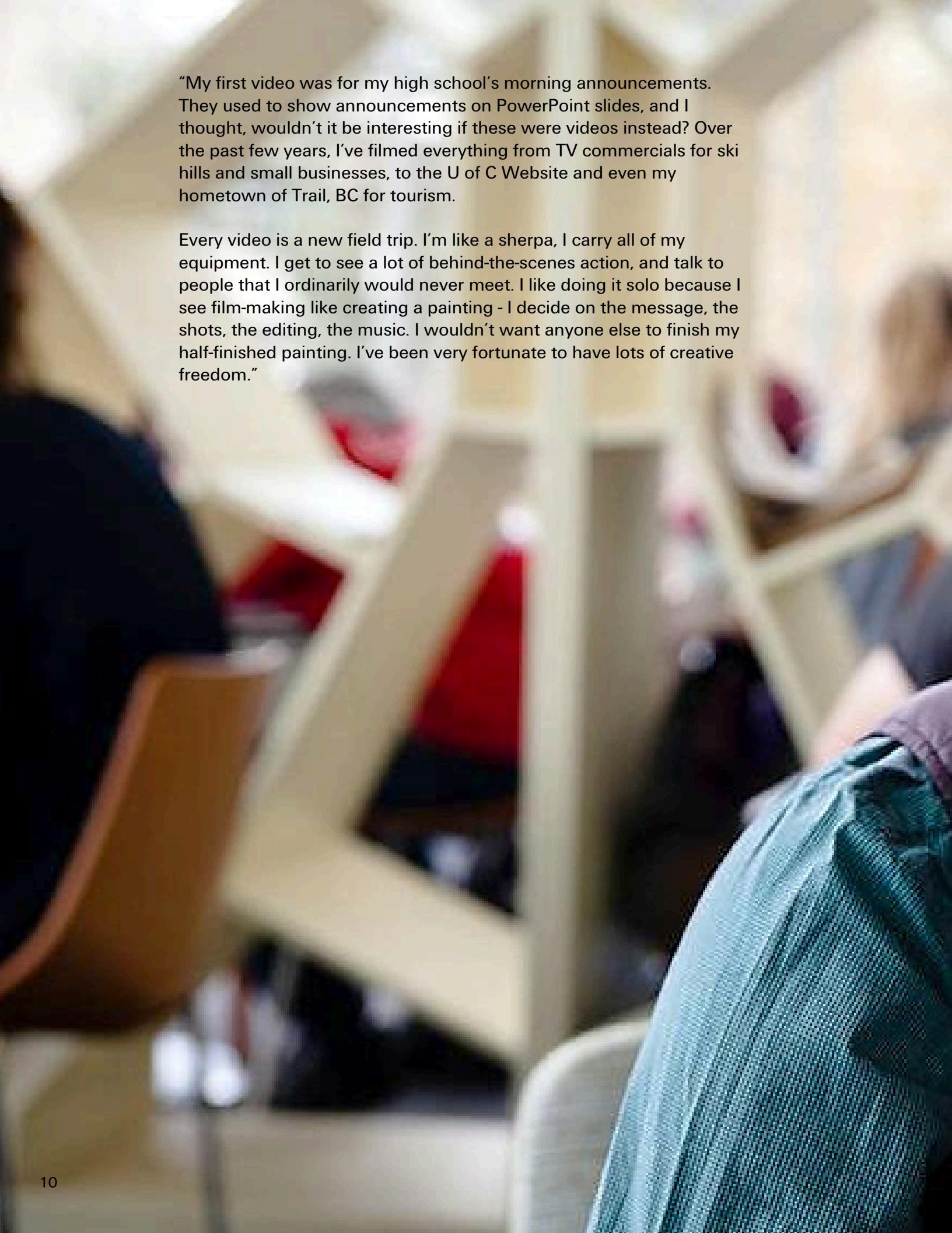
"It's a bit of a funny story. I actually got into photography by taking selfies in Grade 7! I would edit them in Photoshop, which was my gateway into the creative art of post processing. During high school, my family briefly lived in Kuwait. After moving there, I felt lonely and experienced major cultural shock, so photography was a way for me to pass time while making friends. Even today, I still love taking portraits of my friends and view it as a way to bond with the people around me. For me, it's always been the people that make the place, you know? It's more about who I'm around, rather than where I am."



"What do you look for in a friendship?"

"Trustworthiness, open-mindedness, kindness, generosity, and so many more attributes are important to me. But, I don't really look for anything in a friendship. I think it just comes with people who can find happiness in the same things as me."





"My first video was for my high school's morning announcements. They used to show announcements on PowerPoint slides, and I thought, wouldn't it be interesting if these were videos instead? Over the past few years, I've filmed everything from TV commercials for ski hills and small businesses, to the U of C Website and even my hometown of Trail, BC for tourism.

Every video is a new field trip. I'm like a sherpa, I carry all of my equipment. I get to see a lot of behind-the-scenes action, and talk to people that I ordinarily would never meet. I like doing it solo because I see film-making like creating a painting - I decide on the message, the shots, the editing, the music. I wouldn't want anyone else to finish my half-finished painting. I've been very fortunate to have lots of creative freedom."



"I recall the most amazing headline about my adoption: 'The gay juggernaut: Legislative fences fall as homosexual Albertans gain access to private adoption.'

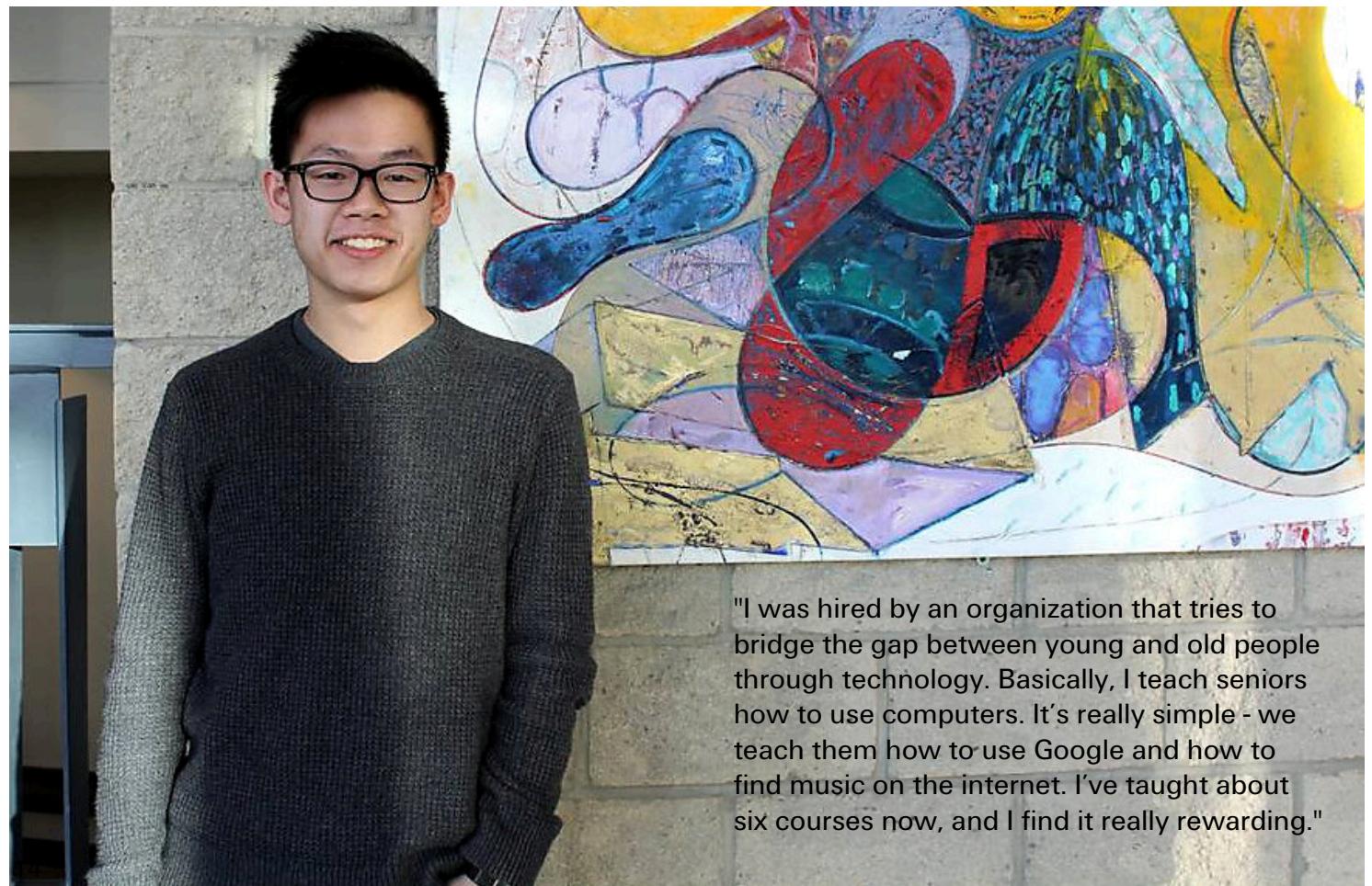
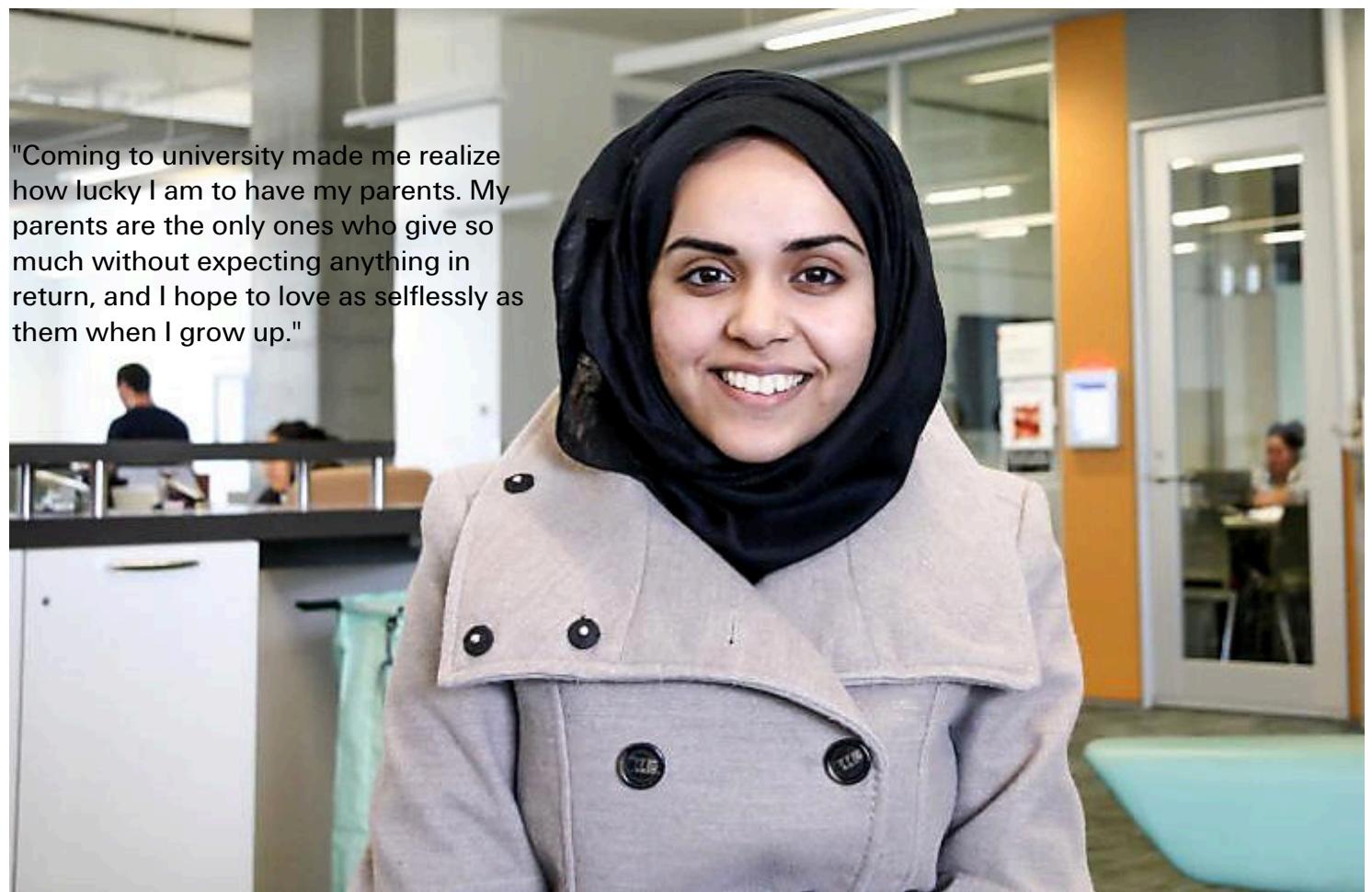
My mothers could not legally adopt me, as only one of them could be recognized as my parent under the laws of that time. Both of them have raised me since birth, so in 1999, they petitioned the government for the right to legally adopt me. After the government dropped out of the case, another organization called AFWUF actually applied to the court to pick up the case again. They were denied, and they also ended up having to pay for our legal fees and punitive damages. I was adopted in the first same-sex private adoption in Alberta.

My parents also led the Lesbian Mothers' Support Society. They held monthly potlucks for lesbian couples and their children, and provided a platform for support for both the mothers and their kids."



"My family left Colombia when I was around two years old, to build a better life for me and my two older siblings. We moved to New Jersey, Toronto, and finally settled in Calgary. It was especially difficult for my parents, because my entire extended family lives in Colombia. Colombian culture is very family oriented. You do almost everything with your relatives. Sometimes, you live with your family even after you get married. My mom was a dentist there, and she loved her work. Here, my mom's credentials are no longer recognized, so she is unable to practice. I really hope to use my education well, so I can give back to my parents as best as I can."





"Coming to university made me realize how lucky I am to have my parents. My parents are the only ones who give so much without expecting anything in return, and I hope to love as selflessly as them when I grow up."

"I was hired by an organization that tries to bridge the gap between young and old people through technology. Basically, I teach seniors how to use computers. It's really simple - we teach them how to use Google and how to find music on the internet. I've taught about six courses now, and I find it really rewarding."



"I voluntarily sacrifice myself for the hungry so you don't have to."

"I have VATER Syndrome, which stands for Vertebral anomalies, Anal atresia, Tracheo-Esophageal fistula, and Renal anomalies syndrome. I was born with holes in my throat, spinal deficiencies, missing nerve endings, no anus, no left kidney, a heart valve with irregular chords, and missing ducts. I couldn't breathe or eat by myself. I had a feeding tube and was constantly subject to intestinal complications. Some of the muscles in my mouth and throat didn't finish developing properly, so I have an accent when I speak. There are three full journals dedicated to my medical records.

The majority of my procedures were done when I was quite young, but I can still remember never wanting to go to the hospital throughout my childhood. One of my strongest memories from being at the hospital was when I had to be put under for a procedure and they would always ask me to count to ten sheep. I never did make it to ten! But through it all, thanks to the support of my family, doctors, and life-changing medical devices, I am proud to say that I made it and am still here today.

Fortunately, I was one of the first fifty patients in Canada to receive a cecostomy tube to give me control over draining my intestines, which granted me the independence to do so many things. This semester, I am fulfilling my milestone dream of finishing a degree in Chemical Engineering with a Biomedical specialization.

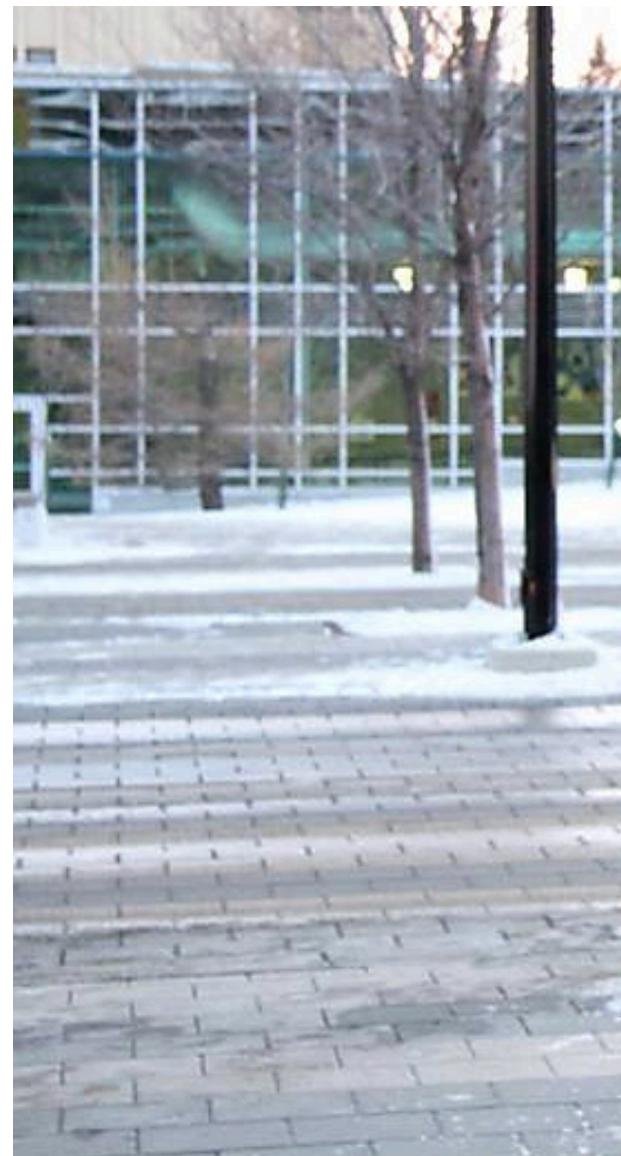
I went to Switzerland for a 12-month internship with ABB between my third and fourth years of Chemical Engineering. I was gone for 14 months in total, because I took two Study Abroad courses in Greece on ancient Minoan civilizations and numeric methods before arriving in Switzerland. Immediately after my internship, a close friend joined me in Europe and we explored more countries together. In total, I visited 25 countries, including Sweden, the UK, Morocco, Iceland, and the United Arab Emirates.

While I was working, I visited a new country every other weekend by air or by rail. One of my most exciting experiences was going to Berlin. On a whim, we decided to go to Berlin to watch the World Cup Final. After the game ended at midnight, we crammed downtown to party with about half a million people until 2:00 am. I woke up at 4:00 am, got to the airport at 5:30 am, caught a flight at 6:30 am and took a train to arrive five minutes early for my 9:00 am meeting back in Switzerland.

Eventually, I hope to do a Masters degree in either Europe or Australia. After that, my goal is to come back to Canada and do a PhD. Ultimately, I hope to become a university professor and pass on the knowledge and experience I have gained, as well as conduct my own research in biomedical engineering."







"I've lived in Thailand for the past seven years. I've noticed that the difference between Thailand and Canada is that in Thailand, people are much more carefree. They have an expression called 'sabai sabai,' which can mean many things, including 'take it easy.' No one is in a huge rush to do anything or get anywhere, but this doesn't mean they're lazy. It just means that life is taken at a relaxed pace, and I think this attitude is what makes life feel more enjoyable."



"I went to boarding school for six years, and moved to British Columbia last year to start university. I transferred to the University of Calgary this year for its engineering program. My parents and my oldest brother are currently living in Nigeria, while my other two siblings are studying medicine in Ukraine.

I don't really get lonely or homesick anymore. I have lots of friends on residence and campus, and I keep in touch with friends from boarding school. But occasionally, when I am homesick, I listen to mixtapes of old school Nigerian music that my dad sends me. I close my eyes and it briefly feels as if I am all the way back home."



"I haven't traveled to nearly as many places as I want to, but I did go to France for a few months after high school to work as an au pair."

"Oh wow, can you speak French then?"

"Both my parents are from Quebec, so I grew up speaking both English and Canadian French - mind you, it isn't quite like French, so I struggled a little bit sometimes while I was in France. My boyfriend was born in South Korea, but since moving here he's lost all of his Korean speaking skills. We really want to travel to Korea together and learn the language."

"Since you volunteer in the Study Abroad office, have you been on any exchanges?"

"Over winter break, I got to go to New York on a group study. My prof has been to New York over twenty times, so we got to experience New York in a less touristy way. Out of all the performances we saw, I think 'An Affair to Remember' is my favourite because of its beautiful love story. Actually, 'Wicked' was really amazing as well!"

"Any travel plans in the near future?"

"I'm actually doing another group study in Hawaii this summer to learn about photography!"



"I love travelling! When I was in Bolivia, I was on the train and a beautiful girl sat next to me. We ended up talking for 12 hours straight! I couldn't believe how much we had in common. She loved travelling, she spoke English, she was independent, and she loved programming. Then, I learned that she was staying in Bolivia much longer than I was, and I didn't want to tie myself down so early in my trip. I should have kept in contact with her. There was just one thing - she already had a boyfriend."



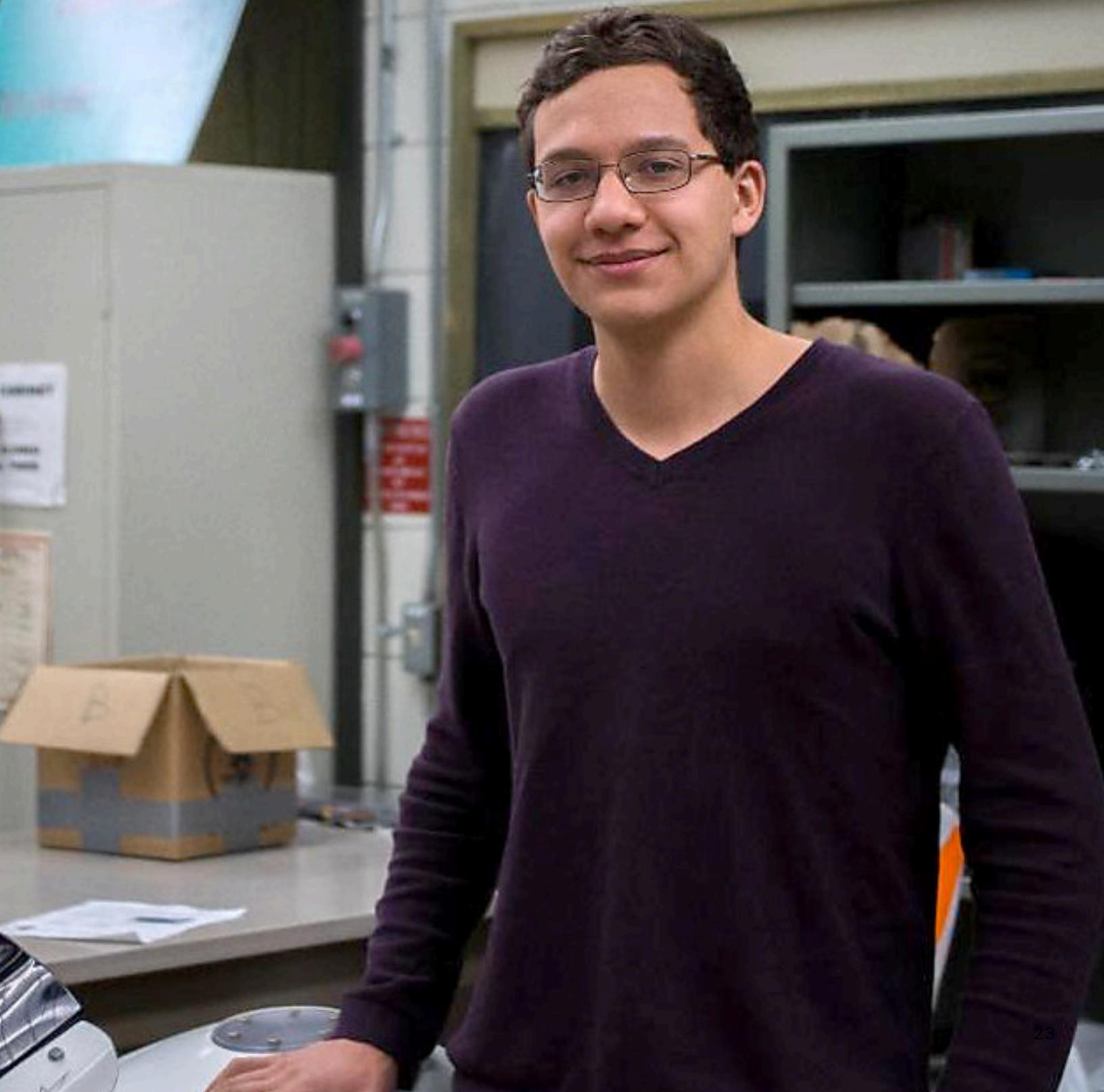


"School used to be my whole life. As an engineer, I know that we are well known for focusing solely on academia. I want to change that. When my peers and I are out in the field, it's important for us to build interpersonal connections with others. Engineering involves working with people, and working to create for people. We can't learn everything from our books. That's not how it works in the real world."

A lot of CEOs I've met have admitted they weren't 4.0 students. They decided to allocate some of their time to personal pursuits, extra projects, and hobbies rather than having the perfect GPA. I want to walk away from university and be able to say, 'I made a change in my city, or maybe even my country.' I think it's more rewarding to walk away knowing I made a difference in other people's lives, than with a 4.0."

"Is there anything you would've done differently in first year?"

"For me, first year of university was academically challenging. I wasn't used to struggling with school, since I found it very easy to grasp all of the material taught in high school. During first year, I thought I was capable of getting by even when I skipped class and hardly studied. I wanted to cover up my mistakes and pretend they didn't exist. I pushed away the support that was offered to me. Since then, I've learned that there is no shame in admitting you need help and reaching out for it."





"In my first year of university, I took honours calculus, honours algebra, honours physics, art, and English.

Honours calculus was a terrible choice. After writing the first midterm, I was completely sure I had failed. So I filled out a drop form, and was walking to the office to hand it in. Halfway to the office, I bumped into my calculus professor. In his thick Eastern European accent, he asked what I was doing. I told him I was dropping calculus because I thought I failed the midterm, and he assured me, 'You vill be fine. Do not drop ze class.'



In our next lecture, he stood at the front of our classroom and said sternly, 'Anyone less than 50% on the midterm should drop ze class.' My midterm was then handed back. He had whited out my original score and added two extra marks, so I had exactly 50%.

I failed a lot of tests in university. I actually met my husband for the first time while I was crying over a quantum physics midterm that I failed in third year. But, I eventually became the second woman to win the Plaskett medal for most excellent PhD dissertation in astrophysics or astronomy in Canada."



"I lived in Iraq for the first three years of my life, and then Libya until I was nine. In Libya, we lived in a village of 600 people that was literally in the middle of nowhere. I had fun there because I was a little kid, but my parents probably went through hell just to get us there.

Looking back, it was amazing to see how resourceful everyone was. Children created skateboards from wooden planks and worn rubber tires, even without using modern conveniences like power tools. Here, we take a lot of the things we have for granted. We have homes to go to, and cellphones to watch YouTube on. My childhood has really shaped my perspective, but at the same time, it's really easy to lose touch with that part of my life now that I've lived in Canada for so many years.

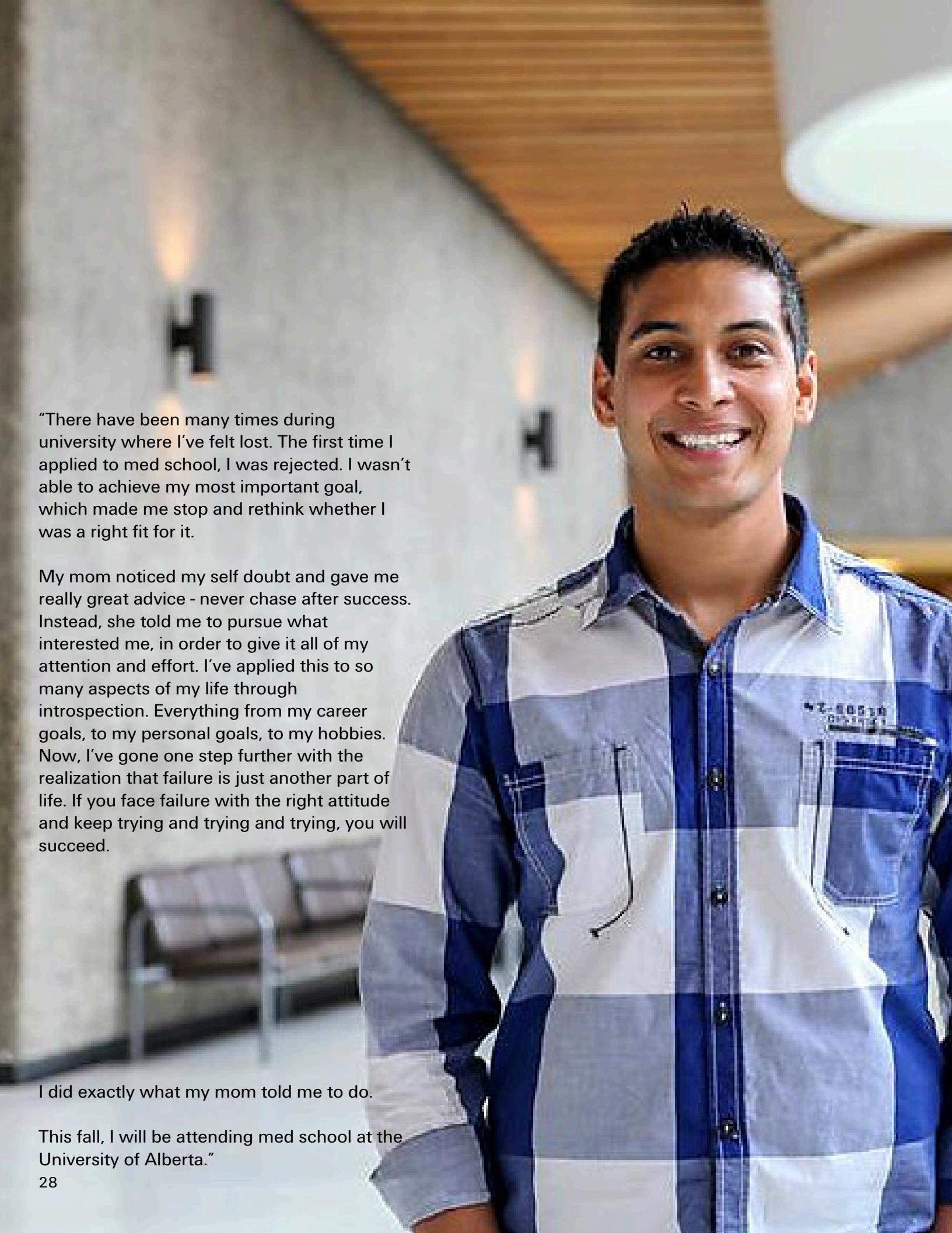
Volunteering in Guatemala with the club Students Offering Support (SOS) and volunteering in Mexico with Homes of Hope really grounded me. It reminded me of how the majority of the world lives. In Guatemala, we worked closely with local construction workers and NGOs to build a kitchen that they designed for a local school, and a chicken farm. In Mexico, we built homes for two local families. Here, I might know my two next door neighbours, but not every single person in my community. Going to these places, where people lived in the same conditions that I did during my childhood, reminded me of the deep values of community and family and put everything back in perspective."



"A pilot has to know absolutely everything in and about their airplane – how the hydraulic fluid works, the exact type of gas it runs, the operations of the airspace and airports they're in, and even the nuances in changes of the weather. I have bad habits in all other aspects of my life, but when it comes to flying, I am extremely disciplined. I like to think of myself as a safe adrenaline junkie, because I realize that at the end of the day I need to be completely responsible for my own safety and the safety of others.

This April, a few days after I finish the final exam of my Engineering degree, I'll be taking my first flight exam. And after I graduate, I plan to go to flight school full time for a year to get my second pilot license.

Eventually, I hope to become a volunteer pilot that delivers food and medical supplies to remote areas in developing countries. I don't know if I can entirely change the world, but I want to make it a better place. You can't always help, but when you can, why not?"



"There have been many times during university where I've felt lost. The first time I applied to med school, I was rejected. I wasn't able to achieve my most important goal, which made me stop and rethink whether I was a right fit for it.

My mom noticed my self doubt and gave me really great advice - never chase after success. Instead, she told me to pursue what interested me, in order to give it all of my attention and effort. I've applied this to so many aspects of my life through introspection. Everything from my career goals, to my personal goals, to my hobbies. Now, I've gone one step further with the realization that failure is just another part of life. If you face failure with the right attitude and keep trying and trying and trying, you will succeed.

I did exactly what my mom told me to do.

This fall, I will be attending med school at the University of Alberta."







"I applied to work at Shoppers Drug Mart, so I left my resume and application at the Canada Post office there. Somehow I was hired at Canada Post instead of Shoppers, but I decided to take the job anyways. I have to fill out customs reports for when people ship packages. People ship the weirdest things – I've helped them mail hair, saliva, and breast milk. In these customs reports, I also have to write the monetary value of the items being mailed. When I ask the customers what number to write, they just stare at me or ask what I think their breast milk is worth. I usually put \$1."

"I've been working with Schulich Racing for the past two years. Through it, I realized I was interested in becoming a Formula One race engineer. It was only a vague ambition before last year's competition in Nebraska. At the competition, another team didn't consider how the fuel would move in the tank during long turns and not reach their engine. To me, it was incredible to see how failing to consider that tiny detail prevented them from finishing the main event.

I'm willing to take the risk of moving to a new country to pursue my dreams. I have been conditionally accepted to the Masters of Motor Sports program at Oxford Brookes, in Oxford, England. I'm actually in mechanical engineering with an energy and environment specialization, but I've probably spent just as many hours learning how to engineer cars on my own time."





"The Zephyr's first race was in the summer of 2014. During a practice run on the day of the race, our motor burnt out due to a factory defect. Miraculously, we had a spare motor available. What really impressed me was that no one freaked out or panicked - everyone just jumped into action. The moment the bike was back in the shop, the team moved like a well-oiled machine. Everyone who wasn't actively working on something was ready to run and grab tools, or relay information at a moments notice. This sort of emergency management wasn't something we'd talked about - it just came naturally. Within three hours, the circuit was verified, the bike was reassembled, and we were driving it around the parking lot to test the spare motor. Two hours later, we finished the race, coming in 5th place out of 6. We were actually thrilled about the 5th place finish - it was our first race, and we were the only team with a non-commercially built bike - but I don't think I've ever been as proud of anything as how well the team worked together that morning. In a lot of ways, Team Zeus is like a family to me."



"In the very short time that I've been on this earth, I can only say one thing for certain, and even then I have to use an analogy to explain it. The idea behind a kaleidoscope is that when you look through all of its broken pieces, by some miracle, you're able to view something beautiful. And I think people are the same way.

So, I hope that in the New Year everyone is able to take a little bit of time out of their daily lives to get to know the people around them. It doesn't matter how many cracks and imperfections we feel we have. Because if others are able to see how radiant, lovely, and extraordinary we are when the light shines through our cracks, we'll only be reminded of what a beautiful mosaic we are."

"I am in my last year of Kinesiology. Outside of school, I work at the Talisman Centre, and this April will also be my one year anniversary working as a DJ at Commonwealth.

I have DJ'd at the Squamish Valley Music Festival representing Red Bull Canada, as well as local clubs in Calgary such as the Hifi Club, Commonwealth, and the U of C's very own Den. As for my favourite party in recent memory, it would have been either the Pulse Studios 5th anniversary party or the Junos party I threw with my boy from Toronto last weekend. Both of those parties were such amazing experiences - so much energy, and amazing moments were made those nights.

After graduation, I plan on taking some time off to focus on music. I hope to travel with my music and throw parties around Canada, but keep it as organic and fun as I can. I've been so lucky to enjoy both Kines and music, so I'm open to wherever my career takes me."



"What's your favourite part about Sikhism?"

Left: "The Sikh community is tightly knit because of our strong belief in equality. Equality is the foundation laid out in the very roots of Sikhism, and is actively incorporated into everything we do. As well, selfless service to others is very important to Sikhs. One example would be langar, or free kitchen. This is based on the idea that everyone, regardless of caste, race, and gender, deserves to be given a meal and be well fed. We've always been taught that spirituality is not just about building our faith, but about encouraging others to practice their own faiths."

Right: "I have done Keertan since I was five years old. Keertan is the singing of hymns from the Sikh Holy Book, 'Guru Granth Sahib', which is divided by tunes and melodies called raags. We sing the praises of God. Much of Sikhism has developed from music and I am grateful that my parents were able to get me involved at such a young age. I have had the same instructor ever since I started, and now I'm teaching under her supervision. It's really nice to recognize the progress that I've made over the years."



"I was in Victoria for a couple days this summer and halfway through my trip, I needed to change places to stay. It was 7pm and I was sitting at a Starbucks with my stuff trying to find a place for the night. Didn't know anyone in town and all the hostels were booked, so I went on Airbnb and I found this really cool place right in between downtown and a beach.



A minute after sending the request, the lady accepted it, so I got her address and made my way there. Turns out I booked a place with the friendliest person on the island. When I got there, we started chatting, she fed me and then asked if I wanted to look at her photo album. She opens this book and it's years of photos of her performing as a Princess Diana impersonator! A couple minutes later, she got on the phone and invited one of her friends over, and turns out she was a Queen Elizabeth impersonator. These ladies were both performance artists!

It was pretty nice out so we went out for a walk, and they showed me a couple of places I had to check out while I was there (shout out James Bay Coffee & Books). We walked down to parliament, ran into a comedian friend of theirs and ended up at her show half an hour later. I had a great couple of days in Victoria after that, so if you're ever stranded on the island, stay with Winnie and Carolyn. Oh and she had a cat named Anya, we got along pretty well."



"I almost died in my first year of medical school. My left lung collapsed, but luckily we were learning about lungs and I managed to diagnose myself with tension pneumothorax. When I got to the hospital, my professor saved my life by stabbing me through the chest so the pressure from the vessels leaving my heart could escape. Talk about experiential learning. I just tell people that the scars are from a knife fight in a bar. You should see the other guy!"



"In Grade 8, I attended an overnight basketball camp. I had only one reason for going there - to get better. When all the other kids would be hanging out after meals, I'd be in the gym working on my shot. I ran the hardest I could for every sprint. At the end of the camp, I was awarded the "Grit Award" for being the hardest working kid. While it may seem like a trivial moment, it shaped the rest of my life: it validated that it's okay to work hard. It's okay to work harder than everyone else."

Five years, two degrees, countless challenges, numerous late nights and early mornings later, I am walking away from U of C with a job in investment banking on Wall Street waiting for me this summer. U of C, I've given it my all. I am walking away absolutely exhausted. I am walking away accomplished. I am walking away proud. I am walking away happy."

"We got a call from my aunt one night. My sixteen year old cousin was being transported by ambulance from Lethbridge to the Foothills Hospital. He was complaining of intense headaches and nausea. When he arrived in Calgary, they performed CT scans and found a brain tumour. He was immediately scheduled for surgery to remove the tumor. At first, the prognosis seemed great. However, shortly after he was discharged, his vision degraded and he eventually became blind.

During his recovery, the doctors would always talk about neuroplasticity: the brain's ability to remodel and repair itself after injury, so that one could return to normal life and function. I started to think about how amazing it would be, if technologies to promote neuroplasticity could have improved my cousin's outcome. Don't get me wrong - the surgeons saved my cousin's life. But, I couldn't help but wonder if we could have saved his vision.

Although I can't do anything to change my cousin's current condition, I feel the overwhelming desire to help families in similar situations, so that their children can be provided with the best possible health care and the best chance for a full recovery. This is what inspired me to join Run for Little Ones, an organization that raises money for the new Neuro-Critical Care (NCC) program at the Alberta Children's Hospital. NCC specialists use innovative technologies like brain cooling, or therapeutic hypothermia, to slow the onset and progression of brain damage. This helps children who are critically ill, such as those with stroke, trauma, seizures, and brain bleeds."



A photograph of a young woman with long, straight dark brown hair. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. She is wearing a light-wash denim jacket over a white t-shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with greenery and possibly a building.

"When I was 14 years old, I was diagnosed with Juvenile Arthritis. It affects 30 joints located in my fingers, wrists, and toes, to name a few. It causes pain, stiffness, inflammation and severe fatigue, but also inflammation in organs like my liver. The past seven years have been tiring, painful, and frustrating. Even though I have undergone every possible treatment available, there is no drug that helps my particular case. I have had wrist surgery, and will be receiving surgery on my ankle and two of my fingers in the future.

The hardest part of about having Juvenile Arthritis? It's an invisible disease. People can't see my joints, so it's hard for them to understand that I have a disability and can't do certain things. But, I refuse to be defined by my disease.

I started a blog in September 2015 after I realized something had to be done to show the reality behind this invisible disease, and to connect others who were silently suffering. I wanted to show other people that even though I have chronic pain, I am normal. I regularly go to the gym and do yoga, I go out with my friends on the weekend, and I attend university. My disease isn't disabling me from having a happy life, and I want to bring awareness to this misconception and break the stigma behind disabilities.

Ultimately, I would like to be a Pediatric Rheumatologist. My work in the arthritis community and at the Alberta Children's Hospital has been both rewarding and inspiring. This year, I founded a peer-to-peer support group for teens with arthritis. I hope I can use my complicated experience to make this diagnosis easier for other patients. This dream is what makes it all worthwhile for me."





"When I was eighteen, I was an average kid. I had just finished first year of engineering in university, and was working at Swiss Chalet over the summer. Life was good. Until one day, I tripped off my parents' elliptical machine and I canned myself quite badly. Over the next few weeks, I noticed some swelling in my gentleman's area, but I ignored it. I made excuse after excuse. Maybe it was a hormone thing. Maybe it would go away on its own. When it didn't go away, I finally decided to turn to my mom, who was a doctor. Talking to my mom about my balls was very awkward, but she insisted that I go get checked out. Eventually I received an ultrasound, and I found out I had cancer."

"My academic life at university was saturated by cancer. After losing my first testicle, I was diagnosed with cancer for the second time, at the age of 23, in my fourth year of engineering.

A lot of people have reached out to me, asking how to support their friends or family through a cancer diagnosis. The best advice I have is they don't always have to be strong. Sometimes they'll be down and their loved one will be up. Sometimes they'll be up when their loved one is down. Everyone contributes in a different way to the support network, and cancer affects all of them, together."

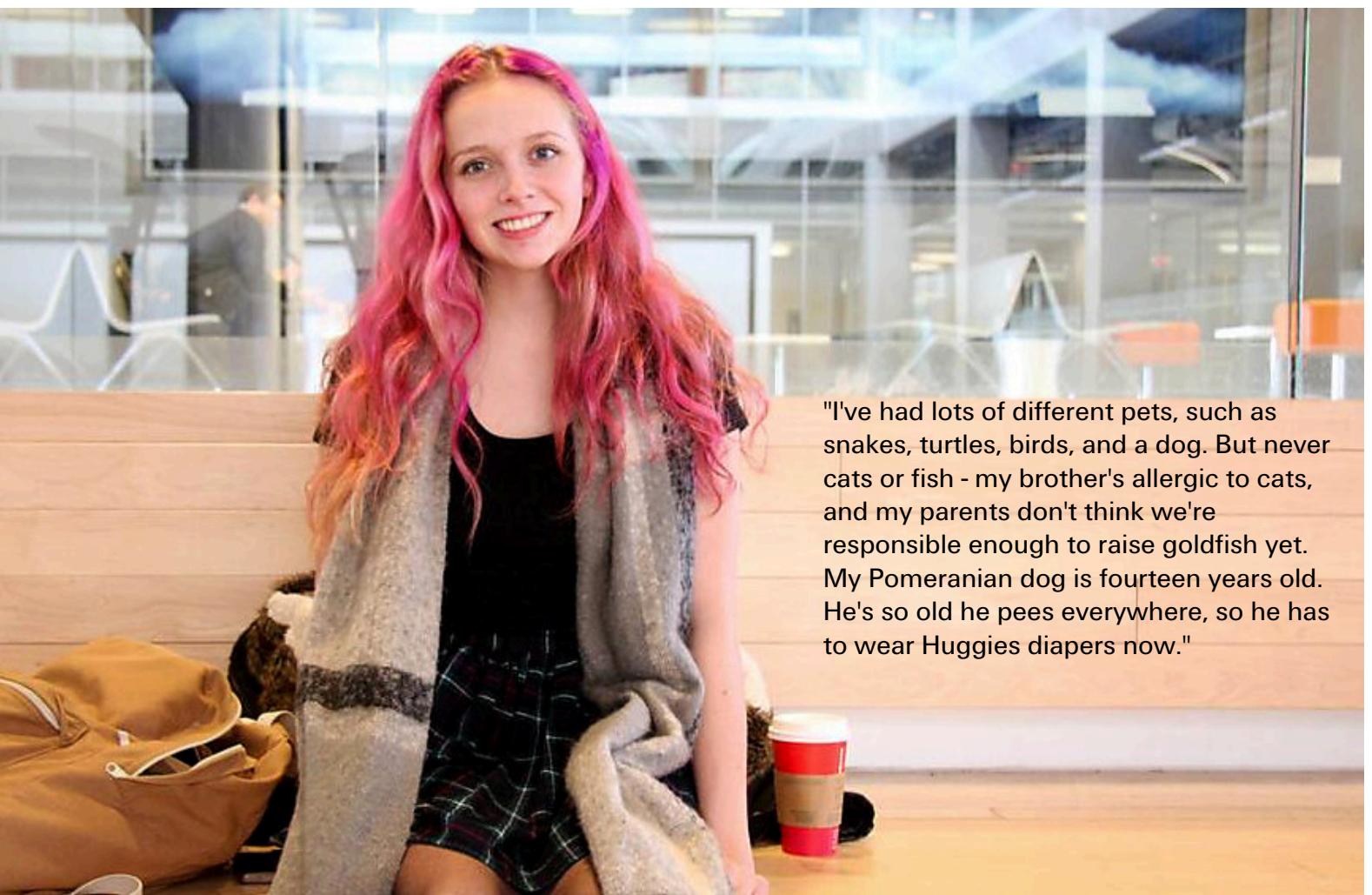




"Although I was born in Calgary, I consider myself to be from the Yukon. My mother is from Nigeria. She was a professor of anatomy at the University of Alberta, and dreamed of becoming a plastic surgeon. After she unexpectedly became pregnant with my big sister, those dreams were shelved and she decided to move to the Yukon to practice family medicine. For the early years of my life, we lived in Watson Lake, a tiny town near Whitehorse. Afterwards, I was sent to Vancouver Island for boarding school.



My mother worked very hard to give me the opportunities she did. When she was young, she insisted on being educated and going to medical school. She was the only woman in her entire surgery class. She moved to Canada and raised her two children, all by herself. She instilled a sense of confidence and independence in me that no one else could have done."



"I've had lots of different pets, such as snakes, turtles, birds, and a dog. But never cats or fish - my brother's allergic to cats, and my parents don't think we're responsible enough to raise goldfish yet. My Pomeranian dog is fourteen years old. He's so old he pees everywhere, so he has to wear Huggies diapers now."



"What scares me most is going out into the real world. It's sort of expected that we'll just know how to deal with things when we're thrown into reality. I'm not afraid of making mistakes. I'm more afraid of being completely clueless as to what to do and where to even start. Finding a job, budgeting, cooking and healthy living – and oh my god, taxes. I asked my dad how to do taxes, but it went over my head. It would be so much easier to grow up if we had more opportunities to formally learn these skills."

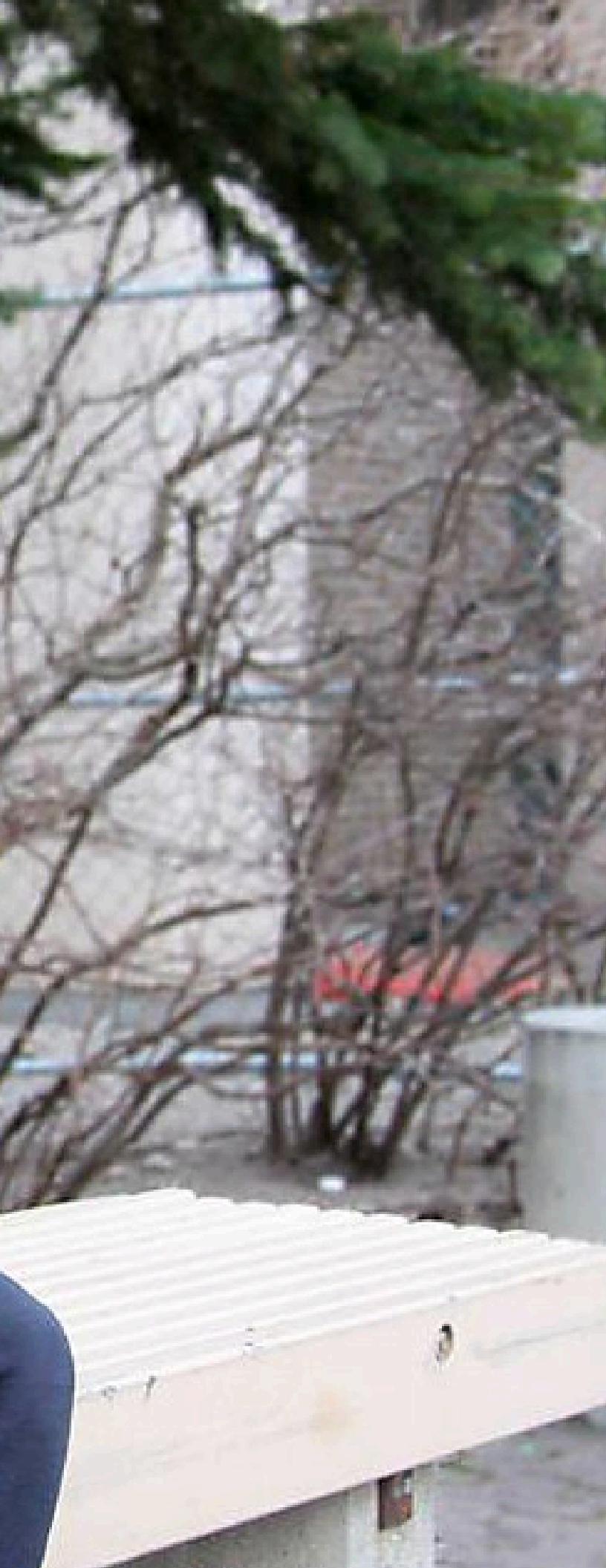


A person wearing a white t-shirt and dark pants is sitting on a light-colored wooden bench. They are looking down at their hands or the bench. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a window or glass doors.

"My first name, Oleg, is Russian, my family is Korean, and I was born in Kazakhstan. If a Kazak has a Russian name, he is Korean. That's something quirky about the culture there.

I am from Almaty, a pretty city in the mountains. My area was not dangerous, but it was not safe. There was lots of bullying, so I became involved in martial arts to protect myself. This quickly became my first passion in life. I did taekwondo, and then boxing and jujitsu. I knew a lot of people in Kazakhstan who struggled with money, so I learned how to save money on hobbies. When I moved to Canada for boarding school, I found a lot of companies that offered free memberships or promotions at their martial arts gyms. In my two years of high school, I did martial arts pretty regularly but I only paid for three days. And even that was discounted!"





"I'm so lost right now. I'm in the middle of doing some soul searching.

I was born in Algeria, and lived there for the first five years of my life. My dad is an engineer, so we moved frequently as he worked in Oklahoma, Texas, and later Calgary. I went to fifteen schools as a kid. I had to say goodbye to a lot of friends. Every time I arrived in a new place, it was difficult to slide into a group of friends that had known each other since childhood.

University was refreshing, because it was a lot easier to make friends who shared common interests and values. I did the first year of engineering at the U of C, and then finished a degree in Kinesiology. I was originally planning to become a physiotherapist, but after doing a practicum, I realized it wasn't the career I was looking for. I just want to find something that truly speaks to me – as long as I've at least tried my hardest to find something that makes me feel both meaningful and passionate, I'll be happy.

I'm in open studies right now. My goal is to take the LSAT next year and apply to law school. In the future, I'll go wherever the wind blows, but I hope to settle in the West Coast and live by the ocean again."



"A couple of weeks ago, like any other Friday, I went to work in the morning, then I served meals at a nearby homeless shelter with some co-workers at lunchtime. I hung out with friends at the Calgary Stampede that evening. Except this wasn't any other Friday. I didn't eat anything for thirty hours. All I had was water, a coffee, and a can of sprite.

Fasting provided me with a new understanding: You don't talk as much when you're hungry, so you tend to avoid unnecessary conversation. This made me realize how much of our daily conversation is unfocused and impersonal. I believe that instead of feeling obliged to engage in small talk, we should save our words and thoughts for meaningful conversation. That way, we can truly improve our lives by building long-lasting and worthwhile relationships with one another. Be patient, speak with kindness, and always say what you mean and mean what you say."



Scurfield Hall



Haskayne School
of Business

"I was shy, and I had to somehow survive drama class. I turned bright red the very first time my teacher called on me. And somehow, when I performed in front of an audience for the first time, I loved it. The blinding lights thrilled me and I had never felt more confident in my life. Performing arts consumed my life. I auditioned for Grease and my teacher wrote me into the script. I loved performing so much that I planned to go to Vancouver for film school.

Then I became scared. I imagined my life on the rollercoaster of 'acting' and I told myself that I would take business in my home province, just to figure things out for a year. And two years later, I'm still here. I never expected this, but I ended up loving business too!"

"I remember thinking to myself during our induction ceremony that I would never be that dude on the stage. Life has a funny way of working itself out.



When I started in Kinesiology, I just wanted to get through my bachelor's degree in four years and immediately start med school afterwards. I didn't take into account all of the amazing opportunities that would add to my degree. My first leadership experience was as a volunteer coordinator for the Kin Games in 2013. After that, I started talking to Lauren Vos, who was the KNES rep at the time. She was the one who encouraged me to run as the KNES representative in the SU - two days before the deadline. I was elected in 2014, and in 2015 I became the VP Academic for the SU.

If I've learned anything during my experience here, it's that road maps are good, but we need to stay flexible. I would never have imagined I'd be where I am today, but this has been the most rewarding experience of my life. I don't know what the future after my presidency holds. Maybe law school, maybe a masters degree. But, I do know that I want to continue inspiring others to take chances and step outside their comfort zones."



"My favourite quote is by Napoleon: 'Ability is nothing without opportunity.' You never know what might happen, so take note of all opportunities."





"Being at university was a great time in my life. I can still remember the Dean of Engineering addressing our class during the induction ceremony. He said, 'Look to your right, now look to your left. One of those people will drop out after first year.' He was right – it was a work hard, play hard environment.

I've been active at the university for 49 years, and I've never stopped working hard or playing hard. Whether it was sitting on the Board of Governors or going back to receive my MBA, I've always been able to experience something new each year. When I sat on the Board of Governors, I had the opportunity to work alongside Murray Fraser. Every volunteer hour I put in was worth it to learn from this outstanding individual. He was just a joy. A privilege to get to know. It was such a loss when he passed away, but I know that the university is in good hands."



Aaron Chau

I'm currently studying "BioMech" Engineering at the UofC. What has charmed me about Humans of UCalgary is its ability to provide a platform for the campus to connect on an interpersonal level. There's a lot of activities done by faculties, organizations and individuals that breathe life into our campus – and it's a huge part of university that one could easily miss. I hope HOUUC can continue to help develop the sense of community found within our university.

Moujan Gilanmorad

I joined the Haskayne School of Business to learn more about how businesses affect the world, but I have come to realize that the greatest effectors of change are simply people like you and me, with dreams and aspirations. Humans of UCalgary has given me the opportunity to follow my passion of getting to know as many types of people as I possibly can and learn more about what makes them tick and why they love doing whatever it is they do. I have also been lucky to be able to document their stories, and to provide a platform where their past, presents and futures can reach a wide audience.



Max Hum

The university would call me a second year business student, but I would call myself a curiosity student with a major in storytelling, a minor in photography, and I'm currently doing my thesis on the meaning of life. Jokes aside, I found the Humans project through one of my closest friends who I happened to photograph at our High School graduation. Fortunately for me, they liked the photos enough to put me on the team! Sharing stories of bravery, honesty and curiosity are what gets me up in the morning and I can't wait to continue meeting ordinary people with extraordinary stories!

Alysia Kwong

I am a photographer from North Vancouver, BC who came to Calgary to study business and marketing in 2015. What I love the most about HOUUC is that it has forced me to step outside of my comfort zone and meet new people and learn new stories that I never would have gotten the chance to hear otherwise. Moving to Calgary for school has been one of the best decisions of my life and that is a huge reason I am so passionate about sharing what makes this school so amazing - the people - with the rest of the world. I feel lucky to be a part of this project and I can't wait for what's in store. I hope you enjoy this book as much as we enjoyed making it!



Alvin Li

I am a software engineering student and freelance photographer born and raised in Calgary, Alberta. I enjoy capturing images of my surroundings and interpreting them through my own perspective. The Humans project was something that sparked my interest because it was a way to showcase the many unique individuals at the University. When I'm not studying, I'm probably DJing, travelling, or listening to rap music.

Rachelle Loo

I am an Actuarial Sciences student. What I love most about the University of Calgary is how everyone is always open and accepting. Despite being a commuter school where everyone has a group of people they already know, it really only takes a "hello" to be able to connect with someone. HOUUC has given me the chance to live through so many experiences from the stories of others. Other than HOUUC I love to eat and explore... and play Pokemon Go.





George Wang

Hey everyone! My name is George and I am pursuing a degree in Neuroscience. Studying the brain is like a bunch of sciences, technology and some imagination put into one degree. I love how completely random things can connect beautifully together to form a brain that watches Netflix instead of studying for the midterm tomorrow. It's truly fascinating how we think, interact and work. In the future I want to be a social innovator, who helps people of weird talents can come together to build something special, much like our group in HOUC.

Mariah Wilson

Bill Nye, my favourite scientist growing up, inspired me to get to know the people in my community since “everyone you will ever meet knows something you don’t.” My own path of switching from kinesiology to urban studies was inspired by other students’ narratives. Thus, I’m encouraged each day to capture the experiences of other students and alumni through photojournalism, as you never know who you will inspire or influence by sharing stories from your own journey. In my free time, I drink a lot of tea (I’m pretty sure I keep David’s Tea afloat), I volunteer for nonprofits, and I take long walks by the Bow with my pup Sandy. I hope that you enjoy our campus’ stories and are encouraged to get to know the people around you!



Tingting Yan

I came into university looking to earn a degree, but then I realized what I (and many others) truly search for is an education. The greatest parts of my education have taken place beyond the walls of our lecture theatres - they've come from learning from the insights and passions of other people. I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside the HOUC team to share our community's stories and perspectives.