

*I worried. What was I going to learn working with people with a disability, I wondered. I realize now how, despite my image of myself as an open-minded person and someone with curiosity, I knew nothing about segregation. In fact I would never have even recognized it had I not been exposed to integration. Without realizing it, I had been taught, subconsciously, just to accept things the way they are. That in itself was a profound learning experience.*

Ask students why they chose to go to college and they will invariably mention the possibility of making new friends. Some students might set a higher priority on getting a well-paying and secure job, others on getting a good education, but the social aspects are a very attractive feature of student life. Many life-long friendships trace their beginnings to meetings at concerts, lecture halls and cafeterias on campus. Other relationships fade when the college years are over but are long remembered as part of an important stage of personal growth and discovery.

As students pursue their own interests, there are endless possibilities for meeting other students with similar interests: dancing at the monthly pubs; attending poetry readings in the library; setting up the sound system for a concert or jam session; at a quiet magazine rack in the library or a music listening corner. Whole sections of the cafeteria are devoted to card games and homework; these are places where camaraderie and collaboration on assignments are encouraged. Organized opportunities to socialize also abound: at student council fund-raising barbecues, aerobathons, and morale-boosting mid-winter madness escapades. The opportunities for personal development are an important part of the culture of colleges and universities.

One particular young man comes to mind. His parents withdrew him from the sheltered workshop he had been attending for a number of years and applied to Humber on his