

An Overseas Volunteer Experience to Increase Self-Confidence

In cooperation with the Groupe Information Travail (GIT), a Montreal-based organization dedicated to the rehabilitation of youth who have experienced difficulties with employment, Canada World Youth (CWY) launched an innovative pilot project in January 2004: the *GIT en Amérique* program.

During this three-month program, nine young people who had already overcome challenges related to employability, housing, societal integration, etc. had the opportunity to acquire community work experience overseas.

Based on the CWY model, the participants in the *GIT en Amérique* program had the opportunity to live in host families and carry out volunteer work projects in Costa Rica. Lino DaGiovanni and Stéphanie Grenier, two experienced project supervisors who have both worked as CWY field staff before, accompanied the group throughout the program's three phases: preparation, overseas program, and debriefing.

Sébastien Légaré, one of the project's participants, speaks of his experience: "In Montreal, I was becoming more and more isolated. The *GIT en Amérique* program gave me the chance to try something new and to develop my self-confidence." Now that he is back in Quebec, Sébastien is deciding what he will do in the coming months—study visual arts at the Université du Québec à Montréal, work, or travel some more.

Given the positive results of the project — whose objective was to motivate young people to take their place in society and develop their social and professional skills — CWY plans to run the program with GIT again in the coming year. This is yet another exceptional success story that demonstrates the important role of overseas volunteer experiences in helping young people build their self-confidence. 🍀

A Partnership that has Stood the Test of Time

While in Thailand in February 2004, Mr. John Cawley, Vice-president of CWY, had the pleasant surprise of meeting up with Dr. Yuwat Vuthimedi, Director General of the Royal Thai Youth Foundation. It was the first time Mr. Cawley and Dr. Vuthimedi had seen each other since they had negotiated the first contract for launching the educational youth program between Thailand's Department of Community Development and CWY twenty years earlier! The two men took advantage of the opportunity to discuss the indisputable success that the program has known over the course of the past two decades. 🍀



In the photo, from left to right, are the Deputy Director General of Thailand's Department of Community Development, with Mr. John Cawley and Dr. Yuwat Vuthimedi.

CWY—A Family Affair!


Annie Lévesque, from Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Quebec, will be participating in the Ontario/Thailand program this year. One need not look far to discover how 19-year-old Annie inherited the "travel gene." Her mother, Danielle Pratte, was a participant in Canada World Youth's program with the Philippines in 1974 –1975!

"I didn't convince Annie to participate in a CWY program," explains Danielle. "She is naturally adventurous and this was her own decision! But I have often spoken to my children about the things I experienced when I was younger, and they have seen the pictures of my travels... When I look back at it, I realize what CWY gave me—a greater social awareness and an interest in ecology... It was an intense course in international politics!" Thirty years after her own CWY adventure, Danielle will now have the pleasure of seeing her daughter take part in this extraordinary learning experience! 🍀

“CWY changed my life” former participant tells Minister for International Cooperation

Shawna Miller, former Canada World Youth (CWY) participant in the New Brunswick/Cuba program (2002-2003), gave a stirring account of her volunteer experience as part of a press conference held by Aileen Carroll, Minister for International Cooperation, on April 7, in Barrie, Ontario.


“CWY has made me a person who now cares and is willing to work towards developing my world”, said the young woman. “The idea of international development can be a hard lesson to learn, especially when most youths in Canada live a sheltered life. CWY helped me, and I assume many others, to realize that the world and everything in it does affect even the most sheltered of lives. I now hope, like so many before me, that CWY and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) will keep on helping thousands of Canada’s youth to realize this”.

On this occasion, Minister Carroll announced that CIDA will provide close to \$210 million over five years to strengthen the impact of Canadian volunteer-cooperation agencies, which include Canada World Youth. This funding agreement, the longest ever concluded between the federal government and CWY, recognizes, among other things, the importance of the role played by CWY with Canadian and overseas youth as well as the unique character of its programs. 

Getting to Know CWY in Cuba

From February 14–21, 2004, a group of people from Canada’s philanthropic and business sectors went to Cuba in a visit organized by Canada World Youth. The purpose of their visit was to become better acquainted with the CWY program.

Accompanied by Jacques Hébert, founder of CWY, the group of approximately thirty visitors had the opportunity to meet with representatives of Cuba’s Ministry of Education — a longstanding partner of CWY — and Alexandra Bugailiskis, Canada’s ambassador to Cuba. The delegation also visited participants, host families and work projects in the communities of Quemados, Remedios and Manicaragua.

During their stay, the visitors were able to witness the educational benefits of the CWY program and to appreciate the degree to which Cuban and Canadian participants had integrated into their host communities. As a result of this delegation’s visit to Cuba, relationships have been forged with businesses and organizations that have now become fervent supporters of CWY. These valuable alliances will certainly be beneficial to CWY in the years to come. 

Attention CWY Alumni!

As part of the planning of various alumni activities, such as group reunions, we are often asked to make our program lists available to past-participants who undertake the organization of these events. If you **DO NOT WANT** your name and address shared with other past participants for such activities, please contact Betty-Jo McCarville at: bjmccarville@cw-y-jcm.org or by phone at **1 (800) 605-3526**. We do not trade, rent or sell our list of participants to other organizations.

If you prefer to receive this bulletin electronically, please contact bwhittaker@cw-y-jcm.org and give her your email address.

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