

**Wednesday, April 13, 2011**

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**New Canadian Aspires to Achieve Volunteering First**

Zuyi Jiang recently immigrated to Canada and volunteers are inspiring her to expand her list of goals: Jiang wants to be the first learner at Frontier College to become a tutor with the same organization. Jiang immigrated to Scarborough from China in 2008. One year later a friend introduced her to the Families Learning Together program at Frontier College, a national, volunteer-based literacy organization. Jiang signed up for the one-on-one tutorial sessions to practice her English and learn the subtleties of Canadian culture.

In early 2011, Jiang paired with Claudia Frangolho, a volunteer at Frontier College who tutors new immigrants. It's a program close to her heart. Frangolho's parents are immigrants. They left their home in Angola to settle in Canada. Her parents came to Canada not knowing a word of English, and growing up, Frangolho often had to read and translate documents for them.

"The effect of individual volunteer activities may seem small but it is significant," said Deborah Gardner, Executive Director of Volunteer Toronto. "Volunteers impact the community every hour, every day in ways that are often invisible.

"It's through the commitment of volunteers that we feel a sense of community, connectedness, and well-being. It is important to celebrate volunteers and make visible their valuable contributions to our lives and our communities."

**Cultural adjustment**

Jiang says Frangolho and the Frontier College program have helped her adjust to life in Canada. Adjusting to the Canadian culture has been very important to Jiang, and Frangolho's tutoring has helped her learn about Canadian society.

For instance, Jiang was at first unsure how to use emergency services in Canada. From her tutor, she learned under what circumstances it's appropriate to dial 911 if a problem arises.

According to Jiang, the Frontier College literacy program is very helpful for immigrants who wish to learn English and meet people from different backgrounds. Before joining Frontier College, most of Jiang's social contacts were other Chinese immigrants. But through Frontier College, she's had the opportunity to meet people in her neighbourhood from a variety of backgrounds.

“There are 12.5 million volunteers in Canada contributing more than two billion hours every year,” said Ruth MacKenzie, President & CEO of Volunteer Canada. “The work of volunteers like Claudia Frangolho is essential to our communities as well as to our social fabric and telling them how their contributions are making a positive impact is one of the best ways to thank them.”

Jiang is so appreciative of Frontier College and its tutors, she wants to give back. When she feels her English is strong enough, she wants to make the transition from learner to volunteer tutor.

“I’d like to be the first person that plays both the learner’s role and the tutor’s role in this program,” said Jiang.

Jiang isn’t the only one who feels she benefits from the program. For Frangolho, volunteering offers her a brief escape from her regular sales job. Frangolho once dreamed of being a teacher, and her role as a tutor allows her to use her teaching skills.

“It’s nice that for a few hours each week, I get to go and do something that was a dream of mine,” said Frangolho. “I wanted to be a teacher, and that didn’t happen for me, but in a small way now, I get to have a taste of that life every week.”

### **About National Volunteer Week**

National Volunteer Week ([www.volunter.ca/nvw](http://www.volunter.ca/nvw)) pays tribute to the millions of Canadian volunteers who graciously donate their time and energy. This year’s 68th annual NVW takes place the week of April 10 to 16. It is Canada’s largest celebration of volunteers, volunteerism, and civic participation. The theme of this year’s National Volunteer Week is **Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.**

National Volunteer Week was first proclaimed in 1943 as an initiative to draw the public's attention to the vital contribution of women to the war effort on the home front. In the late 1960s, the focus was revived and broadened to include all community volunteers.

Investors Group has sponsored National Volunteer week for 12 years as part of its commitment to corporate citizenship. The company is a founding member of Volunteer Canada’s Corporate Council on Volunteering.