

An Insider's View of the Internship

By Matt Thompson, 2014

Doing the internship program at Welcome Home Refugee House has been incredibly enriching, for it has stretched me in every capacity. The work demands maturity, leadership and selflessness as well as social competency, cultural awareness, and patience. As a new graduate in International Development, this experience has exposed me to a variety of different aspects of development. It bridges my education with the real world by providing avenues for me to apply the theoretical to the actual.



In one day, I could help a refugee fill out some documents, book a doctor's appointment for a refugee, settle a conflict among two of the residents, and finish off with a dance party with everyone. At the same time, I would also be critically reflecting on

- the individual, national, and international mechanisms that forced someone to flee their country and become a refugee,
- the availability and barriers to accessibility surrounding refugee health care in Ontario,
- analyse the potential socio-political factors that a house conflict might be rooted in,
- or how those you work with in the field of development are just humans who laugh, play, and dance.

I would highly recommend this opportunity due to the diversity of work involved and the flexibility of making the position what you want it to be. It allows you to test out what it is you enjoy and don't enjoy about working in the field. Furthermore, it is a great way for you to participate in development work in a local and faith-based context. Welcome Home exemplifies holistic development, supporting all aspects of the person; the physical, the spiritual, the emotional, and the mental. I guarantee that this experience will be challenging, rewarding, and different than anything that you've done before!

Some knowledge and skills that will be gained and developed are:

Social Work

- community development and conflict management
- community programming and event coordination
- emotional support and counselling
- relationship building and social support
- awareness of Waterloo Region social services for all categories of refugees
- knowledge of Canadian policy towards refugees as well as the resettlement process in Ontario

Administrative Work

- grant proposal writing and editing
- project planning and development (The current development project is the Build a Canadian Résumé Project.)
- public presentations about refugees and Welcome Home's role in the resettlement process
- building management

Personal Development

- cultural, historical, and religious awareness and knowledge of a variety of different people groups
- leadership development
- provides a great environment to learn new languages and how to cook different cultural foods
- deeper self-awareness