



RESPECT e-Zine

Refugee Education Sponsorship Program: Enhancing Communities Together

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The Challenge Is On!

by Emily Moreton

Logan Cochrane, of the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada will soon be leaving the university and passing on his RESPECT work to a new volunteer. However, he plans to leave behind something worth continuing - a letter exchange of at least 100 pen pals.

Logan has been involved with RESPECT for some years, first at Simon Fraser University (SFU), where he is still in contact with the new, highly active RESPECT volunteers. Now volunteering at the University of Victoria, he runs a letter exchange as well as being involved with the HIV Education program.

Unusual for a RESPECT letter exchange, Logan's pen pals are mostly university students, rather than primary and secondary school students, communicating with refugees in Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Liberia. He has great confidence in the ability of those involved in the letter exchange to rise to the challenge, with over 30 students waiting for letters from refugees, and three RESPECT meetings scheduled for the next week.

The letter exchange is not just part of the work of RESPECT but is also closely connected to the university's own Student Refugee program, which brings a refugee to the university to study each year. As well as using the letters to help raise awareness of the program's work, Logan also hopes that they will be able to be incorporated into the letter exchange.

The letter exchange has not only helped to raise awareness on a university-wide level, but has also profoundly affected those involved in exchanging letters, helping students to build friendships with people they would not have had contact with otherwise, and, for one person at least, being an activity that 'changed her life.'

For more information about the HIV Education program go to: www.yourhelp.4t.com.

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