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First Report **Academic Activities and Progress**

I have chosen the Peace Studies module at the University of Bradford and am taking the following courses: Human Rights, African Politics and Introduction to Peace Studies. I am also auditing the Conflict Resolution course. All of the courses are extremely interesting. In particular the professors teaching Human Rights and African Politics are fascinating people with a great deal of practical and academic experience they freely share with us students.

I have submitted one essay and am awaiting the mark. The essay was for African Politics and was on the topic: AIDS is the Single Most Important Challenge Facing African Societies. I sincerely enjoyed researching the paper, and learned a great deal more than I had ever dreamed of knowing about HIV/AIDS and the epidemic's impacts on communities, governments and conflicts. Along with the other Rotary Peace Fellows, I attend seminar once a week with our tutor Tom Woodhouse. Tom is a fantastic mentor and guide, and extremely helpful in all things academic and Rotary. He keeps us on track and calms us down when our stress levels sky rocket.

Involvement with Rotarians

The first few months in Bradford have been very busy with Rotary events. Shortly after arriving I went to the Rotary Link Weekend in Birmingham. This was a good opportunity to meet the Ambassadorial scholars in the UK, as well as more Rotarians. I was hosted by very nice Rotarian who took time to show me all the sites of Birmingham.

Two weeks later, all of us Peace Fellows attended the Rotary District Conference in Scarborough. At the conference we staffed the Rotary Foundation booth and made a point of speaking to as many Rotarians as possible. We also made a short presentation, introducing ourselves and the program, which was very well received. I spoke particularly on the prevalence of HIV in Vancouver, a wealthy first world city, and public perceptions of street children in Nairobi, Kenya.

In Bradford, we attended a lovely welcome dinner and a number of meetings with the local committee. Most recently the Bill Hutley Peace Seminar was held here. We made the same presentation as in Scarborough, as well as had the opportunity to meet many more Rotarians.

The same weekend I attended the President's Dinner at my host councilors' club. My host councilors, Andrew and Rosemary Makin, are extremely helpful and kind. I've spent the night at their house, attended church with them and really feel welcomed by them. Earlier this month Bob

Fells, a Rotarian, was here to assess the program and we had a lunch and a meeting with him. I, along with another fellow, also took the opportunity to give him a tour of the campus.

Impressions of the Program

So far the program has been excellent. In particular the academic environment is fantastic. It is remarkable to be in a Conflict Resolution class, for example, and have the professor tell you he has been to Palestine and back since the last class. Similarly, in African Politics the professor lectures from his immediate experiences in the Congo, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

The whole Peace Department is a vibrant place to study with numerous remarkable people interact with. Many of these are my fellow students. The department is made up of mostly international students and so there is never a shortage of cross-cultural learning to be done and new experiences to hear about. The Rotary connection is definitely an added advantage. As Rotary students I feel we are extremely welcomed by the university staff. Also I feel very supported and encouraged by my fellow 'Fellows'. It's a privilege to arrive in a new place and have a ready made group of friends.

Successes and Challenges

As you can likely tell by the report above there have been many successes, and so I'm hard pressed to think of any serious challenges. My entry into student life at Bradford was remarkably easy. Due to help from the host councilor and the other Peace Fellows, I had a lovely apartment secured ahead of time. The university was easy to integrate into and my 'buddy' from Class VI (Audra) had given me all the right advice about what to bring and what to expect.

Academically, the work load keeps me busy, and the essay caused a little stress, but over all it is manageable. I often leave class feeling like my brain has been doing yoga, trying to wrap itself around so many new concepts and ideas, but that's how I like it. Perhaps the only challenges emerged earlier this month when the Bill Hutley Seminar and Bob Fell's (the Rotary program assessor) visit were scheduled just before our first essay was due. We thus lost a full four days, that our fellow students were able to use to fine tune their papers, to Rotary events.

As a group, the Peace Fellows have spoken to Tom Woodhouse about the occasional overload of Rotary and academic commitments and he has been very helpful and convincing that the academic commitments can be flexible (i.e. we could get extensions on our papers if needed). However, the Rotary commitments are presented as much more rigid, which is a shame as I think most of us feel our academic excellence is of paramount importance. However, in the larger picture this is just a small issue, and I think we all managed to get our essays in on time and our marks will not suffer from a few less days work.

In closing I would just like to say thank-you again to the Rotary Foundation, and also to the local committee and all the Rotarians in Canada who supported me in this grand adventure.