

London Council for Adult Education Awards Ceremony

Safaa Shakfa Speech – May 16, 2019

Thank you, for your warm welcome. Thank you, to our guests, award winners, friends and families for being here today during this special occasion. It is an honor to stand before all of you today, and before I get started with my speech let me say to the winners: WE MADE IT.

Congratulations to us all, for making it to this important day after many months of hard work.

In the words of Walt Disney: “All of our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them”.

To those of you who don't know me, allow me to tell you my story. My name is Safa Shakfa or Sofy, I received my bachelor's degree with honors in Information Technology. I ranked first amongst my class of over 150 students. When I came to Canada a year and half ago, my dream was starting a new life full of achievements and accomplishments. However, there were many obstacles at that time including a new culture, no Canadian workplace experience, and language obstacles, since English is not my first language, but I did not give up. I worked hard and I continued to chase my dreams. Honestly, attending ESL classes at the G. A. Wheable Adult Education Centre made a huge impact on my life and I believe this is where I started accomplishing my goals! Everything seemed to go the way that I wanted it to. I felt that my dreams were going to come true!

During my studies at G. A. Wheable, I worked hard to improve myself. I acquired all of ESL Benchmark levels, enrolled in a business course taught by Ms. Jen Artan, and completed my COOP course with Ms. Corinne Wester who helped me obtain my placement at Microcad Computer Corporation. At the end of my placement, I am happy to say that I was hired by my manager, Ms. Pam Bains, to begin my very first Canadian workplace experience! Fulfilling my dream continues!

There is nothing in life more rewarding than witnessing the fruitful results of the investment of our time and hard work over the past few months.

I would like to thank those who made this day possible. A special thanks goes out to the London Council for Adult Education for organizing this ceremony and to all of the educators and counsellors who share their knowledge and experience to contribute to our success and help us reach our goals!

To the winners, I wish to remind you to never forget those who stood with us and helped us down the road to success. Always stay in touch and be grateful for the knowledge that has been given to you.

On behalf of all of the award recipients, I would like to say a special thanks to the LCAE Awards Committee, everyone who nominated and supported us throughout our journey that brought us here today. Our special thanks to our LCAE Chair Ms. Corinne Wester who I have also had the honour of knowing as my coop teacher - I still hear the echo of your words and advice that I will cherish throughout my work life “be a good communicator and show initiative - be the best that you can be in all that you do!” You have been one of my most valuable sources for advice and encouragement - I know that my fellow award recipients feel the same way about those that have supported them and nominated them!

Thank you also to Ms. Jen Artan, my ESL teacher, for your amazing course that opened my eyes to many opportunities and expanded my knowledge about the Canadian workplace culture. I would also like to thank my ESL teacher Ms. Nancy Carey.

My gratitude goes out to WIL Employment Connections, which helped me to prepare my Self-Marketing Package to meet Canadian workplace requirements. Thank you Ms. Zeinah and Ms. Wendy.

My deep gratitude to the person who hired me and gave me the chance to put my best foot forward, to face the real world, and to get experience in the IT field. (Thank you; Ms. Pam Bains).

Tremendous thanks to my family, without whose love and support I would not have made it to this point in my life. (Thank you to my lovely mom and my lovely husband Youssef, Thank you my sisters and my brothers, Thank you to my beloved father. If he were with us today, I know that he would have been so proud of me). I know that my fellow award recipients are also thinking of all of the special people that have been a part of their lives - those that are with us today, and those that are not able to be here - they are remembered for helping us to believe in ourselves!

A special thanks to all of our friends and families for attending today's ceremony to support all of the award winners.

Dear winners, this ceremony is an important part of our journey. And the journey continues! Today, may also be an easy part of our journey, as we are surrounded by people who admire, encourage, and support us! The real world may not always be as easy, it will present challenges, but your presence here today is evidence that you have overcome obstacles, have accomplished goals, and can survive and succeed in the real world! Remember, don't underestimate your abilities and no matter how small our contributions may look to us, they always have an impact in the grand scheme of things. There is always something that we can do to make a positive difference in this world! All we have to do now is step out there, roll up our sleeves and use what we have learned to build a better future for everyone.

I am so grateful for all the opportunities that have come my way. You are all amazing; you open your doors and hearts and at the same time, share your personal stories to give us a sense of hope. Thank you all and Congratulations.

LCAE Award Winner

Safaa Shakfa

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