

WHAT STUDENTS AND GRADUATES ARE SAYING

Eager to combine her desire to give back to the community with her love for the arts, Izzy Mackenzie Lay took part in the University of Toronto's Independent Community Engaged Learning Seminar at New College from 2011-12. Students in the final years of their undergraduate degrees work with a community organization and contribute to social justice initiatives. They earn academic credit by reflecting on their experiences in classroom discussions and assignments. Lay interned at the Griffin Centre, a non-profit mental health agency providing flexible services to youth, adults and families. As an artist, a member of the LGBTQ community, and someone who lives with invisible disabilities, Lay felt that her placement was an opportunity to repay the support she received as a teen. It also combined her social justice activism with her love of the arts, allowing her to use her creative skills in art, dance and poetry. Lay was thrilled to later be hired by the Griffin Centre where she works as a youth outreach worker and co-ordinator of Compass – a drop-in for LGBTQ youth with intellectual disabilities.

Brock University's BaseCamp is an orientation program organized before classes start for first-year students that is designed to help them build new relationships with other incoming students as well as with older students.

Led by their upper-year peers, BaseCamp uses wilderness adventures to foster teamwork and resiliency. For team leaders like Maya Blomme, the benefits come from enhancing their leadership and issues management skills.

During her final years at Brock, she was a peer-leader for BaseCamp, guiding younger students through three- to five-day canoe, backpack or rock-climbing trips. Blomme graduated in 2014 with an Honours Bachelor Degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies and was named a Distinguished Graduating Student. She also possesses a Bachelor of Education specializing in outdoor and experiential education at Queen's University. Upon graduation, Blomme feels the BaseCamp leadership experience "tipped the scales" in landing her a job with the Tim Horton's Children's Foundation as program manager for a camp in Alberta.

