

Nadia Panas 2013-2014

When I think about my experience at the Welcome Home I always think of Thursday evenings, when people come together for Family Night. It is a time of mutual prayer, meal, and fellowship. When I first arrived, I found it challenging to keep up a conversation with others because of my poor English. However, people showed so much understanding and patience that I always found myself talking to someone. It was both challenging and educational. And I think these two words best describe my time at the Welcome Home.

As I mentioned, it was challenging because of the language, but also because I had never lived apart from my family, I had little knowledge about Canadian culture, no knowledge about Indigenous cultures, and very little understanding of the difficulties facing people who come to the Welcome Home. With the support from other volunteers, community members and those who came to the Welcome Home, I learned a lot about acceptance, patience, and forgiveness. I think the biggest lessons I learnt is asking questions instead of making guesses. I learned so much about the city, peoples' lives, and Indigenous cultures, just by listening and asking questions. It helped to break some stereotypes I carried with me from Ukraine and made me a lot more open minded. My time at the Welcome Home also inspired me to become a social worker, something I had never even thought before, and now I am working on a degree in social work.