

Muntaha Finds Purpose and Belonging at South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre

The day Muntaha tagged along with her sister to the South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre (SLNRC) was an ordinary one. But walking through the doors led her on a transformative journey toward purpose and belonging.

At 13 years old she was struggling and unsure of herself.

“I suffered through depression in middle school,” Muntaha says. “I made myself feel like I wasn’t worthy.”

Determined to change her circumstances, Muntaha found unexpected opportunity at SLNRC. Her first meaningful connection was with Tassia Nantais, then Youth Supervisor, who quickly became an important mentor.

With Tassia’s support Muntaha quickly got involved with the centre, first by assisting with meal preparation and then participating in the sporting activities.

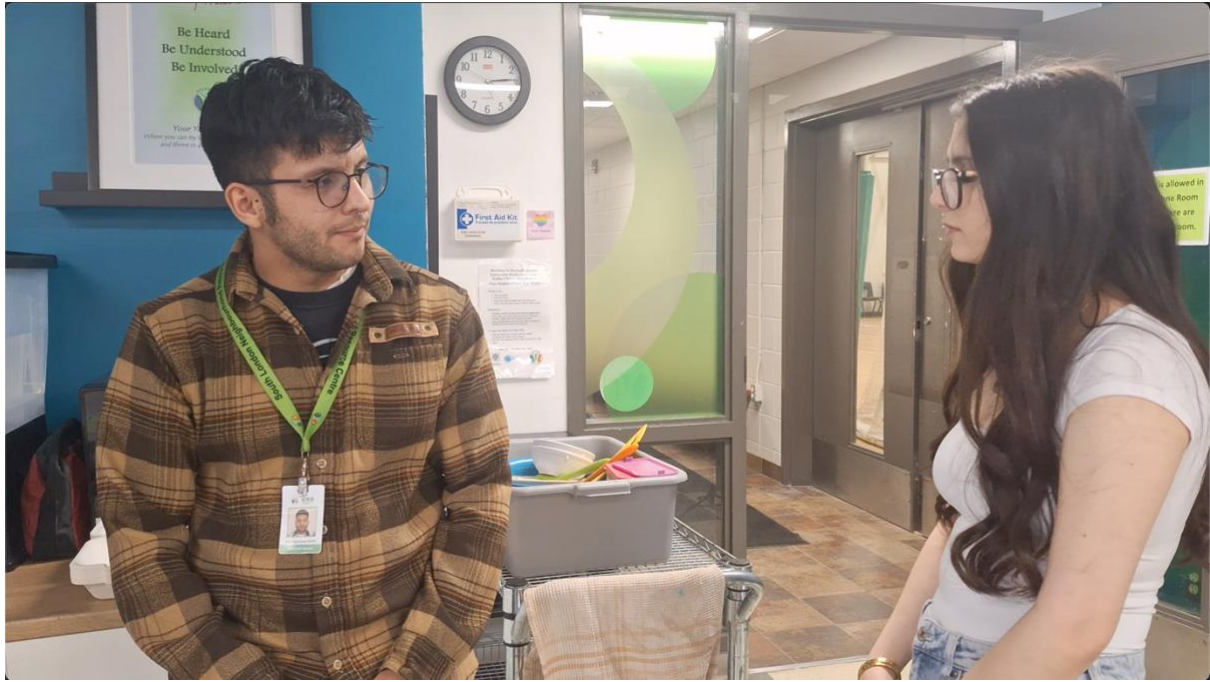
“I cook a lot, it’s my passion, I’ve been doing it since I was a little girl watching my grandma.”

“I usually give out ideas on what kids may like in this generation or what they could eat,” she explains. “I know from my community, like I know what they kind of would want to eat or don’t want to eat.” On activity nights, she would split her time between preparing meals and engaging directly with younger participants.

Three years later, Muntaha is now standing for and with the community youth as Tassia once stood with her, growing into a leadership role and being a supportive presence. This responsibility has profoundly impacted her mental health journey.

“...being here helping others made me feel happy because I thought it was best to put others in need and not just focus on myself,” she says. “Once I started helping others, ...it just made me feel happy.”

She builds confidence in younger participants through positive engagement while handling practical responsibilities like venue setup, organizing and sorting donations and assisting with clean-up.



Muntaha Alabsi, youth volunteer in conversation with her current mentor, Brayan Guzman, youth supervisor at the South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre.

Alt text: At the South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre, Brayan, the youth supervisor wearing a plaid shirt and lanyard, engages in conversation with Muntaha Alabsi. Behind them, a poster displays one of centre's primary messages: "Be Heard, Be Understood, Be Involved." This interaction captures the core of mentorship and growth that defines the SLNRC's impact on young people's lives.

For Muntaha, the centre has become a haven of hope—a place where community youth are truly heard and valued, where they are allowed to thrive.

“Before I didn’t know what I could do all by myself,” she says, “but now that I have trustworthy friends and people that can look up to, I get a lot of help from them to do a lot of work that will lead me to my future, like volunteering for my college applications, volunteering here also, they provide me with information that I don’t know and I will need in the future.”

With quiet confidence, she says, “I think in the future I’m going to be led somewhere way better than I imagined I would be when I was a kid because the resources I have, which are people at the youth centre.”

The SLNRC offers weekly programs designed for community youth aged 11-24. These diverse programs provide structured opportunities for young people to discover their talents, build relationships, develop skills and most importantly discover they belong.