

Health

For Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care employees

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Diversity in art – and at work

By day, Samia Shaheen is a planning analyst with Health Human Resources Strategy's Physician Planning Unit. By night, and on weekends, she's an accomplished artist fulfilling commissions for her oil paintings and, recently, displaying a new collection of mystical art at Rumi Fest 2010.

"Art was always my hobby," Shaheen explained. "I take inspiration from the places I have lived in and visited. I'm really inspired by historical sacred architecture, such as mosques and churches."

For Rumi Fest, a two-day celebration of 13th century Persian poet Mevlana Jalalud'din Rumi, held October 23 and 24 at the Trinity-St. Paul Centre in downtown Toronto, Shaheen produced a dozen paintings inspired by Rumi's work. One verse from "The Far Mosque" that resonated for her reads: "The far mosque is not built of earth and water and stone, but of intention and wisdom and mystical conversation and compassionate action."

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W.D. Lighthall photo



Samia Shaheen, with the Physician Planning Unit in Health Human Resources Strategy, stands with two of her paintings on display at Rumi Fest 2010, held recently in downtown Toronto to honour the work of Mevlana Jalalud'din Rumi, who lived in the 13th century and is one of the world's most revered mystical poets.

Minaret, by Samia Shaheen

Ministry's annual Take Our Kids to Work Day

W.D. Lighthall photo



Grade 9 student Jacob Yearwood and his mother Jill Morales, from the Assistant Deputy Minister's Office, Health System Accountability and Performance, during the ministry's recent Take Our Kids to Work Day.

Jacob Yearwood, a Grade 9 high school student, loves sports. And at the ministry's recent Take Our Kids to Work Day, Jacob saw that in addition to the role of the athletes, there are a lot of jobs and career opportunities connected to sports and sporting events.

Part of the program for the ministry's annual Take Our Kids to Work Day, held Nov. 3, included a Sports Lab held by the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport. (MOHLTC and the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport jointly run Take Our Kids to Work Day.)

The Sports Lab featured demonstrations of athletic training and fitness equipment by trainers who work with Canadian athletes for the Pan/Parapan American Games.

"I liked the sports part of the day the best. It was a chance to see the kind of work the coaches and trainers do with athletes

preparing for big sporting events like the Pan Am Games. It was a chance to see what goes on off the playing field," said Jacob, whose mother, Jill Morales, works in the Assistant Deputy Minister's Office, Health System Accountability and Performance.

"At 14, they are just starting high school and I think it's good for our children to come to our workplace and start getting a sense of what being out in the workplace is all about," Morales said. "It's good to get them thinking about their future now that they are in high school."

June Livingston, director of the ministry's HROntario Strategic Business Unit, opened the day by welcoming the youth and their parents. "Today all across Canada, Grade 9 students like you are visiting workplaces with

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Illuminated Dervish, by Samia Shaheen



Far Off Palace, by Samia Shaheen



Whirling Dervish, by Samia Shaheen

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“There’s so much meaning in that one stanza,” she said. “Rumi’s poems are just magical ... He talks about achieving inner peace, being one with yourself and one with your surroundings, your environment, and one with the higher power. It really brings out the universal message of love and peace.”

Shaheen has just launched a website, at www.theopeneasel.com, to give people a taste of her art’s diversity — her pieces range from landscapes, figures and florals to architecture, mysticism and abstract art. For her OPS colleagues, she has accepted

assignments to depict everything from a favourite sailboat to a fantasy golf course.

Shaheen is also a big believer in diversity at work too. Before joining MOHLTC, she worked in the Ministry of Government Services’ OPS Diversity Office. To her, diversity means acceptance.

“A workplace is truly diverse when people are accepted for their beliefs and values and are not afraid to share them with others around them,” she said. “It’s the foundation of any good organizational environment. I don’t think anybody can perform to their maximum potential unless you have an open and accommodating environment.” ■



Cleto (Italy), by Samia Shaheen



Château Frontenac (Quebec City), by Samia Shaheen

Faraz Chaudary photos



Purple Rose, by Samia Shaheen

Ministry’s annual Take Our Kids to Work Day

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parents, relatives, or friends to get some insight into the world of work and learn about some of the career options available to them,” said Livingston.

Following the opening remarks from Livingston and David Hallett, MOHLTC’s Associate Deputy Minister, the students watched a video about the importance of having a positive attitude in the workplace. Next was a tour of the provincial legislative building, then the Sports Lab followed by a Career Day display in the St. Lawrence Lounge featuring a number of booths, some with interactive activities for the students. After lunch, the students spent the afternoon with their parent, relative or host to see first hand what they do at their jobs.

“The tour of the legislative building was fun and

I liked the career displays that showed us different types of work,” said Raymond Devine, whose mother Kim Devine, works in the Ministry’s Legal Services Branch. “It gave me lots of ideas about different jobs and I enjoyed the interactive booths and the other activities that we did.”

Devine said it’s important for her son to see first hand what she does at work, including the daily challenges and daily priorities that always come up.

“It’s valuable because the children do get a good sense of how things go in the working world. They see you meeting and interacting with your colleagues and the environment you work in. All in all, it makes for an instructive day for a 14-year old,” she said. ■

W.D. Lighthall photo



Enjoying Take Our Kids to Work Day are Raymond Devine and his mother Kim Devine, from the ministry’s Legal Services Branch.