



# The Story of Us

Photoshop piece made by: Ginny

Frame painted by: Ginny, Jane, Jocelyne and Tim

This is the story of us - our experiences of being an immigrant to Canada from East Asia, or being from a family who immigrated to Canada from East Asia. This is a photoshop piece where we share our experiences, our hometowns, our challenges/obstacles and the things that have helped us overcome these challenges. We are 4 students from Thornlea Secondary School, participating in the "Live Well, Take Action: Ambassador Program for East Asian Youth."

*Left Side:*

## Tim Ting-Yi Jaw / 趙庭逸

I was born in Taiwan, before 8 years old I was study in China because some personal reasons. Then I back to Taiwan to finish the elementary school and my middle school. Now I am study in Canada. When the first day I came here, I was super nervous because of my English is poor, I didn't speak any English before!! So when I went to the first period I couldn't understand what teacher talking about, that make me feel sad and wanna cry, but now I can use English to talk to my friends, even is my teacher. So now I really enjoy my school life.

## Jocelyne Ren-Wei Jaw / 趙枉蕙

Last summer, I came to Canada to study and live with my mom and younger brother. In the first few months, it wasn't too much challenge to me, only freshness like food or culture. In September, I started my new school life, then I have encountered many challenges. The main challenge, of course, was English. In class, I can't understand what the teacher is teaching, I always ask the teacher again after class, and on those handouts, there have many strange words that I never seen before. In the relationship, I didn't have any friends in the beginning, because of the language, I couldn't communicate and play with them, that makes me miss my Taiwan friends during that time, I felt sad and lonely. Similarly, I also miss my dad very much, because of the work, he couldn't live with us, maybe in one year we only see each other for a short time. In addition, one more thing also bothers me, which is my age. When I came here, I was grade 12, while my ESL level too low, this makes me have to stay three years to graduate from high school, that is 21 years old. Overall, although there have many different challenges to me, but now, I always feel happy, I met some friends, and my English is improving too.



*Right Side:*

### **Jane Jun-chen Zhou / 周俊辰**

This is my first time come to Canada, not for travel. The reason is Study. Everything is new to me. I feel so excited about the culture, the scenic and food. But I also feel stress. Chinese is my first language, I need use english to talk to people. That is a big issue. I am worried about this, If I do not solve this problem, I can not get a high mark in the school. The most important is this is not easy for me to make friends. I will feel lonely without friends. But now I feel much better. I improve my english in this year. Now I can talk to my friends in English. I hope I can have more progress, and I am really enjoy my life in Canada now.

### **Ginny An / 안지나**

As a student whose first language was not English, I struggled a lot with the English barrier. My parents immigrated from South Korea a few years before I was born and came here to Canada. Just as I was getting used to the English language and gradually speaking and writing it more along with Korean, my first language, I was put into a French Immersion elementary school. In the first 3 years, it was very challenging and I had to take courses outside of school in order to keep up with my classmates. It took a toll on my mental health because for a kid, that was a lot of pressure. As I got older, I was able to quit my French and English courses outside of school because I reached above the standards at school and I met my parent's expectations. As much as I'm happy that I am able to speak French and English fluently and have the opportunity to take the French Immersion course and the Pre-Advanced Placement English course at school, it gave me lots of anxiety. I was not happy at the end of elementary and my anxiety worsened. When I got to high school, I met amazing people who soon became my friends and I was able to improve my mental health. It turns out a lot of my friends face similar anxiety problems as I do. It felt good to talk about it together. There is a council that I took interest in called the Health and Wellness Council (TWIC). One of the things we focus on is mental health and we help students feel less stressed and anxiety at school. Along my journey, music helped me relax and it helped me get through a lot of stressful challenges. I loved listening to music and playing guitar and ukulele along with singing. To this day, I still do all these things to reduce stress.

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The Live Well, Take Action program aims to engage East Asian youth in learning about wellness and how it can have significant impacts on self, others and society as a whole. It is a collaboration between **ALPHA Education** and the **Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNCTO)**. Follow on Twitter at

@lwta\_program or visit the program website at [livewelltakeaction.com](http://livewelltakeaction.com).

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. OTF awarded more than \$120 million to some 700 projects last year to build healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario.



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