

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

NWT girls volunteer on SSI

By Amy Geddes - Gulf Islands Driftwood - July 30, 2008



Dayna Manuel, above, tidies the shoe rack at Transitions Thrift Shop, while Chelsey Elemie, helps Lady Minto extended care resident Ted Aves with a bowling game. The two women are living and volunteering on Salt Spring for six weeks this summer.

Photos by Amy Geddes

Salt Spring Island is a far cry from being a “big city,” but for Dayna Manuel and Chelsie Elemie, the island offers a greater diversity of work and different experiential opportunities than the small communities they grew up in.

The two women, raised in remote North West Territories communities, are living on Salt Spring with hosts Ellie Langford-Parks and Nick Langford for six weeks this summer.

Along with 27 other northern Canada participants selected to participate in the 2008 Northern Youth Abroad (NYA) program, Manuel and Elemie are volunteering at summer placements to earn high-school credits, get work experience and gain a better sense of career and life opportunities available to them in southern Canada.

All host families are matched with two NYA students at a time. Doubling-up offers participants a support system and facilitates lasting friendships and networks between the youth in Nunavut and the N.W.T., the NYA website explains.

“Salt Spring Island is a good placement location for NYA participants because of its size, proximity to larger metropolitan areas, and the support and generosity participants receive from community members,” wrote NYA program officer Mike Passey in an e-mail.

“Placements in large metropolitan areas can often be overwhelming for northern youth who, like Dayna and Chelsie, tend to come from communities of less than 1,000 people.”

The students were pleased to share their Salt Spring experiences thus far:

CHELSIE ELEMIE, 19

Deline, N.W.T.

Placement:

Lady Minto Hospital

Tasked with re-loading the blue bowling ball, Elemie carefully lines up the metal guide for residents as they take their turn knocking down the pins. Friday is indoor bowling day in the extended care unit at Lady Minto Hospital and Elemie says she is getting exactly the kind of career experience she was looking for when she came to Salt Spring through the NYA program.

“I like helping people,” she said. “Almost all of my life I’ve wanted to get into nursing.”

As a volunteer at the hospital she reads to residents, runs quiz games, helps with the exercise program and mealtime feeding, assists with paperwork, cooking and a host of other activities involved with resident care.

“It’s great for extended care,” said Elemie’s supervisor Jennifer Ritson. “We get an extra person for the whole day for a whole month.”

While on Salt Spring, Elemie has visited the Saturday market in Centennial Park, gone boating and taken sightseeing trips to Victoria and Nanaimo.

“It’s beautiful here,” she said. “I didn’t expect it to be like this. There are a lot of tourists and the people are all really nice.”

She noticed the cost of food and other daily items on Salt Spring are “much cheaper” than in Deline, N.W.T., but there is more junk food, pop and coffee here.

Elemie plans to attend Grand Prairie College next year where she will upgrade her remaining high school credits and then attend nursing school.

Trying lamb for the first time at dinner with her host family was just one of the unique experiences she said she will take with her after she leaves Salt Spring at the end of August.

DAYNA MANUEL, 20

Norman Wells, N.W.T.

Placement:

Transitions Thrift Shop

While volunteering at the Transitions Thrift Shop on Thursday, Manuel wears her new nose ring with pride. Freshly pierced only just the day before at Skin Sensations, she says of her home town of Norman Wells, “You can’t do that there.”

She explained the only hair salon in Norman Wells has been closed for some time while its owner is on

maternity leave. So when Manuel moved to Salt Spring, she jumped at the chance to get pierced.

But it was coming across the thrift shop on the Island Women Against Violence website that really attracted her to Salt Spring and appealed to her interest in working with women and children as a career.

“I wanted to gain work experience and learn new things,” she said.

Her supervisor at the shop, Roberta Temmel, said Manuel is well received by customers. In addition to honing her retail skills, she is interacting with customers and other staff from diverse backgrounds.

Temmel said staff and other volunteers have enjoyed hearing stories about Manuel’s family history and where she grew up.

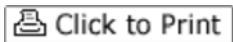
“She does beautiful beadwork and does a type of dance . . . and her grandfather was one of the oldest fiddlers in her community,” Temmel said.

“I think it’s important for her to share her stories with us.”

Manuel rides the bus each day to work, is in awe of Mount Maxwell and is pleased to say she swam in the ocean for the first time a few weeks ago at Vesuvius Beach.

Find this article at:

http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_south/saltspringislanddriftwood/news/26109424.html



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.