

Rajwinder (Sunny) Gill

My involvement with the Between Friends Club dates back to the spring of 2008 when I started volunteering with swimming programs. I have since then volunteered for a total of 118 hours. Programs I have volunteered for include: youth swimming, teen swimming, young adult swimming, laser quest and teen floor hockey. In the fall of 2010 I made the transition from volunteer to program leader and have since worked for a total of 51 hours. As a program leader, I was involved with the youth 'Waterworks' swimming program and the 'Sweet Sundays' with teens.

The Between Friends Club has had a profound impact on my life, especially in understanding individuals with disabilities. Prior to volunteering with the club my understanding of disabilities was confined to definitions I had learned in school. I didn't have any context to really apply those definitions so I didn't know what the disabilities meant to the individuals who had them. After spending a few sessions with the kids in the program, I realized that they were no different than me. The same things made us laugh, happy, sad or mad. They just faced different challenges. Although I still felt bad about their disabilities, I felt much better knowing they were happy and enjoying their childhood. At that point I was especially proud of the Between Friends Club and myself, for being involved with such a great club.

I will be starting medical school in the fall at the University of Alberta and hopefully further expanding my knowledge about disabilities. Although I don't know for certain what type of doctor I would like to be, I am definitely leaning towards a specialty that has plenty of patient

interaction. In particular, paediatrics looks very attractive to me because of all the work I have done with disabled kids at the Between Friends Club.

I remember prior to the 2010 Camp Bonaventure a young boy by the name of Martin was especially excited to go to camp with me. He even had his parents contact me to make sure I signed up to be the camp leader for his age group. Unfortunately I was busy during the camp and I had to tell Martin I wouldn't be coming. This was the case with a lot of the kids who have wanted me to come to camp, but it seems every summer since 2008 I have managed to get tied up in something else. However, I intend on changing that by making summer 2012 my first Camp Bonaventure experience!

Over the years I have spent with the Between Friends Club I have made numerous friends, both participants and staff, and have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the organization. I have learned a great deal and only intend on learning more by continuing to work with the Between Friends Club.